Introduction

The Mount Rogers Planning District is comprised of the counties of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe, and the cities of Bristol and Galax. The population of the District is 189,800 and growing slowly. Recreational delivery systems in this area are well developed, as the cities, towns and counties provide recreational facilities and leisure services through professionally staffed parks and recreation departments. The supply of parks and recreation areas and developed facilities meets much of the demand for recreational facilities in the district.

Large tracts of national forest lands provide close-to-home recreation for residents. The Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) offers developed campgrounds, picnic areas, miles of hiking, bicycling and horseback riding trails, fishing lakes, trout streams and wilderness. Mount Rogers and Whitetop Mountain are the highest peaks in Virginia, with terrain and habitat features uncommon to other parts of the state and the East Coast. Horseback riders, mountain bicyclists and hikers find Mount Rogers' high country attractive because of the terrain and unique, scenic features.

Efforts have been made to attract tourists to this part of the state. Local governments and area businesses have joined the USDA Forest Service and the Virginia Tourism Corp. staff in vacation planning efforts that highlight area attractions. Tourism plays an increasingly important role in the economics of southwestern Virginia.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (*VOP*), it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 3 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

The supply of recreational areas and facilities in this region is adequate to meet demand in many activities. However, shortages of the following facilities were identified by the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey*: basketball courts, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, and football and soccer fields. There is a very large demand for water-based recreation, such as power boating, sailing, fishing and water skiing. Most of this demand is exported to the large lakes outside of this region. Demand for stream fishing is also high. Because the demand for water related activities exceeds the existing supply, improved access to rivers and streams is recommended throughout the region (see Table X-3).

Many of these facilities will be provided by Region 3 localities. According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each locality in this region was: Bland County, $5.87; Carroll County, $12.59; Grayson County, $9.57; Washington County, $14.48; and Wythe County, $10.03. Smyth County does not have a parks and recreation department. The counties' average expenditure is $10.51 per capita, which is well below the statewide county average of $43.75. Average expenditures statewide in cities is $76.45 per capita. Bristol spends $156.69 per capita and Galax spends $85.89 per capita, which are both above the statewide average. Overall, the budgetary and actual expenditures for the region indicate that the average spending for recreation is $42.16 per capita.

Land conservation

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation.

Areas in the Mount Rogers region where conservation is being considered include:

- The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has identified the Burke's Garden area in Tazewell County as a high priority for conservation of its scenic views and its importance to the setting for the Appalachian Trail.
- The Trust for Public Land is trying to conserve Black Lick Farm in Wythe County. The 1,477-acre farm is nestled among mountains of the Jefferson National

Forest overlooking the New River Valley. This property is a high priority for acquisition by the U.S. Forest Service.

- The 4,700-acre tract on Brumley Mountain in Washington County is being acquired for a new state forest.

Land Trusts and Conservation Programs in Region 3:

- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- APVA Preservation Virginia
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Forest Legacy Program (Department of Forestry)
- Land Trust of Virginia
- National Committee for the New River
- New River Land Trust
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- The Land Trust for Southwest Virginia
- Virginia Outdoors Fund
- Western Virginia Land Trust
- 500-Year Forest Foundation
- Virginia Outdoors Fund

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- Local organizations and citizens should continue partnering with Grayson LandCare.

Grayson LandCare

www.publicecology.org/graysonlandcare
Grayson LandCare is a locally organized group of farmers, landowners and residents concerned about economic and environmental problems in Grayson County and southwestern Virginia. Landcare is a conservation movement that brings local communities, private corporations and government agencies together to support hands-on action to promote sustainable land and water management. Landcare combines the following:

- Personal responsibility for the environment.
- "Neighbors helping neighbors" via community-based volunteers.
- Integrated, scientific management of working lands.
- Good group process.
- Ecosystem maintenance and restoration.
- Corporate funding of conservation projects.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, scenic highways and Virginia byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section.

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

Statewide trunkline trails

❶ The **Great Eastern Trail** will link existing trails from central Alabama to central New York along the Allegheny Highlands. The Southeast Foot Trails Coalition and the Mid-Atlantic Foot Trail Coalition are undertaking this project, which is being sponsored by the American Hiking Society. The Great Eastern trail may run through portions of Bland and Giles County and may connect to the Appalachian Trail.

❷ **The Trans-Virginia Southern Trail** will stretch from the Cumberland Gap to the Chesapeake Bay. Comprised of many trails existing or underway, this network will connect the mountains to the sea and stimulate ecotourism across Southern Virginia. Trails in the Mount Rogers PDC are important components of this cross-state trail. These include the New River Trail State Park, Virginia Highlands, Iron Mountain, Virginia Creeper, Over Mountain Victory and the Mendota Trail.

❸ The **Appalachian Trail** is an existing National Scenic Trail. Because of this special designation, localities that host the Appalachian Trail should protect viewsheds along the corridor in their planning and zoning. For more than 75 years the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and its member clubs have worked voluntarily with federal, state and local governments, as well as numerous individual landowners, to solve problems associated with the acquisition, development, administration, management and maintenance of the trail.

Other trails

❹ **The Salt Trail**, a 10-mile long rails-to-trails conversion is under development between the Towns of Saltville and Glade Spring.

❺ The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail** traverses the area through public and private land. Some sections are in need of additional protection. Every effort should be made to avoid impacts to the trail in planning for public projects such as roads, pipelines and power lines. A crossing of Interstate 77 in Bland County needs to be constructed.

❻ Connector trails joining **New River Trail State Park** to other parks and towns along the corridor should be developed.

❼ The **Wilderness Road** should be identified in the region and properly signed and marketed.

❽ The City of Bristol has purchased portions of the abandoned Southern Railroad corridor between Bristol and Moccasin Gap. This 29-mile corridor will be developed as a linear park and will be known as the **Mendota Trail**.

❾ The Town of Marion plans to extend the **bicycle lane along Highway 16** to Hungry Mother State Park. A four-foot paved lane on either side of Highway 16 is stripe-separated from auto traffic and signed for the first mile from Route 11, North Main Street.

❿ The **Wytheville Greenway** is under development and should be extended to Reed Creek.

Water access and blueways

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.

⓫ The **New River Blueway** is being planned in Virginia, North Carolina and West Virginia as a full-service water trail with access sites, rest areas, campsites, re-supply areas and maps to assist users with trip planning. Localities should identify opportunities to increase access sites and use areas along the corridor. A management structure for the blueway needs to be developed in this region.

⓬ Access points at five-mile intervals are needed along the **New River** and other major rivers and canoeable, fishable streams in the region. In an innovative program, the Appalachian Power Company along with the Departments of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) have developed several access sites on the New River along New River Trail State Park. These sites will enhance the multi-purpose utility of the trail, while increasing the public's access to more miles of the New River. Where appropriate, portages have been created around dams and other river obstacles. A way needs to be established to get New River Blueway users around Fries Dam.

⓭ Access sites are needed at appropriate distances along the **New River, Big Reed Island Creek, North Fork Holston and South Fork Holston rivers** and along stretches of other major streams to encourage boating and other water sports. There is also a need to improve public access to stocked trout streams in the region. Inadequate parking and access trails create congestion, resource degradation and unsafe conditions during popular fishing days.

Historic and landscape resources

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this

region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- There is a critical need for county-wide surveys of historic and architectural resources of Bland and Carroll counties.
- There is a critical need for an archaeological survey in Bland County.
- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should build local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.

Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Special attention should be given to protecting views from the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail.
- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
  - Encourage development away from mountaintops to protect significant vistas.
  - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
  - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
  - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of three roads designated as an All-American Road (see Chapter VII). The diverse history and culture of the southern Appalachian Mountains is showcased along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Split-rail fences, old farmsteads and historic structures complement views of distant mountains, parallel ranges and neighboring valleys. Built during the Depression, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the nation's longest rural parkway. The parkway connects Shenandoah National Park in northern Virginia with the Great Smoky Mountains National

Park in southern North Carolina. The Blue Ridge area is not just known for its scenic routes, but also its history of 19th Century Appalachian and Native Virginian cultures.

- Development of a Virginia Karst Trail is recommended to help educate the public about karst resources in the Commonwealth. This thematic trail will promote resource management goals and best management practices that help landowners protect sensitive karst resources such as caves, springs and sinkholes. The trail will focus on above ground features and tourist caves throughout the state's valley and ridge physiographic province. The Virginia Karst Trail, endorsed by the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society and the Virginia Cave Board, will benefit the state through increased educational, commercial and tourism opportunities.

The following road segments have been recommended for consideration as Virginia Byways:

14 **Route 75** in Washington County from Abingdon to the Tennessee state line.

15 **Route 58** in Washington and Grayson counties between Abingdon and Volney.

16 **Route 42** in Smyth and Bland counties between Route 16 and the Giles County line.

17 **Route 52** from Fort Chiswell to Poplar Camp in Wythe County including Route 608 to Foster Falls.

18 **Route 61** in Tazewell and Bland counties from Tazewell to the Bland-Giles County line.

19 **Route 619** from Route 52 to Route 749 to Route 680 and back to Route 52.

20 **Route 21** from Wytheville to Speedwell.

21 **Route 610** and **Route 121** from Wytheville through Max Meadows to Fort Chiswell.

Scenic rivers

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools (e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans) that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.

The following river segments are potential Virginia scenic rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

22 **New River** from Buck Hydro Dam to Allisonia.

23 **Big Reed Island Creek** from Route 753 to New River in Carroll and Pulaski counties.

24 **Whitetop Laurel Creek** from Green Cove Creek junction in Grayson County to Damascus in Washington County.

25 The **North Fork of the Holston** from the confluence with Big Brumley Creek to the Tennessee state line in Scott County.

26 The **Middle Fork Holston River** from Seven Mile Ford to South Holston Lake in Washington County.

27 **South Fork Holston River** from Sugar Grove to South Holston Lake.

28 **Cripple Creek** from Speedwell to the New River in Wythe County.

29 **Laurel Fork** from the headwaters to Big Reed Island Creek in Carroll County.

30 **New River** from the North Carolina-Virginia line to Byllesby Hydro Dam.

31 **Big Brumley Creek** from Hidden Valley Lake to its confluence with the North Fork of the Holston in Washington County.

Watershed resources

For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

Region 3 is in the New River, Tennessee and Big Sandy watersheds that ultimately flow toward the Ohio and Tennessee basins into the Mississippi River. Karst topography, which covers much of the region, creates special issues and considerations for water quality and quantity in the region. A regional policy committee is developing comprehensive policies for management of these water resources.

Watershed groups in Region 1:

- Virginia Conservation Network
- Friends of the Rivers of Virginia

Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with NPS to revise policy that allows mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.

32 The **Blue Ridge Parkway** is one of the most successful linear parks in the nation. Annually, more than 10 million visitors use the parkway and associated facilities in Virginia. Protection of the parkway's viewshed and appropriate use of adjacent lands is crucial to its long-term viability. Local governments and planning district commissions should consider adoption of a scenic overlay zone adjacent to and within the viewshed of the Blue Ridge Parkway as part of a multi-regional parkway viewshed planning process.

33 **Fishers Peak Recreational Area** in Carroll County is being developed by the National Park Service as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

National forests

- The U.S. Forest Service should continue to place program emphasis on areas designated by Congress, such as the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and designated wilderness areas.

34 The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests should continue to work with DCR to transfer management responsibilities for the **New River Recreation Area** in Carroll County adjacent to the New River Trail State Park.

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State parks

35 **Grayson Highlands State Park** (4,822 acres) is located in Grayson County adjacent to Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Nearly 10 miles of cold water streams lie within the park, which offer angling for native brook trout and wild rainbow trout. Known for its scenic vistas, such as Little Pinnacle (elevation 5,089 feet), and wild ponies residing in the High Country above Massie Gap, the park has more than 23 miles of trail, including segments of the Appalachian Trail and Virginia Highlands Horse Trail. The park has two full-service campgrounds, one specifically for equestrian users. It also has picnic facilities, a visitor center with a gift shop featuring local crafts; interpretive and educational programs, cultural demonstrations, nature programs and Junior Ranger Programs.

Through the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB), funds were allocated to renovate the visitor center, install water and electric hook ups in the equestrian campground and construct a group camp. In conjunction with the Wayne C. Henderson Foundation, a music stage and shelter will be constructed in the Homestead Area of the park. This will be used for the annual Wayne Henderson Festival held in June, as well as the annual fall festival and pony auction, held in cooperation with the Rugby Rescue Squad and Wilburn Ridge Pony Association in September. This new stage should create more opportunities for the park to be a participant on the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail.

36 **Hungry Mother State Park** (2,368 acres) is located in Smyth County. One of the original six Civilian Conservation Corps state parks that opened in 1936, Hungry Mother is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The park offers camping, cabins, picnicking, a swim beach and concession, rental boats, boat launch, fishing, handicap fishing piers, restaurant, and more than 12 miles of trails for hiking and biking. Nature and history interpretive programs are offered through the park's discovery center, such as canoe tours, hikes, Critter Crawl (aquatic sampling), guest evening programs, campfires, storytelling, music and Junior Ranger Programs. Fishing tournaments just for kids are offered monthly. Hemlock Haven Conference Center, located within the park, offers meeting rooms, cabins, a sports complex and a picnic area. Catering is provided through the park restaurant.

Through the 2002 GOB, funds were allocated to purchase the campground now referred to as Camp Burson. Funds were also allocated to renovate facilities and upgrade water and electric hook ups at Camp Burson. Other bond projects included construction of a new campground bathhouse, water line upgrades and dredging the lake. The Town of Marion is continuing plans to extend the bicycle lane along Route 16 to the park. The park has constructed and enhanced the Lake Trail to accommodate bikes along the segment paralleling Route 16. Opportunities have been explored by the park and U.S. Forest Service to develop trails linking the park and surrounding forest area.

37 **Lick Creek Natural Area** (863 acres) is located in Smyth and Bland Counties. The site was donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia by the Old Dominion Foundation acting through the Nature Conservancy in May 1961. Bounded by national forest to the north, east and northwest, the property is primarily mature hardwood forest. The site lies on the southern slope of Carter Mountain and the northern slope of Brushy Mountain. Between these two ridges are the valleys of Lick Creek and Lynn Camp Creek, with a range in elevation from 2,000 feet in the valleys to 3,200 feet at the ridge tops. Combined, there is approximately five miles of stream, including Lick and Lynn Camp creeks.

The property was acquired primarily to be maintained in its natural state and operated as a sanctuary for the maintenance of wildlife. However, development of the site for public use and enjoyment is acceptable in accordance with the deed. A limiting factor to enhanced public use is access to the property. If access were improved, opportunities to convert old forest roads into trails could be realized. The Appalachian Trail runs within one-quarter mile of the northeast boundary of the property near the confluence of Lynn Camp Creek and Knot Mole Branch. Once access has been improved, consideration should be given to creating a small parking area and a connector trail to the Appalachian Trail.

38 **New River Trail State Park** (765 acres) follows an abandoned railroad right-of-way from Galax to Pulaski (51.5 miles) and on to Fries Branch (5.5 miles) for a total length of 57 miles. The park meanders through Grayson, Carroll, Wythe and Pulaski counties and parallels the scenic and historic New River for 39 miles. Rapidly becoming a popular destination area for trail enthusiasts from across the mid-Atlantic region, the trail has been designated as a National Millennium Trail and a National Recreation Trail. Also located along the trail overlooking the New River is Shot Tower Historical State Park. The shot tower was built more than 150 years ago to make ammunition for the firearms of the early settlers.

The park master plan calls for the provision of campsites along the trail for trail users and canoe campers. A new equestrian campground will be constructed at Jackson's Ferry, and canoe-in sites will be developed on Baker Island and Hiwassee Island. Foster Falls is being developed as the main park headquarters and will include a historic interpretive village, hotel, concessions, day use picnic area, new park office and a new maintenance yard. Through the 2002 GOB, funds were allocated to make trail improvements, expand the water distribution system and for acquisitions. Also funded are renovations to the historic Foster Falls complex, which includes renovations to the hotel and office area.

There are multiple access points along the New River Trail, which create numerous opportunities for connector trails to the surrounding towns and communities. The park also serves as a link to other outdoor recreational areas, including a town park in Fries, Mount Rogers National Recreational Area, and four Department of Game and Inland Fisheries boat launches. The New River Trail and Grayson Highlands state parks are connected by an extension of the Virginia Highlands Horse Trail. This combined trail system includes more than 300 miles of trails and creates a link between the New River Trail State Park and the Virginia Creeper Trail on the southern end of Mount Rogers NRA. The park is also involved in the New River Blueway, which offers several opportunities for canoe-in camping.

State natural area preserves

Big Spring Bog Natural Area Preserve and Grayson Glades Natural Area Preserve are located in Grayson County and Red Rock Mountain Natural Area Preserve is located in Smyth County.

As of November 2006, 838 occurrences of 238 rare species and natural communities have been documented in the Mount Rogers Planning District by DCR. One hundred one species are globally rare and 20 are federally threatened or endangered. One hundred twenty-eight conservation sites have been identified in the district; 67 (52 percent) have received any level of protection through ownership or management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only four sites are protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site, but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 3, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Significant caves and karst areas.
- Water quality for globally rare aquatic communities.
- Significant seepage wetlands in Grayson and Carroll counties.
- Additional lands around Grayson Glades Natural Area Preserve and Big Spring Bog Natural Area Preserve.

Information about the location of conservation sites and the natural heritage resources they contain, as well as management assistance, is available to local planners from DCR's Natural Heritage staff. For a discussion of the Natural Heritage Program, see Chapter IX-B.

State fish and wildlife management areas

DGIF manages several wildlife management areas in the region. Hidden Valley, Clinch Mountain, Big Survey, Crooked Creek and Stewarts Creek wildlife management areas (WMA) help meet a large amount of the outdoor recreation demand for fishing, hunting and nature study in the region.

Most public hunting lands in Virginia lie west of the Blue Ridge, and a surplus of hunting in this region is captured by those coming from outside the region to take advantage of public lands for hunting. In addition, most hunting takes place on private lands, and DCR does not inventory private lands available for hunting.

DGIF should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their WMAs and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. They should also acquire additional lands wherever feasible to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and other wildlife viewing recreation.

- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife Trail program.

39 DGIF has acquired the 8,300-acre **Big Survey** property near Wytheville for a WMA. This property has great potential for a wide variety of dispersed recreation opportunities.

40 The **Clinch Mountain WMA** should be connected to the new state forest on Brumley Mountain with a trail system if a corridor can be created.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion.

41 DOF plans to acquire a **4,700-acre tract on Brumley Mountain** in Washington County. Portions of the property will be managed as a natural area preserve while the remainder will be managed as a state forest. A connector trail to the Clinch Mountain WMA should be developed if a corridor can be identified.

42 DOF has developed a management plan for the **Matthews State Forest** and has completed acquisition of an additional 410 acres for the state forest.

Plans call for the property to be managed as a conservation and education state forest with the development of additional self-guided nature trails, an education management road for self-guided driving tours, and examples of various forestry practices and different plantings. A new office and education conference facility has been built on the Matthews. Funding should be identified to provide needed staff for the state forest and to acquire easements or fee interests in adjacent properties that could enhance the forest.

Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies.
The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

43 **Virginia Highlands Community College** in Washington County has a 100-acre tract with potential for the development of recreational facilities.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.
- The Mount Rogers region localities should implement the regional bikeway and walking trails plan. This plan outlines the trails, bikeways and walkways needed to meet both recreational and alternative transportation objectives. Envisioned is a comprehensive network of shared roadways, bike lanes and independent trails. New facilities will be developed in coordination with road improvements, land development projects and through individual project initiatives.

44 **Interstate Bike Route 76** should be studied to determine if the trail is still located on the best roads. Recent development has changed traffic levels and some sections of the route carry too much vehicle traffic to be suitable for BR 76.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate, state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.

Private sector

Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. Because of the abundance of water resources in the region, there are a number of water-based recreational opportunities that could be explored. For a discussion of private sector role, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Evaluate the possibility for a private dry storage boat facility and marina at Claytor Lake.
- Evaluate opportunities for guide and outfitter services to accommodate canoeing, kayaking, rafting, hiking, backcountry camping, trout fishing and hunting.

The New River

There may be opportunities along the New River, a designated American Heritage River, for private investment to take advantage of existing resources, especially the New River Trail State Park. The river and the trail share the same valley for nearly 40 miles. Bicycling, horseback riding, hiking, canoeing, camping, nature study, fishing and scenic viewing are popular activities. Private facilities could include camping, bed and breakfasts, hotels and hostels, and canoe, bicycle or horse liveries. Shuttle services and equipment rental is very good at this time. The states of North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia are cooperating with the National Park Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a New River Blueway that will provide a series of access points and managed use areas along the entire river from the point of navigation in North Carolina to Thurmond and the Gaully Bridge in West Virginia. A map of the New River Blueway will be published to provide trip planning information.

Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. Photo by USFS.

Table X-3. Region 3 (Mount Rogers Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	250,226	49	fields	35	14	17
Basketball	307,095	73	goals	46	27	31
Bicycling	270,130	19	miles	NI		
Mountain	44,548	3	miles	NI		
Other	225,582	16	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	225,582	4,042	water acres	250	3,792	4,002
Power boating	106,915	2,577	water acres	S		
Sailing	15,165	131	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	53,457	301	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	34,122	535	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	15,923	499	water acres	S		
Camping	306,716	1,809	sites	3,022	-1,213	-1,119
Tent camping	175,348	1,034	sites	399	635	689
Developed camping	131,369	775	sites	2,623	-1,848	-1,808
Fitness Trail use	157,339	13	mile trails	15	-2	-2
Fields (combined)	322,261	68	fields	32	36	39
Football	121,322	26	fields	32	-6	-5
Soccer	200,939	42	fields	-	42	44
Stream Use (combined)	710,679	452	stream miles	122	330	353
Freshwater fishing	617,982	435	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	33,363	8	stream miles	S		
Rafting	18,957	3	stream miles	S		
Tubing	40,377	5	stream miles	S		
Golfing	239,610	8	courses	252	-6	-5
Hiking, backpacking	298,565	153	trail miles	739	-586	-578
Horseback riding	85,304	37	miles	391	-354	-352
In-line skating	51,183	4	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	1,232,173	99	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	52,130	7	sites	1	6	7

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed **S**: same as combined **NS**: not inventoried separately **NI**: not inventoried **(-)** indicates surplus

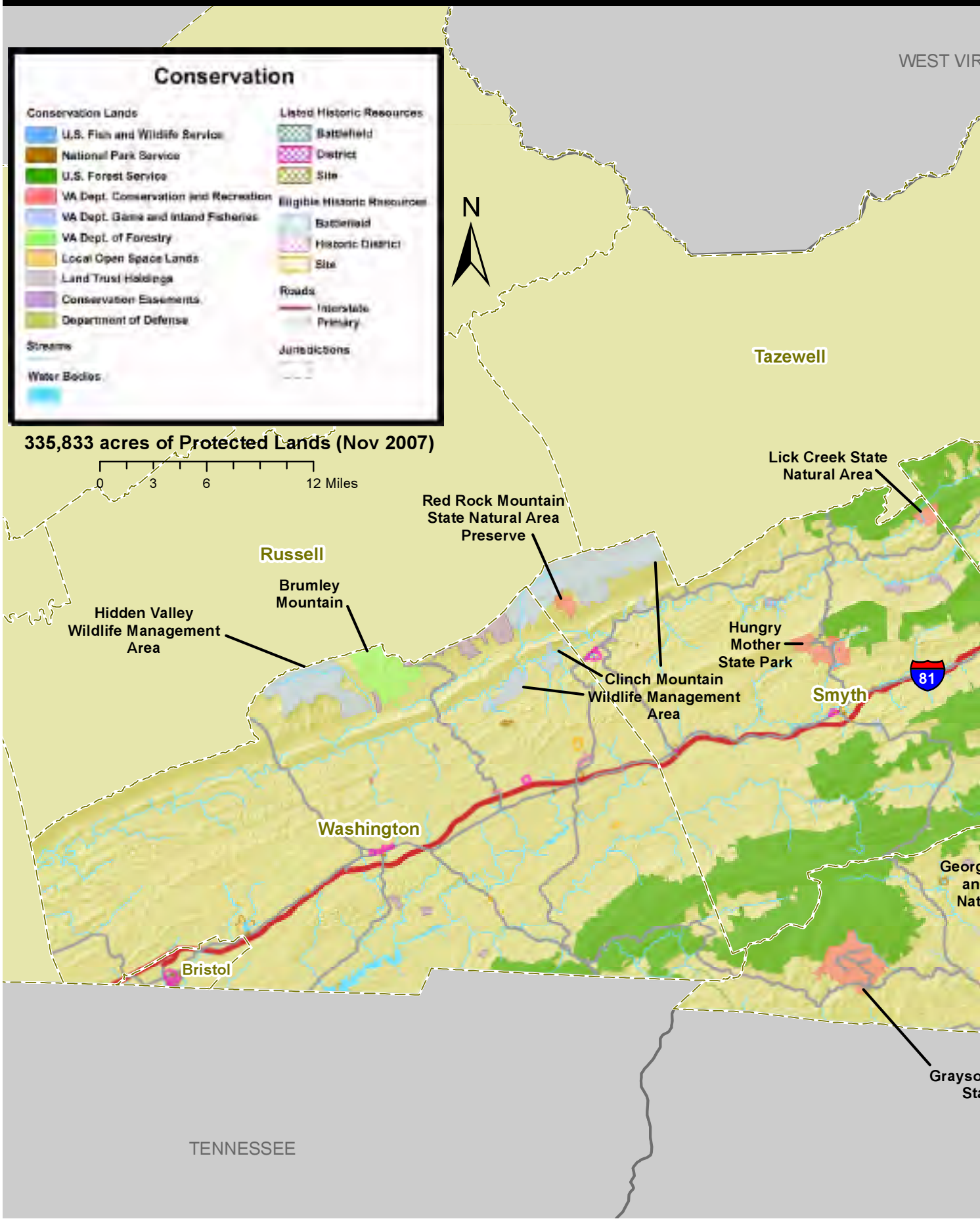
Table X-3. Region 3 (Mount Rogers Planning District) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – *continued*

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	258,756	672	tables	2,157	-1,485	-1,450
Skateboarding	144,069	44	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	32,416	1	ski lifts	2	-1	-1
Softball	269,182	48	fields	38	10	12
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	351,454	25	beach acres	87	-62	-61
Swimming	1,895,650	127		NI		
Outdoor area	951,616	97	beach acres	87	10	15
Outdoor pools	619,878	26	pools	27	-1	1
Indoor pools	324,156	4	pools	3	1	1
Tennis	147,861	92	courts	78	14	19
Used a playground	509,930	73	sites	84	-11	-8
Visiting gardens	50,424	6	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	278,092	24	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	354,107	60	sites	NI		
Volleyball	89,096	26	courts	14	12	14
Hunting	608,504	99,788	acres	250,332	-150,544	-145,367
Drive for pleasure	1,256,816	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	51,183	23	miles	112	-89	-87
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	214,208	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	4,077,543	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	50,045	NA		NI		
Other	109,948	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

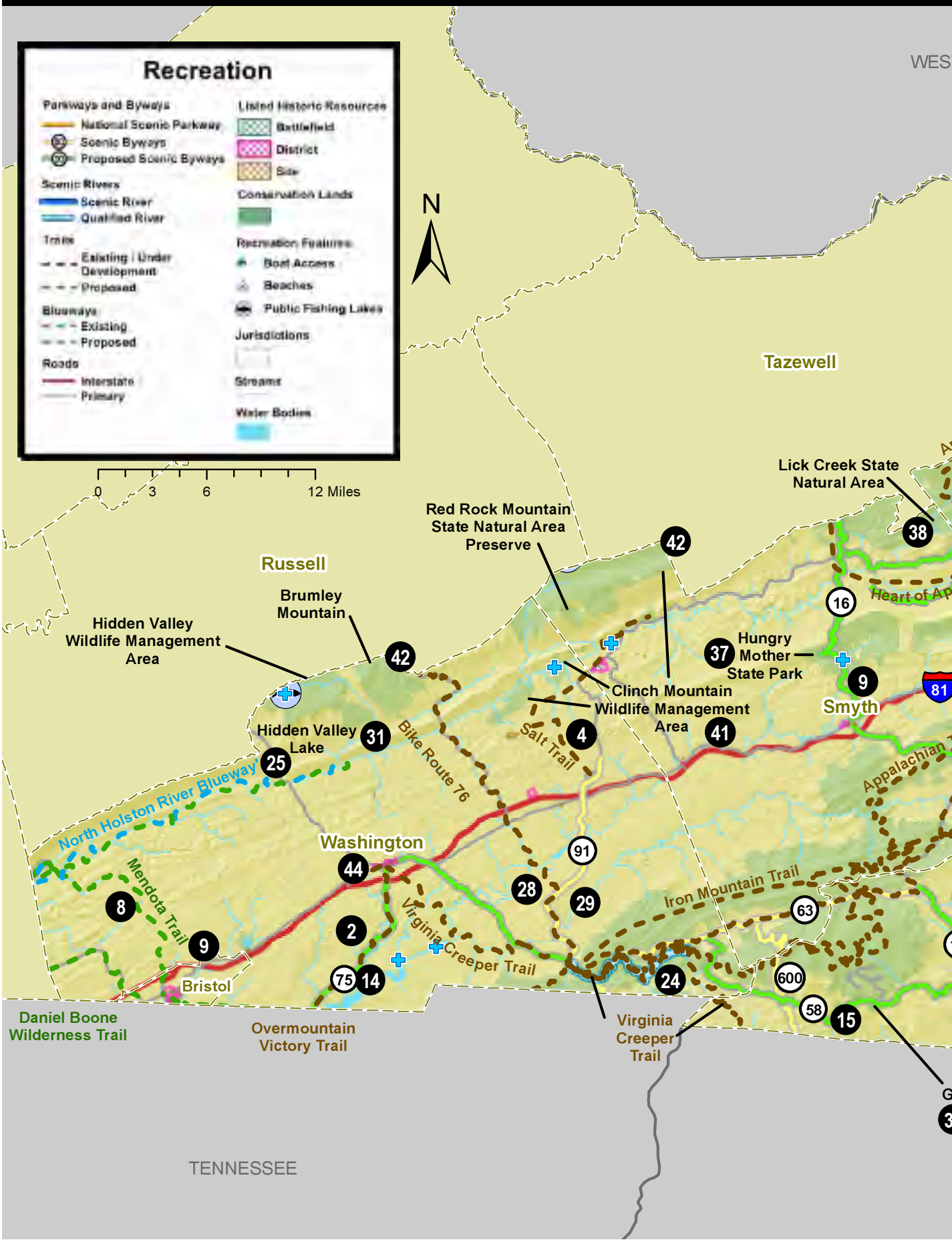
NA: not applicable, no standard needed **S**: same as combined **NS**: not inventoried separately **NI**: not inventoried **(-)** indicates surplus

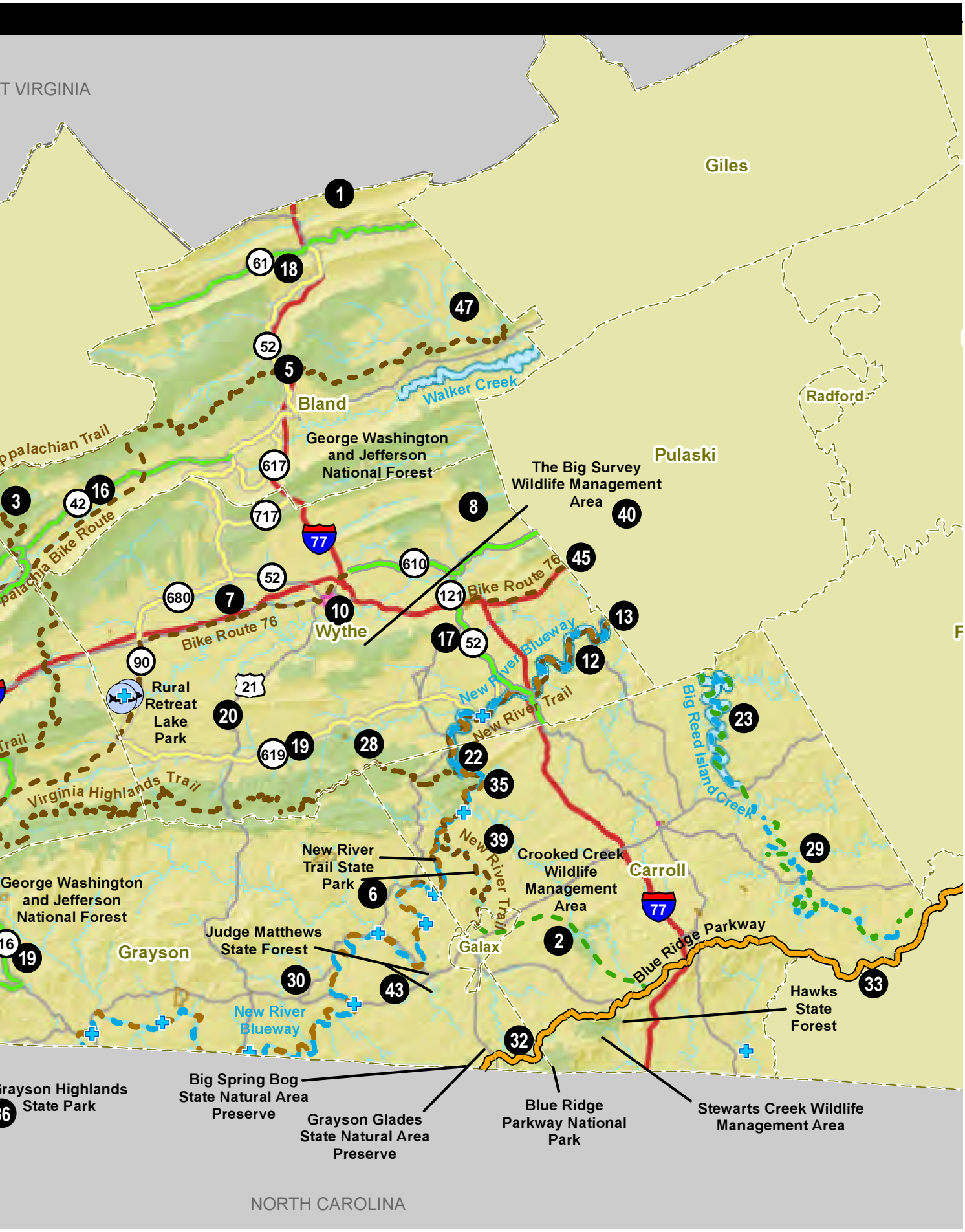
Map X-6. Region 3 (Mount Rogers Planning District) Conservation Lands



RGINIA
Giles
Bland
George Washington
and Jefferson
National Forest
Radford
Pulaski
The Big Survey
Wildlife Management
Area
77
Wythe
New River
Trail State
Park
Crooked Creek
Wildlife
Management
Area
Carroll
77
ge Washington
d Jefferson
ional Forest
Grayson
Judge Matthews
State Forest
Galax
Hawks
State
Forest
on Highlands
ate Park
Big Spring Bog
State Natural Area
Preserve
Grayson Glades
State Natural Area
Preserve
Blue Ridge
Parkway National
Park
Stewarts Creek Wildlife
Management Area
NORTH CAROLINA

Map X-7. Region 3 (Mount Rogers Planning District) Outdoor Recreation




T VIRGINIA
Giles
Radford
Pulaski
Bland
Wythe
Carroll
Grayson
Galax
Walker Creek
George Washington and Jefferson National Forest
The Big Survey Wildlife Management Area
Bike Route 76
Appalachian Trail
Appalachian Bike Route
Virginia Highlands Trail
New River Blueway
New River Trail
Big Reed Island Creek
Rural Retreat Lake Park
New River Trail State Park
Crooked Creek Wildlife Management Area
Judge Matthews State Forest
Blue Ridge Parkway
Hawks State Forest
Grayson Highlands State Park
Big Spring Bog State Natural Area Preserve
Grayson Glades State Natural Area Preserve
Blue Ridge Parkway National Park
Stewarts Creek Wildlife Management Area
NORTH CAROLINA