

# Recreation Component Plan For Clarke County, Virginia

*An Implementing Component of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan*



**Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 15, 2020**

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November 6, 2020**

**DATE OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PUBLIC HEARING:  
December 15, 2020**

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## RECREATION COMPONENT PLAN

### I. Executive Summary

Clarke County has numerous natural resources, indoor, and outdoor recreational opportunities. The purpose of this plan is to address the recreational needs of the community and describe existing resources, how they will be protected and promoted, and the steps that should be taken to ensure the continued viability and enhancement of these resources for present and future generations.

This plan establishes specific functional strategies and recommendations to protect, promote, grow and enhance the County's active and passive recreational resources. This plan will place particular emphasis on passive recreation opportunities as active recreation needs are primarily addressed by the Parks and Recreation Department at Chet Hobert Park.

The Planning Commission appointed a subcommittee consisting of Jon Turkel (Planning Commission liaison), Pete Engel (citizen), Daniel Sheetz (Chair Parks and Recreation Board), Lee Sheaffer (citizen), Tom McFillen (citizen); and staff persons Alison Teetor (Natural Resources Planner), Lisa Cooke (Parks & Recreation Director), Brandon Stidham (Planning Director) and Christy Dunkle (Berryville Assistant Town Manager). The subcommittee met monthly to prepare the draft plan for approval by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. In addition to the Plan, a map (Map 1) detailing the recreation resources and an inventory list were developed.

### II. Summary of Plan Goals

The Recreation Component Plan identifies the following overarching goals:

- 1) Meet the recreation needs of the community
- 2) Increase awareness of all recreational activities
- 3) Assist in maximizing the recreation value of existing assets
- 4) Promote connectivity among the County's active and passive recreation resources
- 5) Update the Recreation Plan on a 5 year cycle

### III. Strategies to meet Goals

The following specific strategies are recommended in order to implement the Plan Goals:

#### 1) Meet recreation needs of the community

- a. **Conduct formal Needs Assessment.** Under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Department a community needs assessment should be undertaken that incorporates all components of community, including both users and non-users of county Parks and Recreation programs and amenities. The needs assessment should accomplish the following:
  - i. Identify demand levels of existing facilities and programs
  - ii. Identify demand for new or expanded facilities and programs
  - iii. Evaluate the County's ability to meet this demand over a ten year period
  - iv. Establish level of service needs based on above data
- b. **Evaluate the County's recreation needs on a regular basis.** This Recreation Plan should be evaluated every 5 years or as new needs are identified and prioritized for consideration. County facility needs should be evaluated annually by the Parks & Recreation Board in conjunction with the annual budget process.
- c. **Make changes to the Park Master Plan to meet new needs.** The Parks & Recreation Board shall continue its efforts to maintain an updated master plan of County park facilities, and shall strive to communicate any new or changing needs in a timely fashion to the Board of Supervisors. The County shall support the efforts of the Parks & Recreation Board to update the Park Master Plan.
- d. **Program capital improvements based on need/level of service and incorporate in the annual capital improvement program (CIP) process.** In conjunction with updating the park master plan, the Parks & Recreation Board shall use level of service criteria to help justify the need for future new or expanded facilities. The Board of Supervisors shall utilize the criteria to include future park projects into the CIP process in an effort to implement master plan recommendations in a fiscally-responsible manner.
- e. **Develop master plan for the Janet Kohn Memorial Park property (Kohn property).** The Parks & Recreation Board shall work to develop a new master plan for the future development of the Kohn property as a County passive recreation facility. The master plan shall identify initial amenities to meet the current needs of County residents, potential funding sources, and future improvements based on level of service criteria. The County shall support the efforts of the Parks & Recreation Board to create this new master plan.

- f. Encourage partnerships to expand active and passive recreational opportunities.** As an ongoing effort, the County shall seek opportunities to partner with public and private sector agencies and organizations in an effort to implement the recommendations of this Component Plan and the Parks & Recreation Board’s master plans. Such opportunities may include co-sponsorship of recreation programs, recreation-related events, or partnering in the development of a new or expansion of an existing recreation facility.
- g. Enhance role of Parks and Recreation Board.** The Board serves as the advisory body to the Clarke County Board of Supervisors. As the liaison among the Parks and Recreation Director, the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of the community, they are tasked with consulting and advising the County Administrator, the Parks and Recreation Director and the Board of Supervisors in matters affecting recreation policies, programs, personnel, finances, and the acquisition and disposal of lands and properties related to the total community recreation program and to its long-range, projected program for recreation. The Board’s role can be enhanced by empowering them to implement Park Master Plan recommendations as supported by data developed via needs assessments and community surveys. This will help to ensure that the Board can address actual needs and avoid pressures from special interests.

## 2) Increase awareness of all recreational activities

- a. Provide updated website.** The County shall continue to maintain an updated website to support and promote recreational facilities, activities, and opportunities within the County. The County shall pursue partnerships with public and private-sector owners of recreational facilities to ensure that the website is current, user friendly, and contains reciprocal webpage links.
- b. Pursue partnerships with non-county and private recreation facilities to coordinate awareness of recreational opportunities in the County.** The County shall utilize partnerships with public and private-sector recreation facility owners to share and coordinate awareness of all recreation opportunities available in the County. Such collaboration could include coordination of recreation events or programs as well as creation of new or expanded programs and opportunities.

## 3) Assist in maximizing the recreation value of existing assets

- a. Support the development of Chet Hobert Park in accordance with the Park Master Plan.** Chet Hobert Park serves as the County’s primary indoor and outdoor active and passive recreational asset. Centrally located adjacent to the Town of Berryville, the Park is ideally located to serve the daily recreational needs of the County’s residents. The Park property also contains an undeveloped area for future expansion consistent with the park master plan. The County shall

continue to develop the Park according to the Park Master Plan and shall explore partnerships with public and private-sector entities to enhance and expand programming opportunities.

**b. Facilitate more effective public use of the Shenandoah River while simultaneously protecting it as a critical natural and environmental resource.**

The Shenandoah River is a national treasure that attracts thousands of visitors annually for fishing, kayaking, boating, or simply enjoying its natural beauty. Promoting use of this unique recreational resource must be balanced with the critical need to protect it from pollution, erosion, and corruption of its scenic value.

The County shall explore opportunities with State and Federal agencies and private landowners to improve public access, parking, and amenities. Current partnerships include the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Virginia Marine Resource Commission, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Such improvements, however, should ensure that the integrity of the River is not compromised and that the rights of landowners along the River are not unreasonably affected. An additional consideration is the impact of increased traffic on secondary roads and the neighbors living along those roads. The County shall continue to maintain land use controls to protect the River and should explore adoption of new controls to further protect this asset.

Partnerships with other public and private entities can also be sought to promote and to protect the River. Two groups in particular, the Friends of the Shenandoah River and The Downstream Project, are dedicated to protecting water quality in the River and other perennial streams. Efforts should be undertaken to better identify the specific roles that the County may take in this endeavor and to address specific challenges that may be faced.

**c. Facilitate more effective public use of the Appalachian Trail while simultaneously protecting it as a critical resource.**

The Appalachian Trail (A.T.) is a world-renowned recreational resource that is enjoyed by thousands of hikers, camping enthusiasts and outdoor lovers annually. Promotion of the A.T. must include protecting it from corruption of its scenic and recreational value.

The County shall explore opportunities with State and Federal agencies and private landowners to improve public access, parking, and amenities. Such improvements, however, should ensure that the integrity of the A.T. is not compromised and that the rights of landowners along the A.T. are not unreasonably affected. As with River access, consideration should also be given to the potential impact of increased traffic on secondary roads. The County shall continue to maintain land use controls to protect the A.T. and should explore adoption of new controls to further protect this asset. Partnerships with other public and private entities can also be sought to promote and protect the A.T.

Efforts should be undertaken to better identify the specific roles that the County may take in this endeavor and to address specific challenges that may be faced. The Town of Berryville and Clarke County were accepted as an Appalachian Trail Community in 2014. This designation recognizes communities that promote and protect the A.T. In addition, the County should continue to pursue acquiring conservation easements along the A.T. corridor as a preservation measure. In 2018 the County received a grant from the A.T. Landscape Partnership Action Fund to develop a map describing six hikes associated with the Appalachian Trail. These maps have been distributed to area shops, restaurants, and tourist information sites.

Due to increased popularity of the trail, parking at access points exceeds the available area for cars. In 2018 the County paid for an expansion of the parking lot at the Route 679 lot to increase the capacity from 8-10 cars to 20-30 cars. Additional parking is also being provided at the Morgan's Mill access point through a cooperative effort with the National Park Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and the County. This lot will be completed in late 2020.

- d. **Facilitate more effective public use of the historic Bear's Den Hostel and property while simultaneously protecting it as a critical resource.** The County should also explore partnership efforts with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to promote awareness of Bear's Den as a related recreational asset. Bear's Den is a well-known scenic location along the Appalachian Trail containing the only formal lodging and camping facilities along the County's section of the A.T. as well as providing public access points, scenic view access, internal trail network, programming and events for day users as well as through hikers. Such partnership efforts could include coordination of events and promotion as well as exploring ways to protect the resource and expand its amenities.
  
- e. **Support the efforts of Shenandoah University to develop and maintain its River Campus as conservation, educational, and passive recreation resource.** Shenandoah University received the former Virginia National Golf Course property along the Shenandoah River in 2013 as a gift from the Civil War Trust with the goal of developing the property as a satellite campus for historic, conservation and environmental education. In furtherance of this goal, the University has opened the campus to the public for passive recreation opportunities during daylight hours. The County should work with the University in furtherance of these goals and should seek opportunities to promote the Campus as a passive recreation facility. The County should also consider support of ongoing improvements proposed by the University provided they are context-sensitive and do not compromise the aforementioned goals.

- f. Support the efforts of the University of Virginia to maintain Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia (“Blandy”) as a conservation, educational, and passive recreation resource.** Blandy is operated by the University of Virginia as an educational and research facility with a goal of increasing public outreach and awareness of environmental issues and the natural world. The Farm is open to the public and is used by many as a passive recreational facility for walking, jogging, or simply enjoying the unique environment that the University has created. The County should work with the University in any available capacities to help further the stated goals of the Farm and to promote it as a passive recreation facility. The County should also consider support of any future improvements that are consistent with the aforementioned goals, and should continue to support the Farm’s existing mission.
- g. Support the efforts of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and The Clermont Foundation to develop and maintain Clermont Farm as conservation, educational and passive recreation resource.** Clermont Farm, a working 360-acre farm just east of Berryville, was surveyed by George Washington in 1750 and has mid-18th, 19th, and 20th century buildings and important archaeological sites. The bequest of the site to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the creation of The Clermont Foundation (a non-profit with a local board of trustees) were gifts of Elizabeth Rust Williams, a local lawyer and judge whose family had owned Clermont for 185 years. The bequest at her death in 2004 was intended to benefit not only all citizens of the Commonwealth, but specifically also citizens of Clarke County. Clermont is now a research and training site in history, historic preservation and agriculture, with partnerships with Virginia Tech in agriculture and James Madison University in archaeology, and with the Clarke County Public Schools in agricultural education. Clermont is currently open by appointment to researchers, teachers, and students. It is open to the public only for specific scheduled events, such as the annual Clermont Farm Day. The County should consider support of future improvements, which might extend use of the farm for passive recreational and educational (historic and agricultural) opportunities which would benefit local citizens as well as draw heritage and agro-tourism. The County should also consider support of any future improvements that are consistent with the Department’s and Foundation’s existing mission for the farm, with the County’s Economic Development Plan, and with the goals of the Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission.
- h. Promote the development, maintenance, and promotion of Driving Tours.** Driving tours are an effective way to raise residents and visitors awareness of the County’s active and passive recreational resources and to promote their ongoing use. These tours can also help promote linkages among recreational, historic, and tourism assets. The County’s scenic byway designations and State Birding and Wildlife Trail designations also serve as attractors to County recreational assets.

The County's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has developed a series of driving tour maps that are centered around the County's current historic districts. The County should promote driving tours using these maps as well as electronic media and the County website. Owners/operators of public and private recreational facilities should be made aware of driving tours and their benefits of increasing usage and visitation.

- i. Coordinate cross-promotion of adjacent recreational assets.** The County should consider establishing partnerships with adjacent or nearby recreational resources for co-promotion and public awareness. Building a solid network of public and private recreational assets within the County is critical, but including related facilities adjacent or close to the County's borders will make citizens and visitors more aware of the wealth of resources available to them. This would ultimately help increase tourism and potentially decrease demand for the County to provide new or similar amenities.

Publically accessible facilities immediately adjacent to the County borders include Sky Meadows State Park (Fauquier County) and Lake Frederick (Frederick County). Other regional facilities are listed in Appendix B.

- j. Work with Public Schools to ensure public understanding of policies in place for use of school facilities for passive outdoor recreation.** All public school facilities have large expanses of open land that are informally used for passive recreation by nearby residents. Other facilities that are routinely used are the track at Johnson Williams Middle School, and playground facilities at Berryville Primary, Boyce Elementary and Cooley Elementary Schools. Working with public school administration to ensure public understanding of policies in place for use of school facilities may strengthen the access for the public and reduce safety concerns for the school system.

#### **4) Promote connectivity among the County's active and passive recreation resources**

- a. Support the use of the 2014 Town of Berryville and Clarke County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and implementation of its recommendations.** In September 2014, the Board of Supervisors accepted the 2014 Town of Berryville and Clarke County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for use as a guidance document by the Planning Commission in updating the Comprehensive Plan and relevant implementing component plans. This Plan was developed by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission in a cooperative effort with the Town and County. The Plan provides recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements to better serve transportation, recreation, and economic development objectives.

The Plan's recommendations should be evaluated in developing any bicycling-related strategies in this Recreation Plan.

- b. Develop and promote hiking, biking, and vehicular connectivity among active and passive resources.** As noted in some of the previous strategies, helping citizens and visitors connect the County's active and passive resources is an important strategy. Connectivity helps to build a County-wide recreational network in lieu of separate recreational assets accessible only by motor vehicle. Connectivity also promotes awareness of all recreational assets which boosts tourism and potentially reduces urgent demand for new or expanded County recreational resources.

Connectivity should be promoted through asset awareness such as cross-promotion of facilities via electronic media. Physical connectivity options should also be evaluated including shuttle service for Appalachian Trail hikers to reach retail and dining options in the Town of Berryville, and for boaters and floaters on the Shenandoah River to reach put-in sites. Multi-modal connectivity should be promoted for bicycling using the recommendations of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, hiking via awareness and promotion of trails, and vehicular transportation via driving tours.

#### 5) Update Recreation Plan on a 5-year cycle

In order to ensure that this component plan is kept up to date, it should be evaluated for changes at a minimum on a 5-year cycle. This will enable careful evaluation of the Plan's recommendations against current demographics and the County's fiscal condition.

### IV. Resource Inventory

The Plan is divided into two main components, (1) active and (2) passive recreation, a secondary component describes facilities immediately adjacent to and accessed from Clarke County but not in the County. As defined, active recreation involves organized activities that require infrastructure such as playgrounds and ballfields. Passive recreation or "low intensity recreation" is that which emphasizes the open-space aspect of a park and allows for the preservation of natural habitat. It usually involves a low level of development, such as rustic picnic areas, benches and trails. Special use is categorization that includes nature centers, golf courses, historic sites, and linear features such as bike paths. In addition sub categories describing the availability of facilities includes full access, limited access, and restricted access. Each resource is described in Table 1. A complete list of website links is detailed in Appendix A.

#### 1) Active Recreation

The Clarke County Parks and Recreation Department offers a host of recreational activities and programs for all ages. The Department manages the 102 acre Chet Hobert Park, which houses an outdoor swimming pool, lighted outdoor tennis courts, 6 ball fields, numerous soccer fields, a Recreation Center, 4 picnic shelters, 2 playgrounds and a fitness trail. (full public access)

The Clarke County Public Schools also have a number of active recreation facilities including a football/soccer stadium, baseball/softball fields, track, playgrounds, and indoor/outdoor basketball (limited access).

The Town of Berryville owns and maintains the three-acre Rose Hill Park in the heart of downtown Berryville. Rose Hill Park provides a great place for families to relax and enjoy a peaceful outing. Park facilities include a playground designed for younger citizens, basketball courts, and a gazebo.

## 2) Passive Recreation

Clarke County has an abundance of passive recreational activities available.

- A. Resources include the **Shenandoah River**, which is a state designated scenic river throughout its 22 mile length in Clarke County. Public access to the river is maintained by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) at 3 boat landings. The boat landings are located at the Route 50 bridge, Lockes Landing off of Route 621, and the Route 7 bridge. Additional private access is located on private property or maintained by home owners associations such as River Park, Shenandoah Farms, Shenandoah Retreat, and Calmes Neck. The Shenandoah River follows along the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains and provides both great scenic views and an up close experience with nature. The American Bald Eagle, Blue Herons, Deer, Red Tail Hawks and Osprey are just a few examples of wildlife found in this special landscape. Kayaking, canoeing, tubing, fishing and camping are all part of the experience. There are also fish weirs constructed by native American Indians that extend from shore to shore can still be clearly seen in several parts of the river today, nearly 400 years later. Canoe, kayaks and tubes can be rented at Watermelon Park campground (private) and other private facilities.
- B. The **Appalachian Trail** crosses through the entirety of Clarke County from north to south. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy states, “This is one of the best places on the Appalachian Trail for spring break hikes.” Primitive shelters can be found along the trail for overnight stays. More formal lodging may be found at the Bear’s Den Hostel located in an old stone house with castle like features and magnificent views of the Shenandoah Valley (full public access). In addition to the Hostel, the Bear’s Den property offers picnicking, primitive camping, and a nature trail.
- C. The **Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia** (Blandy) is located on Route 50 in Clarke County and provides passive recreation and educational. The primary purpose of Blandy is to increase understanding of the natural environment through research and education. Blandy exists to promote this understanding through education and research on plants, plant biology, ecology, evolution, the environmental sciences, and the manner in which all of these are used and affected by humans. The three principal programs designed to achieve this mission include: 1) University research and education; 2) Outreach and environmental education; and 3) The Orland E. White Arboretum (also

known as the State Arboretum of Virginia). Walking and horseback trails are open to the public (full public access).

- D. The **Shenandoah University River Campus** was established in 2013 on the site of the former Virginia National Golf Course. The property is located north of Route 7 and has nearly 2 miles of frontage on the Shenandoah River. In 2012, the Civil War Trust acquired the 195-acre property as it played a crucial role in the July 18, 1864, Battle of Cool Spring. Once purchased, the Trust placed it in permanent Conservation Easement with the Department of Historic Resources before gifting it to the University. This property is similar to Blandy in that it is open to the public but used by the University as an experiential learning campus for academic programs in the fields of outdoor leadership and education, environmental studies and history. The property has a paved shared use trail open to walkers and bicycles with interpretive signage highlighting the historic and natural resources. This facility is currently under development and it is anticipated that future plans will include additional passive recreational opportunities (full public access).
- E. **Kohn property** A currently undeveloped site that was gifted to the County is the Kohn property located on the mountain off Ebenezer Rd. This property consists of 50 acres that was placed in Conservation Easement with the County by the owner. The deed of easement specifies the intended use for environmental education, passive recreation, and bird/wildlife watching. As a county facility, the Parks and Recreation Department and Advisory Board is tasked with developing a master plan for this facility.

### 3) Special Use

- A. **Long Branch Historic House and Farm** The mission of Long Branch is to preserve, maintain, and interpret the site, the house, the grounds, and the story of life in rural Virginia in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the community and the general public. The centerpiece of the property is the 200-year-old historic home that is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property consists of nearly 400 acres that is used primarily as pasture for retired horses. In addition to being open for tours and programs, the property is open to community functions, meetings, and events. (full public access).
- B. **Clermont Farm** is owned by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and managed and funded by The Clermont Foundation, and it is a research and training site in history, historic preservation, and agriculture. The farm includes the oldest extant house in Clarke County, a timber-frame structure built in 1755-56, plus 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century additions, with a suite of plantation service buildings which supported what was one of the highest-producing wheat farms in Clarke County for almost 200 years. The land has an occupancy record reaching at least 10,000 years and a number of archaeological sites. Access for researchers, teachers, and students is by appointment. Access for the public is scheduled on the website for 5-8 days per year, including Clermont Farm Day and

Smithsonian National Museum Day. (limited public access)

- C. **The Burwell Morgan Mill** is a fully restored and operable grain mill has been milling wheat since 1785 in the center of historic Millwood. In addition to the Mill being open for tours, the area's largest Art Shows are held here annually. The mill was owned by Lt. Col. Nathaniel Burwell and operated in partnership with one of the American Revolutionary War's most notable patriots, Gen. Daniel Morgan. The grounds surrounding the mill have picnic tables and the property is adjacent to Spout Run. (full public access)
- D. **Locke's Mill** is the only other functioning Mill in Clarke County. The Mill was restored by Jon and Carol Joyce. Locke's Mill is a colonial-era grist mill located in the central portion of Clarke County, Virginia. It was one of many mills along the Shenandoah River that provided grinding services for grains coming over the Appalachian passes from the Shenandoah and Ohio Valleys for sale in the large coastal cities. Originally a double mill site, the present building dates from 1876 and ran two mill-wheels. The mill has recently had the second wheel assembly restored and certified organic in 2017. Today, Locke's Mill provides essential services to the growing local organic food movement in Northern Virginia.
- E. **Barns of Rose Hill** is a performing arts venue and community center in historic Berryville, Virginia. Housed in two early 20th century dairy barns that were fully restored in 2011, its mission is to enrich lives through programs in the performing, visual, and literary arts. Since opening in September 2011 and the Barns have become a vital center of activity in downtown Berryville, drawing people to concerts, exhibits, films, workshops, classes, and community programs.
- F. **Clarke County Historical Association Museum** - In 2004, the Clarke County Historical Association began planning a new and exciting museum experience for visitors to our headquarters in Berryville. On November 19, 2009, the vision of our late president, Roger Chavez, became a reality. Designed around the unifying theme "Our Land Is Our Legacy," the new museum exhibits, specially commissioned art work, and state-of-the-art audio/video displays allow us to share our collection in a way that is both educational and entertaining.

Artifacts on display in the museum's three rooms include the money chest from Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax's Greenway Court land office, a pistol carried by a member of Company D, 6th Virginia Cavalry (the "Clarke Cavalry") during the Civil War, a Chinese punch basin that once belonged to 18th century plantation owner Nathaniel Burwell, racing silks from Audley Farm, and a former slave's corn-cutting knife from a home in Josephine City.

Two of the rooms also feature extraordinary films that combine historical photographs, contemporary footage, and the art of noted illustrator Richard Schlecht to tell a panoramic story of the pre- and early history of Clarke County

and of the county's continuing efforts to preserve a unique and land-based way of life.

- G. Josephine School Community Museum** - The Josephine School Community Museum is a living museum dedicated to restoring our original 1882 school house and sharing the people, objects, and stories that form the continuing legacy of Clarke County's African American history and heritage.

In 1882, the former slaves and free colored people of this community built the Josephine City School to provide their children with a grade school education. Under the leadership of Rev. Edward Johnson, a new building was completed in 1930 to provide high school education for Negro students and was called the Clarke County Training School. It was named the W.T.B. Williams Training School in 1944 to honor a Clarke County native who served as Dean of Tuskegee Institute. From 1949 to 1966, the school was known as Johnson-Williams High School. After the integration of public schools, it became the Johnson-Williams Intermediate School and served students of all races from 1966 until it closed in 1987. The high school building was converted into apartments for older persons in 1992. The original Josephine City School was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2003 it became the first museum devoted to the history of Clarke County's African-American community.

The renovation of the Josephine School Community Museum building was completed in October 2002 with assistance from the Virginia General Assembly and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors. The inaugural exhibit of the museum was opened on July 12, 2003.

- H. Bicycling** - The Town of Berryville & Clarke County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was prepared in response to a joint-request from the Town of Berryville and Clarke County under the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission (NSVRC) Rural Transportation Work Program. The plan provides a comprehensive overview of the existing transportation network and outlines recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements in each locality to better serve transportation, recreation and economic development objectives. Appendix A and the Bike/Ped Plan list several cycling organizations that have established bike routes in the County.
- I. Historic Driving Tour** - The Historic Preservation Commission is tasked with educating, promoting, and protecting the County's historic resources. An updated driving tour brochure is currently available at the County Planning Department, Clarke County Historical Association office, and other locations throughout the County. The brochure describes significant historic structures throughout the County.

- J. Scenic Byways** - In 1966, the Virginia General Assembly passed the State Scenic Highway and Virginia Byway Act. The legislation defined a Scenic Byway as a road designated by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) having relatively high aesthetic or cultural value, leading to or within areas of historical, natural or recreational significance.

In selecting a byway for designation, preference is given to corridors controlled by local zoning to reasonably protect a highway's aesthetic or cultural value. A Scenic Highway is defined by the Act as "a highway designated by the CTB within a protected scenic corridor located, designed, and constructed in a manner to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and cultural value of the countryside." Just over 78 miles or 16% of the public roads are designated scenic byways in Clarke County (Map 2).

- K. Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail** - Within Virginia's 43,000 square miles of diverse natural habitat, you can find some 400 species of birds, 250 species of fish, 150 species of terrestrial and marine mammals, 150 species of amphibians and reptiles, and a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail celebrates this diversity. It is the first statewide program of its kind in the United States. In Virginia, three phases of the trail link wildlife viewing sites throughout the state. Clarke County has portions of the Mountain Trail within its borders included on the Route are:

### **1) Snickers Gap Hawk Watch**

Snickers Gap is at its best from mid-August through the end of October when thousands of migrating birds of prey stream past overhead. The area was established as a "hawk-watching" site in 1990 and counts have taken place every fall since. The most widespread species seen is the broad-winged hawk, which, depending on the weather, may occur in the 1000s or 10,000s. Other species frequenting the lookout include red-tailed, sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks, northern harrier, osprey, bald eagle, American kestrel, merlin and peregrine falcon. Each fall supports the opportunity to spy a few true rarities, especially later in the season. Golden eagle and northern goshawk have appeared annually, but rough-legged and Swainson's hawks are more particular about gracing birders with their presence. Numerous other species use the ridge top as a migration corridor, including migrant passerines such as warblers, vireos, thrushes and tanagers and, occasionally, migrant waterfowl. Monarch butterflies and dragonflies also migrate along the ridge, providing food for the migrating American kestrels and broad-winged hawks. (full public access). In 2018 a informational sign describing the Hawk Watch was installed at the parking area. Funding was provided by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

### **2) Smithfield Farm**

Smithfield Farm supports an historic bed and breakfast, set amongst the rolling hills of a working farm. The brick manor house was built in 1824 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The farm is the product of seven

generations of cattle farmers and, in recent years, has branched out to support other livestock, including goats, pigs and chickens, all of which are now reared organically. These rolling acres provide an excellent spot to relax overnight so you can search for the area's wildlife. The combination of woodland, orchards, fields and riparian belts support a diversity of species. Birds to look for include red-tailed hawk, mourning dove, ruby-throated hummingbird, red-bellied and downy woodpeckers, eastern wood-pewee, great crested flycatcher, eastern kingbird, tree and barn swallows, and purple martin. The moist areas and fields of wildflowers that line the stream are an excellent place to search for butterflies and dragonflies. The results of pesticide-free farming practices are seen clearly in the clouds of pearl crescents, eastern tailed blues, and common checkered skippers that line the stream banks. A walk through the fields should produce eastern tiger, black, spicebush and pipevine swallowtails, as well as the occasional monarch. Dragon- and damselflies are represented by the ebony jewelwing that reside along the shadier stretches of stream and by the brash common whitetail that may appear anywhere along your walk. (full public access)

### **3) Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia**

The Blandy Experimental Farm is a field station operated by the University of Virginia. Its 700 acres are a good representation of the habitats found in the Shenandoah Valley, making it an excellent spot to watch birds and other wildlife. The Orland E. White Arboretum sits at the center of the property, providing an excellent opportunity for visitors to familiarize themselves with the local flora. The Virginia Native Plant Trail is not to be missed during spring and early summer when the wildflowers are vibrantly in bloom. The numerous wildflowers on the property attract a high diversity of butterflies, while the various ponds and marshes attract a variety of dragon- and damselflies. Birds to search for in the woods and meadows of the farm include red-tailed hawk and American kestrel as they patrol the open fields and Cooper's hawk darting through the woods. Woodpeckers on the farm include red-headed, red-bellied, downy and pileated, as well as northern flicker. The farm's extensive undisturbed meadowlands provide nesting habitat for several of Virginia's waning species, which are declining or have disappeared elsewhere in the state. These species include northern bobwhite, loggerhead shrike, dickcissel, and grasshopper and vesper sparrows. Winter on the farm is the best time to search for sparrows and hawks. Even short-eared owl has been reported on the farm. (full public access)

## **4) Limited Access Facilities**

### **Active Recreation**

#### **A. Public Schools**

Includes D.G. Cooley Elementary School, upper and lower campuses, Boyce Elementary School, Johnson Williams Middle School, and the Clarke County High School. Table 1 lists the resources available at each school. Use of school

grounds for organized sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.) requires a written request in advance and fees are associated with use. (limited access)

## **Passive Recreation**

### **A. Powhatan School**

Powhatan is a private school that believes in and is committed to community use of its facilities. Facility use is by appointment only. Uses include indoor basketball, summer camps, cross country runs, and conservation fairs. Additional outdoor recreation opportunities may exist in the future on the Crocker Conservancy. The Crocker Conservancy is a 48 acre property held in permanent conservation easement by the County Easement Authority, which is being developed to enhance environmental education and includes trails and bird & wildlife watching areas. (limited access)

### **B. Public Schools**

Passive recreation of outdoor facilities by the general public is permitted (during non-school hours) without fee on playground equipment, and grounds for individuals. (limited access)

## **Private campsite rentals**

**1. Watermelon Park** – Campground, Recreation along the beautiful Shenandoah River on Lockes Mill Road (Route 621) in Clarke County Virginia. Family owned and operated since 1939, the Park offers kayak, canoe, tube rentals, RV camping, and a store. Watermelon Park has been known historically for its Bluegrass Festivals. John Miller Sr. (owner) presented “Bluegrass Day” at Watermelon Park on Aug. 10, 1960 – an event considered by music historians to be the first-ever, all-day concert dedicated to American roots music. “Bluegrass Day” evolved into bigger and longer festivals with huge crowds and nationally known performers such as Bill Monroe, the Osborne Brothers, Ernest Tubb, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Del McCoury, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, George Jones, and Merle Haggard.

**2. Mountain Lake Campground** -- a quiet family owned campground located on the west side of Mount Carmel Road (Route 606) approximately ½ mile north of John Mosby Highway (Route 50). The facility contains two small lakes, each about half an acre in size, twenty plus sites; some are primitive, some have water/electric, some have sewage also, and a bathhouse and a dump station.

3. In addition to the two public campgrounds there are numerous River lots that are privately owned and rented.

## **Special Use**

### **A. Holy Cross Abbey**

Holy Cross Abbey Monastery is located at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains

bordered by the Shenandoah River on over 1,000 acres of fertile and scenic farmland. The monastery belongs to the Cistercian Order that was first founded in France in 1098. The monastery makes its own food products. The Abbey also has a retreat house on the property open to guests that wish to spend time in silence and prayer. The peaceful surroundings and spiritual energy here is a far cry from two hot summer days in July 1864. On those two fateful days the Battle of Cool Spring was fought between General Early of the Confederacy and General Crook of the Union. The old manor house on the monastery property remains and is a central part of the monastery structures. The entire property was placed in Conservation Easement with the Department of Historic Resources in order to protect the Battlefield. The Conservation Easement provides for signage, walking trails or footpaths to aid in the historical interpretation of the Property as a Civil War Battlefield. The Property shall also be made accessible to the public for 2 days per year for the purpose of touring the Battlefield. (limited public access)

## 5) Facilities located in Adjacent Counties

### Passive Recreation

#### A. Sky Meadows State Park

Rich in history, this 1,864-acre park has scenic views, woodlands and the rolling pastures of an historic farm that captures the colonial through post-Civil War life of Mount Bleak House. Nature and history programs are offered year-round. Hiking, picnicking, fishing and primitive hike-in camping for families and groups are favorite activities in this peaceful getaway on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The park has 9.5 miles of bridle trails, 19 miles of hiking trails, 8 miles of bike trails and Appalachian Trail access.

Located in Fauquier County, on the east side of the mountain, the Park is accessible from Clarke County by foot via the Appalachian Trail south of Route 50 or by vehicle via Rt. 17 south. (full public access)

#### B. Lake Frederick

Located south of Double Tollgate, in Frederick County, on U.S. 522, Lake Frederick is a 117-acre impoundment owned by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and includes a 100 foot buffer around the entire shoreline. Lake Frederick has a paved entrance road, gravel parking lot, paved boat launch with courtesy dock, and a handicapped accessible fishing pier. (full public access)

There is adequate bank fishing access along the breast of the dam and around the lower end of the lake. Boats and boat anglers are welcome, but gasoline motors are prohibited. Only electric trolling motors are allowed.

A privately operated concession, "Lake Frederick Bait and Tackle", offers rest room facilities, snacks/drinks, bait, tackle, and boat rentals.

## V. Conclusion

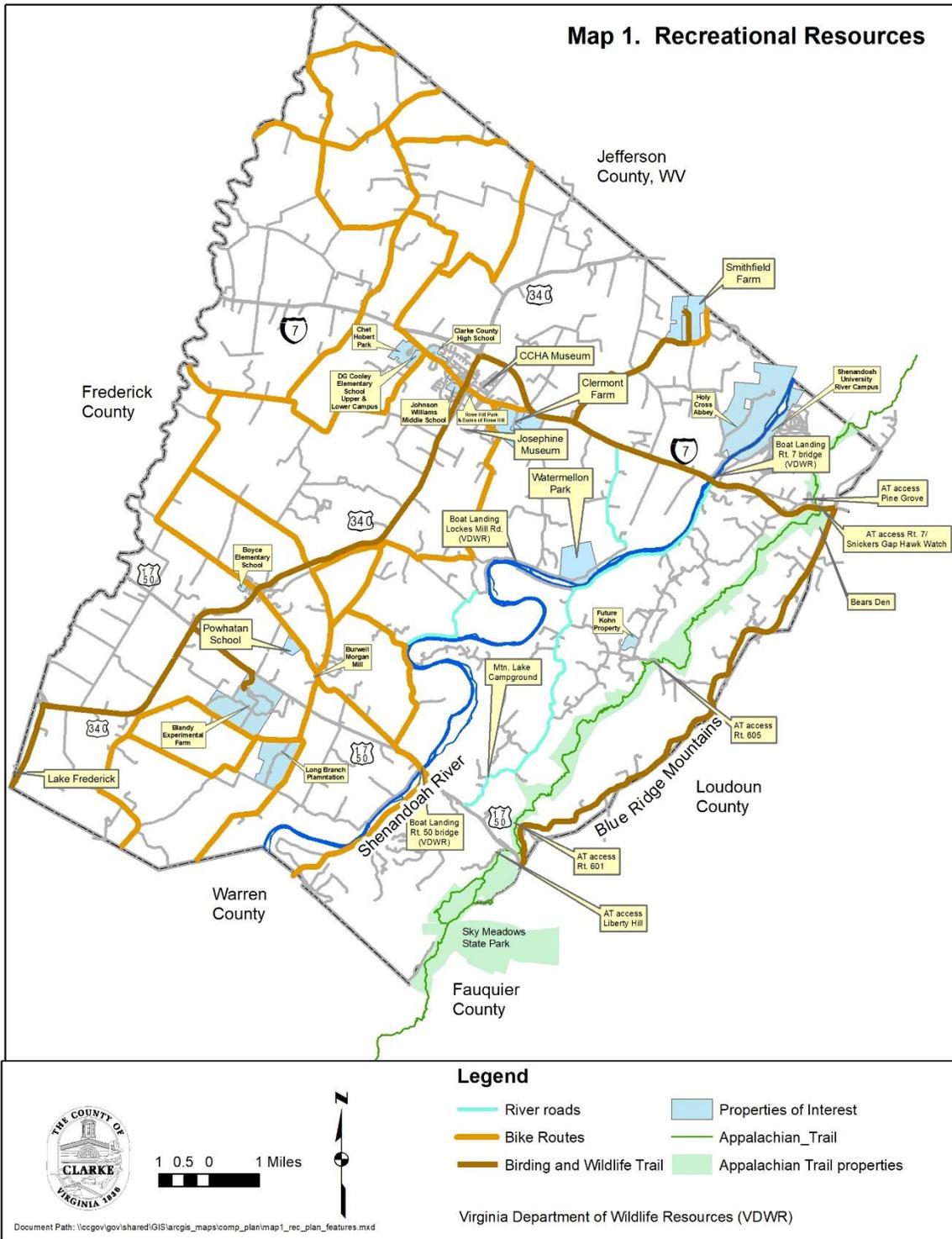
In focusing on recreation in Clarke County, this plan strives to address the existing and potential recreation needs of the community. The Plan establishes specific functional strategies and recommendations to protect, promote, grow and enhance the County's active and passive recreational resources. This plan will place particular emphasis on passive recreation opportunities. The Recreation Component Plan identifies the following overarching goals:

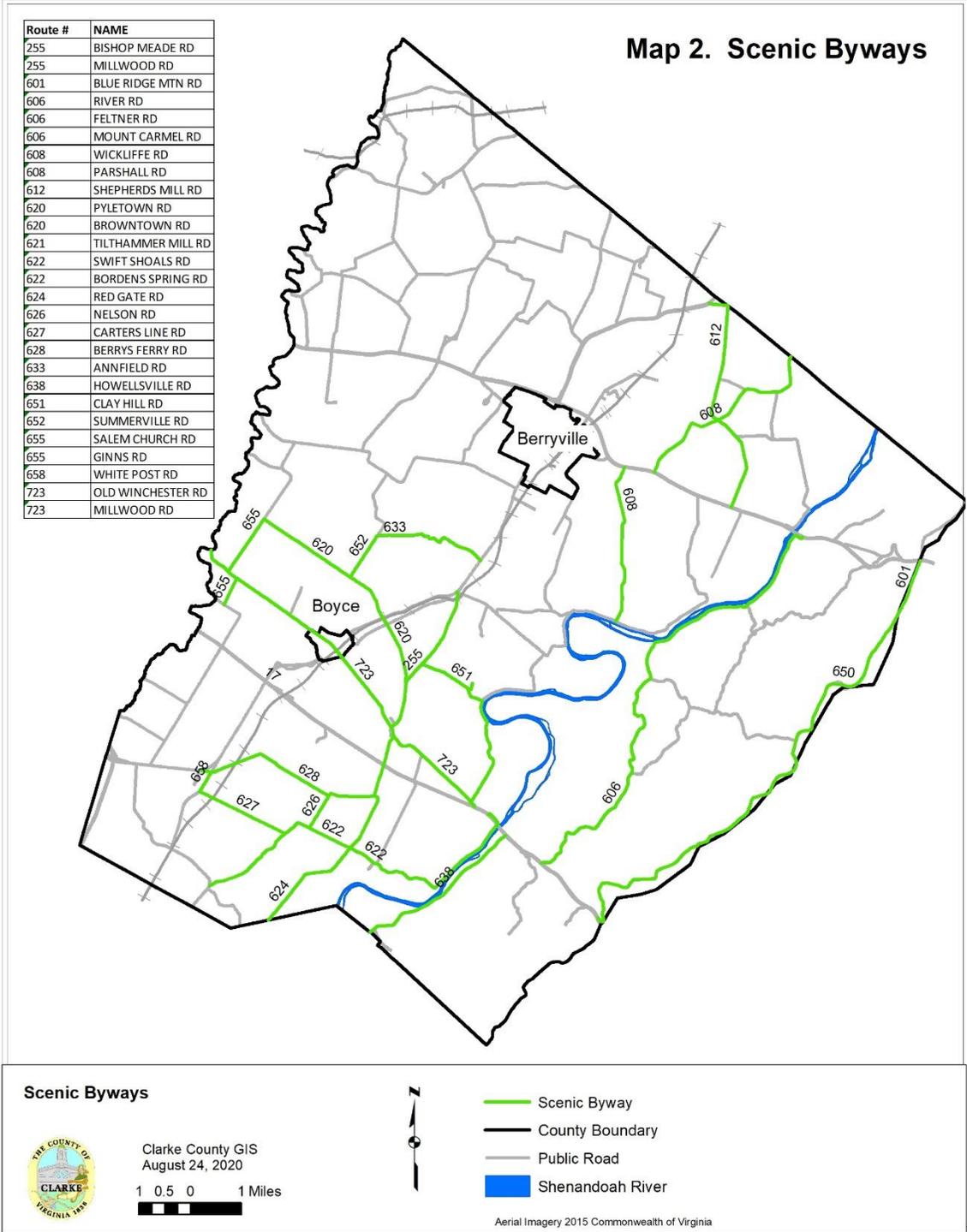
- 1) Meet the recreation needs of the community
- 2) Increase awareness of all recreational activities
- 3) Assist in maximizing the recreation value of existing assets
- 4) Promote connectivity among the County's active and passive recreation resources
- 5) Update the Recreation Plan on a 5 year cycle

Assessing the recreation needs of the community is essential to ensure that future recreational facilities are available. Protecting and promoting these resources is the purpose of the plan, working with private and public partners to enhance recreational opportunities a valuable tool to ensure success. The Recreation Plan committee, who developed this plan, will be maintained and will continue to meet to implement the goals and strategies outlined. Development of park master plans and conducting surveys will primarily be the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board with support and guidance from the local governing bodies.

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**Map 1. Recreational Resources**





# Table 1. Existing Recreation Resources Inventory

Table 1. Existing Recreation Resources Inventory																													
	Playground Equipment	Shelter	Rest Rooms	Concession Stand	Football Field	Baseball Diamond	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Soccer Field	Dog Park	Recreation Center	Swimming Pool	Gazebo	Outdoor Grills	Picknicking	Nature Trails	Fishing	Bicycling	Arboretum	Water Access	Camping	Horseback Riding	Hiking/Backpacking	kayaking\canoing	Bird Watching	Trails	Historic	Swimming	
<b>Full Access Facilities</b>																													
<b>Active Recreation</b>																													
Chet Hobert Park	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x			x								x		x	
Rose Hill Park	x						x						x		x														
<b>Passive Recreation</b>																													
Blandy		x	x											x	x			x	x							x	x		
Shenandoah University River Campus															x			x									x	x	x
Shenandoah River																	x							x	x			x	
Appalachian Trail		x												x	x						x					x	x	x	
Bear's Den Trail Center		x	x											x	x						x					x	x	x	
Kohn property		o													o	o				o						o	o		
Snickers Gap																											x		
Smithfield Farm																x											x	x	
<b>Special Use</b>																													
Long Branch			x												x													x	
Burwell Morgan Mill			x												x													x	
Bicycle Routes																													
Historic Driving Tour																												x	
Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail																										x	x		
Scenic byways																												x	
<b>Limited Access Facilities</b>																													
<b>Active Recreation</b>																													
Berryville Primary School	x																												
Upper DG Cooley Elementary School	x						x																						
Lower DG Cooley Elementary School	x				x		x																						
Boyce Elementary School	x						x																						
Johnson Williams Middle School			x	x	x				x																				
Clarke County High School					x	x	x		x																				
<b>Passive Recreation</b>																													
Powhatan School	x						x		x												x					x	x		
Watermelon Park	x	x	x	x										x	x		x			x	x					x		x	
Mountain Lake Campground															x					x	x							x	
<b>Special Use</b>																													
Holy Cross Abbey																											x	x	
<b>Adjacent Facilities</b>																													
<b>Passive Recreation</b>																													
Lake Frederick			x	x																	x						x	x	
Sky Meadows State Park		x												x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x	

x - existing use  
o - anticipated use

## Appendix A. Web links

Chet Hobert Park - <http://clarkecounty.gov/>  
Rose Hill Park - <http://www.berryvilleva.gov/>  
Clarke County Public Schools -  
[http://www.clarke.k12.va.us/pages/Clarke County Public Schools](http://www.clarke.k12.va.us/pages/Clarke_County_Public_Schools)  
Shenandoah River (access/fishing) - [www.dgif.virginia.gov/](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/)  
Watermelon Park Campground - [www.watermelonpark.com/](http://www.watermelonpark.com/)  
Appalachian Trail - <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/>  
Bear's Den - <http://www.bearsdencenter.org/>  
Long Branch - <http://www.visitlongbranch.org/>  
Blandy – <http://blandy.virginia.edu/>  
Barns of Rose Hill - <http://barnsofrosehill.org/>  
Clarke County Historical Association Museum - <http://www.clarkehistory.org/museum.html>  
Josephine School Community Museum - <http://www.jschoolmuseum.org/>  
Clermont Farm - [www.clermontfarm.org](http://www.clermontfarm.org)  
Shenandoah University River Campus - <http://www.su.edu/venue/cool-spring/>,  
<http://www.su.edu/blog/cool-spring-protecting-land-for-future-generations/>  
Burwell-Morgan Mill - <http://www.burwellmorganmill.org/>  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan – Town of Berryville & Clarke County – [www.clarkecounty.gov](http://www.clarkecounty.gov)  
Historic Driving Tour – [www.clarkecounty.gov](http://www.clarkecounty.gov)  
Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail - <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/>  
Mountain Lake Campground -  
<http://www.virginia.org/Listings/PlacesToStay/MountainLakeCampground/>  
Powhatan School - <http://powhatanschool.org/>, <http://thecrockerconservancy.blogspot.com/>  
Holy Cross Abbey - <https://www.virginiatrappists.org/>  
Sky Meadows - [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sky-meadows.shtml#general\\_information](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sky-meadows.shtml#general_information)  
Lake Frederick - <https://dwr.virginia.gov/waterbody/lake-frederick/>  
Historic Resources in Clarke County - <http://www.clarkehistory.org/>  
Bicycle Routes  
    Winchester Wheelmen- <http://www.winchesterwheelmen.org/>  
    Potomac Peddlers – Backcountry Century Ride - <http://www.potomacpedalers.org/>  
    Panhandlers Peddlers - <http://www.panhandlepedalers.com/>  
  
Hiking - <http://www.hikingupward.com/>  
    [www.patc.net](http://www.patc.net)

## Appendix B. Regional Facilities

Refer to the Virginia Outdoors Plan for a complete list and map of regional recreation facilities  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/vop.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml)

## Appendix C. Resources

- a. Virginia Outdoors Plan
- b. County Park Master Plan
- c. County Comprehensive Plan
- d. Potomac Appalachian Trail Club
- e. Berryville Area Plan
- f. Berryville Comprehensive Plan
- g. Town of Berryville and Clarke County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- h. Shenandoah River Use Plan - NSVRC