

Raymond R. “Andy” Guest Jr. Shenandoah River State Park Draft Master Plan Update Public Comment Meeting

January 20, 2026





Housekeeping

- Sign in sheets available
- Exits and restrooms
- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation
- Materials will be posted to DCR website after the meeting
- Additional comments will be received until February 20, 2026
- Links to contact information and websites will be given at the end of the presentation



Agenda

- Welcome to the Park
- Meeting Purpose
- Progress Recap
- Park Background
- Phased Development Plan
- Staffing Buildout
- Comments
- Next Steps and Wrap Up

Welcome to the Park



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

District 1 - Tidewater

BI - Belle Isle State Park
CP - Chippokes State Park
FC - False Cape State Park
FL - First Landing State Park
KP - Kiptopeke State Park
MA - Machicomoco State Park
YR - York River State Park

District 2 - Potomac

CA - Caledon State Park
CB - Culpeper Battlefields Historical State Park
LA - Lake Anna State Park
LE - Leesylvania State Park
MN - Mason Neck State Park
SN - Sweet Run State Park
WE - Westmoreland State Park
WW - Widewater State Park

* under development

District 3 - Shenandoah

DO - Douthat State Park
HF* - Hayfields State Park
JR - James River State Park
NB - Natural Bridge State Park
SE - Seven Bends State Park
SH - Shenandoah River State Park
SK - Sky Meadows State Park

District 4 - Central

BC - Bear Creek Lake State Park
HB - High Bridge Trail State Park
HL - Holliday Lake State Park
PO - Pocahontas State Park
PW - Powhatan State Park
SB - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park

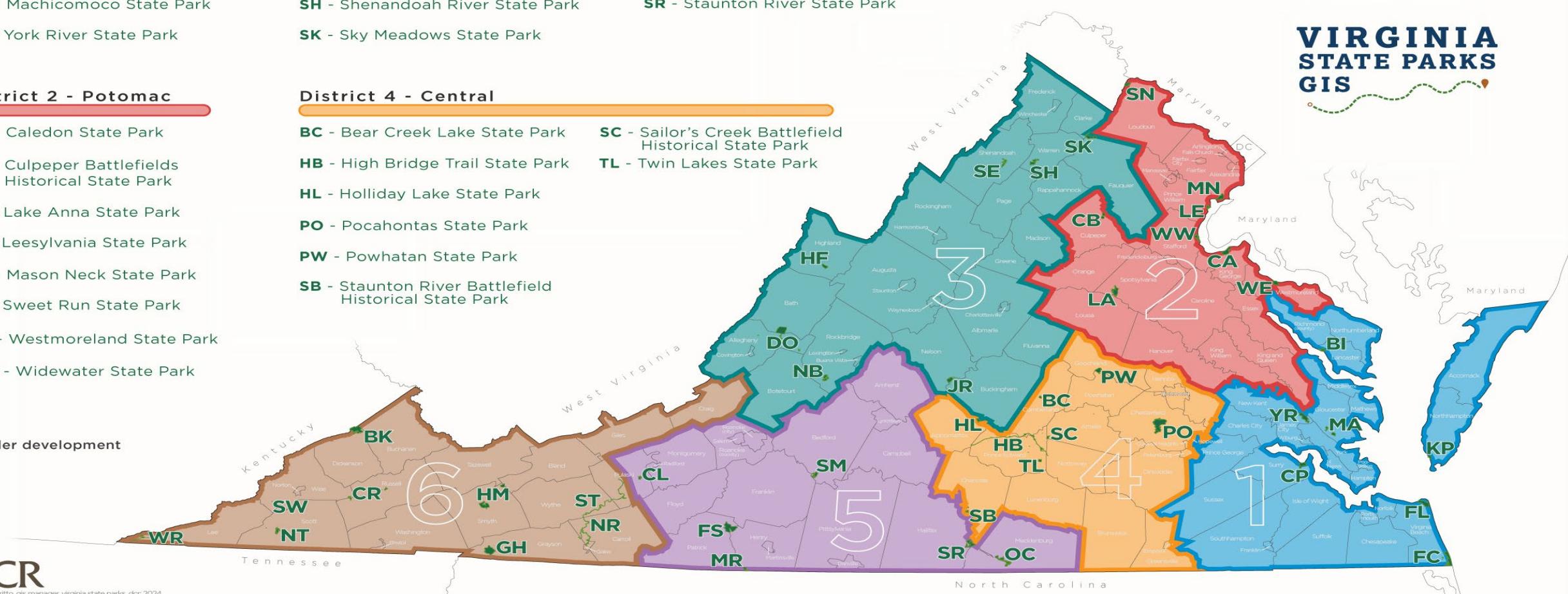
District 5 - Piedmont

CL - Claytor Lake State Park
FS - Fairy Stone State Park
MR* - Mayo River State Park
OC - Occoneechee State Park
SM - Smith Mountain Lake State Park
SR - Staunton River State Park

District 6 - Southwest

BK - Breaks Interstate Park
CR - Clinch River State Park
GH - Grayson Highlands State Park
HM - Hungry Mother State Park
NR - New River Trail State Park

NT - Natural Tunnel State Park
ST - Shot Tower Historical State Park
SW - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
WR - Wilderness Road State Park

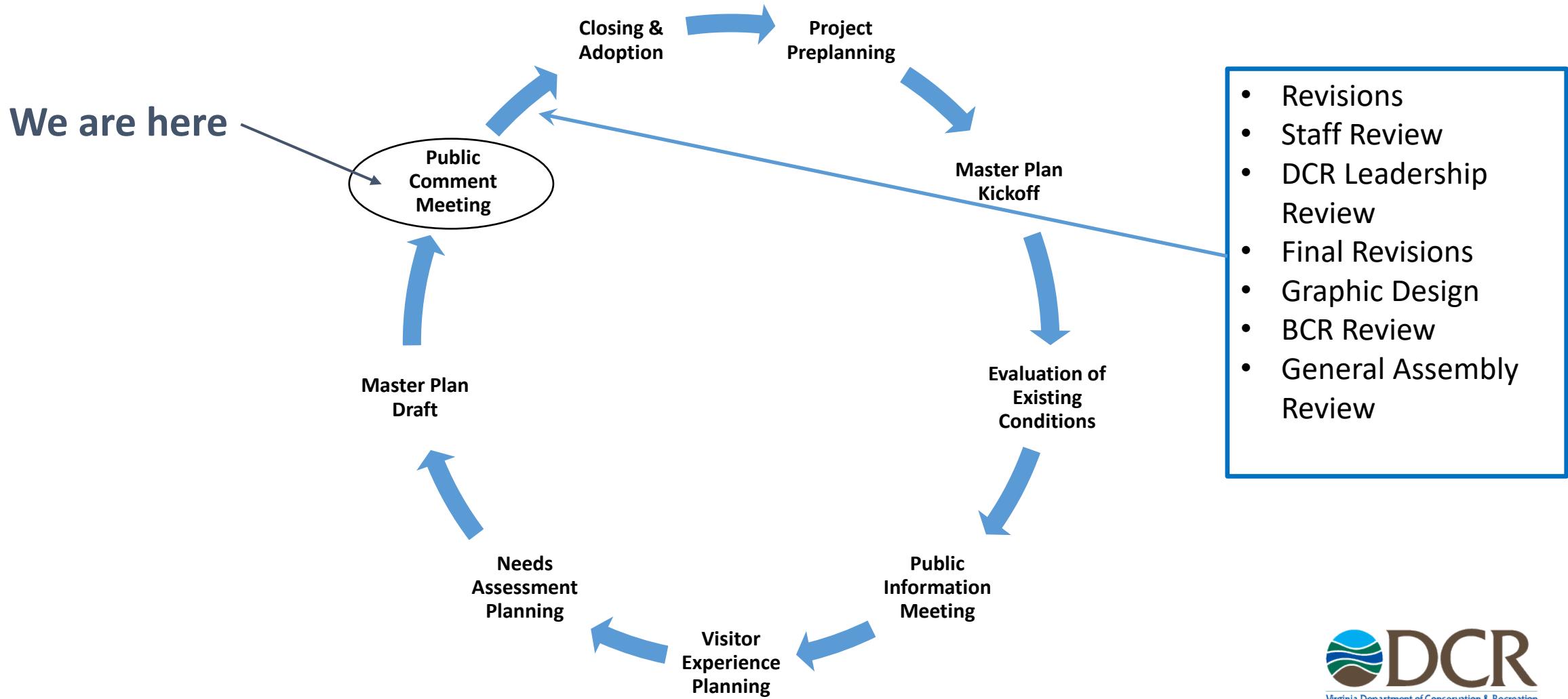


Meeting Purpose

- Share project progress, goals, and objectives
- Present key elements of the overall park master plan including the proposed site amenities, visitor experience areas, phased development and staffing
- Give the attendees an opportunity for comment

Project Progress

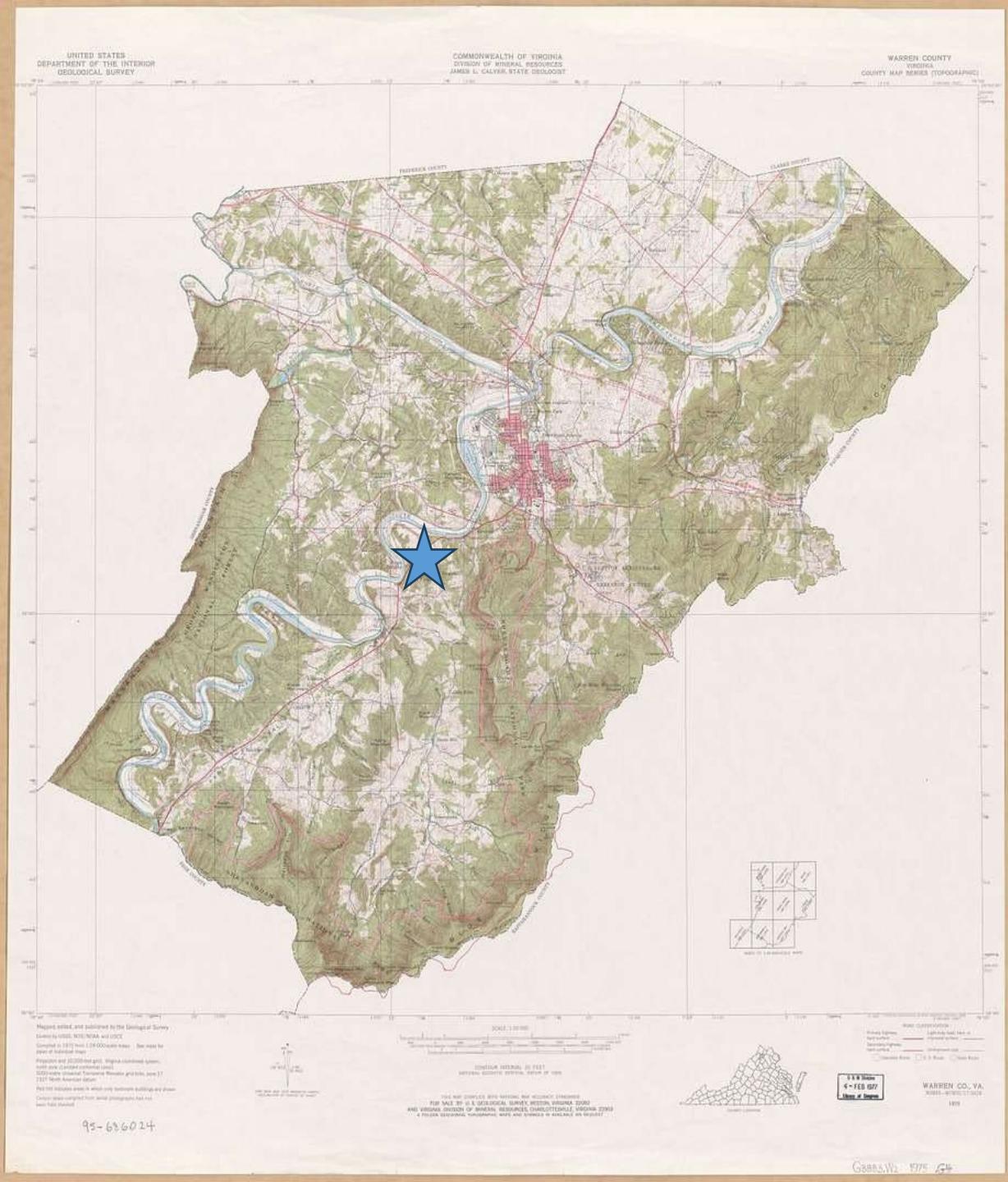
Master Planning Process



Public Outreach & Engagement

- DCR social media posts
- Public meetings
 - Public Information Meeting
 - Public Comment Meeting (tonight)
- 30-day comment periods
- Online survey
- Project website





Park Background

- 1992 Bond referendum – added four new parks
- Three-county search identified this site.
- Jeni tract (922 acres) acquired in 1994
- Other tracts:
 - Maddox tract (171 acres)
 - Hidalgo tract (7 acres)
 - Parsall tract (22 acres)
 - Culler tract (484 acres)
 - Norfolk and Southern tract (15 acres)
- Park opened in 1999



Park Background

- Delegate Raymond R. “Andy” Guest Jr.’s name added in 1995 to honor long standing support of Virginia State Parks
- First master plan adopted 2001 updated 2011
- Received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 2001 and 2006 for park development



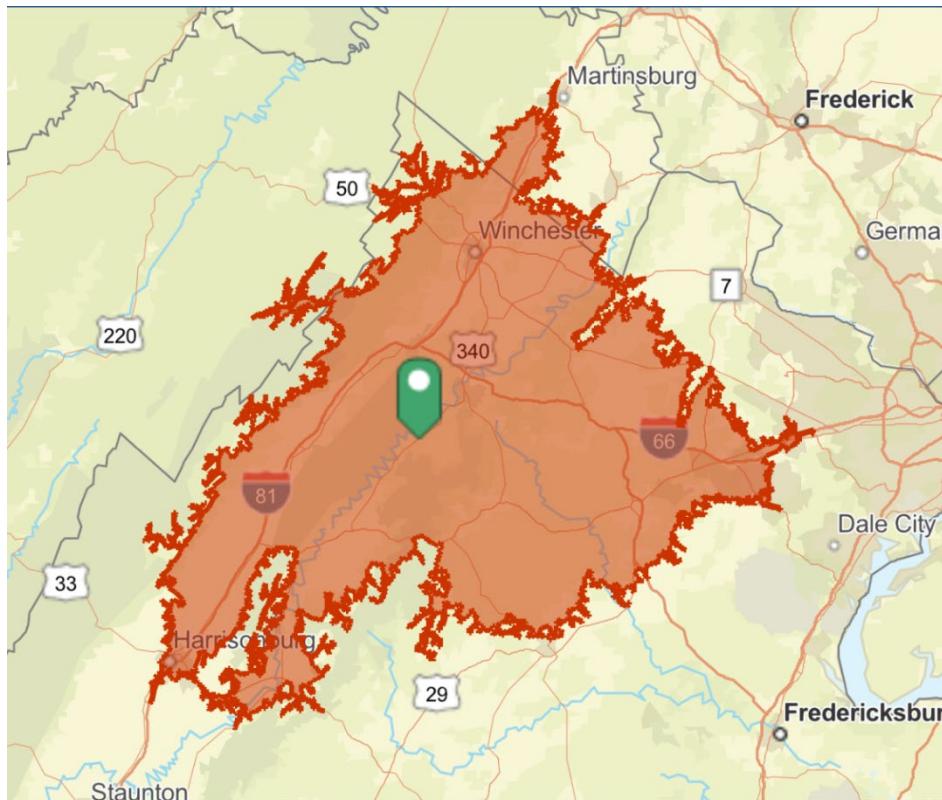
Market Study, Service Area and Economic Impacts

Demographic and Market Analysis

Service Areas

Primary Service Area – 1 hour drive

- 598,854 people



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2025 Esri

Secondary Service Area – 3 hour drive

- 14.4 million people



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2025 Esri

Demographic and Market Analysis

Service Areas

Primary Service Area

- Median Age – 39
- Total Households – 226,350
- Median Household Income - \$94,600
- Employment
 - 62% White Collar
 - 21% Blue Collar
 - 17% Services
- Education
 - 29.7% High School Graduate
 - 24.7% Some College/Assoc. Degree
 - 36.5% Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree
 - 9.1% No High School Diploma

Secondary Service Area

- Median Age – 39.2
- Total Households – 5,678,140
- Median Household Income - \$98,360
- Employment
 - 69% White Collar
 - 16% Blue Collar
 - 15% Services
- Education
 - 24.8% High School Graduate
 - 22.2% Some College/Assoc. Degree
 - 45.7% Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree
 - 7.3% No High School Diploma

Recreational Trends

- Participation in outdoor recreation is increasing annually (nationally).
- Walking and Hiking are the most popular outdoor activities!
- This is consistent with internal Virginia State Parks survey data.

MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

More people participated in most categories of activity in 2022. In fact, 80% of outdoor activity categories experienced participation growth in 2022, including large categories like camping and fishing and smaller categories like sport climbing and skateboarding.

ANNUAL GROWTH IN LARGE OUTDOOR CATEGORIES INCLUDED:



22.9%

GROWTH IN CAMPING TO
51.4 MILLION CAMPERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN HIKING TO
59.6 MILLION HIKERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN FISHING
(FLY, SALT, FRESH) TO
54.5 MILLION ANGLERS



22.9%

GROWTH IN ALL
BIKING CATEGORIES (ROAD,
BMX, MOUNTAIN) TO
54.7 MILLION CYCLISTS

THE FASTEST GROWING CATEGORIES IN OUTDOOR INCLUDED:



21%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
SNOWSHOEING



12%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
CAMPING



8.5%

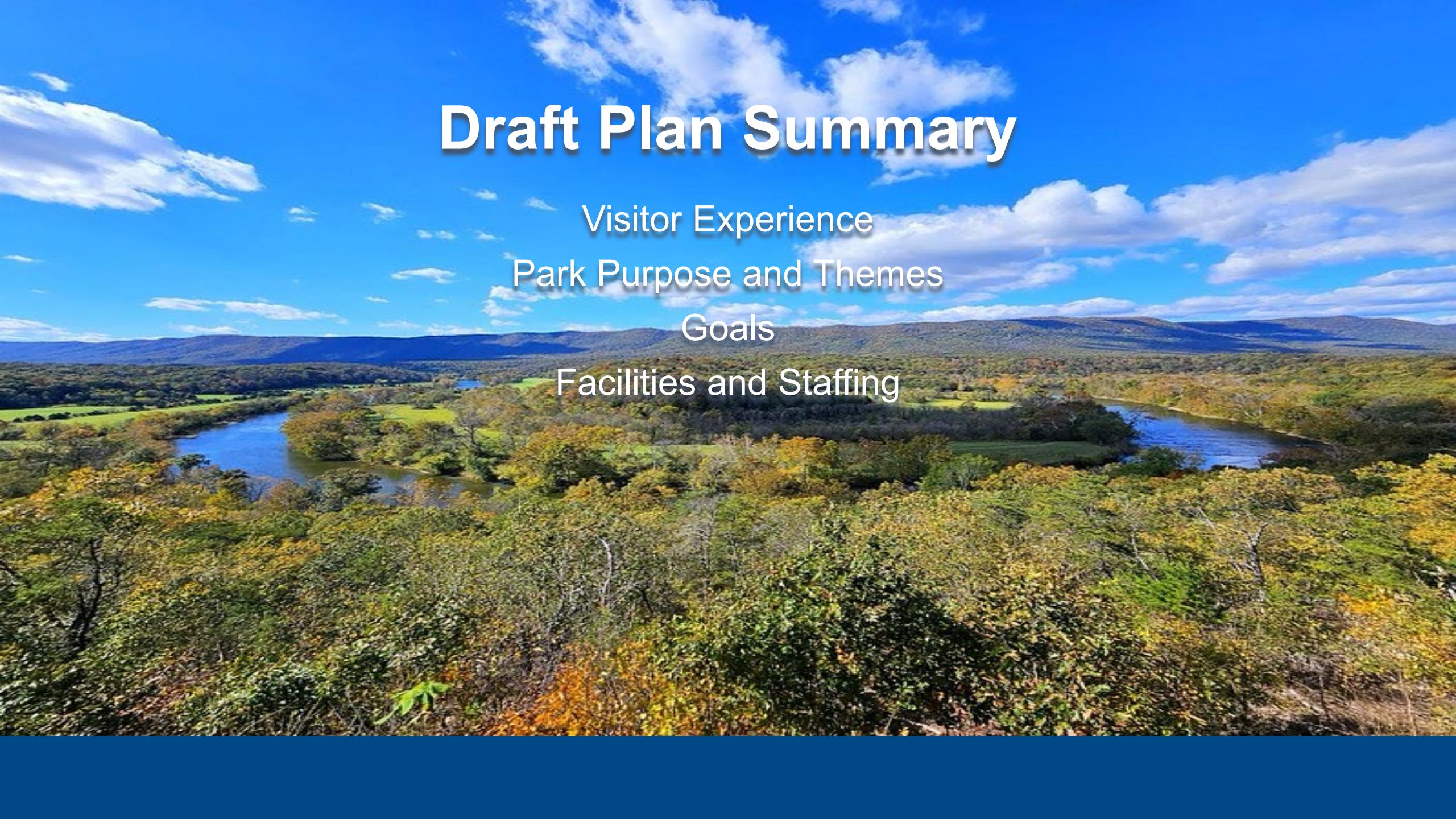
ANNUAL GROWTH IN
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING



8.3%

ANNUAL GROWTH IN
BMX BICYCLING

Outdoor recreation categories that experienced decline in 2022 included trap and skeet shooting, overnight backpacking, road running, and adventure racing. These categories lost 3.1 million participants in 2022 and have experienced year-over-year declines since 2020.



Draft Plan Summary

Visitor Experience

Park Purpose and Themes

Goals

Facilities and Staffing

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience (VE) is a broad term encompassing the overall journey, activities and interactions of park users, as well as their personal, subjective feelings, impressions and level of satisfaction with the park

Master Planning looks at VE to understand:

- Audiences & User Groups
- User Group Wants, Needs, and Expectations
- Themes and Subthemes
- Park Purpose Statement
- Essential Experiences
- Experience Areas

Visitor Experience Themes



Theme #1:

From the river bottom to upland slopes, the Shenandoah River features an exceptional range of ecosystems and experiences for wildlife and humans alike.

Theme #2:

Like a bumblebee to a flower, Virginia Bluebells attract visitors from near and far to a stunning show of ephemeral spring beauty.



Visitor Experience Themes



Theme #3:

Carved by the river through ancient rock, this land has long been the foundation for human subsistence, settlement and migration.

Theme #4:

Shenandoah River State Park preserves stories of continuous human history across the millennia, from early Indigenous communities to today's adventure seekers.



Purpose Statement

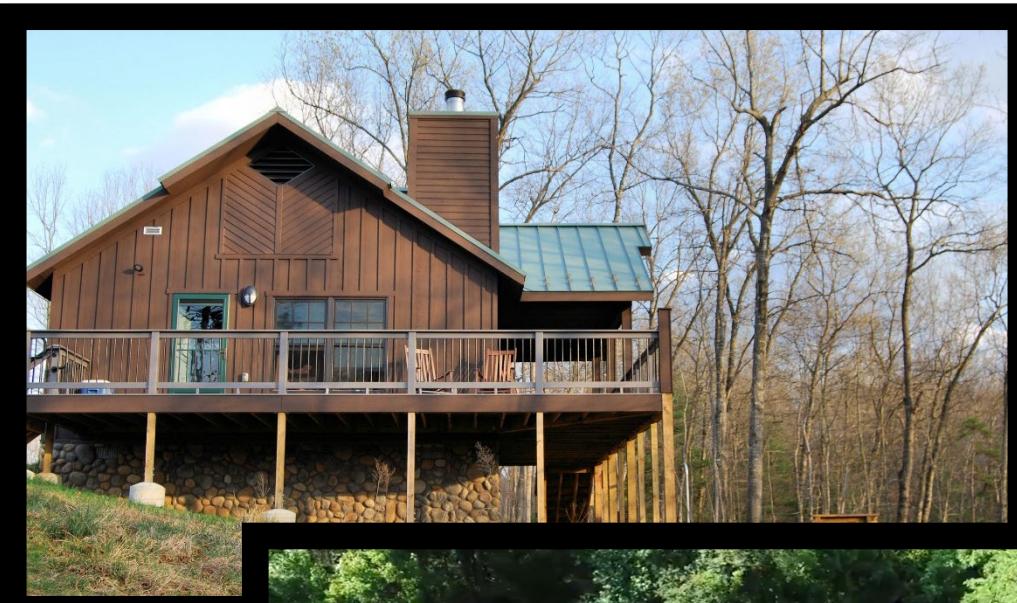
Shenandoah River State Park celebrates the continuing story of the Shenandoah River over thousands of years of human settlement, provides outstanding recreational opportunities, and preserves the surrounding landscape's natural beauty and resources.



Audiences & User Groups

- Active Recreators
- Campers/Cabin Users
- Cultural Special Interest Users
- Education Users
- Low Impact Park Users
- Natural Resource Special Interest Users
- Partners

Essential Experiences

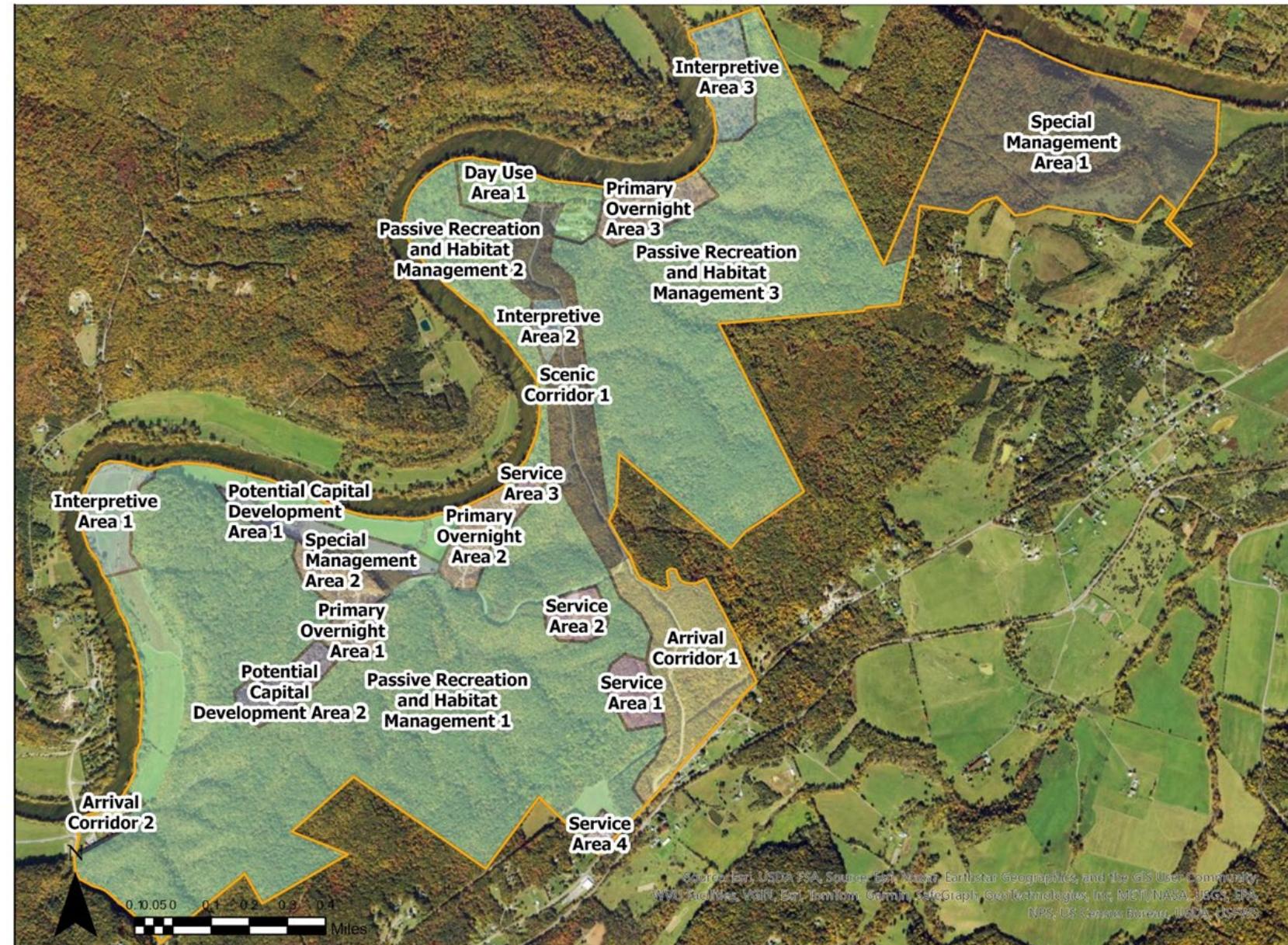


Shenandoah River State Park features the following essential experiences as opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in the park, its resources, and its story.

- Culler's Overlook
- Bluebell Trail, Cottonwood Trail, Wildcat Ridge
- Picnic by the River
- Birding on River Trail
- Canoeing, kayaking or tubing down the Shenandoah
- Grade A smallmouth fishing
- Unique primitive campground opportunity
- Cabins and/or RV campground

Experience Areas

- Arrival Corridors
- Day Use Areas
- Interpretive Areas
- Potential Capital Development Areas
- Passive Recreation and Habitat Management Areas
- Primary Overnight Areas
- Service Areas
- Scenic Corridors
- Special Management Areas



Master Plan Goals, Proposed Development and Staffing

Goals

Goal 1.0 – **Protect, conserve, and enhance** the cultural, historic, and natural resources of the park.

Goal 2.0 – **Create a welcoming and safe environment** for all visitors to learn about and gain a better understanding of the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the park.

Goal 3.0 – **Provide** a variety of **day-use and overnight** experiences that are compatible with resource protection and regional recreational trends.

Goal 4.0 – **Provide** programming for natural, cultural, and historic education and interpretation.

Goal 5.0 – Serve as a model for **sustainable park development** and environmental design.

Goal 6.0 – **Strengthen community connections** and regional collaboration.

Goal 7.0 – Continue to **administer and manage the park professionally and transparently**, which fosters the public's trust

Phase 1

Additional Cabins

- 1 Lodge
- 5 three-bedroom
- 7 two-bedroom
- Engineering study of septic opportunity and existing treatment plant.

Improvements to day use area

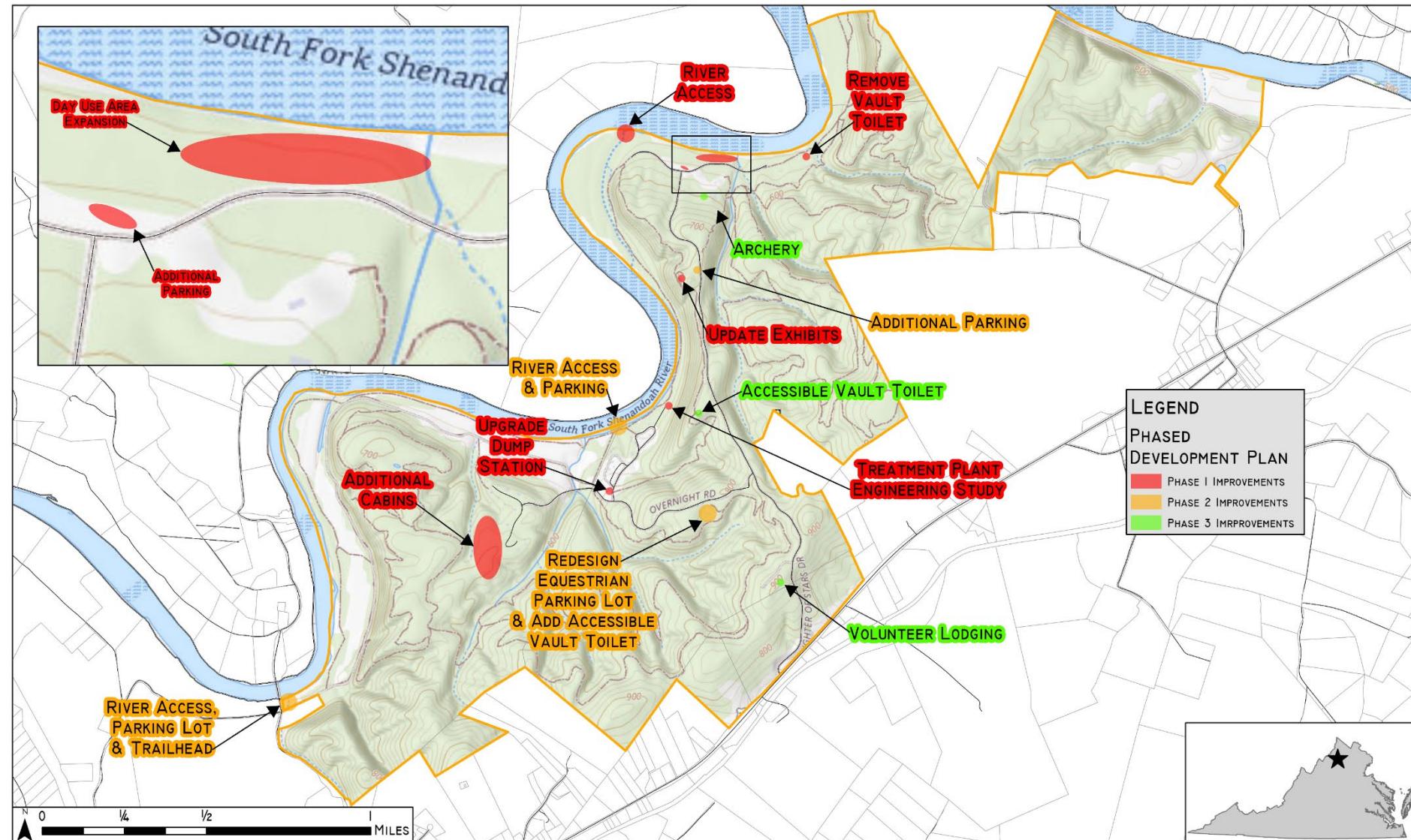
- Picnic tables – 5 pads with three tables each
- River access
- 15 more parking spaces
- Medium shelter
- Another rest room

Interpretive exhibits update

- Visitor Center
- External exhibits

Remove vault toilet

Upgrade dump station



Phase 2

River access at “tube exit” adjacent to RV campground

- 10 parking spaces
- Road improvements

Access/trailhead/parking lot at south end (Indian Hollow Road)

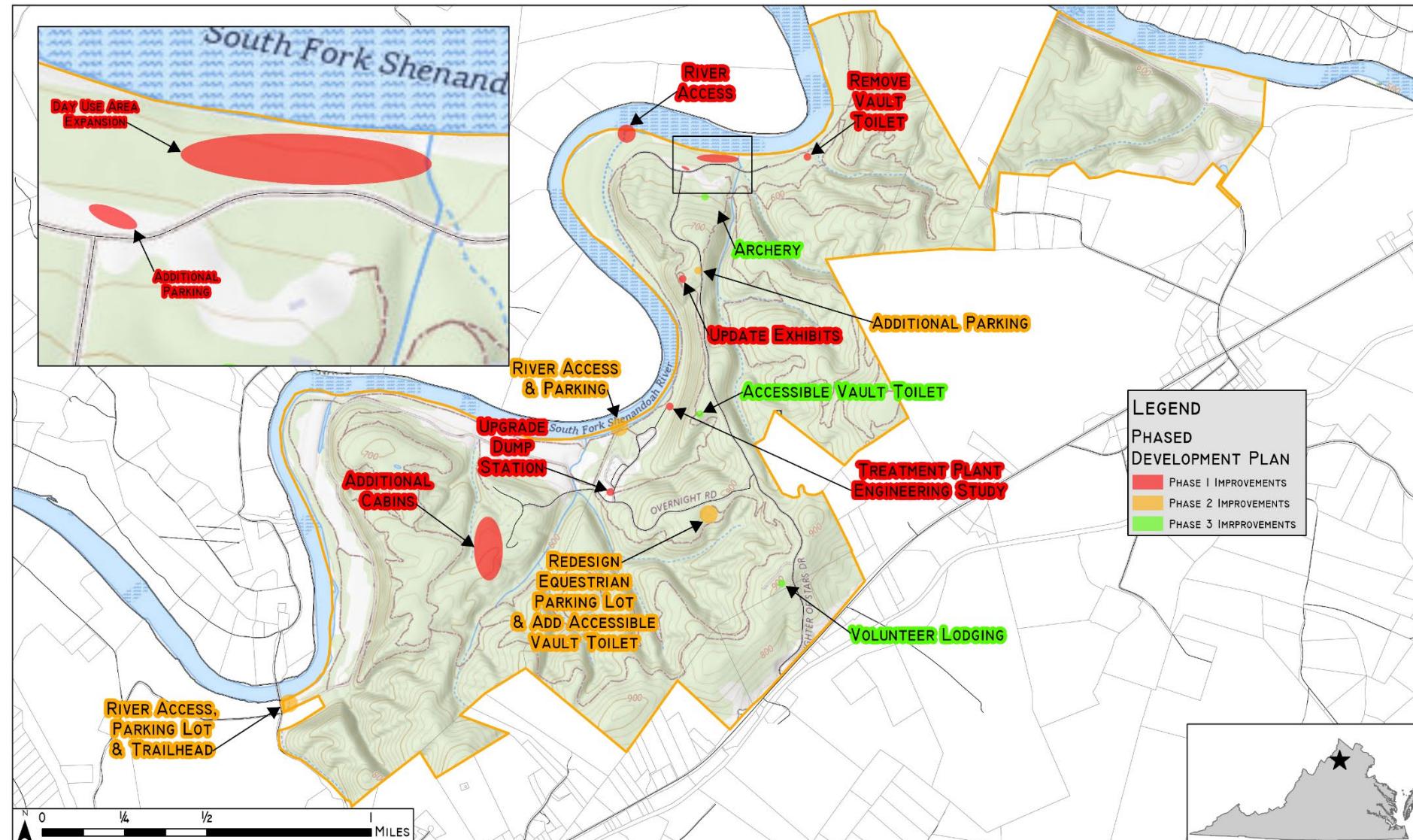
- 20 parking spaces

Parking at visitor center

- 10 new parking spaces
- Trailer lane
- Reduce width of island

Re-design equestrian gravel parking lot

- 8 horse trailer spots
- 10 pedestrian spots
- Repair/replace fence



Phase 3

Restroom at overlook

- 3 toilet rooms

Equestrian area restroom

- Vault toilet

Volunteer lodging

- 8 Single rooms with own bathroom.
- Kitchen
- Common space

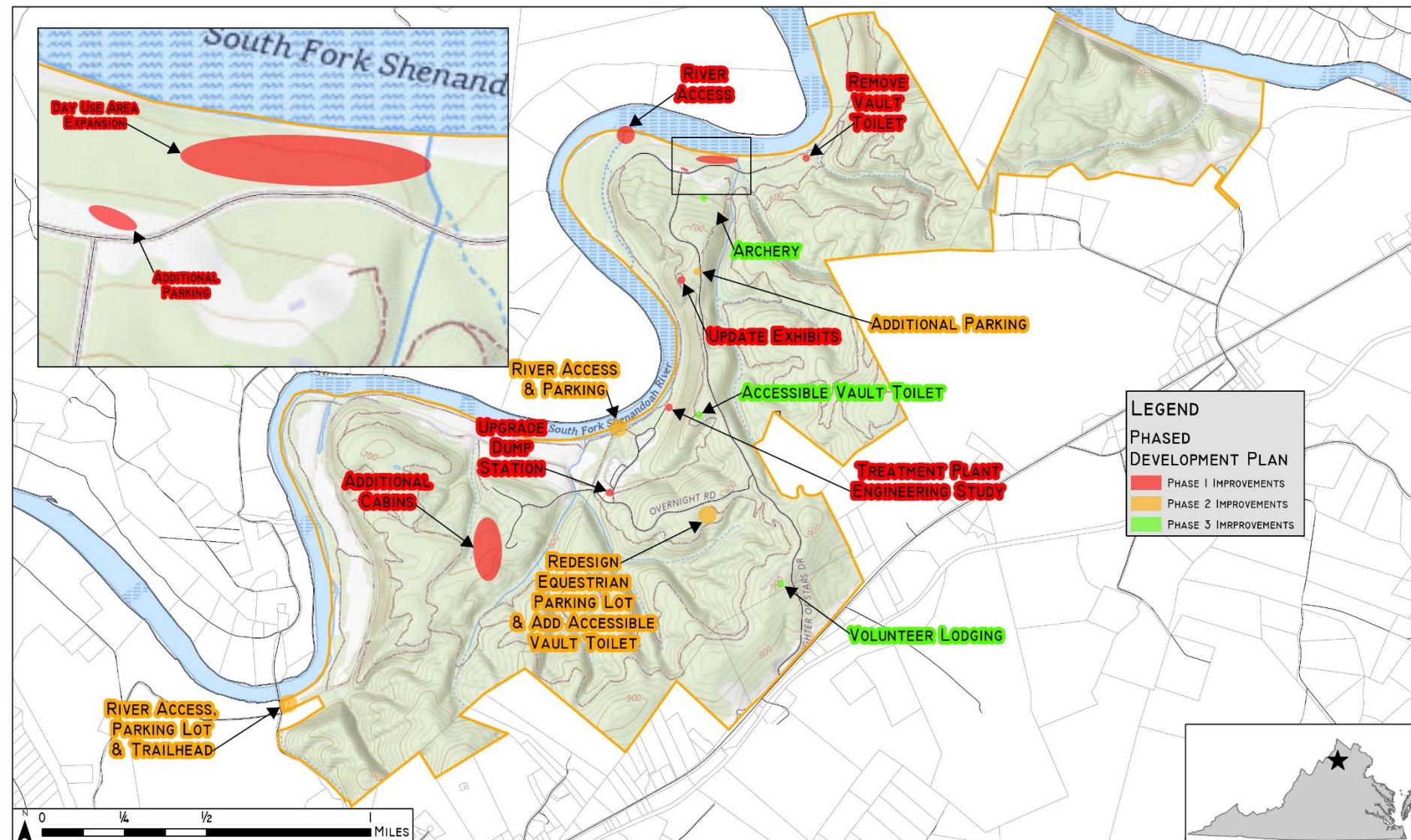
Archery near Discovery Center

New fishing node

- Location TBD

Improve existing canoe ramp

- Hand carry/launch



Existing Staff Positions

**8 Current FTE Positions
(plus Wage & Seasonal Staff):**

- Park Manager
- Assistant Park Manager
- Chief Park Ranger – Visitor Experience
- Office Manager
- Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Park Ranger – Custodial
- Public Safety & Law Enforcement Positions (2)



Staffing Needs

Immediate

- Chief Park Ranger - Operations
- Office Assistant
- 2 Park Ranger – Maintenance
- Park Ranger – Resource Management

Phase 1

- Education Specialist
- 2 Park Ranger – Maintenance

Phase 2

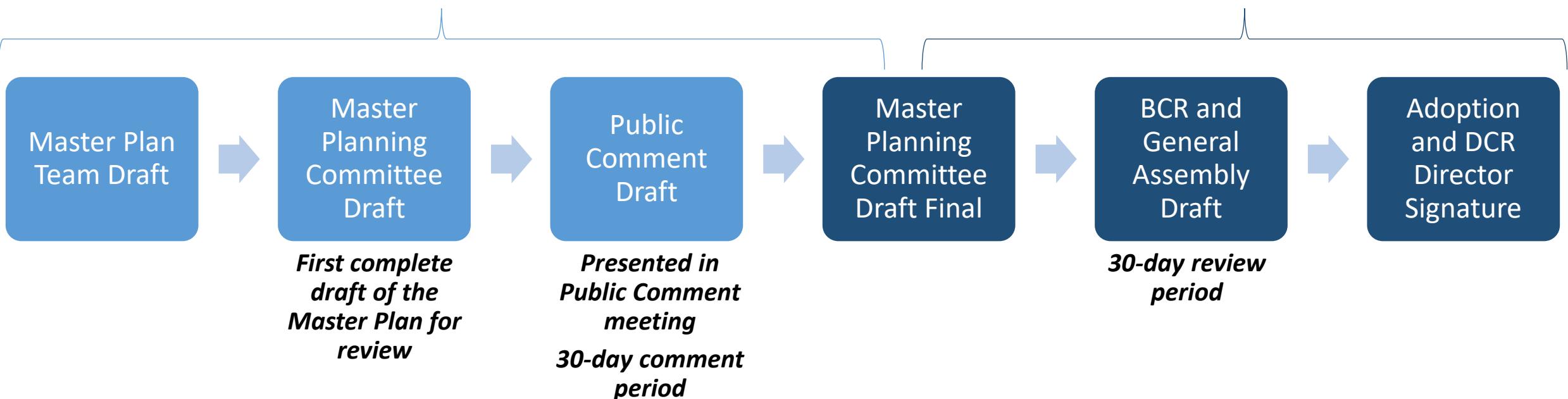
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Public Safety & Law Enforcement Position

Phase 3

- Park Ranger – Maintenance

Master Plan Document

DRAFT MASTER PLAN



Additional Discussion





Public Comments

We want to hear from you!

- Public comment period for **30 days (i.e. February 20, 2026)**
- Email PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov with “Shenandoah River SP Master Plan” in the subject line.



Thank You!



Contact us via Email:
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov

Project Website:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/sh-masterplan>

