

# 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

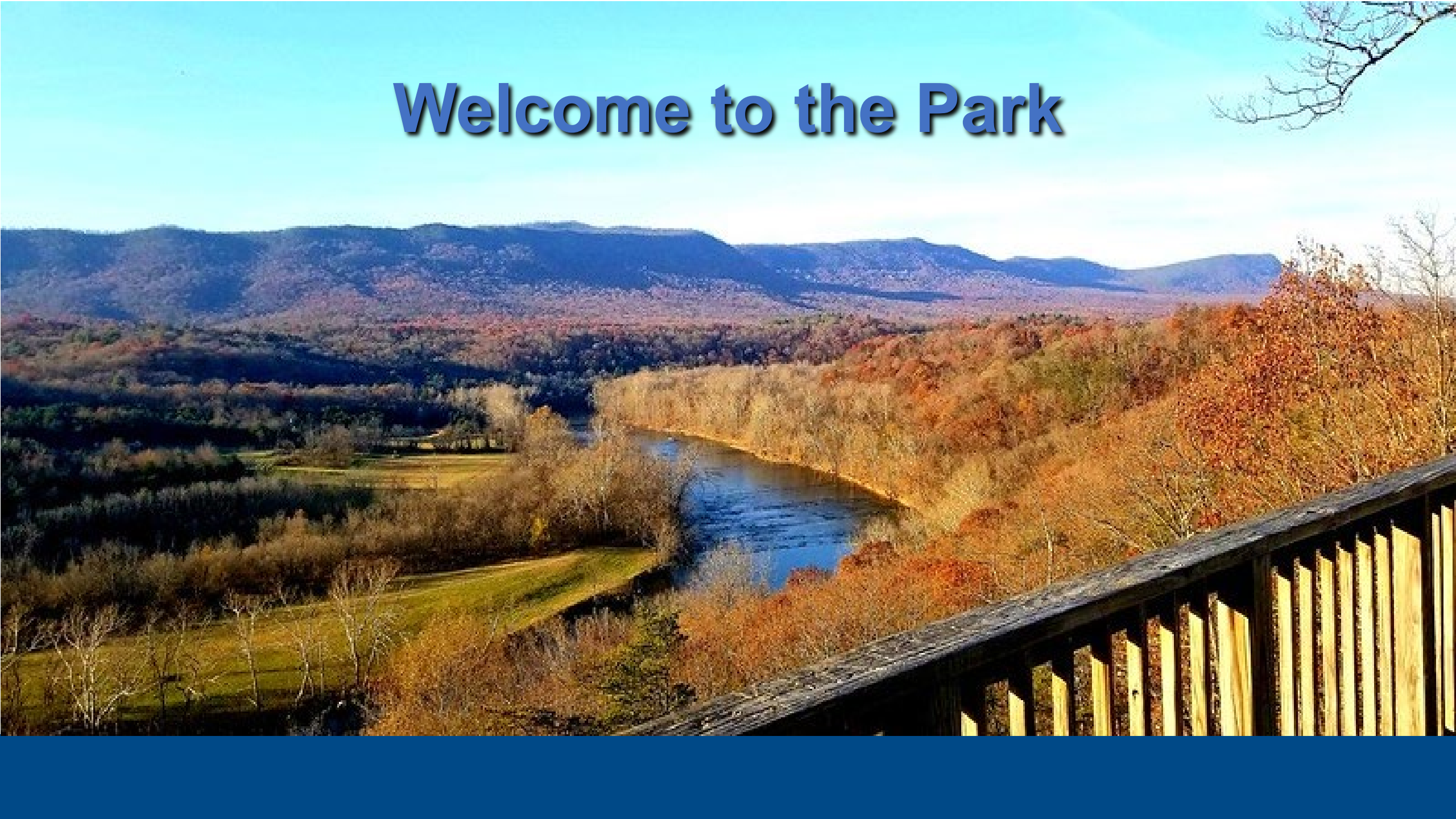




# Agenda

- 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
- SC - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
- TL - Twin Lakes State Park

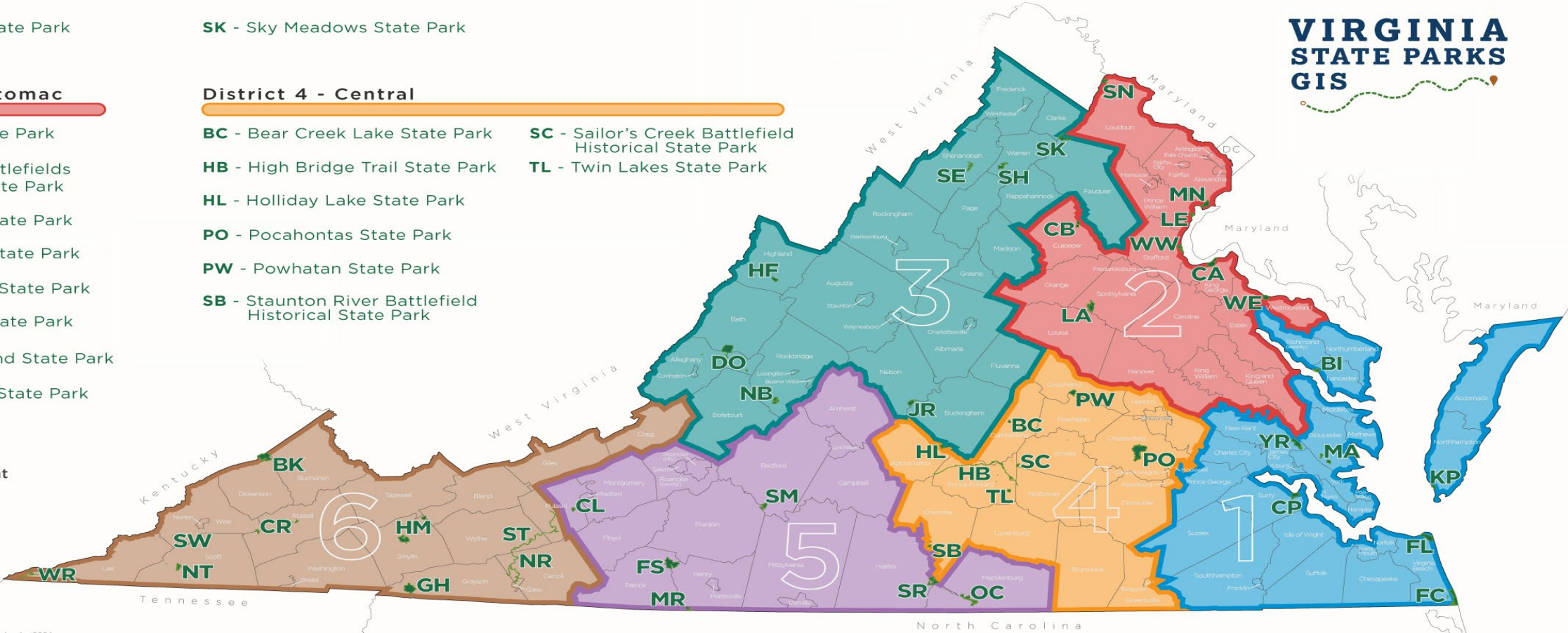
## District 5 - Piedmont

- CL - Claytor Lake State Park
- FS - Fairy Stone State Park
- MR\* - Mayo River State Park
- OC - Oconeechee 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

VIRGINIA  
STATE PARKS  
GIS

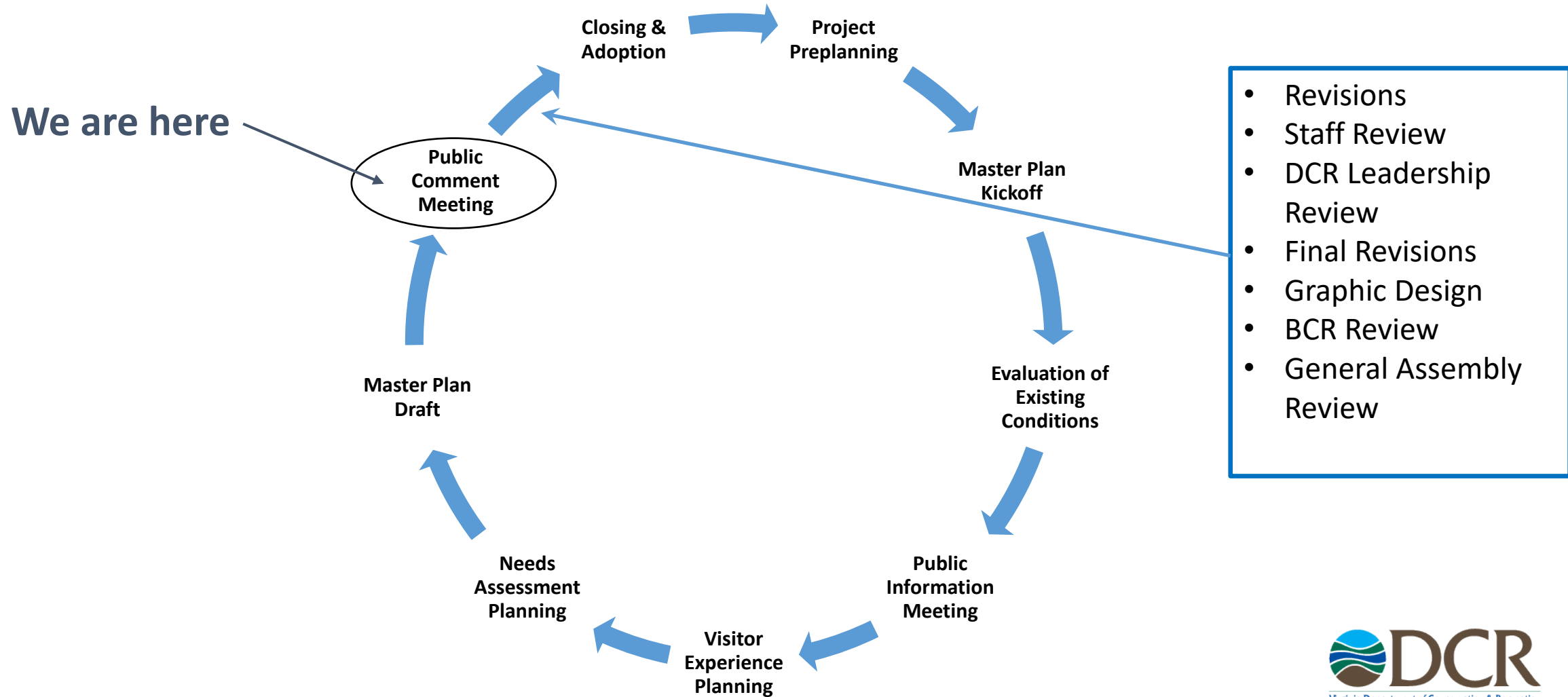


# Meeting Purpose

- 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



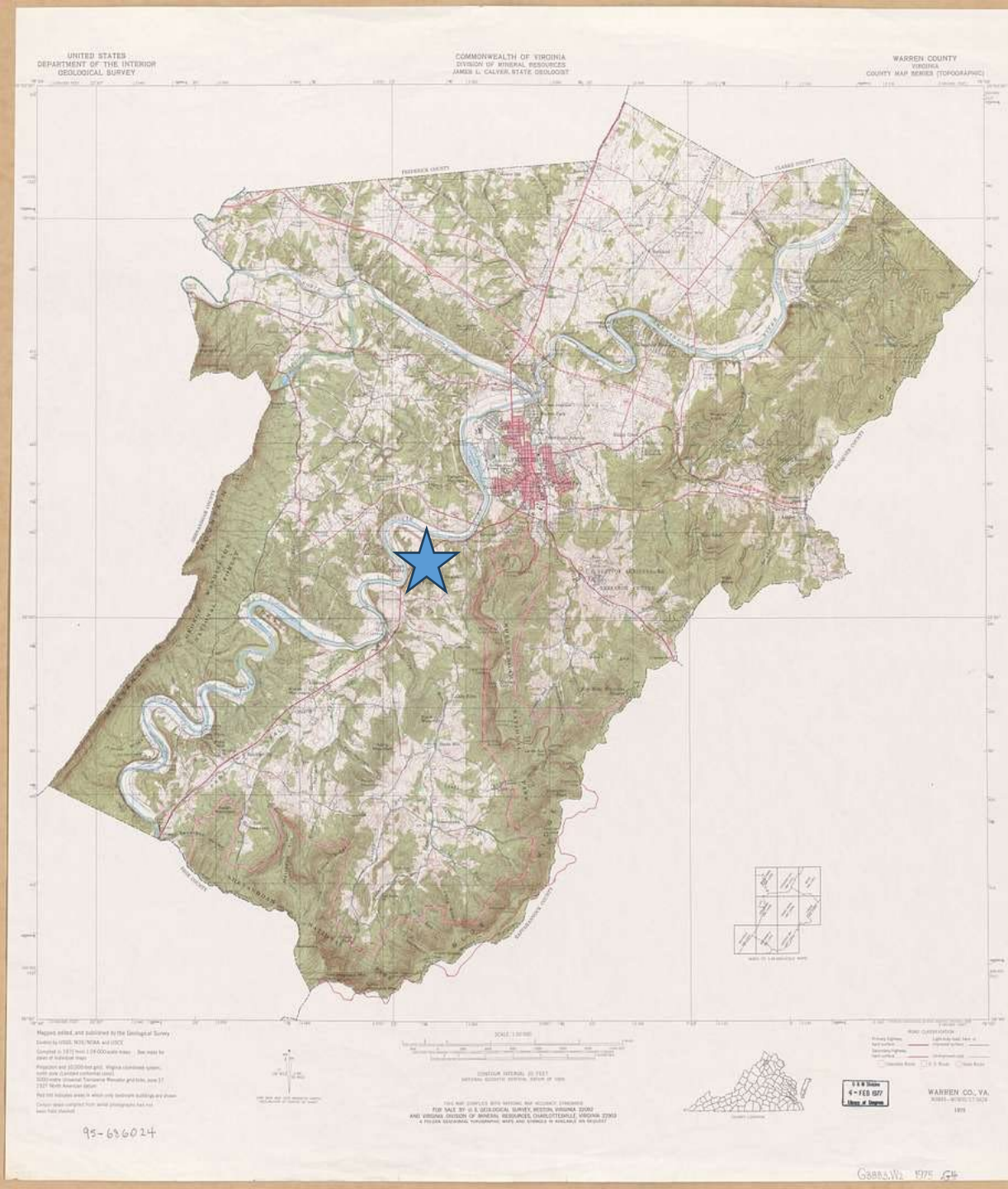


# Public Outreach & Engagement

- 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

## Welcome to Shenandoah River State Park



### Wildlife and Safety

The natural world is a wild and wonderful place for relaxation, discovery and recreation. Please

### Trail Etiquette

- Be courteous
- Stay on designated trails

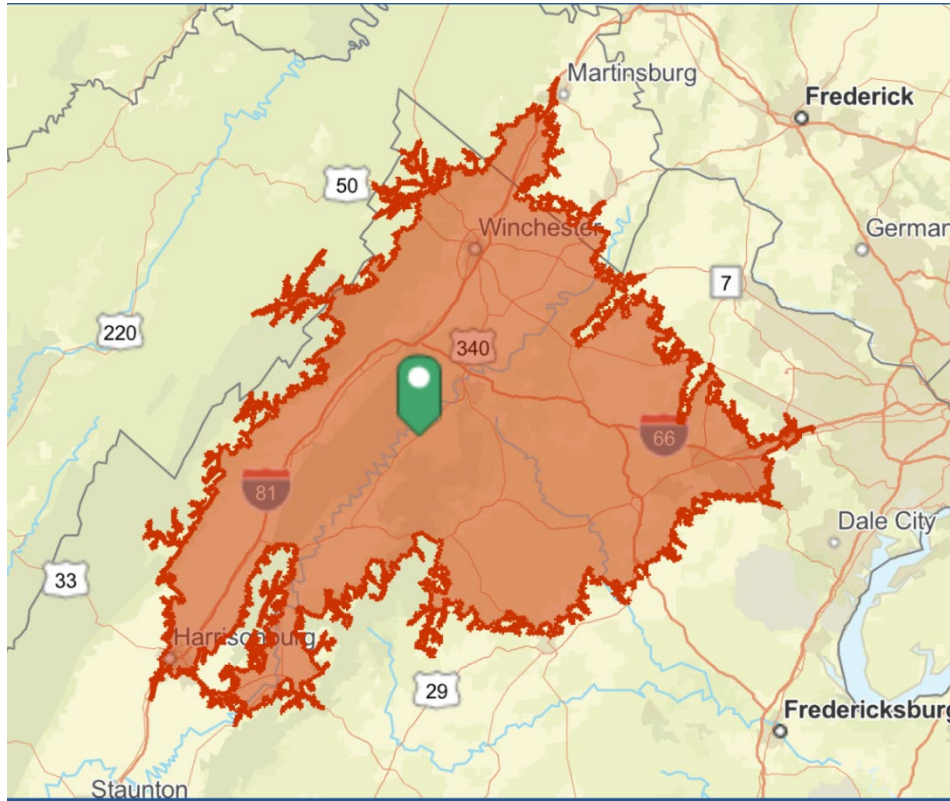
# **Market Study, Service Area and Economic Impacts**

# Demographic and Market Analysis

## Service Areas

Primary Service Area – 1 hour drive

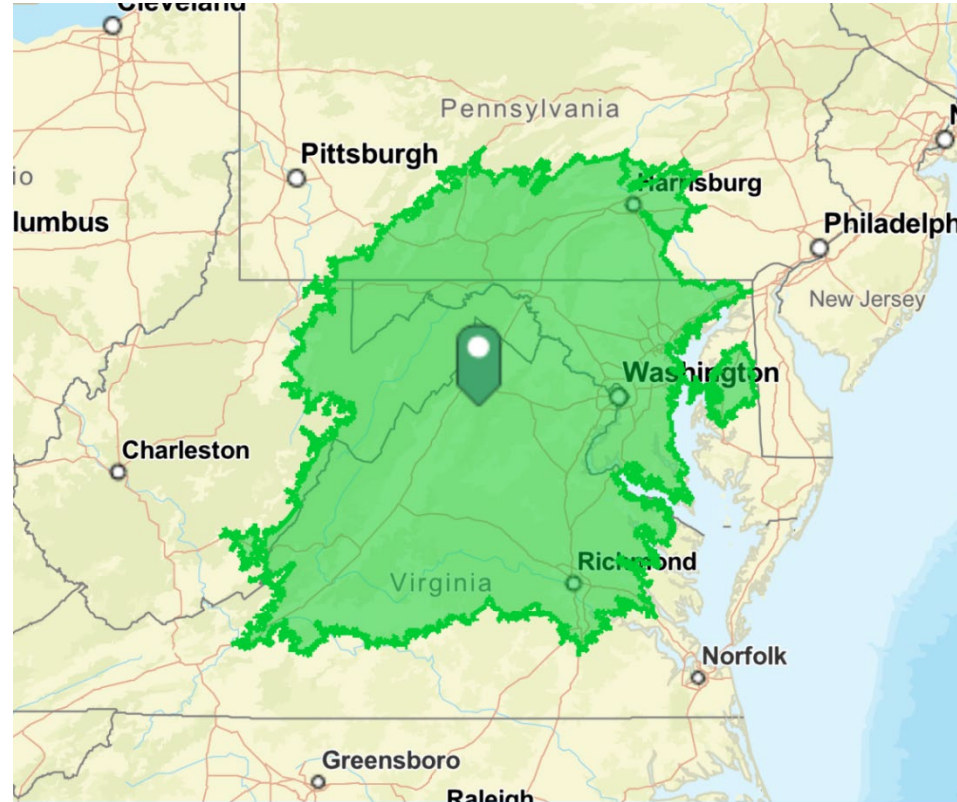
- 598,854 people



**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.

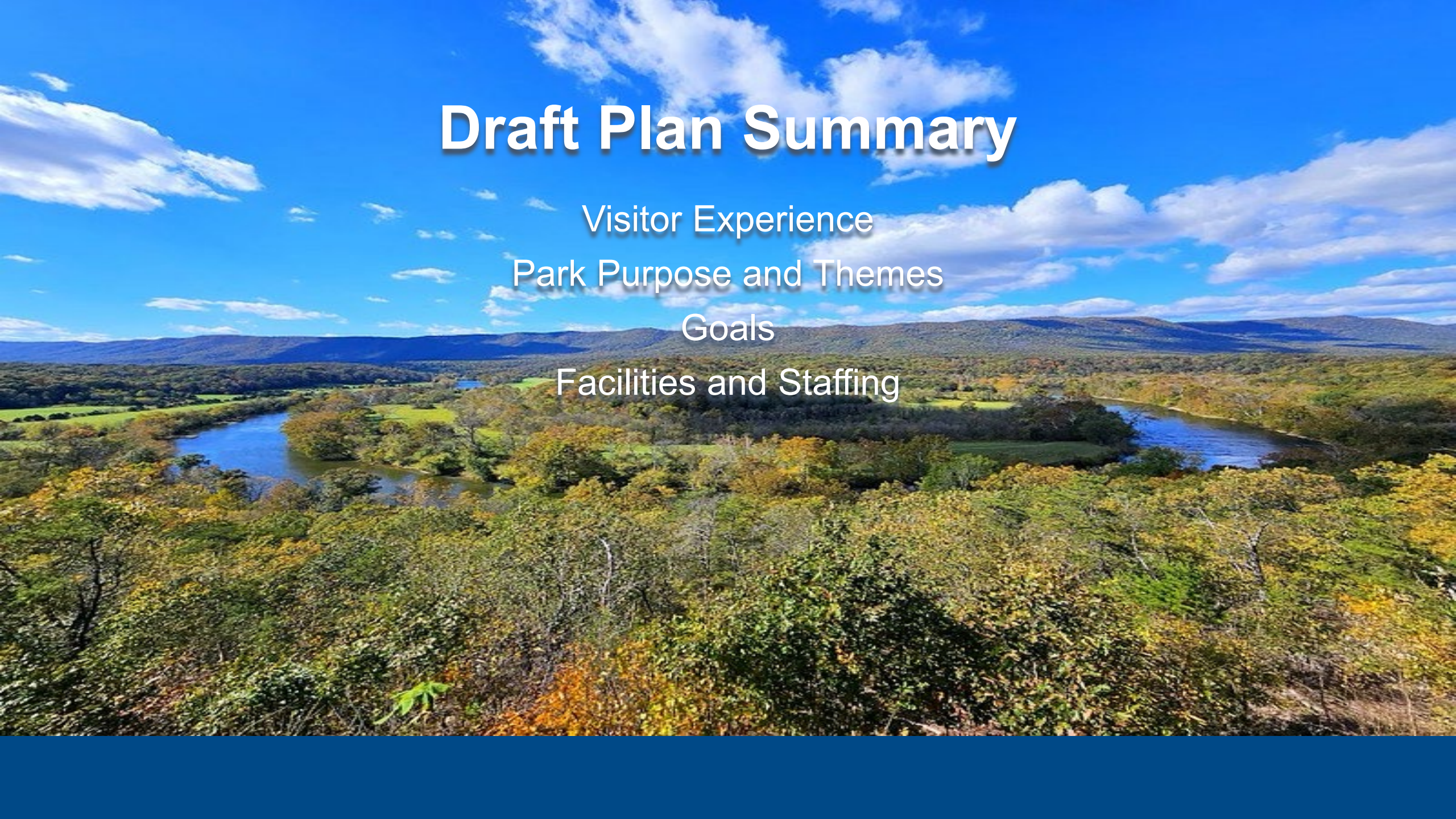
# Draft Plan Summary

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

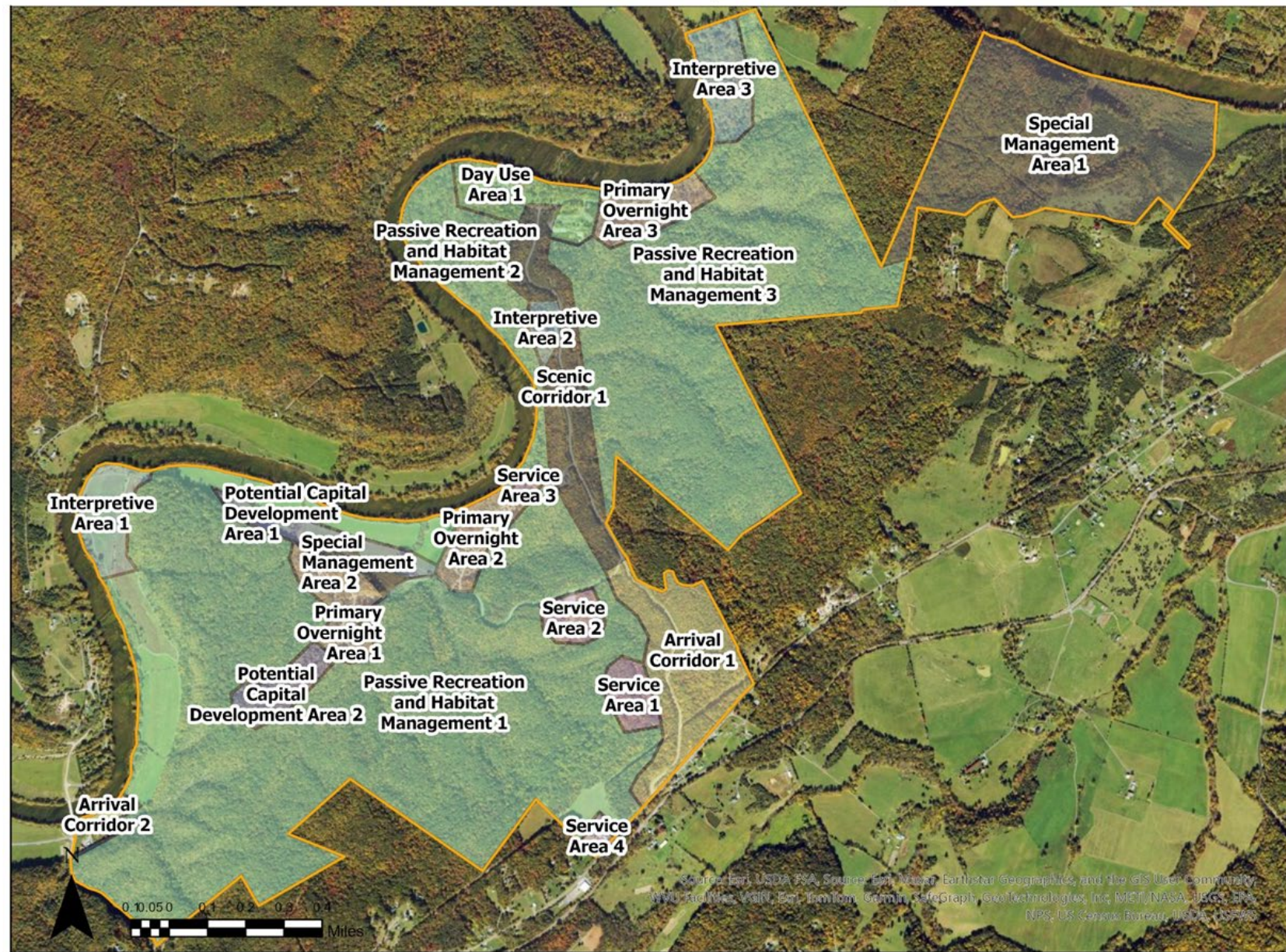
Shenandoah River State Park features the following essential experiences as opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in the park, its resources, and its story.

- 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

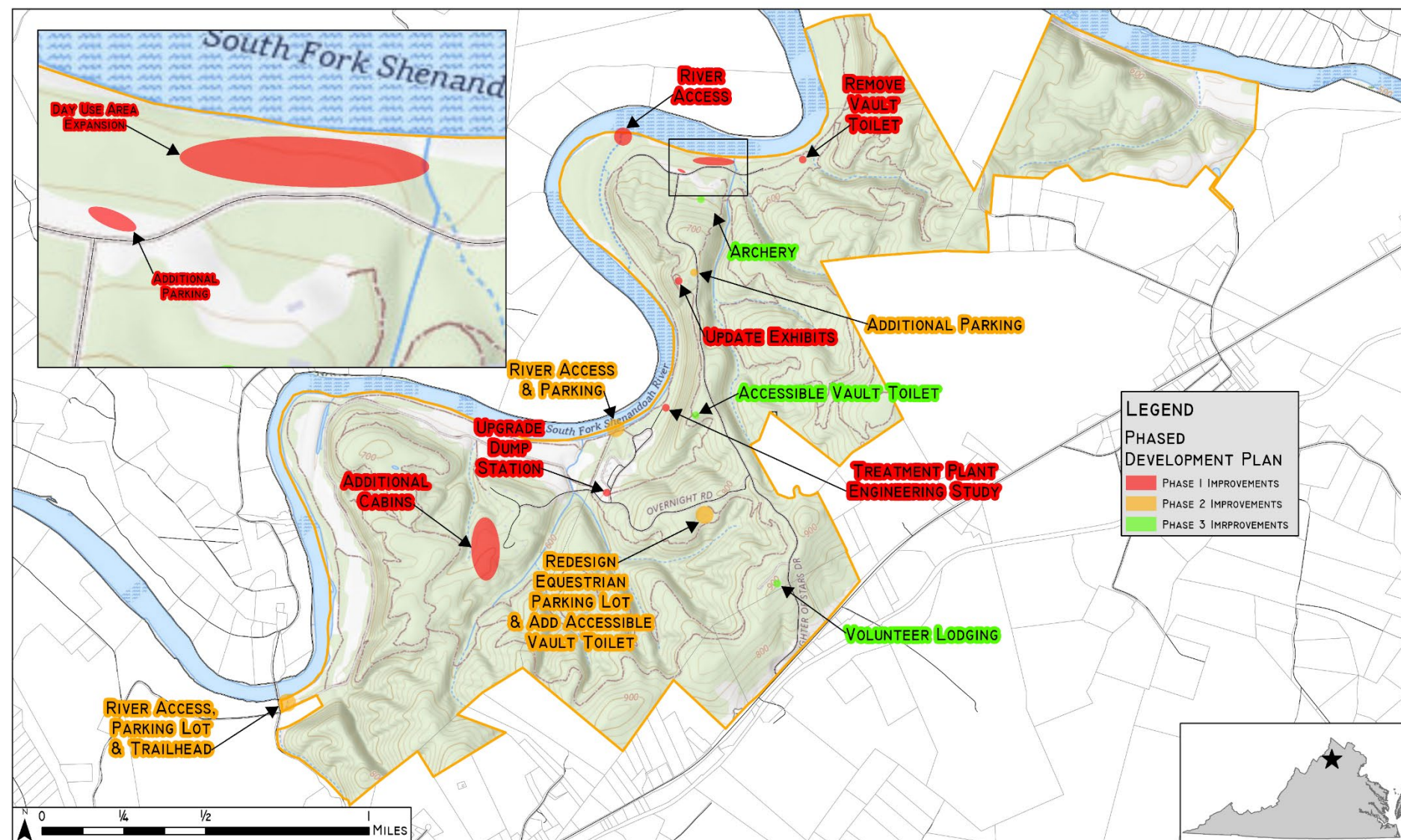
- Picnic tables – 5 pads with three tables each
- River access
- 15 more parking spaces
- Medium shelter
- Another rest room

## 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)

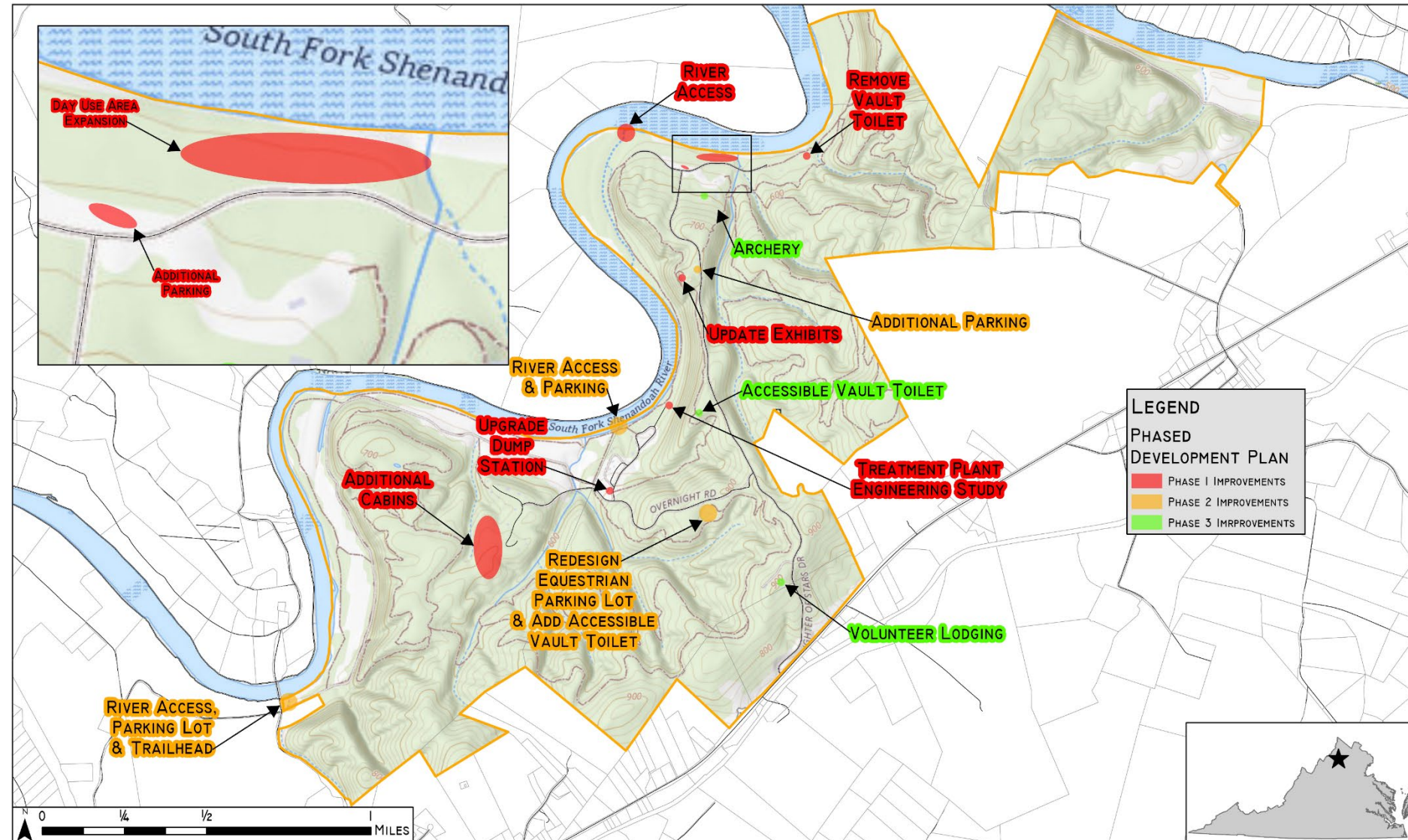
- 20 parking spaces

### 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

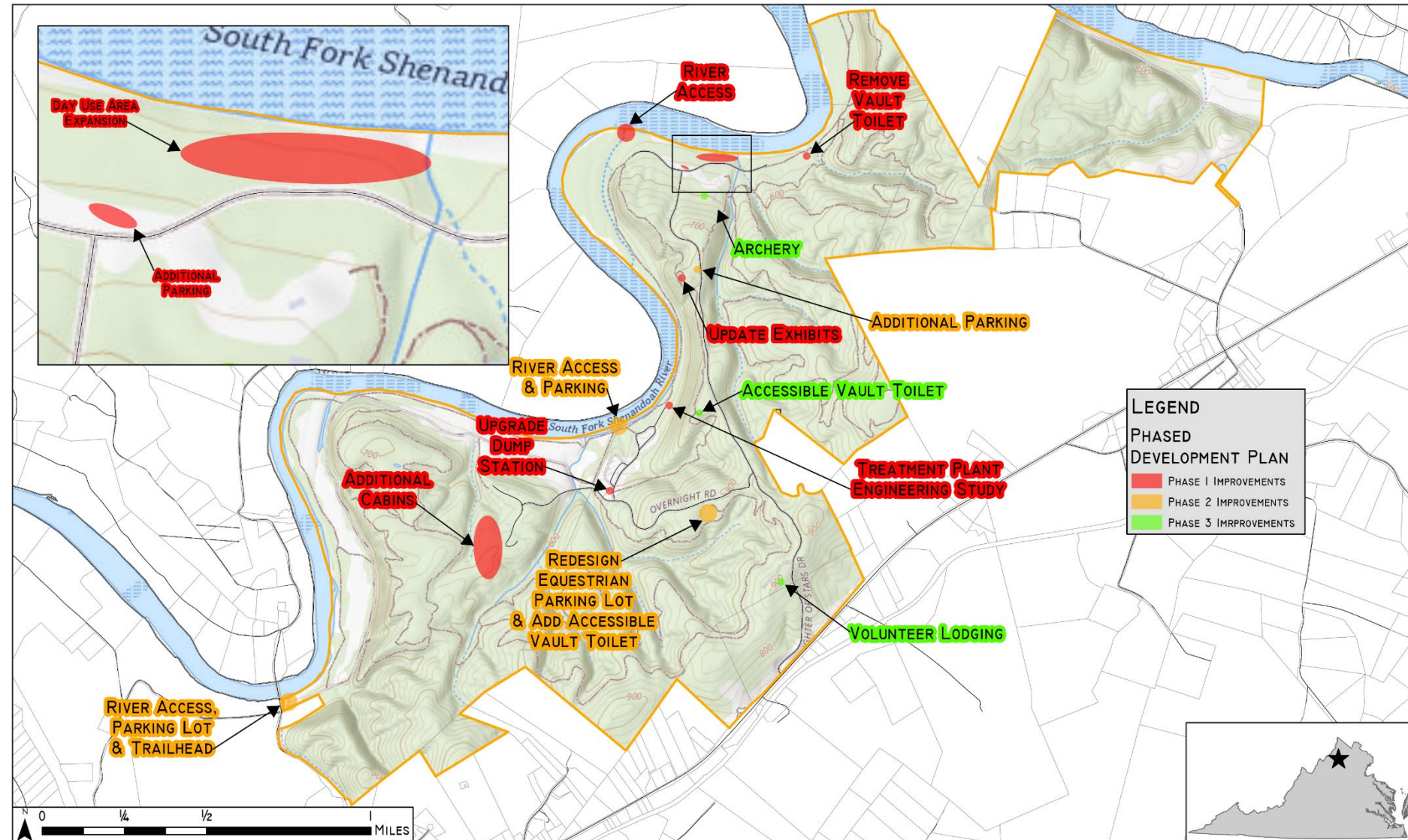
## Archery near Discovery Center

## 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

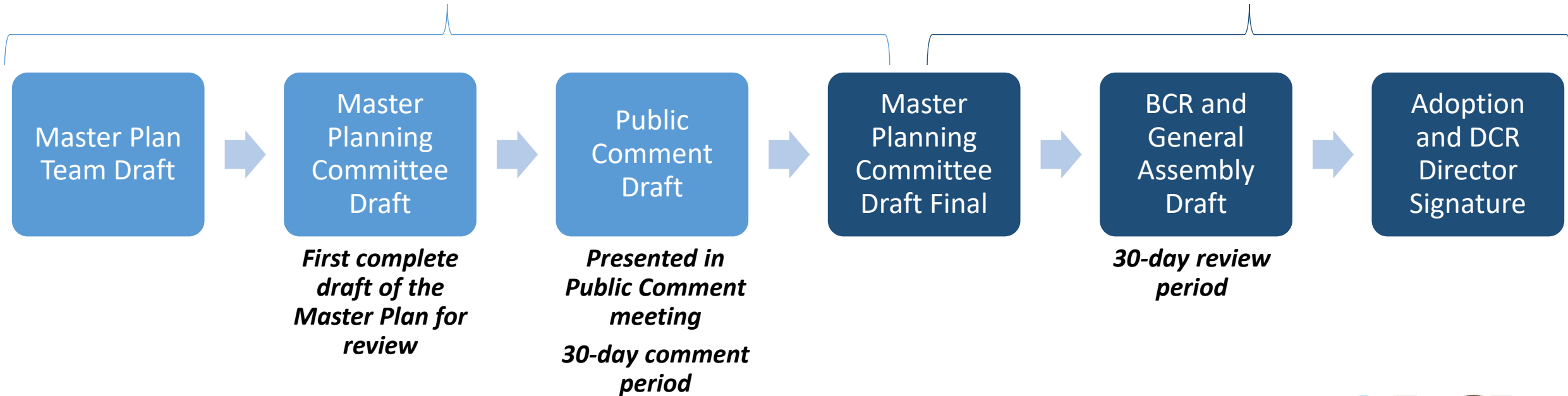
## Phase 3

- Park Ranger – Maintenance

# Master Plan Document

## DRAFT MASTER PLAN

## FINAL 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](mailto: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>**

