The *Virginia Outdoors Plan*

Virginia PDC Summer Conference
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2018 *Virginia Outdoors Plan*

Virginia's 11th Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Produced in accordance with §10.1-200 of the *Code of Va*.

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Virginia Outdoors Plan

- Commonwealth's official outdoor recreation, conservation, and open space plan
- Required by the NPS for states to be eligible to receive federal LWCF funds
- Guides all levels of government and the private sector

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Virginia Outdoors Plan

- Produced approximately every 5 years since 1966
- Since 2013 plan is totally digital
- Features an interactive map
- Plan development takes 2 years and begins with the Virginia Outdoors Survey

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Virginia Outdoors Plan

Issues:

- Land Conservation
- Wildlife Corridors
- Carrying Capacity
- Trails, greenways & linkages
- Water trails & water access
- Scenic resources
- Urban green space initiatives
- Walkable communities
- Water quality
- Economic benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism
- Outdoor recreation and health

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Virginia Outdoors Plan Regional Meetings

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State Trails Advisory Committee

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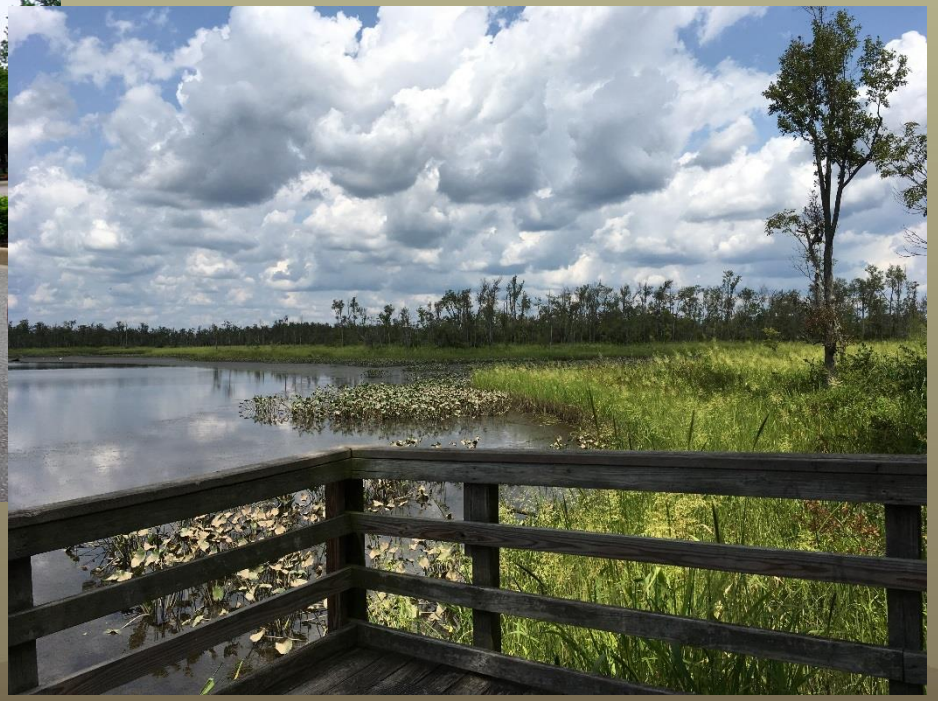
VOP Theme

"Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Land Conservation"



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Virginia Outdoors Survey

- First step in completing the VOP
- 2017 Survey completed under contract with the UVA Center for Survey Research
- Public polled in a series of questions about their outdoor recreation preferences
- Simultaneously, the inventory of recreational facilities across the state was updated
- Takes about a year to complete & analyze

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Survey Methods

- 14,000 Virginians contacted by mail
- 3,252 responded
- 23% response rate
- Margin of error 2.3%

Most popular activities

Activity	% of households 2011	2017
Visiting natural areas, preserves, refuges	50	**71**
Driving for Pleasure	-	**67**
Walking for pleasure	82	**67**
Visiting parks (local, state, national)	51	**56**
Swimming/ outdoor pool	43	**48**
Sunbathing/ relaxing on a beach	41	**47**
Viewing the water	-	**38**
Swimming—beach/ lake/ river	38	**37**
Visiting historic areas	64	**35**
Freshwater fishing	24	**34**

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Citizens view of most needed outdoor recreation facilities

Most Needed Facilities	% of households
Natural Areas	54
Parks	49
Trails	43
Water access	43
Historic areas	39
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	22

2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

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Importance of Natural Resources

96% ranked protection of Virginia's natural areas & open space resources as "important" or "very important"

Public Opinions about Recreation

96%	*Important to protect Virginia's natural and open space resources*
93%	*Important to have access to outdoor recreation opportunities*
74%	*Support state funding for outdoor recreation; 44% of those support an increase in funding*

State spending for outdoor recreation

- 74% support state funding for outdoor recreation
  - 44% support an increase in funding
  - 30% said funding should stay the same
- 25% didn’t know
- 2% said funding should decrease

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Are natural and open space resources adequately protected?

Yes	26%
No	32%
Don't know	42%

…an opportunity for education!

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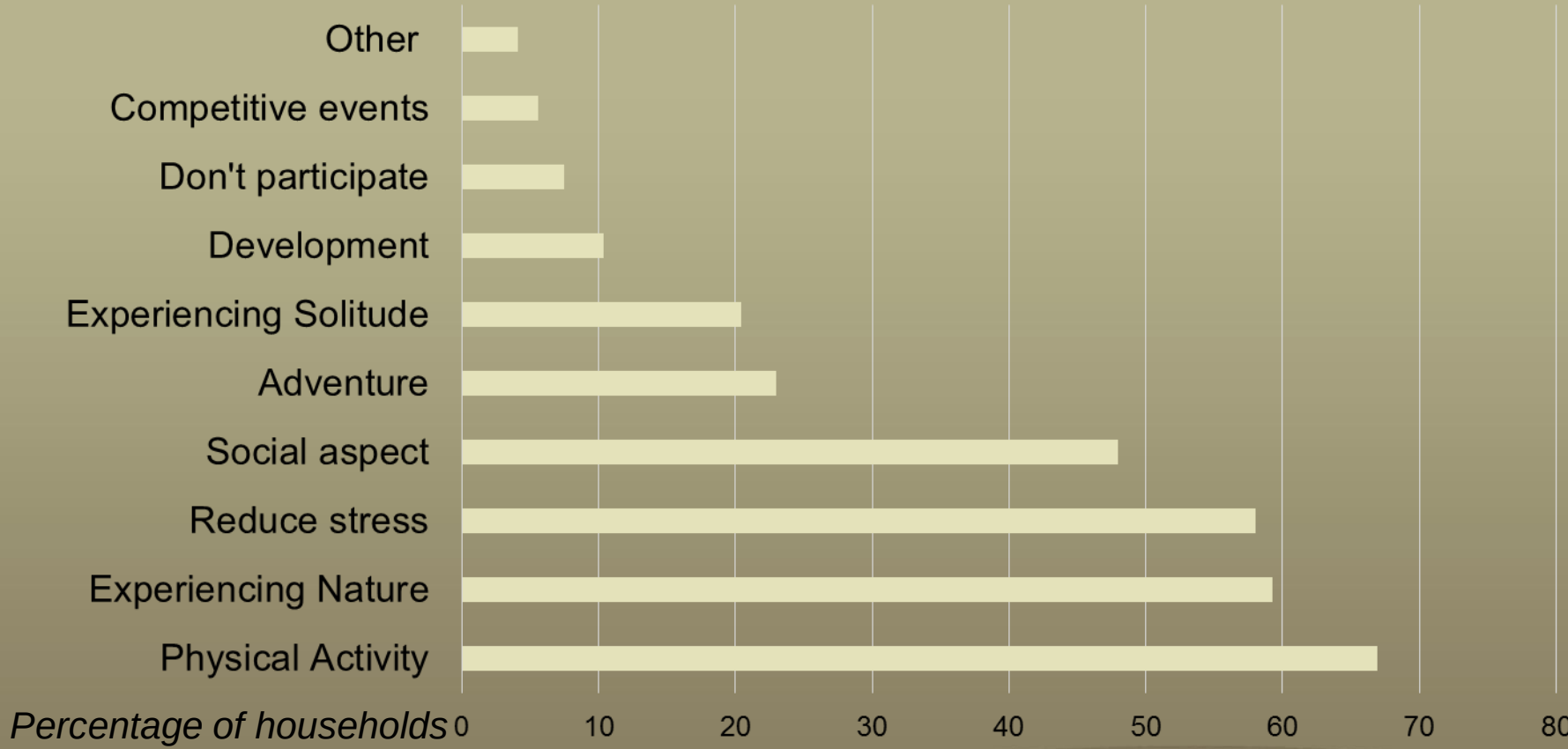
Reasons for Participation in Outdoor Recreation



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Does your health care provider do any of the following?

Reasons trails are popular	%
Pleasure and relaxation	88
Experiencing scenery and the natural environment	71
Health and physical activity	65
Family and social outings	50
Educational opportunities	6
Commuting on trails	3
Other	3
Volunteer work	2

Scenic Rivers and Scenic Byways

- 89% *Scenery is important in making travel plans*
- *2020—50th anniversary Scenic Rivers Program*

Virginia Outdoors Survey Data

When you recreate outdoors, do you prefer developed parks with a variety of recreational facilities or natural areas with limited facilities?

	2011	2017
Both equally	49%	49%
Natural area parks	27%	30%
Developed parks	15%	14%
No preference	9%	6%

Survey Summary

- Natural areas, parks, trails, and access to waterways remain among the top recreational needs in Virginia
- Increased participation in freshwater fishing and paddle sports
- Increased visitation to natural areas and preserves
- Strong support (74%) for public funding for outdoor recreation
- Importance of scenic resources in travel planning

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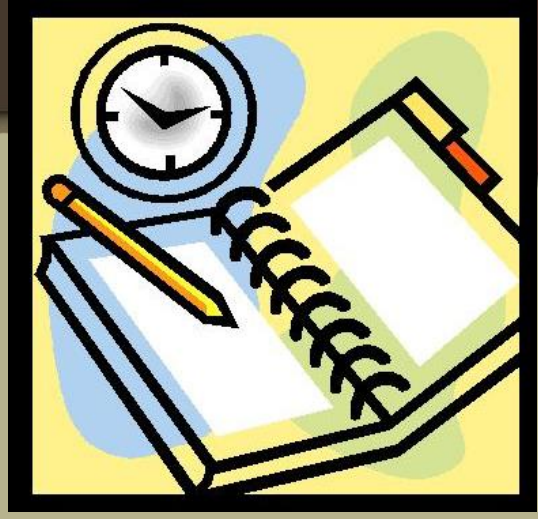

VOP Schedule

- Public review of draft—June
- Edits and review by SNR office—July
- NPS review of draft—August/ Sept
- Graphic layout for web—Sept/ Oct
- Final document to NPS with letter from Governor Northam—Nov/ Dec
- Final approved document—December 2018
- Executive Summary—Jan/ Feb 2019

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Thank you!

Visit the Survey and

Virginia Outdoors Plan online at:

www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml