

Clinch Scenic River Report **Towns of Richlands and Cedar Bluff** **and Tazewell County**

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I. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In 2014, DCR completed a Scenic River evaluation of a 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River. Based on the evaluation, the segment—which flows from State Route 693 in Pisgah to the Tazewell/Russell County line at State Route 629—was deemed eligible for inclusion in the Virginia Scenic River System.

The segment’s designation as a Virginia Scenic River is recommended, and it is further recommended that DCR be the administering agency.

II. REASON FOR THE STUDY

In 2013 and 2014, local officials from the Richlands Town Council, the Cedar Bluff Town Council, and the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors contacted the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) requesting that a 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River be evaluated for inclusion in the Virginia Scenic River System. An evaluation of the Clinch River segment was completed in 2014, wherein DCR concluded that the section was eligible for designation.

In May 2019, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution requesting that the General Assembly and Governor amend the *Code of Virginia* to designate the 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River as a Virginia Scenic River. In response to the county’s confirmation of support, DCR updated the 2014 draft report. The updates in the following 2019 report include more recent information about the river’s flora, fauna, and conservation projects.

The request for this Scenic River study has been part of a larger effort of the Clinch River Valley Initiative to expand downtown revitalization, outdoor recreation, water quality, entrepreneurship, and environmental education along the Clinch River. The Initiative is:

“a pioneering effort to build local economies in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley, one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed scale with several local partners, this collaborative grassroots effort has developed significant momentum with applicability for communities in Appalachia and beyond.” (<http://www.clinchriverva.com>)

The Scenic Rivers Act instructs DCR to conduct, "studies of rivers or sections of rivers to be considered for designation," and to, "recommend to the Governor and to the General Assembly rivers or sections thereof to be considered for designation as Scenic Rivers." This report fulfills this statutory directive.

A. History of Scenic River Designation for the Clinch River

The eligible 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River flows through Tazewell County, Town of Richlands, and Town of Cedar Bluff. It begins at State Route 693 in Pisgah and ends at the Tazewell/Russell County line at State Route 629. If the segment becomes a designated Scenic River, it would increase the number of designated miles of the Clinch from 29.2 miles to 59.5 miles.

The full length of the Clinch River within the Commonwealth of Virginia is 135 miles. The river originates near the Town of Tazewell and flows southwestward, its path winding through the counties of Tazewell, Russell, Wise, and Scott, as well as the towns of Tazewell, Cedar Bluff, Richlands, Cleveland, St. Paul, Dungannon, and Clinchport. The Clinch River continues past the Virginia border and enters Tennessee, then flows for about 200 miles before joining the Tennessee River.

Within Virginia, two sections of the Clinch within Russell County are already part of the Virginia Scenic River System: 20 miles, from Little River to Route 645 (Nash Ford Bridge), and 9.2 miles, from Route 58 (St. Paul) to the Guest River. Two tributaries of the Clinch River—Big Cedar Creek and the Guest River—are already designated as well.

B. Benefits of Designation

The Scenic Rivers Act (the Act), found in Title 10.1, Chapter 4, §§ 10.1-400 through 10.1-418.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, was enacted in 1970 as a means of recognizing the Commonwealth's scenic rivers and their immediate environs. In order to be eligible for Scenic River designation, a river must contain substantial natural, scenic, recreational, and historical attributes. Designated rivers need not include the entire river, and may include tributaries. At the request of the locality(s), DCR evaluates a specified river segment and writes a report documenting these attributes.

Since the passage of the Act, 33 river segments, totaling nearly 860 miles, have received Scenic River designation from the General Assembly. A list of those rivers can be found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/srlist.pdf>

The Virginia Scenic River designation accomplishes the following:

- Allows riparian landowners to continue using their land as they did before designation, except as provided in §10.1-407 (§10.1- 408), <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title10.1/chapter4/section10.1-408/>
- Requires the Federal Energy Commission (FERC) to consider the impact of proposed hydropower or related projects on a designated Scenic River using the Scenic River report developed in the qualification process (Code Section E)
- Requires all state agencies to consider visual, natural, and recreational values of a Scenic River in their planning and permitting process (§10.1-402) <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title10.1/chapter4/section10.1-402/>
- Gives riparian landowners, local citizens, and local governments a greater voice in the planning and implementation of federal and state projects that might affect the river (§10.1-406.1), <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title10.1/chapter4/section10.1-406.1/>
- Requires authorization by the General Assembly for the construction, operation and/or maintenance of any structure, such as a dam, that would impede the natural flow of a Scenic River (§10.1-407), <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title10.1/chapter4/section10.1-407/>

The Virginia Scenic River System is a state-level system for recognizing the uniqueness and

quality of a river. Note that the Virginia Scenic River System is different from the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The national-level system has a different set of criteria, and requires designation by Congress or the Secretary of the Interior. According to rivers.gov, Virginia has approximately 49,350 miles of rivers, but no congressionally designated Wild and Scenic rivers.

C. Evaluation Process

In order to determine whether a river (or river segment) is eligible for Virginia Scenic River designation, it must be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. River Corridor Vegetation
2. Riverbed and/or River Flow Modifications
3. Human Development of Visual Corridor
4. Historic Features
5. Landscape
6. Quality of Fishery
7. Special Natural Flora and Fauna
8. Water Quality
9. Parallel Roads
10. Crossings
11. Special Features Affecting River Aesthetics
12. Public Recreational Access
13. Land Conservation

Each evaluation involves data collection from multiple sources. These include state agencies, local and regional planning commissions, map surveys, and related literature reviews.

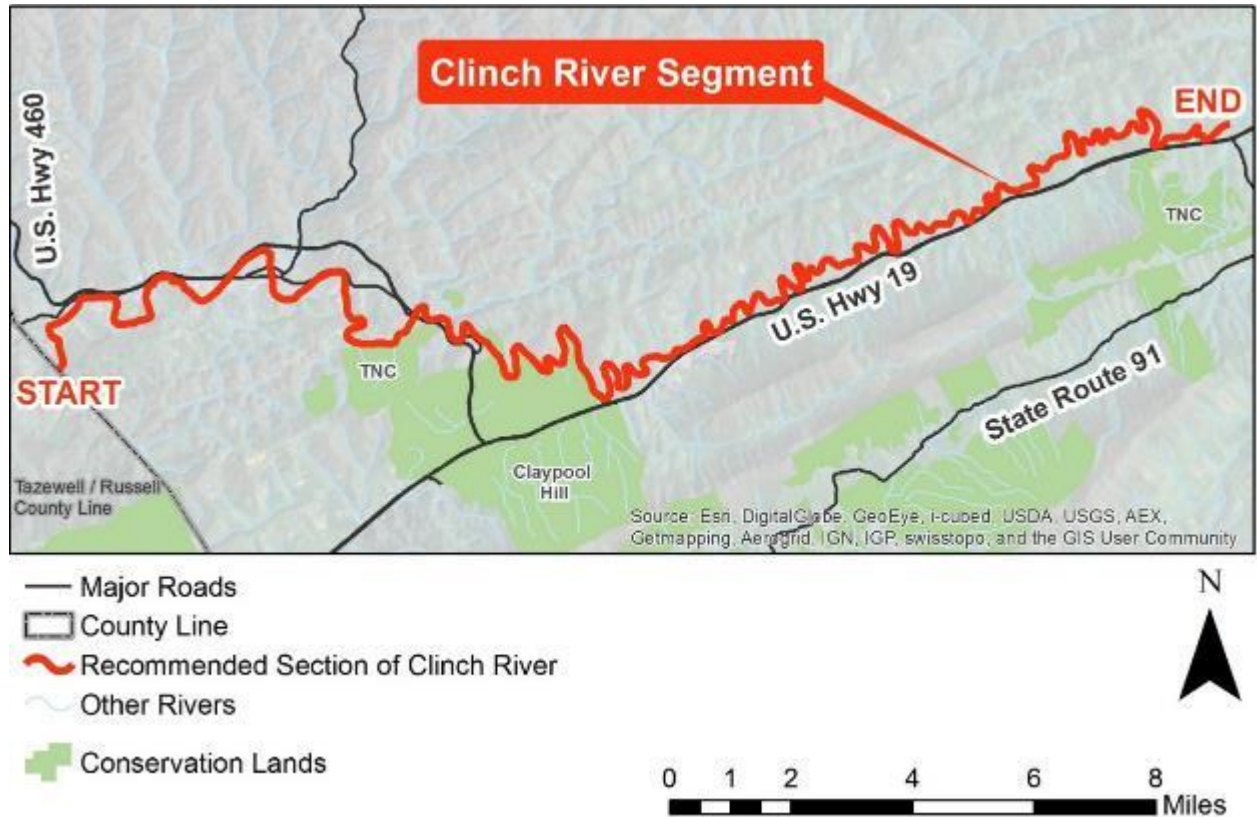
Each evaluation also involves fieldwork. The fieldwork requires canoeing, boating, or walking the stretch of a river and rating the characteristics of the resource.

The fieldwork, combined with the data collected from multiple sources, are used to validate existing land use information and rank the river according to relative uniqueness and quality.

III. CORRIDOR STUDY MAP

The Clinch River originates near the Town of Tazewell. It flows southwestward through Tazewell, Russell, Wise, and Scott counties for approximately 135 miles before reaching eastern Tennessee and becoming part of the Tennessee River.

This report will discuss the river segment from State Route 693 in Pisgah to the Tazewell/Russell County line at State Route 629, a distance of about 30.3 miles (Map 1).



Map 1. Section of the Clinch River recommended for Scenic River designation.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Personnel from DCR's Division of Planning and Recreation Resources and from the Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) performed fieldwork on April 15-17, 2014. DCR, CDAC, and local stakeholders paddled the entire section of the Clinch under consideration.

The following is a description of the qualities and conditions of the resource that make it a candidate for the Virginia Scenic River System.

A. River Corridor Vegetation

The Clinch River winds through a varied landscape of forestland, pastureland, and urban areas (Image 1, Image 2). Streamside vegetation is most prevalent in the northeastern sections of the study corridor where tracts of forest provide shade along the river's edge.

Although some of the land along the river is forested, many of the areas are used for agriculture or residential development (Map 2). Approximately 60 percent of the 30.3 mile river segment has forested riparian buffers of less than 100 feet (Map 3). Forested buffers provide necessary cover to protect water quality and fish habitat.

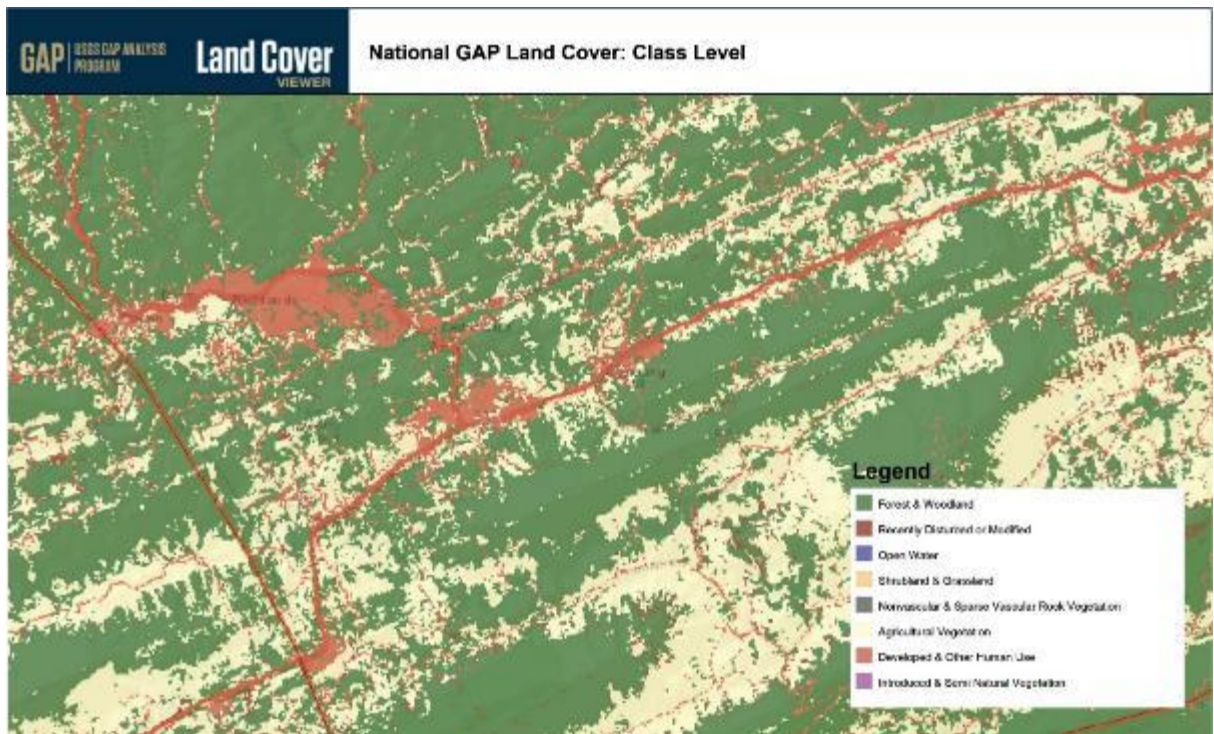
The river segment is located in the Ridge and Valley physiographic province. Vegetation along the corridor is primarily central oak-hardwood and pine forest with herbaceous agricultural vegetation (Map 4). Dense stands of pine plantations provide evergreen buffers along some sections of the river, while sycamore, buckeyes, and river birch line much of the river bank. Redbud, serviceberry, and dogwood provide spring color, while sweet gum and maple display good fall color. Early spring wildflowers include American beauty, bellwort, bloodroot, columbine, coral bells, Dutchman's breeches, mayapple, meadow-rue, Solomon's seal, trillium, and twinleaf (Image 3). Other plant species create many different forms, textures, sizes, and colors along the corridor. The variety of plants provide year-round changes in scenery.



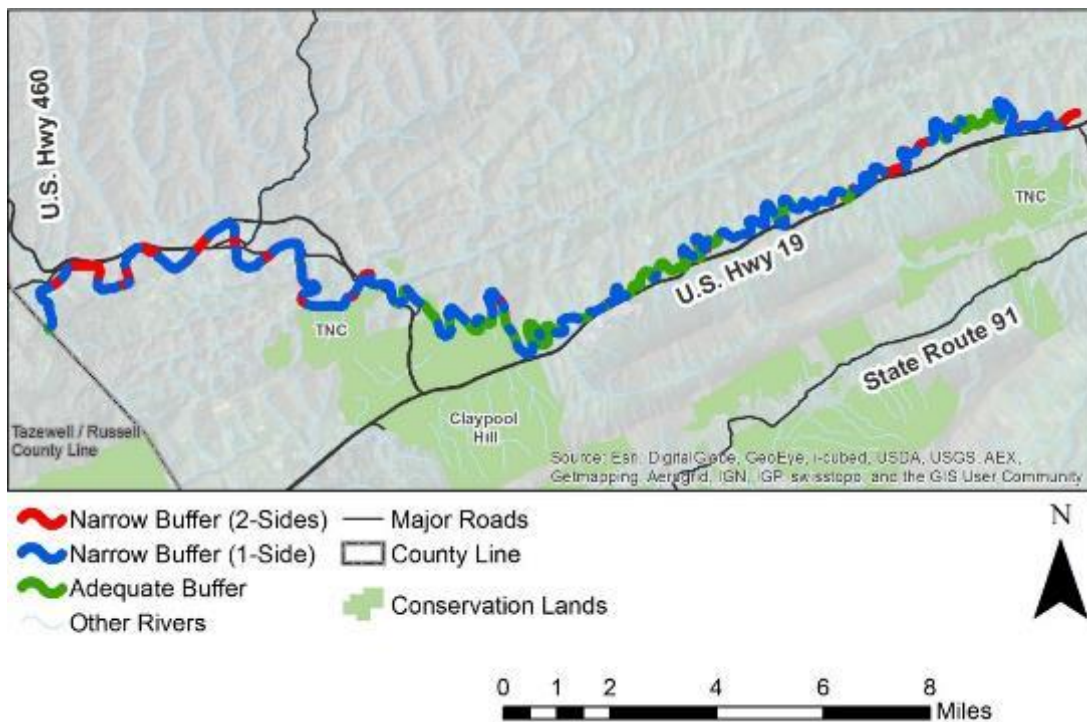
Image 1. Typical vegetation along the Clinch River.



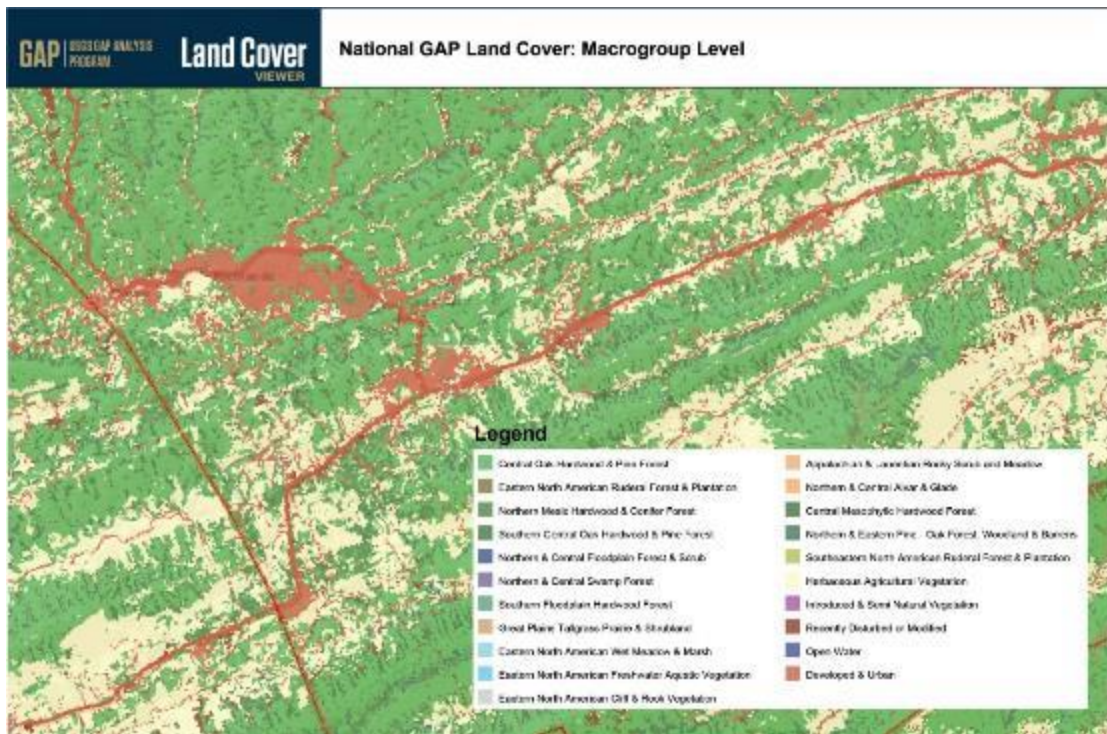
Image 2. Cedar Bluff Woolen Mill building.



Map 2. Landcover along the Clinch River. Prominent features are forest and woodland (green), agricultural vegetation (white), and developed/other human uses (brown). Source: U.S. Geological Survey, Gap Analysis Program (GAP), August 2011. National Land Cover, Version 2



Map 3. Buffer analysis of the Clinch River. Most of the length has narrow buffers of less than 100 feet.



Map 4. Vegetation types along the Clinch River. Prominent features are central oak-hardwood and pine forest (green), herbaceous agricultural vegetation (white) and developed and urban areas (brown). Source: U.S. Geological Survey, Gap Analysis Program (GAP). August 2011. National Land Cover, Version 2



Image 3. Bellwort (*Uvularia* sp.).

B. Riverbed and/or River Flow Modifications

Although the river section studied is mostly free-flowing and meandering, several river flow modifications are present. About 1.4 miles (0.4 percent of the river section) is impounded due to dams or other structures. These include two intact dams: Taylor’s Mill and the Old Cedar Bluff Grist Mill (Image 4). These also include the ruins of the McGuire Mill (which was abandoned after World War I), and several low water bridges that create significant obstructions and require portaging. The location of the old McGuire Mill now serves as a small public park and offers river access.

Naturally occurring rock ledges, outcrops, high bluffs, and in-stream rock formations add visual and paddling interest (Image 5, Image 6). Class 1-3 rapids add excitement and require intermediate technical paddling skills. These rapids do not impact river flow (Image 7).



Image 4. Taylor's Mill.



Image 5. High bluffs.



Image 6. In-stream rock formations.



Image 7. Paddlers cross rapids along the Clinch River.

C. Human Development of Visual Corridor

The 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch contains numerous signs of human development. Multiple houses, cabins, and shelters are visible along the route (Image 8). The homes and shelters are particularly dense in urban areas such as downtown Richlands and Cedar Bluff. Other human interventions include bridges and utility line crossings (see **Section J: Crossings**).



Image 8. Houses along the Clinch River.

D. Historic Features

According to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), there are six historical/cultural features of significance within 1000 feet of each side of this Clinch River section. Three of the sites, including the Old Kentucky Turnpike Historic District, Richlands Historic District, and Tazewell Avenue Historic District, are of national significance.

All of the sites, with the exception of the Richlands Historic District, are visible from the river. The sites therefore add to the cultural experience. More details about these features are below:

- (1) Clinch Valley Roller Mills (Banes-Higginbotham Mill/Grist Mill Restaurant)
This building is on the official Cedar Bluff town seal. It was first built in the late 1850s and possibly rebuilt after an 1884 fire. The two story, three-bay, frame mill has extensive, late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century shed-roofed additions to the north (Image 9).¹
- (2) McGuire-Perry House
This late-nineteenth-century house is a two-story, central-passage-plan frame house with contemporary accessory buildings including a framed two-room servants' house, granary, barn, and corn crib, as well as the site of an outbuilding (Image 10).²
- (3) Naph Whittaker House
This late Victorian house, built circa 1895, was the residence of Naph Whittaker, a railroad engineer. It is one-and-a-half-stories with a double-front gable roof, weatherboard sheathing, and wood shingled gables. It has a wrap-around porch supported by Tuscan columns.³
- (4) Old Kentucky Turnpike Historic District
This district is located on both sides of the Clinch River in the Town of Cedar Bluff, at the mouth of Indian Creek. It extends up a steeply sloping bluff on one side of the town. The district encompasses the Cedar Bluff High School and a group of houses on College Hill located to the north. The district also includes densely settled lots along the Old Kentucky Turnpike, open land on the opposite side of Indian Creek, the historic Clinch Valley Roller Mills at the creek mouth, and the setting of the McGuire-Perry House on the south side of the Clinch River.⁴
- (5) Richlands Historic District
This district encompasses approximately nineteen blocks in the center of town with 96 primary buildings and 10 outbuildings. All but fifteen of these buildings contribute to the historic district. It is approximately 55 percent residential and 45 percent commercial, and includes three churches. Architectural styles include late Victorian, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, American Bungalow, American Craftsman, and commercial.⁵

¹ *Old Kentucky Turnpike National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 184-0001*

² *Old Kentucky Turnpike National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 184-0001*

³ *Richlands Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 148-5014*

⁴ *Old Kentucky Turnpike National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 184-0001*

⁵ *Richlands Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 148-5014*

(6) Tazewell Avenue Historic District

This district encompasses 70 contributing buildings in a primarily residential section of the Town of Richlands. Most of the buildings were built between 1900 and 1960. They are modestly-scaled brick and frame dwellings reflecting popular architectural styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow. Notable non-residential buildings include the former Pentecostal Holiness Church, former First Baptist Church, Barker Youth Center (1955), Nassif Building (circa 1945), and Masonic Hall and Jenkins Cleaners Building (circa 1930).⁶



Image 9. Historic Clinch Valley Roller Mills.



Image 10. Historic McGuire-Perry House.

⁶ *Tazewell Avenue Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. VDHR# 148-5020*

E. Landscape

The Clinch is part of the ridge and valley physiographic province, a landscape characterized by long, parallel, narrow, even-crested ridges rising above intervening valleys of varying size.

The studied 30.3 mile portion of the Clinch is near the river's headwaters. Views along this section offer variety: forested hills, rock bluffs, and open fields with vistas of nearby mountains and urban environments. This section of the Clinch River is characterized by a patchwork of forest and pastureland that transitions into a more urban environment as it flows through the towns of Cedar Bluff and Richlands (Image 9, Image 10). This is an intimate corridor with ample canopy, which contributes to a wide range of views (Image 11, Image 12).



Image 11. Exceptional view along the Clinch.



Image 12. Clinch River in downtown Richlands.

F. Quality of Fishery

The Clinch River contains more species of fish than any other river in Virginia. According to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) 2018 Clinch River report, the Clinch also supports one of only two sauger populations in the state. The report adds that:

“Overall, the smallmouth bass population in the Clinch River should provide good fishing opportunities for anglers targeting this species. Good numbers of quality and preferred-size fish are available, although the size structure is somewhat smaller than that seen on other Virginia rivers.”

Native gamefish in the river include smallmouth bass, spotted bass, walleye, and sauger. Other potential gamefish populations include largemouth bass, rock bass, redbreast sunfish, longear sunfish, bluegill, musky, black crappie, and freshwater drum.

The studied 30.3 mile portion offers good fishing opportunities. However, because the section is near the river's headwaters, the fish populations may be less diverse than those downstream.

G. Special Natural Flora and Fauna

In addition to having rich species diversity of fish, the Clinch River is also home to about 50 species of mussels. This is more mussel species than any other river in the world.

The 30.3 mile river segment attracts diverse populations of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and insects. Sightings of bear, deer, turkey, rabbit, and quail are relatively common.

Species observed during the field study included blue heron, green heron, wood duck, kingfisher, scarlet tanager, western tanager, rufous towhee, Canadian geese, mallard, osprey, snapping turtle, and beaver (Image 13).



Image 13. Great blue heron rookery along the Clinch River.

Species with Conservation Status

The 30.3 mile river segment has 23 species with state-level or national-level conservation status. The following information was provided by the DCR Natural Heritage Program. For species ranking definitions (G1, G2, etc.), please see **Appendix A**.

(1) Bluespar Darter/ *Etheostoma meadiae*

G4/S2

The bluespar darter is a small fish (typically less than 2 inches) found in medium to large streams with silty sand to fine gravel substrates and slow to moderate currents. It occurs in the Clinch and Powell River systems above Norris Reservoir in Tennessee and Virginia (Image 14).



Image 14. Bluespar darter © N. Burkhead & R. Jenkins, DGIF

(2) Mirror Shiner/ *Notropis spectrunculus*

G4/S2

The mirror shiner is a small species of fish (1.5-2 inches) that is found in clear, cold, rocky creeks and streams in the Upper Tennessee River drainage in Virginia (Image 15).



Image 15. Mirror shiner © Noel M. Burkhead, U.S. Geological Survey

(3) Ohio Lamprey/ *Ichthyomyzon bdellium*

G3G4/S2

The Ohio lamprey is one of two native parasitic species. It is typically 10-14 inches long. Spawning adults are found in small, clear streams with sand or gravel bottoms. Juveniles are found in medium to large streams with soft substrate. Non-spawning adults are found in large bodies of water (Image 16).



Image 16. Ohio lamprey © Uland Thomas

(4) Clinch Sculpin/ *Cottus sp.4*

G1G2/S1S2

The clinch sculpin is a small species of fish (2-3 inches) that is endemic to the upper Clinch system. Its preferred habitat is large gravel, rocky substrate in the runs and riffles of small, clean streams. It avoids silted areas and feeds on aquatic insects, tiny crustaceans, small fish, and some vegetation (Image 17).



Image 17. Clinch sculpin © Virginia Tech EFISH

- (5) Purple Bean/ *Villosa perpurpurea*
G1/S1/LE/LE

The purple bean is a freshwater mussel that is mainly found in southwestern Virginia and northeastern Tennessee. It is a filter feeder and is found in shallow waters (under three feet) with moderate to strong currents and coarse sandy/gravel substrate (Image 18).



Image 18. Purple bean © Virginia Tech FMCC

- (6) Tennessee Clubshell/ *Pleurobema oviforme*
G2G3/S2S3

The Tennessee clubshell is endemic to the Cumberland Plateau Region of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. It is often found in riffles or shoals with a sandy/gravel substrate (Image 19).



Image 19. Tennessee clubshell © Craig Stilher, USFWS

- (7) Tennessee Heelsplitter/ *Lasmigonia holstonia*
G3/S1/LE

The Tennessee heelsplitter is a small to medium (3-5 inches) freshwater mussel found in the Ohio and Tennessee River drainages. It is found in small or medium streams (sometimes even in very small streams where no other mussels occur) with some current and sandy/gravel substrates (Image 20).



Image 20. Tennessee heelsplitter © NCWRC

- (8) Fluted Kidneyshell/ *Ptychobranchus subtentum*
G2/S2/LE/LE

The fluted kidneyshell is a large freshwater mussel (3-5 inches) found in the Cumberland and Tennessee River systems. Shell color ranges from yellow-green to brown with wide green markings (Image 21).



Image 21. Fluted kidneyshell © M.C. Barhart

- (9) Rough Rabbitsfoot/ *Quadrula cylindrical strigillata*,
G3G4/S2/LE/LE

Rough rabbitsfoot is a large freshwater mussel (approximately 5 inches) found in sections of the Clinch and Powell Rivers. Its habitat is the clear waters of medium and large-sized rivers, and in particular, the riffles and shoals along banks with swiftly moving currents (Image 22).



Image 22. Rough rabbitsfoot © Dick Biggins, USFWS

- (10) Fine-rayed Pigtoe/ *Fusconaia cuneolus*
G1/S1/LE/LE

Fine-rayed pigtoe is a medium-sized freshwater mussel (up to 3.5 inches) that is found in portions of the Clinch and Powell Rivers, North Fork of the Holston River, and Paint Rock River. It is found in moderate to strong current streams with firm cobble or gravel substrates (Image 23).



Image 23. Fine-rayed pigtoe © Jim Godwin

- (11) Oyster Mussel/ *Epioblasma capsaeformis*
G1/S1/LE/LE

The oyster mussel occurs throughout the Clinch and Power river drainages of southwestern Virginia and northeast Tennessee. It is approximately 2 inches in length and yellow-green in color. Its habitat is shoals with silt-free gravel and sand substrates (Image 24).



Image 24. Oyster mussel © Virginia Tech

- (12) Tennessee Pigtoe/ *Pleuroaia gibberum*
G2G3/S2

The Tennessee pigtoe is a medium size (2.3 inches) freshwater mussel that is endemic to the Tennessee River basin. Extant populations exist in the Clinch, Little, Nolichucky, Powell, Little Tennessee, Elk, Duck and Buffalo Rivers. It occurs in riffles and shoals with sandy/gravel substrates and moderate to swift currents **Error! Reference source not found.**



Image 25. Tennessee pigtoe © NCWRC

- (13) Slippershell Mussel/ *Alasmidonta viridis*
G4G5/S1/LE

The slippershell mussel is a small freshwater mussel (1.4 inches) that is found in Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. It is critically imperiled in North Carolina, New York, Iowa, Arkansas, Alabama, and Virginia. It is typically found in creeks and headwaters of rivers and prefers sandy gravel substrates (Image 26).



Image 26. Slippershell mussel © DCA

- (14) Shiny Pigtoe/ *Fusconaia cor*
G1/S1/LE/LE

The shiny pigtoe ranges from 2-3 inches and often has a subtriangular yellowish-brown shell with prominent dark green to blackish rays. It is found in the Clinch, Powell, and North Fork Holston Rivers in Virginia, as well the Elk River in Tennessee and the Paint Rock River in Alabama. It occurs in fords, shoals and other shallow areas of rivers with moderate to swift currents (Image 27).



Image 27. Shiny pigtoe © Jim Godwin

- (15) Spiny Riversnail/ *Io fluvialis*
G2/S2/LT

The spiny riversnail is a gill-breathing freshwater snail found in the Clinch, Powell, and Holston River systems of southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee. It can grow to a length of 19.5 inches making it one of the largest species of aquatic snails in North America. It is found in shoals and riffles with strong currents and feeds on algae and organic debris found on river rocks (Image 28).



Image 28. Spiny riversnail © Dick Biggins, USFWS

(16) Little-winged Pearlymussel/ *Pegias fabula*

G1/S1/LE/LE

The little-winged pearlymussel is a small freshwater mussel with a maximum length of approximately 1.5 inches. It is found in clear, cool small to medium-sized streams with moderate to strong currents. It is found in limited sections of the Tennessee and Cumberland river systems (Image 29).



Image 29. Little-winged pearlymussel © Virginia Tech

(17) Cumberland Bean/ *Villosa trabalis*

G1/SX/LE/LE

The cumberland bean is a small to medium sized (2.2 inches) freshwater mussel that is found in small streams and rivers with strong currents and coarse sandy/gravel substrate. It is currently found in limited sections of the Cumberland and upper Tennessee River systems (Image 30).



Image 30. Cumberland bean © USFWS

(18) Elktoe/ *Alasmidonta marginata*

G4/S1S2

The elktoe is a medium sized freshwater mussel (3 inches) whose boundary ranges from New York to Virginia on the east and North Dakota to Oklahoma on the west. It is most commonly found in small shallow rivers with moderately fast currents and riffles. It is also present in some medium to large size streams (Image 31).



Image 31. Elktoe © Dick Biggins, USFWS

(19) Tan Riffleshell/ *Epioblasma florentina aureola*

G1T1/S1/LE/LE

The tan riffleshell is a small to medium size freshwater mussel (2.5 inches) that is brown to yellow in color with numerous green rays. It is found in the headwaters and small and medium-sized streams of the Tennessee River system. The only known reproducing population exists in the Clinch River. The riffleshell is found in shallow riffles and shoals with coarse sand/gravel substrates and in some silty substrates (Image 32).



Image 32. Tan riffleshell © Gary Peeples, USFWS

(20) Slabside Pearlymussel/ *Pleuronaia dolabelloides*

G2/S2/LE/LE

The slabside pearlymussel is a medium size freshwater mussel (3.3 inches) found in large creeks and small to medium-sized rivers. It prefers shallow waters with sandy/gravel substrates and a moderate current. Its distribution is restricted to sections of the Cumberland and Tennessee River systems (Image 33).



Image 33. Slabside pearlymussel © Bretty Ostby, USFWS

(21) Onyx Rocksnail/ *Leptoxis praerosa*⁷

G5/S2

The onyx rocksnail is a freshwater snail found on algae-covered rocks in strong currents of unpolluted streams. It is found in the Ohio River, Cumberland River, Duck River, and Tennessee River and some of these rivers' lower tributaries (Image 34).



Image 34. *Onyx rocksnail* © Chris Lukhaup

(22) Canby's Mountain-lover/ *Paxistima canbyi*

G2/S2

Canby's mountain-lover is a small, evergreen shrub (16 inches) that has small green flowers. It occurs in rocky well-drained upland woods on west and northwest facing slopes. It ranges from Pennsylvania and Ohio to the north, and to North Carolina and Eastern Kentucky to the south and west (Image 35).



Image 35. *Canby's Mountain Lover* © Thomas G. Barnes, U.S. Department of Agriculture

(23) Crested Sedge/ *Carex cristatella*

G5/S1

Crested sedge is a 1.5-2 inch facultative wetland species that actively grows in the spring and fall when soil temperatures are cool. A facultative wetland species is one that usually occurs in wetlands but is occasionally found in non-wetlands. It is found in wet meadows, wet prairies, swamps, along streams, around ponds and in roadside ditches. It is found throughout Virginia (Image 36).



Image 36. *Crested sedge* © Doug Goldman, U.S. Department of Agriculture

⁷ The Onyx Rocksnail was a significant species within the segment of the river studied, according to the DCR Natural Heritage Program's assessment done in 2014. The species was not listed, however, in the program's 2019 assessment.

H. Water Quality

Visibility through the water column is mostly clear (Image 37). The water is only periodically turbid or muddy. This occurs primarily after heavy rains. Tires and other forms of trash are rare in the upper stretches of the river corridor. However, they become more common from Pounding Mill to Richlands (Image 38).

Water quality impairment is not a factor in Virginia Scenic River eligibility. The Scenic River evaluation focuses on visual aspects: namely, turbidity and the presence of rubbish. The following description of the Clinch's impaired waters is provided for informational purposes.



Image 37. Visibility through the water column along the Clinch River.



Image 38. Trash along the Clinch.

I. Parallel Roads

Roads, including railroads, run parallel to approximately 20 percent of the 30.3 mile section of the river segment. The Norfolk Southern Railway parallels the river from US Highway 460 near Pleasant View Lane to the Tazewell/Russell County line. In addition, numerous small roads and US Highway 460 parallel sections of the river.

Larger roads, such as US Highway 460, reduce the quality of the sights and sounds of the river. The smaller and less traveled roads have less negative impact. Some may even offer benefits to the river's scenic quality, by allowing fishing access and providing passerby views of the river.

J. Crossings

Crossings are roads and power/communication lines that pass over a river. Although crossings reduce the sense of remoteness along a river, they can provide visual and physical access to the water (Image 39).

Most of the crossings in the 30.3 mile section were perpendicular to the river and had limited visual impact on the river experience. In the evaluation, wherever utility and road crossings were located close to one another, the crossings were counted as one instead of two occurrences. The river segment had a total of 57 crossings, for an average of 1.9 crossings per mile.



Image 39. Railroad crossing the Clinch River.

K. Special Features Affecting River Aesthetics

This section of the Clinch River has a variety of views to enjoy, from intimate spaces of a couple of hundred yards to spectacular, long vistas of three to four miles. The long-range views often feature distant mountains surrounded by forest and pastureland. River-goers can see generous buffers and stream canopy along the studied corridor, and hear the sound of water and the call of songbirds.

Periodic rapids, in-stream rock formations, bluffs, and cliffs provide a diverse experience along the river corridor (Image 40, Image 41). Small islands create navigational interest for paddlers, and the historically significant sites (see **Section D: Historic Features**) provide cultural interest.



Image 40. Bluff along the Clinch River.



Image 41. In-stream rock formations.

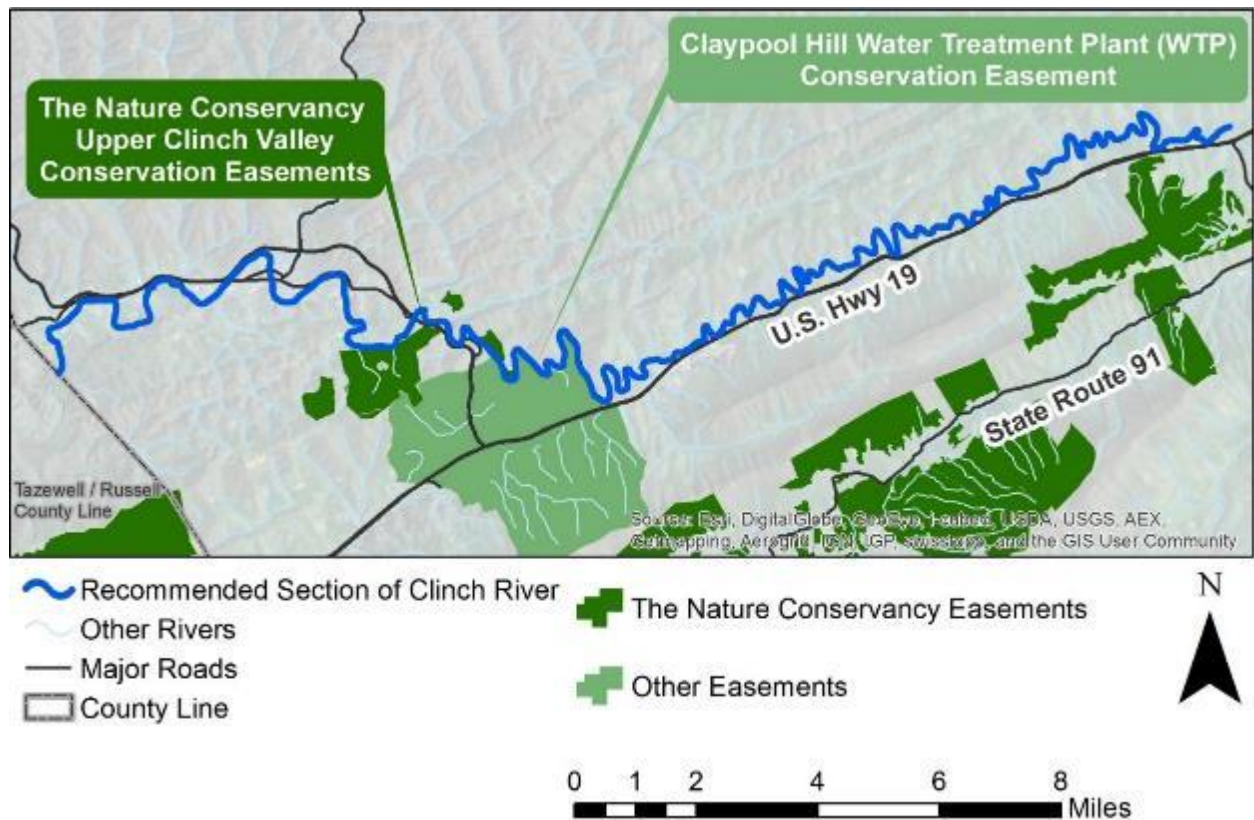
L. Public Recreational Access

Recreationists can paddle the 30.3 mile segment with canoes and kayaks during the wet season. During dry seasons, navigation is hindered, and short in-stream portages are often necessary.

Paddlers and tubers can access the river at public bridge crossings and by permission from private landowners. Public access is located at Old McGuire Mill Dam Park in Cedar Bluff. In addition, there are plans for two public access points in the Town of Richlands, one at Critterville Park and the other at the potential Swinging Bridge Park.

M. Land Conservation

DCR's Natural Heritage Program provides information on managed lands and conservation easements. According to its inventory, the 30.3 mile section of the Clinch has limited protection from development, and about 7.4 percent of the river corridor is under conservation easement (Map 5).



Map 5. Land conservation along the Clinch River segment.

V. LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Lands along the study corridor are primarily in private ownership with only a few conservation easements. Most of the land use is pastureland, forested, or residential.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) concludes that the Clinch River from State Route 693 in Pisgah to the Tazewell/Russell County line at State Route 629, a distance of approximately 30.3 miles, is hereby eligible to be a component of the Virginia Scenic River System. Scenic River designation is warranted because of the aesthetic and recreational qualities of the river section, its environs, and the unique flora and fauna.

Flowing through largely pastoral and forested land, this river segment has a number of interesting aesthetic features including expansive views, rock formations, islands, rapids, and cliffs. Its winding alignment promotes interesting foreground and middleground views. The landscape along the river offers variety: some areas are forestland and feel remote and isolated, while other areas are urbanized.

The Clinch River is one of the nation's most biologically diverse drainage systems. It is home to the largest number of mussel species in the world and more species of fish than any other river in Virginia. The river also harbors one of the nation's highest concentrations of globally rare and imperiled freshwater animals. The 30.3 mile section of the Clinch alone has 23 plant and animal species with state-level or national-level conservation status.

The studied segment also has cultural and recreational value. It features three historical sites of state significance and three of national significance. Public access points are available at McGuire Mill Park in Cedar Bluff and at public bridge crossings. There are plans for two public access points in the Town of Richlands, one at Critterville Park and another at the potential Swinging Bridge Park.

Considering the aspects of this segment of the Clinch River as described in this report, DCR recommends that:

1. The Clinch River from State Route 693 in Pisgah to the Tazewell/Russell County line at State Route 629, a distance of approximately 30.3 miles, receive Virginia Scenic River designation, and
2. The Department of Conservation and Recreation be appointed the Administering Agency.

Proposed legislation for Scenic River designation is provided in **Appendix D**.

VII. CONSERVATION PLAN

The following recommended conservation plan would involve local and state governments, individual and riparian landowners, and local stewardship initiatives.

A. Virginia Scenic River Designation

Designation of the 30.3 mile section of the Clinch would give riparian landowners, local citizens, and local governments a greater voice in the planning and implementation of federal and state projects that might affect the river. For other benefits of Scenic River designation, see **Section B: Benefits of Designation**.

The local government may create a local scenic river advisory committee to advise the local government on the protection or management of the scenic river segment within its jurisdiction. For more information about this process, see *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-401 and § 10.1-406.1.

B. Land Use Plans

The Town of Richlands, Town of Cedar Bluff, and Tazewell County can review their land use plans, to check whether they reflect citizens' recognition, appreciation, and concern for the river and the role it plays in the region's quality of life. Such plans could prioritize the protection of the river and its environs from potential development, or insuring that the development that does occur uses low impact strategies whenever possible.

C. Local and Riparian Landowners

Stewardship by local and riparian landowners has been good over the years. If not for this stewardship, the attributes necessary for inclusion in the Virginia Scenic River System might have been lost. Through continuation of these efforts, the natural and scenic character of the river can be protected.

D. Local Stewardship Initiatives

Several nonprofits are involved in the conservation and recognition of the Clinch River. The following describes a few of them.

The Clinch River Valley Initiative aims to build local economies in Southwest Virginia around the Clinch River. Its activities include championing a Clinch River State Park, developing access points and campgrounds along the river, enhancing water quality, developing environmental education opportunities in the Clinch River watershed, and expanding downtown revitalization and entrepreneurial opportunities in the Clinch River Valley.

The Appalachian Spring Initiative works to create an international awareness of Southwest Virginia as a destination for tourism, and focuses on asset-based economic development related to outdoor recreation, downtown revitalization and small business development.

For further conservation goals, a review of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) data provides additional information on the chemical and benthic qualities of the river.

VIII. ANTICIPATED COST OF DESIGNATION

The only anticipated direct costs as a result of the designation would be those incurred by DCR as a result of its duties as administrator of the river. These costs are estimated to be within \$1,000 per year.

IX. AGENCY COMMENTS/ RESOLUTIONS

A draft report was circulated in 2014 among DCR Divisions, other state agencies, and Tazewell County. See comments and resolutions of support in **Appendix C**.

X. APPENDIX

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Appendix A. Acronyms and Abbreviations

The Act	Scenic Rivers Act, Title 10.1, Chapter 4 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>
CDAC	Community Design Assistance Center
DCR	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
DEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
DHR	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
DGIF	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
VA	Commonwealth of Virginia

Appendix B. Species Ranking Definitions of DCR Natural Heritage

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	FEDERAL STATUS	STATE STATUS
Villosa perpurpurea	Purple Bean	G1	S1	LE	LE

Definitions of Abbreviations used on Natural Heritage Resource Lists

The following ranks are used by DCR to set protection priorities for natural heritage resources. Natural Heritage Resources, or "NHR's," are rare plant and animal species, rare and exemplary natural communities, and significant geologic features. The criterion for ranking NHR's is the number of populations or occurrences, i.e. the number of known distinct localities; the number of individuals in existence at each locality or, if a highly mobile organism (e.g., sea turtles, many birds, and butterflies), the total number of individuals; the quality of the occurrences, the number of protected occurrences; and threats.

- S1** Critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically 5 or fewer populations or occurrences; or very few remaining individuals (<1000).
- S2** Imperiled in the state because of rarity or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the state. Typically 6 to 20 populations or occurrences or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000).
- S3** Vulnerable in the state either because rare and uncommon, or found only in a restricted range (even if abundant at some locations), or because of other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation. Typically 21 to 100 populations or occurrences (1,000 to 3,000).
- S4** Apparently secure; Uncommon but not rare, and usually widespread in the state. Possible cause of long-term concern. Usually >100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.
- S5** Secure; Common, widespread and abundant in the state. Essentially ineradicable under present conditions. Typically with considerably more than 100 populations or occurrences and more than 10,000 individuals.
- S#B** Breeding status of an animal within the state
- S#N** Non-breeding status of animal within the state. Usually applied to winter resident species.
- S#?** Inexact or uncertain numeric rank.
- SH** Possibly extirpated (Historical). Historically known from the state, but not verified for an extended period, usually > 15 years; this rank is used primarily when inventory has been attempted recently.
- S#S#** Range rank; A numeric range rank, (e.g. S2S3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty about the exact status of the element. Ranges cannot skip more than one rank.
- SU** Unrankable; Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.
- SNR** Unranked; state rank not yet assessed.
- SX** Presumed extirpated from the state. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.
- SNA** A conservation status rank is not applicable because the element is not a suitable target for conservation activities

Global Ranks are similar, but refer to a species' rarity throughout its total range. Global ranks are denoted with a "G" followed by a character. Note GX means the element is presumed extinct throughout its range, not relocated despite intensive searches of historical sites/appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered. A "Q" in a rank indicates that a taxonomic question concerning that species exists. Ranks for subspecies are denoted with a "T". The global and state ranks combined (e.g. G2/S1) give an instant grasp of a species' known rarity.

These ranks should not be interpreted as legal designations.

- G1** Extremely rare and critically imperiled with 5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals; or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extinction.
- G2** Very rare and imperiled with 6 to 20 occurrences or few remaining individuals; or because of some factor(s) making it vulnerable to extinction.
- G3** Either very rare and local throughout its range or found locally (even abundantly at some of its locations) in a restricted range; or vulnerable to extinction because of other factors. Usually fewer than 100 occurrences are documented.
- G4** Common and apparently secure globally, although it may be rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- G5** Very common and demonstrably secure globally, although it may be rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- GH** Formerly part of the world's fauna with some expectation that it may be rediscovered; generally applies to species that have not been verified for an extended period (usually >15 years) and for which some inventory has been attempted recently.
- GX** Believed to be extinct throughout its range with virtually no likelihood of rediscovery.
- GU** Possibly rare, but status uncertain and more data needed.
- G?** Unranked, or, if following a numerical ranking, rank uncertain (e.g., G3?).
- G_G_** The rank is uncertain, but considered to be within the indicated range (e.g., G2G4) of ranks (also, T_T_).
- G_Q** Taxon has a questionable taxonomic assignment (e.g., G3Q) and may prove to be invalid upon further study.
- G_T_** Signifies the rank of a subspecies (e.g., G5T1 would apply to a subspecies if the species is demonstrably secure globally (G5) but the subspecies warrants a rank of T1, critically imperiled.)

FEDERAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses the standard abbreviations for Federal endangerment developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Endangered Species and Habitat Conservation.

- LE** Listed Endangered
- LT** Listed Threatened
- PE** Proposed Endangered
- PT** Proposed Threatened
- C** Candidate (formerly C1 - Candidate category 1)
- E(S/A)** Treat as endangered because of similarity of appearance
- T(S/A)** Treat as threatened because of similarity of appearance
- SOC** Species of Concern species that merit special concern (not a regulatory category)

STATE LEGAL STATUS

The Division of Natural Heritage uses similar abbreviations for State endangerment:

LE	Listed Endangered
PE	Proposed Endangered
SC	Special Concern - animals that merit special concern according to VDGIF (not a regulatory category)
LT	Listed Threatened
PT	Proposed Threatened
C	Candidate

For information on the laws pertaining to threatened or endangered species, please contact:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for all **FEDERALLY** listed species;
- Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Plant Protection Bureau for **STATE** listed plants and insects; and
- Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for all other **STATE** listed animals

CONSERVATION SITES RANKING

Rank is a rating of the significance of the conservation site based on presence and number of natural heritage resources; on a scale of 1-5, 1 being most significant. Sites are also coded to reflect the presence/absence of federally/state listed species:

Conservation Site Ranks

B1	Outstanding significance
B2	Very High significance
B3	High significance
B4	Moderate significance
B5	Of general Biodiversity significance

Legal Status of Sites

FL	Federally listed species present
SL	State listed species present
NL	No listed species present

Appendix C. Letters, Comments, and Other Support

1. Letters Requesting Designation

DEC - 3 2013

TOWN OF RICHLANDS
200 WASHINGTON SQUARE
RICHLANDS, VA 24641
PHONE (276) 964-2566 • FAX (276) 963-2889

November 26, 2013

Ms. Lynn Crump
Environmental Program Planner
DCR Planning & Recreation Resources
600 East Main Street 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Scenic River Study

Dear Ms. Crump:

The Richlands Town Council, at their November 12th council meeting, gave approval to pursue having a study performed to determine if the Clinch River qualifies for the scenic river status.

The Town of Richlands, located in Tazewell County, is hopeful this would bring tourism and recognition to this area. The area considered for the scenic river would consist of 6.2 river miles from the east to the west end of town.

There is the possibility that the Town of Cedar Bluff, located at the east end of the Town of Richlands, will join in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Tim Taylor
Town Manager

Cc: Mayor and Council Members
Jim McGlothlin, Town Manager, Cedar Bluff
Jim Spencer, Tazewell County Administrator

Town of Cedar Bluff

BOX 907
CEDAR BLUFF, VA 24608

PHONE 276/964-4889



JAN 22 2014

January 17, 2014

Danette M. Poole
Division Director
Va. DCR Planning and Recreation Resources
600 East Main St., 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Scenic River Program

Dear Ms. Poole:

At the regular meeting held on January 14, 2014, the Cedar Bluff Town Council voted unanimously to request a study to see if the Clinch River in Cedar Bluff qualifies for Scenic River designation. This section of the Clinch River is approximately 3 miles in length and adjoins the Clinch River located in the Town of Richlands which has been included in a separate request for study.

Enclosed you will find a copy of Section 46.8 of The Town of Cedar Bluff Comprehensive Plan addressing waterways and a copy of the Town of Cedar Bluff Strategic Plan.

The contact information for the Town of Cedar Bluff representative is:

James K. McGlothlin
Town Manager
276-964-4889
managercedarbluff@roadrunner.com

Thank you very much for your assistance with this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James K. McGlothlin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of a large, hand-drawn circle.

James K. McGlothlin
Town Manager

Cc: Timothy Taylor, Town of Richlands

Tazewell County Virginia
"Bound For Progress"

D. Michael Hymes, Supervisor
Southern District

Seth R. White, Vice Chairman
Northwestern District

J. Garland Roberts, Supervisor
Northern District

Charles A. Stacy, Chairman
Eastern District

John M. Absher, Supervisor
Western District

March 13, 2014

James H. Spencer, III
County Administrator

Ms. Lynn Crump
Environmental Program Planner
DCR Planning & Recreation Resources
600 East Main Street 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Scenic River Study

Dear Ms. Crump:

The Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, at their March 4, 2014 meeting gave approval to pursue having a study performed to determine if the Clinch River qualifies for the scenic river designation through the Department of Conservation & Recreation.

We will be joining with the towns of Cedar Bluff and Richlands to request your office conduct this study. If river conditions allow, we would like for the County portion of the study to begin at the Pisgah area, near the Crab Orchard Museum (Route 460 & Pisgah Road intersection). If conditions are not favorable to starting in that location, the alternative launch point could be Taylors Mill, Route 637. The study would continue to the eastern limits of Cedar Bluff.

I have been in contact with Rod Cury, Town of Richlands, about the boat and guide that you will need. He has secured the boat and is in the process of securing a guide for the study. We have discussed your lodging with Crab Orchard Museum, who has a guest cottage that they rent out. It is a four room cottage with two bedrooms (one queen & two twin beds), living room and kitchen. If this would work for you and your group, we can reserve this for you. If you need more beds, we will need to use a different location. You can let me know when you have a firm date for arrival and the number of people who will be traveling with you.

We are looking forward to your visit and the tourism opportunities it could bring to Tazewell County!

Sincerely,



Patricia Green
Assistant County Administrator

108 East Main Street • Tazewell, Virginia 24651 • (276) 385-1200 • Fax (276) 988-4246
www.tazewellcounty.org

2. DCR Designation Support Letters

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources



Clyde E. Crisman
Director

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-6124

5/16/2014

Tim Taylor
Town Manager, Town of Richlands
200 Washington Square
Richlands, VA 24641

Re: Scenic River Study of a Clinch River Segment within the Town of Richlands

Dear Tim Taylor:

At your request on behalf of the Town of Richlands Town Council, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff conducted a study of the Clinch River segment in Town of Richlands. Based on the study, the 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River from State Route 693 to the Tazewell/Russell County line has been found to qualify for scenic designation.

The field evaluation was performed on April 15, 2014. DCR staff, along with support from the Virginia Tech Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC), and local citizen, Joe McCracken, paddled the study corridor. Our staff appreciates the support from local representatives who guided the trip.

Should the Town Council wish to continue with the designation process, please notify Lynn Crump of my staff as soon as possible. The Council will ultimately need to pass a resolution of support for extending the designation of the Clinch River.

Additionally, the Town will need to contact its local General Assembly representatives to request that they serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the designation. The attached draft legislation should prove helpful in this regard.

The Board of Conservation and Recreation will hear the proposal for this designation at its next meeting and consider supporting endorsement for the designation of the Clinch River as described in this letter and the attachment.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding your interest in pursuing the formal designation. Lastly, please send this office a copy of the Town Council resolution of support. We anticipate that the necessary requirements can be completed in a relatively short time so that designation legislation can be introduced in the 2014 General Assembly.

*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

If you would like DCR staff to participate in any general or public informational meetings, please let us know. We are happy to assist. We appreciate your interest in the Scenic Rivers Program and look forward to working with you to facilitate the designation of the Clinch River.

If you have any question, please contact Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner, 804-786-5054, or Lynn.Crump@dcr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Danette Poole, Division Director
Planning and Recreation Resources

Attachment

C: James H. Spencer III, Tazewell County Administrator
Jim McGlothlin, Cedar Bluff, Town Manager
Patricia Green, Assistant County Administrator, Tazewell County
Rod Cury, Town of Richlands, Town Council Vice Mayor
Todd Day, Town of Tazewell, Town Manager
Lynn M. Crump, DCR, Environmental Programs Planner



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-6124

5/16/2014

Jim McGlothlin
Town Manager, Town of Cedar Bluff
115 Central Ave.
Cedar Bluff, VA 24609

Re: Scenic River Study of a Clinch River Segment within the Town of Cedar Bluff

Dear Jim McGlothlin:

At your request on behalf of the Town of Cedar Bluff Town Council, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff conducted a study of the Clinch River segment in Town of Cedar Bluff. Based on the study, the 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River from State Route 693 to the Tazewell/Russell County line has been found to qualify for scenic designation.

The field evaluation was performed on April 15, 2014. DCR staff, along with support from the Virginia Tech Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC), and local citizen, Joe McCracken, paddled the study corridor. Our staff appreciates the support from local representatives who guided the trip.

Should the Town Council wish to continue with the designation process, please notify Lynn Crump of my staff as soon as possible. The Council will ultimately need to pass a resolution of support for extending the designation of the Clinch River.

Additionally, the Town will need to contact its local General Assembly representatives to request that they serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the designation. The attached draft legislation should prove helpful in this regard.

The Board of Conservation and Recreation will hear the proposal for this designation at its next meeting and consider supporting endorsement for the designation of the Clinch River as described in this letter and the attachment.

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*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

If you would like DCR staff to participate in any general or public informational meetings, please let us know. We are happy to assist. We appreciate your interest in the Scenic Rivers Program and look forward to working with you to facilitate the designation of the Clinch River.

If you have any question, please contact Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner, 804-786-5054, or Lynn.Crump@dcr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Danette Poole, Division Director
Planning and Recreation Resources

Attachment

C: James H. Spencer III, Tazewell County Administrator
Patricia Green, Tazewell County, Assistant County Administrator
Tim Taylor, Town of Richlands, Town Manager
Rod Cury, Town of Richlands, Town Council Vice Mayor
Todd Day, Town of Tazewell, Town Manager
Lynn M. Crump, DCR, Environmental Programs Planner



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-6124

5/16/2014

Patricia Green
Assistant County Administrator
108 East Main Street
Tazewell, VA 24651

Re: Scenic River Study of a Clinch River Segment within Tazewell County

Dear Patricia Green:

At your request on behalf of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff conducted a study of the Clinch River segment in Tazewell County. Based on the study, the 30.3 mile segment of the Clinch River from State Route 693 to the Tazewell/Russell County line has been found to qualify for scenic designation.

The field evaluation was performed on April 15, 2014. DCR staff, along with support from the Virginia Tech Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC), and local citizen, Joe McCracken, paddled the study corridor. Our staff appreciates the support from local representatives who guided the trip.

Should the Board of Supervisors wish to continue with the designation process, please notify Lynn Crump of my staff as soon as possible. The Board will ultimately need to pass a resolution of support for extending the designation of the Clinch River.

Additionally, the County will need to contact its local General Assembly representatives to request that they serve as patrons for the legislation that will codify the designation. The attached draft legislation should prove helpful in this regard.

The Board of Conservation and Recreation will hear the proposal for this designation at its next meeting and consider supporting endorsement for the designation of the Clinch River as described in this letter and the attachment.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding your interest in pursuing the formal designation. Lastly, please send this office a copy of the Board resolution of support. We anticipate that the necessary requirements can be completed in a relatively short time so that designation legislation can be introduced in the 2014 General Assembly.

*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

If you would like DCR staff to participate in any general or public informational meetings, please let us know. We are happy to assist. We appreciate your interest in the Scenic Rivers Program and look forward to working with you to facilitate the designation of the Clinch River.

If you have any question, please contact Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner, 804-786-5054, or Lynn.Crump@dcv.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



Danette Peole, Division Director
Planning and Recreation Resources

Attachment

- C: James H. Spencer III, Tazewell County Administrator
- Jim McGlothlin, Cedar Bluff, Town Manager
- Tim Taylor, Town of Richlands, Town Manager
- Rod Cury, Town of Richlands, Town Council Vice Mayor
- Todd Day, Town of Tazewell, Town Manager
- Lynn M. Crump, DCR, Environmental Programs Planner

3. Agency Comments



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Street address: 629 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
Mailing address: P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218
www.deq.virginia.gov

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

David K. Paylor
Director

(804) 698-4000
1-800-592-5482

November 25, 2014

Ms. Lynn Crump, RLA
Environmental Programs Planner
DCR - Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
600 E. Main Street; 17th Floor
Richmond VA 23219

RE: Proposed Scenic River Designations – Clinch and Dan Rivers

Dear Ms. Crump:

Thank you for requesting input from the State Water Control Board (Board) on two Scenic River designation proposals for portions of the Dan and Clinch Rivers, per a November 10, 2014 email from Robbie Rhur in your Department. DEQ has reviewed the reports and DEQ files on the two proposals. Our files indicate the following:

- **Dan River:** The Dan River proposal is in Halifax County from the North Carolina state line to the confluence of Aarons Creek, a distance of approximately 38.6 miles, and is identified as Sections 2 and 2a of the Roanoke Basin in the VA Water Quality Standards Regulation (9VAC25-260-450). Section 2a is the Potable Water Supply (PWS) for the Town of South Boston. It is not anticipated this PWS designation will impact the proposal for Scenic River status.

Contrary to the statement on page 15 of the Dan River Report ("*fully supports aquatic life, wildlife, and recreational uses*"), this stretch of the river is impaired for the recreational use due to exceedance of bacteria water quality standards. In addition, the VA Department of Health has issued fish consumption advisories due to PCB and mercury contamination in this section of the Dan River.

There is one VPDES municipal discharge to the proposed Scenic River section in the Town of South Boston (Maple Ave WWTP – VA0020362); there are no known issues with existing VPDES for this proposed Scenic River designation.

- **Clinch River:** The Clinch River proposal is from State Route 693 in Tazewell County through the towns of Richlands and Cedar Bluff to the Tazewell/Russell County line, a

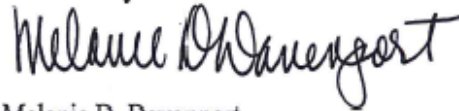
distance of approximately 30.3 miles, and is identified as Sections 2, 2b, and 2c of the Tennessee and Big Sandy River Basins (Clinch River Subbasin) in the VA Water Quality Standards Regulation (9VAC25-260-500). Section 2b is the Potable Water Supply (PWS) for the Raven-Doran area and Town of Richlands. Section 2c is the PWS for the Town of Tazewell. It is not anticipated these PWS designations will impact the proposal for Scenic River status.

The Scenic River report correctly states there are recreational use impairments in the proposed section.

There is one VPDES municipal discharge to the proposed Scenic River section in Richlands (Richlands Regional WWTF – VA0021199); there are no known issues with existing VPDES for this proposed Scenic River designation.

Based on the reports and the above information, General Assembly designation of the proposed sections of the Dan and Clinch Rivers as Scenic Rivers will not impact existing Board programs. Therefore, DEQ, acting on behalf of the Board, has no comment on the proposed designations.

Sincerely,



Melanie D. Davenport
Water Division Director

C: Eleanore Daub – DEQ/Water Permits
David Whitehurst – DEQ/WQ Standards
Cindy Berndt – DEQ/Policy
Robert Weld – DEQ/BRRO Reg. Dir.
Allan Newman – DEQ/SWRO Reg. Dir.

4. Resolutions of Support

Town of Cedar Bluff



RESOLUTION

Scenic River Designation
Clinch River, Cedar Bluff, Virginia

JUN 20 2017

WHEREAS, the CLINCH RIVER possesses substantial environmental, historical, cultural, and scenic attributes; and

WHEREAS, the Clinch River meets state criteria for inclusion into the scenic river system; and

WHEREAS, scenic river designation is in the public interest,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the TOWN OF CEDAR BLUFF recommends to the Governor and General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia scenic river designation of an approximate 3 mile section of the Clinch River between the Eastern corporate limits and the Western corporate limits of the Town of Cedar Bluff, to be contiguous with a segment of the Clinch River in neighboring jurisdictions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cedar Bluff Town Council recommends that the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation be designated the administering agency.


MAYOR

ATTEST: 
DATE: June 13, 2017



RESOLUTION

**Clinch River Scenic River
Town of Richlands, Tazewell County, VA
R-2017-06-01**

WHEREAS, the Clinch River possesses substantial environmental, historical, cultural, and scenic attributes; and

WHEREAS, the Clinch River meets state criteria for inclusion into the scenic river system; and

WHEREAS, scenic river designation is in the public interest.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council of the Town of Richlands recommends to the Governor and the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia scenic river designation of approximately 5.5-mile section of the Clinch River between the eastern corporation limits and western corporation limits, to be contiguous with a segment of the Clinch River in neighboring jurisdictions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Richlands Town Council recommends that the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation be designated the administering agency.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Richlands Town Council directs the Planning Commission to include this design and protect it, while including it into the Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Richlands.



Jannis White, Mayor


Connie Allen, Clerk

VIRGINIA: AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF TAZEWELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA HELD AT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, LOCATED AT 197 MAIN STREET, IN THE TOWN OF TAZEWELL, VIRGINIA, ON THE 7TH DAY OF MAY, 2019, THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED, UPON A MOTION AND SECOND:

Ordinance No.: _____

Date: May 7, 2019

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE CLINCH RIVER IN TAZEWELL COUNTY BE INCLUDED IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA'S DESIGNATION OF THE "CLINCH STATE SCENIC RIVER SYSTEM."

WHEREAS, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors (hereafter, "the Board") advocates for diverse recreational activities for the benefit of residents and tourists;

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes Tazewell County's unique scenic beauty, particularly along the Clinch River, is one of our residents' greatest assets; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires that the General Assembly recognize the Clinch River in Tazewell County as one of the Commonwealth's Scenic Rivers;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors for Tazewell County, Virginia, does hereby **RESOLVE** to request that the General Assembly and the Governor amend Section 10.1-410.2 of the Code of Virginia to include 30.3 miles of the Clinch River extending east from the Russell County line to its terminus as the "Clinch State Scenic River". The Board further directs that the Clerk of the Board provide a copy of this resolution to our Legislators and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

It is so **RESOLVED** this 7th day of May, 2019.

RECORDED VOTE:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

MEMBERS ABSENT:


AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Asbury, Hackworth, Hines, Lester, Stacy
NONE
Asbury, Hackworth, Hines, Lester, Stacy
NONE
NONE

ATTEST:


C. Eric Young
County Administrator


T. Travis Hackworth
Chairman – Board of Supervisors

Appendix D. Proposed Legislation for the *Code of Virginia*

§ 10.1-410.2. Clinch State Scenic River.

A. The Clinch River in Tazewell County from Route 693 in Pisgah to the Tazewell/Russell County line, a distance of approximately 30.3 miles, and in Russell County from its confluence with the Little River to the Nash Ford Bridge at mile 279.5, a distance of approximately 20 miles and including its tributary, Big Cedar Creek from the confluence to mile 5.8 near Lebanon, is hereby designated a component of the Virginia Scenic River System.