



REGION **15**  
*Richmond*

*T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge, affectionately known as the T-Pott | Hargreaves/Richmond Regional Planning District Commission*



James River Railroad Bridge, Richmond | David Nguyen

### Introduction

The Richmond Recreational Planning Region includes Charles City, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Goochland, New Kent and Powhatan counties, the city of Richmond and the town of Ashland. The region is in the center of Virginia’s urban crescent, which stretches from Northern Virginia to the Hampton Roads metropolitan areas. A mix of urban and rural jurisdictions, the area is experiencing rapid growth.

### Regional Focus

**Table 15.1 Most-Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

Richmond Recreational Planning Region

activity	% of households in	
	region	state
Natural areas	55	54
Parks	52	49
Trails	42	43
Historic areas	42	39
Water access	40	43
Scenic drives (driving for pleasure)	28	29
Playing fields, sports and golf facilities	25	22

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey

**Table 15.2 Top 10 Outdoor Recreation Activities By Participation**

Richmond Recreational Planning Region

activity	% household
Walking for pleasure	73
Visiting natural areas	68
Visiting parks (local, state & national)	66
Driving for pleasure	61
Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach	54
Swimming/outdoor pool	52
Viewing the water	45
Outdoor festivals (music festivals, outdoor-themed festivals, extreme sports festivals, etc.)	40
Swimming/beach/lake river (open water)	39
Visiting gardens/arboretums	38

Source: 2017 Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey. Visit [www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop) to view regional participation rates for more than 100 activities.

### Regional Featured Projects

To be considered a regional featured project, a project must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Has statewide or regional significance.
- Addresses top statewide or regional needs identified by the Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey.
- Has involvement and support from multiple jurisdictions in the region.
- Able to be initiated within the next five years.

Featured projects for the Richmond region:

- Develop the East Coast Greenway and connections to county trail systems
- Develop the Regional Ride Center at Pocahontas State Park and connect to the James River Park system trails as well as connect to the Chesterfield bikeways and trails system.
- Develop the Trolley Line Trail.
- Develop the James River Heritage Trail.
- Expand the Virginia Capital Trail to include trail connectors.
- Develop and improve Hanover County Park.
- Improve water access throughout the region.
- Preserve Belmead on the James as a recreation and historical destination.
- Implement the Richmond Riverfront Plan.

### Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact

**Table 15.3 Per-Capita Spending on Parks and Recreation**

*Richmond Recreational Planning Region*

locality	dollars
Charles City County	56.16
Chesterfield County	26.44
Hanover County	35.40
Henrico County	57.70
Goochland County	88.16
New Kent County	24.26
Powhatan County	5.21
City of Richmond	?
Town of Ashland	17.13
Statewide	71.09

*Source: Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, "Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures," 2016.*



*Belle Isle Zipline | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation*

**Table 15.4 Virginia State Parks 2017 Attendance and Economic Impact***Richmond Recreational Planning Region*

state park	location	overnight visitors	day-use visitors	total visitors	economic impact
Pocahontas	Chesterfield County*	128,028	1,051,330	1,179,358	\$20.8M
Powhatan	Powhatan County	13,899	122,126	136,025	\$5.0M

\* Richmond Regional and Crater regions share Chesterfield County.  
 Source: Virginia State Parks

## Regional Health

**Table 15.5 Health Trends***Richmond Recreational Planning Region*

locality	adult smoking (% of adults)	adult obesity (% of adults with BMI over 30)	physical inactivity (% of adults age 20 or over reporting no leisure time/ physical activity)	access to exercise opportunities (% population with adequate access to locations for physical activity)	air pollution – particulate matter (micrograms per cubic meter)
Charles City County	18	35	28	9	8.6
Chesterfield County	15	26	26	80	9.3
Hanover County	13	27	18	78	9.3
Henrico County	16	28	23	94	8.8
Goochland County	13	28	22	66	8.9
New Kent County	15	28	21	51	8.7
Powhatan County	14	30	22	62	8.7
City of Richmond	20	30	21	88	9.4
Statewide	17	27	21	81	8.7

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Outdoor Recreation Interface with Virginia Tourism

The Virginia State Tourism Plan was completed by Virginia Tourism Corp. in March 2015. In 2017, Virginia Tourism compiled “Nature & Outdoors” recommendations in Appendix 13 for each recreation planning region.

### Regional Historic Resources

While the Richmond regional area is densely developed, the Richmond metropolitan area still contains numerous dense concentrations of historic buildings. The city encompasses numerous National Historic Landmarks that are evocative of all periods of its history and thematic contexts. Among these significant sites are: the Egyptian Building at the Medical College of Virginia, the Monument Avenue Historic District, the Jackson Ward Historic District, the John Marshall House, St. John’s Church and the Tredegar Iron Works. In spite of ongoing development, several rural areas within the region survive. Most notably, large portions of several Civil War battlefields associated with the Seven Days’ Battles are protected by either the National Park Service or held in conservation easement by private land trusts or local and state entities. In the summer of 2018, over 472 acres associated with the Malvern Hill farm and battlefield were protected under a perpetual conservation easement and the property will eventually be open to the public as a park.

Appropriate conservation activities may include installation of highway markers to commemorate historic locations and events, placement of historic properties on the Virginia Landmarks Register or National Register of Historic Places and placement of historic preservation and open space easements. Conservation targets include: 18th, 19th and early 20th century dwellings and commercial buildings/districts; historic schools and churches; Civil War battlefield landscapes and resources; historic transportation routes and crossroads; and significant prehistoric habitation sites. Information about historic buildings, structures and archaeological sites is maintained in the permanent files of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and is available to local planners.

**Table 15.6 Regional Historic Resources**

*Richmond Recreational Planning Region*

resource	location
James River Plantations	Charles City County
Glendale, Deep Bottom, Savage’s Station, New Market, Malvern Hill, Ware Bottom Church, Totopotomoy Creek, and Cold Harbor Battlefields	Region-wide
Malvern Hill	Henrico County
Thomas Jefferson’s Boyhood Home (Tuckahoe)	Goochland County
Belle Isle Historic District	City of Richmond

*Source: Virginia Department of Historic Resources*

**Table 15.7 Conserved Lands**

*Richmond Recreational Planning Region*

locality	easement acres	ownership acres
Charles City County	4,196.64	5,571.24
Chesterfield	2,238.65	12,303.84
City of Richmond	6.84	1,780.37
Goochland County	6,966.39	773.39
Hanover County	3,866.13	2,868.00
Henrico County	1,748.44	6,357.94
New Kent County	3,608.50	2,965.82
Powhatan County	3,040.78	6,870.48
<b>Total</b>		<b>65,163.45</b>



Belle Isle kayak fun | Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

### Natural Area Preserves and Natural Heritage Resources

The Richmond region lies on the fall line and includes about equal measures of the lower Piedmont and upper Coastal Plain. Consequently, the region includes a diversity of habitats, including some for rare species and significant natural communities. Tidal areas of the James, Chickahominy and Pamunkey rivers harbor outstanding examples of fresh tidal marshes, including habitat for the federally threatened sensitive joint-vetch and vital habitat for the bald eagle. Seepage wetlands with an assortment of rare plants, including the federally threatened swamp pink, are located in Henrico County and several populations of carnivorous pitcher plants occur in bogs in Chesterfield County.

DCR recommends that conservation activities and land protection efforts in the region focus on unprotected Essential Conservation Sites and all unprotected portions of Natural Area Preserve resiliency areas. Secondly, strategic land conservation should expand upon existing managed areas and seek connectivity via protecting and/or managing intact ecological cores and natural vegetation cover between currently protected lands. Finally, attention on remaining unprotected natural heritage resources within the region should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The appropriate conservation activities and methods of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia’s Registry of Natural Areas; developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner; securing a conservation easement through a local land trust; acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust; dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner; or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Conservation targets of special significance in the region include:

- Significant communities and rare species habitats along the Chickahominy and Pamunkey rivers
- Seepage wetlands in Henrico and Chesterfield counties

Information about the location of conservation sites and the natural heritage resources they contain, as well as management assistance, is available to local planners from DCR’s Natural Heritage Program. For more on the Natural Heritage Program, see Chapter 11 and Appendix 11.

**Table 15.8 Natural Area Preserves**

Richmond Recreational Planning Region

preserve name	owner	locality
Cumberland Marsh	The Nature Conservancy	New Kent County

**Table 15.9 Natural Heritage Resources**

Richmond Recreational Planning Region

Number of occurrences of rare species and significant natural communities	228
Number of different rare species and significant community types (natural heritage elements)	127
Number of globally rare natural heritage elements	29
Number of species listed as federally endangered or threatened	7
Number of species listed as state endangered or threatened	15
Number of terrestrial conservation sites identified by DCR	56
Number of conservation sites with little or no protection	40
Number of partially protected conservation sites	13
Number of well protected conservation sites	3

Information as of Feb. 28, 2018. Source: Virginia Natural Heritage Program