

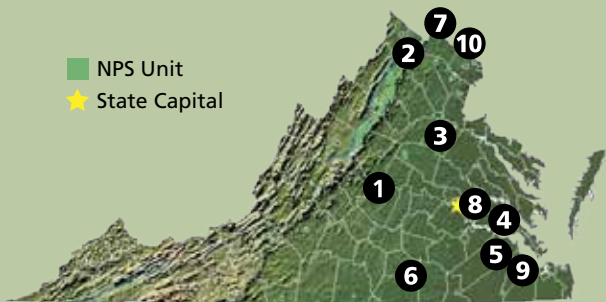


Virginia News



NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Fellow, Laura Kellam, works with Youth Conservation Corp to complete trail maintenance at Cold Harbor unit, Richmond National Battlefield. Photo: NPS

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2014



CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Blue Ridge Tunnel and Rail-Trail
Nelson County
2. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Interpretive Trails
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP
3. Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania Park Connections
Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative
4. Gloucester Greenways and Blueways
Gloucester County, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
5. Hughes Heritage Waterman Trail Conservation Project
Rushmere Community Development Corporation
6. Meherrin River Trail
Roanoke River Rails-To-Trails
7. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
8. Reedy Creek Greenway
Groundwork RVA
9. Suffolk Water Trail
Nasemond River Preservation Alliance
10. Urban Ecosystem Restorations-DC Metro Area
Urban Ecosystem Restoration

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

Recent Successes

Suffolk Water Trail

Located in tidewater Virginia near the mouth of the James River, Suffolk boasts a proud history and long-standing ties to its rivers. The remnants of bustling commercial wharfs can be seen along its shoreline and even today, watermen ply the waters of the Nansemond River and Chuckatuck Creek searching for the day's catch. Evidence of Native Indian villages, Civil War batteries, historic plantations, and artifacts from days past offer the opportunity to learn about the area's colorful past.



Suffolk Water Trail team members evaluate new canoe and kayak launch site opportunities on the Nansemond River. Photo: NPS

The Suffolk Water Trail project is an exciting new initiative to link existing access points, water routes, visitor services, and heritage attractions along Suffolk's waterways. Located within close proximity to both urban population centers as well as expansive undeveloped natural areas, the trail will provide multiple benefits by promoting recreation, environmental education, stewardship, and tourism to support local economies.

Current Projects

1. Blue Ridge Tunnel and Rail Trail

Project Partner: Nelson County
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Nelson and Augusta Counties
Congressional Districts: VA - 5, 6

Project Goal

Restore, reopen, and interpret the historic Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel. Create the associated 2.2 miles of trails infrastructure needed for public access.

NPS Role

Assist with collaborative, multi-jurisdictional trail planning, partnership development, and coordination with NPS park units, including Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park.

2. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Interpretive Trails

Project Partner: Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Frederick, Shenandoah, Warren Counties
Congressional Districts: VA - 6, 10

Project Goal

Develop an integrated trail system at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park that connects key resources on NPS and partners' lands, and links the park to adjacent communities, regional biking networks, and water trails.

NPS Role

Coordinate and facilitate trail planning discussions that assess potential location of trail routes and trailheads, trail design standards, strategies for balancing public access with resource protection and private lands, and trail funding sources.

3. Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania Park Connections

Project Partner: Spotsylvania Greenways Initiative
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Spotsylvania County and City of Fredericksburg
Districts: VA - 1, 7

Project Goal

Develop trails and greenways in Spotsylvania County that connect community resources and NPS lands at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Enhance interpretation, provide recreation and wellness opportunities, and inspire respect and responsible stewardship of green space resources.

NPS Role

Provide assistance, facilitation, and trail planning advice to develop trail connections at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Courthouse, linking communities to park resources while respecting the sensitive nature of the battlefield landscape.

4. Gloucester Greenways and Blueways

Project Partner: Gloucester County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Gloucester
Congressional District: VA - 1

Project Goal

Develop a system of greenways and blueways in Gloucester County that incorporates and connects flood-prone parcels obtained through Federal Emergency Management Agency mitigation grants for recreation, wellness, and habitat conservation.

NPS Role

Assist with greenway and blueway planning, flood mitigation, site assessment, and capacity building to address management issues and foster long-term watershed stewardship.



Pre-school youth examine turtle shell during nature walk at Petersburg National Battlefield. Photo: NPS

5. Hughes Heritage Waterman Trail Conservation Project

Project Partner: Rushmere Community Development Corporation
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Rushmere
Congressional Districts: VA - 4

Project Goal

Preserve and revitalize the Tyler Beach area to serve as a community center providing park and water access for youth, elderly, and veterans that supports and complements economic development, working waterfronts, and job growth.

NPS Role

Assist in the development of a concept plan for Tyler Beach, the Harbor of Refuge, and adjacent lands. Identify future uses, incorporate and preserve environmental areas, interpret local waterman history, and link to nearby parks and historic sites along the James River.

Current Projects

6. Meherrin River Trail

Project Partner: Roanoke River Rails-To-Trails

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Halifax Counties

Congressional Districts: VA - 4, 5

Project Goal

Develop a water trail on the Meherrin River to increase river access, recreation, economic development, and river stewardship in south Virginia.

NPS Role

Identify and evaluate potential water access sites, assess connections to other recreation infrastructure (parks, trails, water trails, and visitor attractions), and assist with water trail design and long-term management strategy.

7. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Project Partner: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Potomac River watershed in Maryland and Virginia

Congressional Districts: VA -1, 8, 10, 11; MD - 4, 5, 6, 8

Project Goal

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is an evolving network of locally-managed trails for recreation, education, transportation, and health, extending from the Allegheny Highlands to the Chesapeake Bay.

“NPS knowledge of the process and resources in water trail design and management has been immensely helpful in moving the project forward.”

- John Wass, Board Member, Nansemond River Preservation Alliance

NPS Role

Assist with policy development, community engagement, trail promotion, and technical assistance to local jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia.

8. Reedy Creek Greenway

Project Partner: Groundwork Richmond

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Southern Richmond

Congressional Districts: VA - 3, 7

Project Goal

Develop a greenway and trail along Reedy Creek in Southside Richmond linking existing parkland, George Wythe High School and adjacent neighborhoods.

NPS Role

Provide assistance with trail design and construction, the identification of funding resources, and the expansion of outreach to underserved communities.

9. Suffolk Water Trail

Project Partners: Nansemond River Preservation Alliance, Captain John Smith National Historic Water Trail, Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Suffolk County

Congressional District: VA - 4

Project Goal

Develop a water trail network in Suffolk that increases access for non-motorized recreation and generates awareness of the historical and environmental significance of the Nansemond River and tributary streams.

NPS Role

Assist with water trail planning including: assessment of water access sites, partnership development, and creation of a water trail map, guide, and interpretive signage.

10. Urban Ecosystem Restorations-DC Metro Area

Project Partners: Urban Ecosystem Restoration, Urban Land Institute, and Land Trust Alliance

NPS Contacts: Wink Hastings, Beth Porter

Location: Washington Metropolitan Region

Congressional Districts: DC - 1; MD - 4, 5, 8; VA - 8, 10, 11

Project Goal

Establish a land trust to model process for land conservation and protection in highly urbanized regions, integrating ecosystem restoration and environmental services and developing innovative approaches to land protection.

NPS Role

Assist with establishing organizational structure, articulating conservation objectives and criteria, and building collaborative partnerships.



Trails in Spotsylvania County support active recreation, connect people to nature, and provide a venue for learning about local history. Photo: NPS

We're Here For You!

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



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2013 Nationwide Partnership Success

1,357 Miles of Trail Developed

736 Miles of River Conserved

20,270 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at
www.nps.gov/rtca



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Recent Successes cont.

Blue Ridge Tunnel and Rail-Trail

The Blue Ridge Tunnel is an important historic architectural feature and an engineering marvel of regional and statewide importance. Extending almost one-mile in length, it was the longest tunnel in America when it opened in 1858. The tunnel was designed by Claudius Crozet, and constructed with the help of a large contingent of Irish-American laborers and enslaved Virginians.

The Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel (CCBRT) Foundation is leading a multi-jurisdictional effort to restore, reopen, and interpret the historic tunnel, and to construct the 2.2-mile rail-trail needed for public access. As the centerpiece of a multi-regional greenway and trail system, the project is a key element in enhancing quality of life, heritage tourism, and community livability.



Allen Hale, President of the CCBRT Foundation, inspects the rail right-of-way. Photo: NPS

“NPS services to the Blue Ridge Tunnel project have been valuable and much appreciated. Nelson County and the Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation are especially thankful for NPS assistance in advancing partnership development goals.”

- Tim Padalino, Director of Planning, Nelson County



Exploring Suffolk's waterways. Photo: NPS

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.