

Strategic Planning for Outdoor Recreation and Downtown Revitalization on the Clinch River

August 3rd, 2011
Oxbow Center, St. Paul, Virginia

Meeting Summary

Facilitated by the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, University of Virginia

Meeting overview

Fifty people gathered at the Oxbow Center in St. Paul on August 3rd, 2011 for the third meeting of a series to develop a strategy for Outdoor Recreation and Downtown Revitalization on the Clinch River. The meeting was facilitated by Frank Dukes and Christine Gyovai of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) at the University of Virginia. The first meeting of the series was held on September 28th, 2010 on Building Local Economies in Southwest Virginia, with other Clinch River Strategic Planning meetings held on February 9th and May 11th, 2011.

During the meeting, participants discussed a draft vision for the Clinch River Strategic Plan, discussed draft goal areas, presented action group updates, and then met in small groups by goal area to refine and plan next steps for each goal. At the end of the meeting, each group reported out on small group work and their next steps (see below for details of the action groups or to join one). A steering committee was formed to help guide the development of the strategic plan, and the next meeting, which likely would include a community design workshop about the Clinch, will likely occur in October. A summary from the meeting is below, and an appendix at the end of the meeting summary contains “info packets”, which are a collection of goals area ideas and potential actions from past meetings used by action groups during the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, several participants agreed to serve on a steering committee to check in periodically about the progress of the planning effort. Steering committee members agreed to draft a Vision statement incorporating the ideas above. Volunteers for the **steering committee** include: Todd Christensen, Ernie Roberts, Bill Smith, Shannon Blevins, and Jennifer Puckett (contact Christine Gyovai if you would like to join the steering committee at 434-982-6464 or christineg@virginia.edu).

Introduction

After introductions, Frank Dukes welcomed participants to the meeting and discussed meeting guidelines. Christine Gyovai then gave an overview of the agenda, reviewed the consensus-decision making process the group is utilizing, and reviewed highlights from the last meeting

held on May 11th. The primary goal of the meeting was to further refine the four draft goal areas and actions identified and discussed at the May 11th meeting, including:

1. Developing a linear Clinch River State Park (and feasibility study)
2. Developing and Integrating Access Points, Trails, and Campgrounds along the Clinch River
3. Enhancing Water Quality and Environmental Education Opportunities in the Clinch River Watershed
4. Connecting Downtown Revitalization and Outdoor Recreation Efforts Along the Clinch River, and Expanding Entrepreneurial and Marketing Opportunities

Attendees at the May 11th meeting chose to form action groups based on these goals, and agreed to work in small groups over the summer to further enhance and refine these goal areas as well as to summarize priorities and next steps for their respective action groups.

Relevant Updates

After a recap of the May 11th meeting, participants shared recent updates that were relevant to the larger group. These updates included:

- The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) at Virginia Tech assists communities, neighborhood groups, and non-profit organizations in improving the natural and built environments through design, planning, and research. CDAC recently received funding to help communities in Southwest Virginia develop conceptual designs for parks, streetscapes, trails, and other related topics. For more information, see the website: <http://cdac.arch.vt.edu/>
- There is a new park and music venue in Wise County, called the Big Glades project, which is now open.
- On August 20th and 27th, the Clinch Coalition is hosting canoe trips along the Clinch. Boats, safety equipment, and lunch will be provided. For more information visit www.clinchcoalition.net
- Appalachian Regional Commission grants are due on Sept. 28, 2011. More information may be found at the website: http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/CommunityDevelopmentRevitalization/Appalachian_Regional_Commission_Program.htm
- A new robust Southwest Virginia website, developed by the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, officially went live on the internet. The site contains information on cultural and natural resources; has videos on ecological and recreational assets; and will allow people to plan a trip through the Southwest Virginia region. The website is www.myswva.org

- The deadline for applications for the Virginia Tourism Corporation regarding marketing funding for tourism is on October 27th, 2011. Information can be found at www.vatc.org
- The Institute for Environmental Negotiation has recently made Basecamp, an online tool used to manage projects, available to all action group participants. Basecamp is a collaborative tool that gives group members a central platform to communicate and store project-based information. For more information, email Christine Gyovai at christineg@virginia.edu or Pete Guzman of IEN at pg4ez@virginia.edu.
- IEN has developed a website for the project which can be found at the website www.clinchriverva.wordpress.com. Additions to the website may be sent to Christine Gyovai or Pete Guzman of IEN at pg4ez@virginia.edu.

Strategic Planning framework, Draft Vision and Action Group Updates

After updates, the facilitators discussed a framework for the Clinch River Strategic Plan, which will likely be organized around a consensus-based Vision, goals and objectives, and then actions. Christine Gyovai presented themes on the vision from the May 11th meeting including:

- Preserve the sense of community (and celebrate community)
- Enhance education and employment opportunities
- Preserve and celebrate the beauty of the Clinch River
- Create more vibrant communities with multiple outdoor recreation opportunities in the Clinch River watershed.

Meeting participants discussed these themes and added that the primary goal was to preserve the community and enhance the economy of the region. Others added that while the scenic and recreational assets of the region were important, the biodiversity of the Clinch River must also be celebrated. Others commented that many recreational opportunities and assets exist outside of the Clinch River. For this reason, participants suggested that the scope of the effort should be the Clinch River Valley. Other elements that participants included in the draft Vision include:

- Celebration of the biodiversity of the Clinch River.
- Focus on education that emphasizes the biodiversity of the Clinch, both within and outside of the region.
 - Developing curriculum that uses traditional music and history of the region to introduce the unique ecology in Southwest Virginia.
 - Develop educational components for local school systems on the Clinch River, including the history of the Clinch, and integrate Standards of Learning (SOLs) into educational offerings (project Estonoa has coordinated outdoor classroom resources with SOLs).

- Include the historical significance of the region, for instance the history of Native Americans using the Clinch River as a main transportation route.
- Preserve the rural nature of the region, and the cultural heritage of the region.
- Include health and fitness as important elements of outdoor recreation on the Clinch River.

After discussing the draft Vision, action groups provided updates on their work over the summer. The action groups were formed to work on specific action ideas and next steps for each of the goal areas. The Access Points/Pilot Project action group discussed creating new access points approximately two hours apart, potentially seeking scenic river designation, and making a new business loan fund available. The group also focused their attention on creating a pilot project with series of access points from Cleveland to St. Paul to Dungannon. The immediate goal of the group was to identify access points and to establish outfitters near them.

The Water Quality and Environmental Education action group also met in July and discussed ideas, goals and objectives around next steps for their goal area, including educational offerings, collecting water quality data, and connecting with groups currently working on the Clinch River.

Participants noted that marketing should be considered in all of the goal areas.

Action Group Discussions

After action group updates, participants broke into small groups around the four draft goal areas to refine the goal area, develop actions for each goal and determine next steps. Reports were given from each action group after the small groups broke out the group's discussion and priorities.

A summary of each action group's discussion around their respective draft goal area is below, as well as information each group identified and presented to the larger group after their small group conversations.

Goal 1: Develop a Linear Clinch River State Park

Group Participants include: Delegate Joe Johnson, Claiborne Woodall, Steve Linderman, Kim Steika, Ramona Chapman, Linda Marshall, and Samantha Landingham

1. **Feasibility Study:** Past studies were done in 1989 and 2005 (updated in 2008), both with several scenarios of how a park would be structured (i.e. nodal vs. contiguous). Parts of existing studies could be used, but a full study of all different variables, including an economic impact study, would cost well over \$50,000 (more like \$250-350,000 over 2 years). A community

design workshop could lower costs as some of the work could be done there. There needs to be an appropriation to fund it, and it is essential to find private partners, especially local industries, to help fund it. We must be able to pitch the economic benefits of creating a state park.

2. **Park Format:** A state park is the best designation because it brings in resources, educational capacity, and stronger economic engine to support the overall goals of the Clinch River group. The minimum size for a state park has typically been 600 acres. If the park is nodal, the central hub would also need a minimum acreage (# not specified). The number of hubs would need to be determined, as there are benefits and disadvantages for one vs. multiple hubs, but there would be one main hub for park headquarters. Look at models such as the New River Trail and High Bridge Trail state parks.

3. **Trail Towns** are central to the Appalachian Trail planning; this is a National Park Service (NPS) designation for accessible towns along a trail at specified interval. The same approach could be used here. Laws regarding river access and adjacent private land must be considered. The Park could be a Blueway, with loop hiking trails, and possibly no single linear trail along river, although a member of the Spearhead Trail group mentioned that the group would like for a linear trail to be considered.

4. **Action group participation:** Linda Marshall volunteered to be coordinator for group. IEN will request a co-chair. Group would like a legislative aide to serve as a liaison, hoping for one from a Delegate and one from a state Senator. Del. Joe Johnson gave the name of his aide Roxanne Hollaway in Abingdon. Also Ursula Lemanski from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program may be able to assist. Kim Steika will contact her to see if she might be available.

5. **Action Item 1:** We need to develop a big map with properties, assets, etc. Then we need to bring in people who know the local areas and specifics, in order to decide the best places for the state park. Josh Larsen with Upper TN River Round Table is working on a similar map, could we collaborate?

6. **Action Item 2:** Hold a Community Design Workshop this fall, to be led/coordinated by Kim Steika of Virginia Tech with IEN support. One sensitive point to consider in this action is real estate speculation for land in/near state vicinity. And the Commonwealth can only pay 10% above assessed value for land.

7. **Action Item 3:** Coordinate closely with the Access Points action group.

Goal 2: Develop and Integrate Access Points, Trails, and Campgrounds along the Clinch River

Group Participants include: Todd Christensen, Randy Rose, Frank Kilgore, Steve Brooks, Bill Dingus, Jennifer Puckett, Jack McLanahan, Stephen Kesler, Kathy Stewart, Greg Bailey, Pat McClann, Greg Edwards, and Bill Kittrell.

Main Focus of the Pilot Project: to identify the access points for entrepreneurial and recreational purposes. Such opportunities include:

- Canoe/kayak/bike rentals
- Guided tours
- Restaurants

Other elements the group will focus on include:

- Connecting access points from Cleveland to St. Paul to Dungannon
 - Identify best places for 2 to 3 hour access points
- Color code what is existing and what is optimal
- Developing infrastructure to allow for entrepreneurial ventures

Challenges:

- Any access points managed by DGIF and/or owned by the federal government have restrictions to land use. On these access points, only boat access is allowed, and business cannot be conducted at those points (i.e. no outfitters or other businesses allowed to operate on that property)
 - NOTE: access points owned by a town/city DO NOT have these same restrictions. The Blueways is an example of town-owned facilitates that qualify for federal funds but can bypass regulations mentioned above.

Immediate Objectives:

- Mapping:
 - Identify potential access points/ properties
 - Use DGIF maps as starting point for labeling existing access points
 - Dominion will help print maps
 - Work with PDCs and County GIS departments to develop maps
- Look for funding resources

Long-Term Objectives:

- Develop other access points for bicycles and horses (other non-motorized vehicles as well)
- Identify where access points are needed
- Look for opportunities for support with other goal areas (partnering on actions and projects)

Next Steps:

- Meet August 17th in order to map existing access points (Frank Kilgore & Bill Dingus are principal people to do this)
- Meet as action group within the next 4 weeks.

Goal 3: Enhance Water Quality and Environmental Education Opportunities in the Clinch River Watershed

Group Participants include: Roberta Hylton, Kelsey Ewing, Josh Larsen, Phyllis Hinch, Pam Vance, Geoffrey Hensley, Terry Vencil, Monica Appleby, Monty Salyer, Chris Clark, Kathy Selvage, and Cameron Parsons.

The group determined that the goal should be split into two separate areas, recognizing that they are inter-related goals: (1). Enhance water quality in the Clinch River; and (2). Develop and enhance Environmental Education opportunities for all community members in the Clinch River watershed.

The group determined several prioritized actions (each action references items labeled on the Group 3 Info Packet. Refer to the Info Packet in the Appendix for more information):

1. Prioritizing Actions
 - a. [1.c.] Gather, coordinate and disseminate water quality data on the Clinch River.
 - b. [1.e.] Developing strategies and actions to enhance water quality.
 - c. [3.] Promote and explore opportunities for conservation, low-impact development techniques and retrofitting storm water systems in urban areas to reduce stormwater runoff.
 - d. [6] Develop environmental education facilities at access points on the river (related to the new action below).
 - e. Develop a regional multi-use Environmental Education Center at the former St. Paul High School center.

Action Refining and Additions

- a. Refine goal [1.i.] to build capacity to address water quality by finding mechanisms for more community members and leaders to work toward the goal (but not additional VISTA volunteers).
- b. Staff and funding are needed to realize these actions.
- c. [7] Expand land protection measures to include land purchases, conservation agreements, refuges, and other actions.
 - o Combine this action with [1.e.] Developing strategies and actions to enhance water quality
- d. Add industry as a partner to [1.d.]
- e. Reclassify agricultural education in the school systems to include aquaculture.
- f. Conduct community education regarding TMDLs as a water quality standard
- g. Remove action [1.c.3.] – replace with [1.c.5.], recognizing TMDLs as the water quality standard for the Clinch River.
- h. For action [1.c.] -- Develop a website to gather data on water quality in the Clinch River, as well as identifying groups and individuals working on water quality on the Clinch River including:
 - o Monitoring, TMDLs, Agencies, groups responsible for water quality (including contact information to individuals)
 - o Education – how to find education resources (including Scott Co. SOL's).
 - o Build on the work of Project Estonoa.
 - o Find ways to share information so it is accessible to those without access to the internet.

2. Moving forward

- a. There is an ARC Grant application coming up due in Sept. that people can work on. See page 2 of this document for the weblink to the grant description.
- b. Action [1.c.]—IEN, Monica, Chris, Kathy will work on this
- c. Action [3]—Monty (3f) and Phyllis will work on this
- d. Actions [4] and [6]—Terry and Monica (particularly community education and outreach) will work on this
- e. [1.e. w/7]—Roberta will work on this
- f. Consider language of two new goal areas
- g. Co-chair Volunteers—Kathy, Terry, Monica, and Josh can rotate and have in person meetings: September 12th Monday evening –conduct a Doodle poll to see when the action group can meet next.

Goal 4: Connect Downtown Revitalization and Outdoor Recreation efforts along the Clinch River, and expand entrepreneurship and marketing opportunities

Group participants include: Paul Revell, Mayor Radfert Rhea, Shane Farmer, Bill Smith, Buzz Witt, Duane Miller, Ernie Roberts, Mayor Kyle Fletcher, and Shannon Blevins

Goal: Connect downtown revitalization and outdoor recreation efforts along the Clinch River and expand entrepreneurship.

- Develop a regional marketing strategy.
- Develop learning opportunities (community members & visitors).
- Promote regional collaboration.
- Strengthen/promote community character & sense of place.
- Promote the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities through adventure tourism.
- Support entrepreneurship in the Clinch River Valley. Consider conducting a Space Inventory:
 - Where are the places where an entrepreneur can start a business?
 - Where is it possible to rent space or river access?
- Develop opportunities for connecting outdoor recreation and entrepreneurship opportunities with community downtown revitalization efforts, including community asset inventories.

Approach:

- Create a Model – Make it available to all towns on the Clinch River
- Conduct a team visit to the localities along the Clinch
- Connect them to resources as appropriate and as requested

Strategy: Share lessons learned across communities regarding downtown revitalization, connect entrepreneurs to training & technical assistance, and help establish a broad vision and identity in the Clinch River Valley region. First, develop a project in St. Paul with its primary location and current level of interest (Mayor Fletcher will lead this initiative). Finally, visit towns and property owners along the Clinch River.

Next steps:

1. Bill Smith (Team Lead) will create a draft one-page overview of the project and share it with the team for feedback within one week of receiving notes.
2. Bill Smith will create an email distribution list of team members.

3. Mayor Fletcher will communicate with the St. Paul Town Council & St. Paul Tomorrow (Susie, Sharon Steel, Lou Ann, Frank) and ask about their interest utilizing the one-pager.
4. Representatives of the team will communicate with other communities using the one-pager.
5. Shannon will add Mona and Douglas and team members to the Entrepreneurship Blueprint distribution list and engage in community conversations.
6. Explore assembling a team with necessary expertise to assist the entrepreneur and their business (finance, marketing, etc.)
7. Ernie Roberts – meeting coordinator – sets date and finds meeting locations

Large Group Discussion -- Moving Forward

After the action groups reported out to the larger group, the group discussed next steps for the effort. Action Groups will continue meeting and working over the coming weeks, and IEN and facilitators from the Dept. of Housing and Community Development are available to assist the Action Groups as needed. IEN will send a template to all Action Groups describing the effort and the goal areas. A draft Strategic Plan will be developed over the coming months, and the Steering Committee will discuss next steps for the effort. Participants agreed to meet again in the fall, likely in October, as well as to continue meeting at the Oxbow Center in St. Paul.

Feel free to contact Christine Gyovai at christineg@virginia.edu or 434-982-6464 to sign up for the Steering Committee or for an Action Group, or with any ideas, questions or concerns about the project.

MEETING ATTENDEES

1	Bill Dingus	21	Jennifer Puckett	41	Regina Pencile
2	Bill Kittrell	22	Joseph R. Johnson	42	Roberta Hylton
3	Bill Smith	23	Josh Larsen	43	Samantha Landingham
4	Bob Harrison	24	Kathy Selvage	44	Shane Farmer
5	Buzz Witt	25	Kathy Stewart	45	Shannon Blevins
6	Cameron Parsons	26	Kelsey Ewing	46	Stephen Kesler
7	Chris Clark	27	Kim Steika	47	Steve Brooks
8	Christine Gyovai	28	Kristina Nell Weaver	48	Steve Linderman
9	Claiborne Woodall	29	Kyle Fletcher	49	Terry Vencil
10	David H. Collett	30	Linda Marshall	50	Todd Christenson
11	Douglas Jackson	31	Monica Appleby		
12	Duane Miller	32	Monty Salyer		
13	Ernie Roberts	33	Pam Vance		
14	Esther Thatcher	34	Pat McClann		
15	Frank Dukes	35	Paul Revell		
16	Frank Kilgore	36	Pete Guzman		
17	Geoffrey Hensley	37	Phyllis Hinch		
18	Greg Bailey	38	Radford Rhea		
19	Greg Edwards	39	Ramona Chapman		
20	Jack McClanahan	40	Randall Rose		

APPENDIX: Goal Action Group Info Packets

** Please note these were used during the August 3rd meeting and revisions were made to all info packets. They are included here for reference for Action Groups.*

Draft Goal 1: Develop a Linear Clinch River State Park

** Note several potential advantages and benefits of a Clinch River State Park are in the May 11 meeting summary*

Potential Action Steps

1. Develop a strong, expanded Clinch River State Park feasibility study
 - a. Feasibility study – A new study to encompass a larger area than the existing 2005 and updated 2008 DCR study (which only focuses on Russell County) to include scope, impact, youth and budget (state funded or private)
 - b. Include the area from Dungannon to Wise (including potential bluway trips)
 - c. Possible questions for study:
 - i. Determine interim steps for developing a state park – how is a state park normally developed?
 - ii. Note that DCR follows the five year VA Outdoors Plan strategy
 - iii. Decide where to begin (would the goal be to do it all at once or to begin with a smaller piece of property?)
 - d. Should this be conducted by a private firm (several firms have been mentioned with a price range from \$8,000 - \$15,000 for more of a white paper to \$50,000-\$75,000 for an in-depth study with a full economic impact analysis)?
2. Identify potential locations for a Clinch River State Park.
 - a. Consider lands that are in recreation or conservation use
 - b. Consider a phased approach to land acquisition.
3. Conduct outreach to legislators, landowners, and the public.
 - a. Gain input from local property owners and the public
 - b. Get legislative support: If the General Assembly funds the feasibility study, they may take more note of the findings, and may possibly be more inclined to take next steps
 - c. If private funds can be found for the study, it may be done faster and can still be done with the support of the General Assembly

4. Develop Finance Mechanisms for a linear Clinch River State Park

Challenges

The first group identified several challenges to the creation of a linear state park as well. These included:

- Finding leadership to provide consistent direction and coordination: an action group may be needed to oversee the development of this strategy.
- How to balance public good with private property rights.
- Raising sufficient funds to acquire and maintain the park.
- DCR budgetary restrictions mean that the agency is unlikely to be able to lead this initiative.

Information Gaps

- While there is the example of the New River Trail, there remain lots of unknowns, including access points [coordinate with access points group]
- How far inland should the park go?
- How might a state park be developed?

Resources

The group offered models that a possible linear Clinch State Park may draw upon. These models included: Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve (intended to be a “state park light” but not suited for state park development), New River State Park, High Bridge State Park, and various rails-to-trails conversions.

Other resources include:

- http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/index.shtml
 - A Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation website that has information on all of the state parks located in Virginia.

The Nature Conservancy Holdings

Name	Acres
Upper Clinch River	629.96
TNC Land Holding	11.90
Cleveland Barrens	441.77
Grays Island	120.87

Millers Yard	57.72
Cleveland Island	223.19
Upper Clinch River	1.00
Freeman/Kerney Island	3.98
Rocky Hollow Cave	44.15

Local Conservation Lands

Name	Managing Agency	Owner	Acres
Flag Rock Recreation Area	City of Norton	City of Norton	40.00
Big Cherry Reservoir	Wise County	Town of Big Stone Gap	3253.06
Ossie Park	Town of Big Stone Gap	Town of Big Stone Gap	32.12

Wildlife Management Areas

Name	Acres
Clinch Mountain	22,374.367
Hidden Valley	6,199.292

State Parks

Name	Type	Acres
Cleveland Barrens State Natural Area Preserve http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/natural_area_preserves/cleveland.shtml	State Natural Area Preserve	1287.51
Natural Tunnel State Park http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/nat.shtml	State Park	908.70
Pinnacle State Natural Area Preserve http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/natural_area_preserves/pinnacle.shtml	State Natural Area Preserve	775.56
Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park http://www.swvamuseum.org/	State Park	2.13
The Channels State Natural Area Preserve http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/natural_area_preserves/thechannels.shtml	State Natural Area Preserve	720.69

Draft Goal 2: Develop and Integrate Access Points, Trails, and Campgrounds along the Clinch River

** Note: The group defined four types of uses to differentiate access points: trails, boating, camping, and multi-use access points during the May 11 meeting.*

Potential Action Steps

1. Identify and develop multiple access points on the Clinch River
 - a. Priority public access locations are needed about 2 hours apart to float upstream from St. Paul and Dungannon (targeted for families, soft-core outdoor enthusiasts, etc.) so visitors can park in town, get shuttled upstream, and float back to town for dinner, shopping, etc.
 - b. These access points would connect Cleveland to St. Paul to Dungannon. Other areas include:
 - i. Potential ramp/access at Carfax location (PSA owned), and others in Wise County
 - ii. Potential ramp location between Carterton and St. Paul
 - iii. Potential ramp location at Old Castlewood
 - iv. And, revitalization of public access ramp at Oxbow/St. Paul location
 - c. Develop aggregated access points and possible “river places” at the Pinnacle Area Natural Preserve at Cleveland and Cedar Creek.
 - d. Possibly developing the pilot project in phases. The order of the phases would be:
 - i. *Phase 1*, Canoeing/kayaking → Develop zones of interest where there would be 2 to 4 floats per zone; focus on gathering landowner information and making landowner contacts in those zones; determine degree of landowner interest in those zones (this may involve a study, conducted by a private firm to reduce political conflicts, to identify property owners and their inclinations toward allowing easements).
 - ii. *Phase 2* → Improving existing hiking trails
 - iii. *Phase 3* → Developing new trails or connecting to off-river trails
2. Localities designate “tourism zones”
 - a. State code allows for localities to establish ‘tourism zones’ which provide special advantages to the locality and entrepreneurs.
3. Develop funding sources for Access Points, Trails and Campgrounds
 - a. Develop a Small Business Outdoor Recreation loan fund
 - i. This involves a development package for small outdoor recreation businesses that may include:

1. A small business loan
2. Business development assistance
3. Free advertising
 - a. The Department of Housing and Community Development may be able to offer a revolving loan fund for small recreation businesses. Other incentives include the VA Enterprise Zones and financial resources for businesses such as the 9th District Development Program which is a revolving loan fund.
 - b. Dominion Power could be approached to provide funding and support for this type of business package.
 - c. Approach and work with PDC's in order to have this need addressed in current *Entrepreneurship Blueprint* initiative (currently being developed)
- b. Funding request in the fall (September) to the Appalachian Regional Commission
- c. Potential request to Tobacco Commission
4. Develop trails along the Clinch River
 - a. Connect to existing outdoor recreation offerings in communities along the Clinch River (see Trail Inventory below: <http://www.trailsrus.com/swvirginia/trails.html>)
 - b. Develop new trails along the Clinch.
 - c. Connect with the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority regarding the proposed Spearhead Trail.
5. Develop campgrounds along the Clinch River
 - a. People need places to stay along the Clinch River.
6. Locate additional outfitters and guides to lead outdoor recreation trips along the Clinch River.
 - a. Clinch Valley Outfitters is leading float trips on the Clinch currently.
7. Develop educational offerings at access points along the Clinch River.
 - a. *[Connect with Environmental Education group about potential co-location of educational offerings at access points along the River]*
8. Explore Scenic River designation for the Clinch River

Short-Term Action Steps

- ❖ Secure DGIF public access/boat ramp study and distribute to rest of group (Jackie Stump)
- ❖ Invite representatives of other targeted partners to working group [DCR/Jennifer Wampler, DGIF, and PDC's] (Randy)
- ❖ Contact River Place on the Clinch and invite to next meeting and request presentation (Randy/IEN)

- ❖ Distribute tourism zone information to group (Randy)
- ❖ Begin drafting white paper (Randy/IEN)
- ❖ Invite Bill Dingus to group (Jennifer)
- ❖ Secure background information regarding the Secretary of Natural Resources recent funding of public access boat ramp near Fries, along the New River (Todd)
- ❖ Ensure LENOWISCO PDC works with Frank to develop maps and provide copies for distribution to group (Todd)
- ❖ Work with LENOWISCO to develop map highlighting the public access needs along the river, for future distribution and inserting into a draft whitepaper and public access action plan for the project (Frank)
- ❖ Contact Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority to distribute tourism zone information to localities along the Clinch to encourage them to consider zoning that compliments the region-wide Clinch River effort (Lou)

Challenges

- Private property owners: Identification of private landowners who are interested in funding development along the Clinch River.
- Developing positive relationships with private property landowners will be important as the effort develops near access points.

Information Gaps or Needs

- Gathering addresses for pinpointing specific access point locations
 - Detailed study of good locations along the river; locations that should be added or developed as access points
- Repairing signage along the river
 - Many of the signs along river are old and some are unreadable

Resources

-
- Spearhead Trails Initiative and Trail Inventory: website has a catalog of different types of trails ranging from ATV's to Hiking to Fishing and more. Also has a list of trails categorized by location at the County level:
<http://www.trailsrus.com/swvirginia/trails.html>
 GIS map of DGIF Access Points: file is uploaded on Basecamp

DGIF Boating Access

Name	Waterbody	County	Location
------	-----------	--------	----------

State Line	Clinch River	Scott	From Clinchport, SR 58 East (1.6); R on SR 625 (9)
Clinch Port	Clinch River	Scott	From Clinchport take Rt 65 north (2.3); landing on the right
Dungannon	Clinch River	Scott	From Dungannon, Rt 65 at Ruritan Park
Bark Camp Lake	Bark Camp Lake	Scott	From Dungannon, Rt 72 North (.5); L on Rt 653 (1.6); R on Rt 706 (3.9); R on Rt 822 (2.8)
St Paul	Clinch River	Wise	Located in St Paul at Town Park
Carterton	Clinch River	Russell	From Castlewood in the community of Carterton, Rt615 N(1.9);RonRt628(3.3);R on Rt614(1)
Laurel Bed Lake	Laurel Bed Lake	Russell	From Saltville, Rt 634 North (.3); L on Rt 613 to Rt 747 in Clinch Mt. WMA
Nash's Ford	Clinch River	Russell	From Honaker, Rt 645 West (8.3); L on Rt 798 (.2)
Puckett's Hole	Clinch River	Russell	From Honaker, Rt. 645 West (2.2); L on Rt 651 (1); R on Rt 652 (2.3)
Blackford Bridge	Clinch River	Russell	From Honaker on Rt 80 South (1.4); L on Rt 641 (.03)

The Clinch is considered navigable from the town of Richlands in Tazewell County to the Virginia/Tennessee line in Scott County. Therefore, boating is legal in that stretch, and the river is becoming popular with float fishermen and canoeists. The uppermost access point is on VA 80 at Blackford in Russell County. Boats may also be put in at Cleveland, Carterton, and St. Paul in Russell County; at Dungannon, Clinch River, and Clinchport in Scott County; and from VA 727 just north of the Tennessee line. Two of the put-ins—Dungannon and Clinchport—have launch ramps. (DGIF)

Draft Goal 3: Enhance Water Quality and Environmental Education Opportunities in the Clinch River Watershed

Potential Actions

1. Improve water quality on the Clinch River
 - a. Consider establishing a watershed protection group focused on the Clinch River.
 - i. There are now many organizations doing some of this work or working in specific areas, but no one place to coordinate all work or serve as ‘one-stop shopping’ for people interested in helping or landowners with questions.
 - b. Clean the Clinch. Engage in removing trash and litter from the Clinch River
 - c. Gather water quality data. There is a strong need to collect more data and coordinate existing data about water quality on the Clinch. Engage youth in water monitoring.
 - i. Coordinate efforts to monitor Clinch and tributaries for various indicators
 - ii. Develop incentives for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) testing
 - iii. Develop standards for water quality in Clinch
 - iv. Utilize existing data (including Team Estonoa tests chemical and invertebrate indicators and others)
 - v. Gather, disseminate Clinch water quality data
 - d. Establish partnerships with new or existing groups, such as the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, The Nature Conservancy, Guest River Group, Clinch Coalition, Training and education groups like Project Estonoa, Clinch River Education Center (CREC) in Dungannon, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD), Black Diamond RC&D, New River Roundtable, Southern Rivers, Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, Waterkeeper Alliance
 - e. Developing strategies and actions to enhance water quality. This includes:
 - i. Enforcement of Best Management Practices (BMPs).
 - ii. Incentives for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) testing
 - iii. Influence laws and policies:
 - iv. Push for enforcement of existing laws and regulations. Zoning and agricultural regulation may be needed.
 - v. Increase protective land base
 - vi. Support sustainable agriculture and farmers’ markets
 - vii. Oppose unsustainable infrastructure and planning
 - viii. Address major polluters, such as coal power plants, and identify pollution sources, effects, and solutions
 1. Regular monitoring of power plant discharge: daily

- f. Create diverse options for people to become involved and engaged in clean-up and water protection
- g. Expand mussel breeding (Estonoa)
- h. Explore establishing a fishery; fish help filter and improve water quality (Blue Ridge Aquaculture in Martinsville as a model: www.blueridgeaquaculture.com)
- i. Capacity building to address water quality:
 - i. Obtain more VISTA volunteer positions
 - ii. Create diverse options for people to become involved and engaged in clean-up and water protection
 - iii. Find training and mentorship opportunities to help people engage with protecting river (ie. Project Estonoa)
 - 1. Training in water quality monitoring, permit review

2. Document the Oral History of the Clinch River.

- a. Conduct an oral history project to collect and publish stories about the community members living along the Clinch River.
- b. Interviews can be recorded and published into a film, website, and/or booklet. Potential partnerships and resources include:
 - i. Ferrum College: English Teachers, Tina Hanlon
 - ii. Johnnie Davis, former Coach, Wise County historian, retired
 - iii. SW Virginia Museum
 - iv. Clinch River Educational Center (CREC, based in Dungannon)

3. Promote and explore opportunities for conservation, low-impact development techniques and retrofitting storm water systems in urban areas to reduce stormwater runoff.

- a. Address point and non-point sources of pollution
- b. Promote creation of more riparian buffers and wetlands
- c. Promote water efficiency and conservation measures across the watershed
- d. Explore opportunities for low-impact development techniques
- e. Explore retrofitting storm water systems in urban areas to reduce stormwater runoff
- f. Promote re-use of existing buildings rather than new construction (many underused or abandoned buildings near Clinch)
- g. Seek financial assistance for waste water system improvements for residences (straight pipe to septic tank)
- h. Promote small acreage conservation easements
- i. Promote adoption of Best Management Practices (BMP's)
 - i. Engage stakeholders, especially property owners, in protecting the river

4. Develop environmental education facilities at access points on the river.

- a. This may involve combining educational outreach with recreation access points and infrastructure (including campgrounds): a station, outdoor classroom, educational signage, workshop space, or water quality testing space with river access.
- b. Connect with administration and teachers in all schools in the Clinch River watershed, especially engaging principals. Connect education to the Standards of Learning (Project Estonoa has resources for this about outdoor education and the SOLs).
- c. Develop gazebo learning stations along the Clinch River
- d. Outreach to audiences including visitors, students, residents, businesses, and farms
- e. Create diverse options for people to become involved and engaged in clean-up and water protection
- f. Find training and mentorship opportunities to help people engage with protecting river (ie. Project Estonoa)
- g. Develop “Mind Blowing” education school program for High School students
- h. Outdoor Laboratory designation
- i. Gazebo stations near access points along river

5. Celebrate the Clinch!

- a. Develop a River fest or Harvest fest in Dungannon
- b. Support ecotourism and small entrepreneurs

Background Information:

- According to one group member, Raw sewage and sedimentation are major types of pollution in the river system.
- Residential, agricultural, and industrial sources of water pollution and other waterway degradation.
- Clinch River has world-class biodiversity, with 29 species of mussels and other rare wildlife. Many sensitive natural resources must be protected.
- Decreased mussel populations in the Clinch is a strong concern.
- 50,000 people get their water from the Clinch River watershed.
- DCR has a costshare program to replace straight pipes with septic tanks, but high level of poverty (25% in Wise County) means many families can't afford this program.
- According to one group member, Pound River has 9.73 miles devoid of aquatic life due to sedimentation. Concerns about sedimentation from mining have been expressed.

- Team Estonoa team tests water quality with chemical tests (i.e. pH and dissolved oxygen), macroinvertebrate tests (showed poor water quality near Dungannon)

Challenges and Information Needs:

- Coordinated water quality testing and data of Clinch River watershed, including:
 - a. To differentiate among levels of water quality
 - b. Different or additional methods of water testing, i.e. heavy metals (from soil samples in river bottom, especially near power plants such as Carbo)
- Additional water quality data for Clinch River (example: heavy metals)
- Information appropriate for diverse audiences on sources of pollution, why it is happening, what people can do to stop it and clean it up
- Funding resources for priority projects

Potential Partnerships:

- Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards is now partnering with the Waterkeeper Alliance through Appalachian Voices (Boone, NC). Water monitoring probe granted to SAMS (training available).
- Team Estonoa is an environmental education program, with very active student involvement in environmental monitoring, raising mussels, and other work.
- Plans in St. Paul to expand program into larger ecological education center. The Wilson Building is a possible site that could house the center, businesses, and dormitory. Other possible sites include Oxbow Lake, an old VDOT site, or near McDonalds.
- Students, scientists, and colleges have been drawn to Clinch River region for studying wildlife and ecosystems: ETSU, UVA, Emory & Henry.

Reports and Studies

- DEQ: Upper Clinch River Watershed TMDL Implementation Plan Overview, May 12, 2011. Introduction to sources of pollution and TMDL plan.
<http://www.deq.state.va.us/export/sites/default/tmdl/pptpdf/upclinchmt1.pdf>
- DGIF report: Clinch River 2010. Describes fish populations for sport fishing.
<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/waterbodies/reports/2010%20Clinch%20River%20Bio%20Rpt.pdf>
- DEQ report: 2010 Impaired Waters. Lists findings of E. coli in 27.5 miles of Clinch or tributaries.
<http://gisweb.deq.virginia.gov/FactSheets2010/FactSheets.aspx?str=Tennessee+and+Biog+Sandy+River+Basins%7cClinch+River+and+Tributaries&style=1>

- Guest River Restoration Project. Describes projects on water quality and community volunteering on environmental projects. <http://gustriver.weebly.com/index.html>
- DEQ announcement of plan to improve Clinch/tributary water quality (meeting in May 2011) <http://www.deq.state.va.us/export/sites/default/tmdl/pn/2012/clinchtribs1.pdf>

Draft Goal 4: Connect Downtown Revitalization and Outdoor Recreation efforts along the Clinch River, and expand entrepreneurship and marketing opportunities

Potential Actions

1. Promote the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities through adventure tourism.
 - a. Enhance and improve tourism infrastructure:
 - i. Outdoor guides for outfitters
 - ii. Outdoor/sporting equipment
 - iii. Bike repair services
 - iv. Shuttle services
 - v. Cafés, ice cream shops, restaurants
 - vi. Bed and Breakfasts
 - vii. Improved signage
 - viii. Internet and cell phone coverage
2. Develop a Regional Marketing Strategy along the Clinch River watershed
 - a. Develop model similar to Crooked Road (started with 8 sites, now more than 50)
 - b. Expand cultural and/or historical tourism opportunities
 - c. Market complementary local heritage and ecological assets
 - d. Study ways to market successfully in competition with other tourism destinations
3. Develop learning opportunities for community members and visitors
 - a. Disseminate information about the true value of the river and the resources of the area so more people are invested and interested in the region.
 - b. Foster a sense of pride for the area through education.
 - c. Bring college-aged volunteers to work on area projects, as internships or Alternative Spring Breaks
 - i. These volunteers will also take part in local entertainment during stay.
 - ii. Ferrum Summer Institute is one example; coordinates summer activities for students in interested communities.
 - iii. Working with only student organizations can be unsustainable because of turnover; Local established organizations such as Rotary Club would be

ideal as they can incorporate goals into 5 or 10 year strategic plan, and can make our efforts more focused and sustainable.

4. Promote regional collaboration.
 - a. Collaborate for regional outdoor recreation offerings that would allow for an extensive outdoor recreation network. For example, a canoe trip could be made from one town to the next town, with valuable amenities at both sites.
 - b. Build network of partner organizations
 - i. Center for Rural Virginia and Council for Rural Virginia: provide funding and attract more interest and investment in the local economy.
 - c. Identify and aggregate regional resources.
 - i. Many organizations work on projects with similar objectives yet do not communicate with one another. The group suggested that organizations like the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Spearhead Trail should meet at least every 6 months to discuss common projects—like downtown revitalization.

5. Strengthen and promote community character and sense of place
 - a. Renovate vacant or distressed buildings in downtowns
 - b. Improve roadway, bridge, water system, sewage, and other basic infrastructure in some areas.
 - c. Foster strong sense of community valued by community members
 - d. Build on existing asset-based tourism opportunities including Round the Mountain and others
 - e. Include tourism and recreation plans in town Comprehensive Plan
 - f. Identify assets to promote resources already available

Challenges

- Securing funding (private or public) to develop projects and businesses
- Current weak economic conditions
- Inherent risks in entrepreneurship for business owners and investors
- Finding right marketing “niche”
- Need for ongoing support for business development
- School consolidation and “Big Boxification” can detract from community’s physical and cultural character

Resources

- The Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech
- Virginia Outdoors Survey, which is part of a state recreation plan
- “Walking school bus” programs

Incorporated Towns in LENOWISCO and Cumberland PDC

Town	Funding / Resources Involved	Notes
Cleveland	DCR Other state agencies	Started 3 years ago Renovating low-income housing (6 per year for 3 years) Goals to renovate town proper, remodel homes, draw in business. Focus on tourism development due to location and infrastructure limits on industrial development.
Gate City		Planned project (Todd Christensen). No info on website.
Honaker		2007-2017 plans: Sidewalks, antique street lamps, amphitheater, downtown core restoration, caboose
Pocahontas		Plans to renovate distressed buildings and landscaping, create more walkable downtown, rehabilitate key historical buildings
St. Paul	DCHD “Main Street Community” program	Streetscape, walkability, key historic building renovation, farmer’s market, business sites along Clinch River, housing mix
Wise (town)		Long-term strategic plan for renovation, development of attractions, and business recruitment.

Incorporated Towns of the Clinch Region

Name	On Clinch?	Population (2000 Census)	Revitalization Projects?	Notes / Website
TAZEWELL COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.tazewellcounty.org/
Bluefield	No	5,078		http://www.bluefieldva.org/
Cedar Bluff	Yes (above navigable portion)	1,085		No town website found.
Claypool Hill	No	1,719		No town website found.
Pocahontas	No	441	Plans on website	http://www.pocahontasva.org/ Exhibition mine and museum; prison that employs few locals (according to website). Link to economic dev't plan: http://www.pocahontasva.org/community.html Map of plan http://www.pocahontasva.org/community.html ; http://www.pocahontasva.org/community.html
Richlands	Yes	4,144		http://www.town.richlands.va.us/ Mayor Jan White
Tazewell	Yes (not navigable)	4,206		http://www.townoftazewell.org/ Crab Orchard Museum Community Hospital (Carilion)
Raven (not incorporated)	Yes			
DICKENSON COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.dickensoncounty.net/ http://www.dickensoncountyvirginia.org/ http://www.dickensonctyva.net/
Clinchco	No	424		No town website found.

				History: http://www.dickensoncounty.net/clinchhist.html
Clintwood	No	1,549		http://www.townofclintwood.com/ Ralph Stanley Museum, Jettie Baker Ctr (theater)
Haysi	No	186		http://www.haysivirginia.gov/ : nice, very tourism-oriented website.
LEE COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.leecova.org/ http://leecountyvachamber.org/
Jonesville	No	995		http://www.townofjonesville.org/ very nice website for a small town!
Pennington Gap	No	1,781		http://www.townofpennington.com/
St. Charles	NO	159		http://stcharlesva.org/index.htm
RUSSELL COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.russellcountyva.org/
Cleveland	Yes	148		No town website. Link to aerial photo/map http://virginia.hometownlocator.com/va/russell/cleveland.cfm
Honaker	Close but not adjacent	945	Yes	http://www.honakerva.com/ Downtown plans: http://www.honakerva.com/restoration Redbud Festival and "Gateway to Breaks Park"
Lebanon	No	3,273		http://www.lebanonva.net/ Out of date and few links
SCOTT COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.scottcountyva.com/
Clinchport	Yes	77		No town website found. Part of Kingsport/Bristol MSA (tri-cities region) Mayor Billie Page YouTube video of train in Clinchport http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtRb_epooUE
Dungannon	Yes	317		Very nice website http://www.townofdungannon.com/visit.html

				Dungannon Development Commission http://www.ddcinc.org/ Travis Perry, Exec Director Mayor Karen Powers
Nickelsville	No	448		2 websites found, neither are well-maintained. http://nickelsville.com/ http://nickelsvilleva.com/ Mayor George Isaacs
Weber City	No	1,333		No town website found. Mayor Grover Dougherty Link to local restaurants, including nice German rest. (?) http://www.urbanspoon.com/n/314/45694/Virginia/Weber-City-VA-restaurants
Duffield	No, but close to Clinchport and Speers Ferry access points	62	Planned new hotel	No town website found. Mayor Gerald Miller Close to Natural Tunnel SP http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/nat.shtml#generalinfo May 5 news article: siting a franchise hotel in Duffield near Technology Park and highway: http://www.virginiastar.net/index.php/z_news/article/feasibility-study-reaffirms-duffield-is-viable-site-for-franchise-hotel/
Gate City	No	2,159	Yes (per Todd Christensen)	http://www.townofgatecity.com/ Mayor Mark Jenkins No info on town website about revitalization projects
Fort Blackmore (not incorporated)	Yes			
WISE COUNTY	On Clinch?	Population	Revitalization Projects?	http://www.wisecountychamber.org/?q=community
Appalachia	No	1,839		No town website found.
Big Stone Gap	No	4,856		http://www.bigstonegap.org/
Coeburn	No	1,996		http://www.townofcoeburn.com/
Pound	No	1,089		http://www.poundva.com/
St. Paul	Yes	1,000	Yes	http://stpaulva.org/default.aspx

				Master Plan http://stpaulva.org/Documents/ST_PAUL_VA_MASTER_PLAN.pdf
Wise	No	3,255	Yes	http://www.townofwise.net/ Revitalization plan on main website; direct link http://www.townofwise.net/userfiles/WiseDwntwnPlan.htm
CITY OF NORTON	No	3,932		http://www.nortonva.org/

From West to East: all communities identified along the Clinch

- Clinchport (Scott)
- Fort Blackmore (Scott)
- Dungannon (Scott)
- St. Paul (Virginia City and Castlewood are nearby) (Wise)
- Cleveland (Russell)
- Honaker (nearby, but not on river) (Russell)
- Raven (Tazewell)
- Richlands (Tazewell)
- Cedar Bluff (not navigable; Claypool Hill is nearby) (Tazewell)
- Tazewell (not navigable) (Tazewell)

The Clinch is considered navigable from the town of Richlands in Tazewell County to the Virginia/Tennessee line in Scott County. Therefore, boating is legal in that stretch, and the river is becoming popular with float fishermen and canoeists. The uppermost access point is on VA 80 at Blackford in Russell County. Boats may also be put in at Cleveland, Carterton, and St. Paul in Russell County; at Dungannon, Clinch River, and Clinchport in Scott County; and from VA 727 just north of the Tennessee line. Two of the put-ins—Dungannon and Clinchport—have launch ramps. (DGIF)