

Sweet Run State Park Master Plan

Public Comment Meeting

September 22, 2026



Kimley»Horn



GRAY & PAPE
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Housekeeping

- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation
- Meeting materials will be shared on the project website at:
www.dcr.virginia.gov/sweetrunmasterplan
- The public comment period will be open through October 22, 2026





Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Summary of Public Input
- III. Visitor Experience Summary
- IV. Cultural Resources
- V. Easements
- VI. Phased Development Plan
- VII. Next Steps & Questions

Virginia State Parks

District 1 - Tidewater

BI - Belle Isle State Park
CP - Chippokes State Park
FC - False Cape State Park
FL - First Landing State Park
KP - Kiptopeke State Park
MA - Machicomoco State Park
YR - York River State Park

District 2 - Potomac

CA - Caledon State Park
CB - Culpeper Battlefields Historical State Park
LA - Lake Anna State Park
LE - Leesylvania State Park
MN - Mason Neck State Park
SN - Sweet Run State Park
WE - Westmoreland State Park
WW - Widewater State Park

* under development

District 3 - Shenandoah

DO - Douthat State Park
HF* - Hayfields State Park
JR - James River State Park
NB - Natural Bridge State Park
SE - Seven Bends State Park
SH - Shenandoah River State Park
SK - Sky Meadows State Park

District 4 - Central

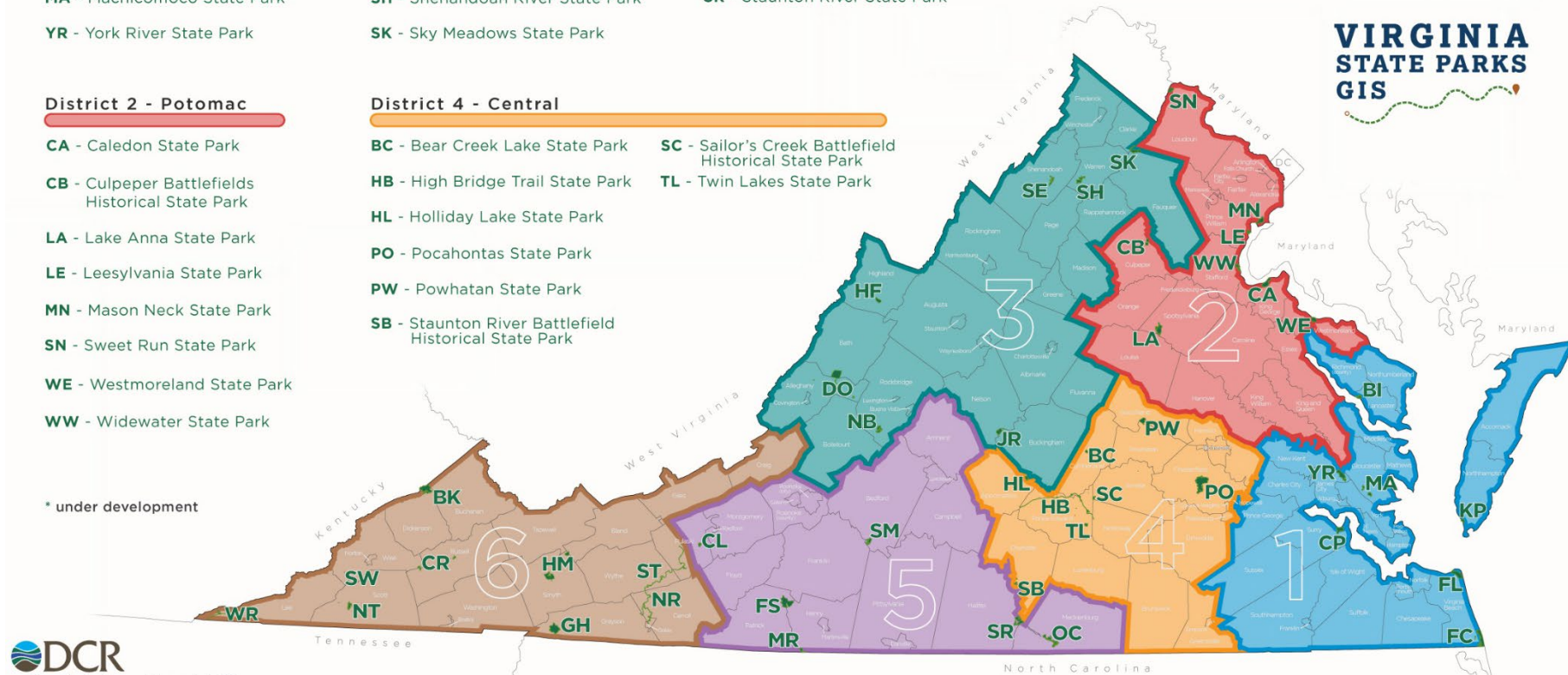
BC - Bear Creek Lake State Park
HB - High Bridge Trail State Park
HL - Holliday Lake State Park
PO - Pocahontas State Park
PW - Powhatan State Park
SB - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park
SC - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
TL - Twin Lakes State Park

District 5 - Piedmont

CL - Claytor Lake State Park
FS - Fairy Stone State Park
MR* - Mayo River State Park
OC - Oconeechee State Park
SM - Smith Mountain Lake State Park
SR - Staunton River State Park

District 6 - Southwest

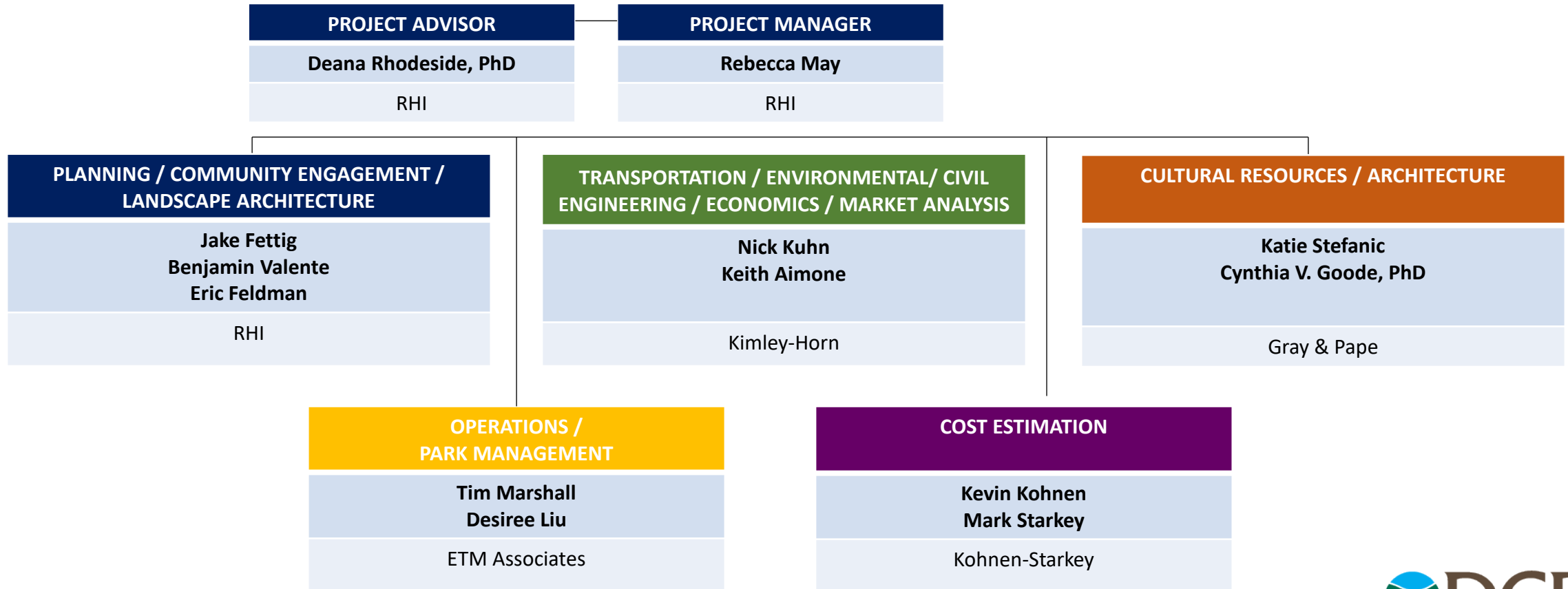
BK - Breaks Interstate Park
CR - Clinch River State Park
GH - Grayson Highlands State Park
HM - Hungry Mother State Park
NR - New River Trail State Park
NT - Natural Tunnel State Park
ST - Shot Tower Historical State Park
SW - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
WR - Wilderness Road State Park



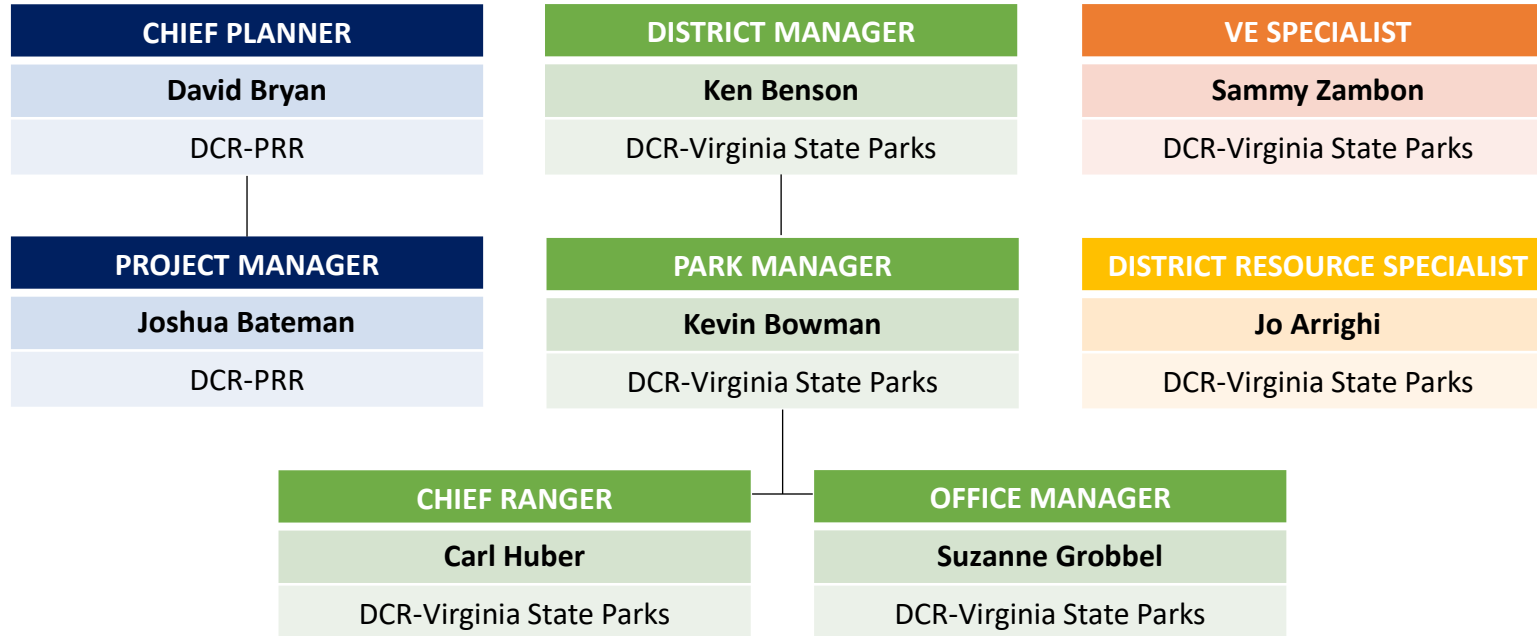
Welcome to the Park



Consultant Team



Core DCR Master Plan Team





Public Input

Engagement Activities

- **Public Information Meeting:**
 - In-Person: March 11, 2025
 - Virtual: March 26, 2025
 - 110+ attendees
- **Public Input Survey:**
 - March 10 - April 30, 2025
 - 740 respondents
- **Advisory Committee of Key Partners**

Public Information Meeting

What We Heard

Primary Q&A comment topics:

- Further trail development
- Concerns about mixed-use trails for hiker, equestrian, and mountain bike use
- Questions about potential widening of the powerline easement
- Challenges related to vehicular access to the park along Sawmill Lane
- Preservation and conservation of the historic structures in the park



[illegible]

- Respondents overwhelmingly value Sweet Run State Park's natural setting in a developing region.
- Respondents highly value the park's hiking trails both as an existing amenity and one for future investment and focus.
- The existing equestrian and mountain biking communities are both passionate about their current and/or desired use of the park.

[illegible]

- Households with children prioritized camping more than the overall group.
- Respondents who stay overnight in other state parks valued camping and dark sky activities more highly.
- Respondents living within the park's Primary Service Area (1 hour from the park) tended to value heritage and history as well as equestrian trails more highly than the overall group.

The logo for the Department of Conservation and Parks (DCP) is located in the bottom right corner. It features a stylized blue and green circular emblem to the left of the letters "DCP" in a bold, dark brown font.

Advisory Committee Guidance

What We Heard

Key Feedback Themes:

- Conservation of the natural landscape and adherence to the requirements of the property's easements
- Preservation of cultural resources
- Connectivity to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail
- Importance of equestrian use in the past and present of the park
- Maintaining and expanding trails



How Public Input Helped Shape the Master Plan

- New structures and roads are largely avoided in conservation areas and scenic viewsheds to preserve the park's natural setting.
- Tent campsites and rustic cabins are added to offer a more immersive experience within the park. Group camping reestablished, consistent with traditional recreational uses of the property.
- A connection to the Appalachian Trail is included, along with ADA-accessible and sensory trails to expand access; specifics will be worked out between Virginia State Parks and partners in time.
- Since new equestrian and biking trails are prohibited by the conservation easements, these are identified as unmet needs that may be addressed in the future with new property acquisition.
- The Master Plan includes prioritization recommendations for the preservation and interpretation of the park's cultural resources.

Visitor Experience

Interpretive Themes

Theme 1: Sweet Run State Park conserves the natural, cultural, historical and agricultural qualities of the Between the Hills Valley, preserving a continuing story of adaptation and resilience amidst an ever-changing landscape.

Theme 2: The park's clear streams, open meadows, and enclosed forests, created by natural succession and human activity, feature native grasses, flowers and pollinators in a dynamic mosaic of habitats.

Theme 3: Situated between Short Hill Mountain and the Blue Ridge, the park's former homesteads serve as a modern testament to the communal nature of everyday life for the people and communities who settled between the hills.

Theme 4: As the culmination of citizen conservation efforts, the park now protects a naturally, historically, and culturally significant representation of northwest Loudoun County, serving as a retreat within this increasingly developed region while teaching responsible stewardship to future generations.



Visitor Experience

Park Purpose Statement

Sheltered between the hills, Sweet Run State Park preserves and showcases farmsteads, forests, meadows, and mountain streams, providing visitors the opportunity to experience and enjoy the region's rural agricultural legacy.

Cultural Resources

- First Priority
 - Analysis of Future Intent for Homesteads
 - Safety and Stabilization
 - Documentation and Research
 - Interpretation at Demory-Wortman
 - Phase I and IA Archaeological Surveys
- Second Priority
 - Restoration at Derry and Everhart-Butler-Speaks houses
 - Interpretation at Barney's Cabin and Piper Log House
 - Phase II Archaeological Survey
- Third Priority
 - Interpretation at Arnold Lane and Sawmill Lane



Easements

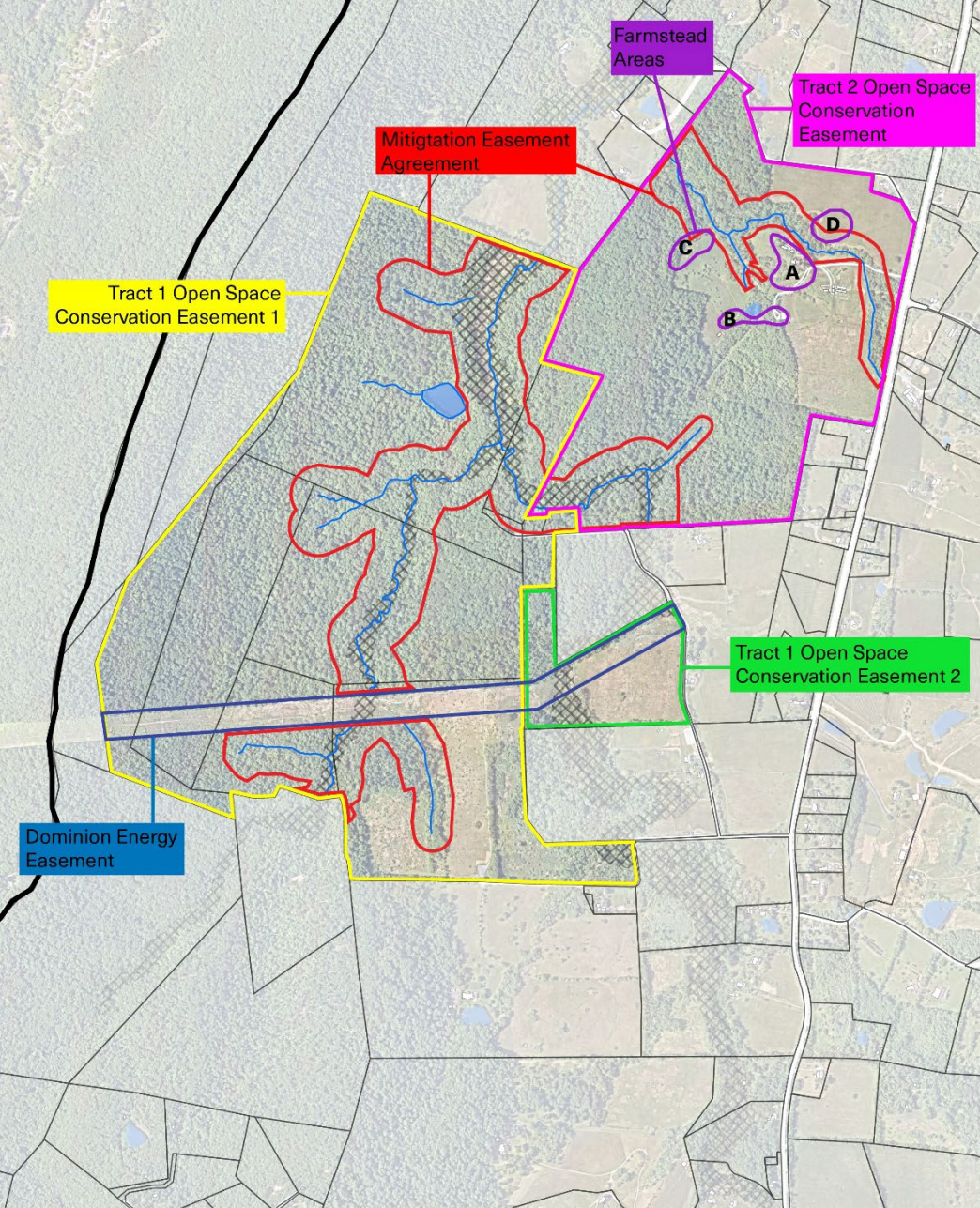
Mitigation Bank & Conservation Easements

Tract 1 Conservation Easement 1 (2003):

- Between owner and Loudoun Board of Supervisors/Potomac Conservancy.
- Protects the property's agricultural, historical, scenic, natural, and aesthetic values in perpetuity.
- Prohibits construction of buildings/improvements including new recreational and educational structures, subdivision, signage, fences, dumping, mining, tree removal (including in 100' buffers/floodplains), hard-surfaced roads (w/ exceptions)
- Exceptions include new residential (≤ 4) and ag. buildings, utilities serving permitted uses, picnic shelters ≤ 150 SF, ≤ 5 rustic cabins, hiking and nature study, temporary and seasonal uses

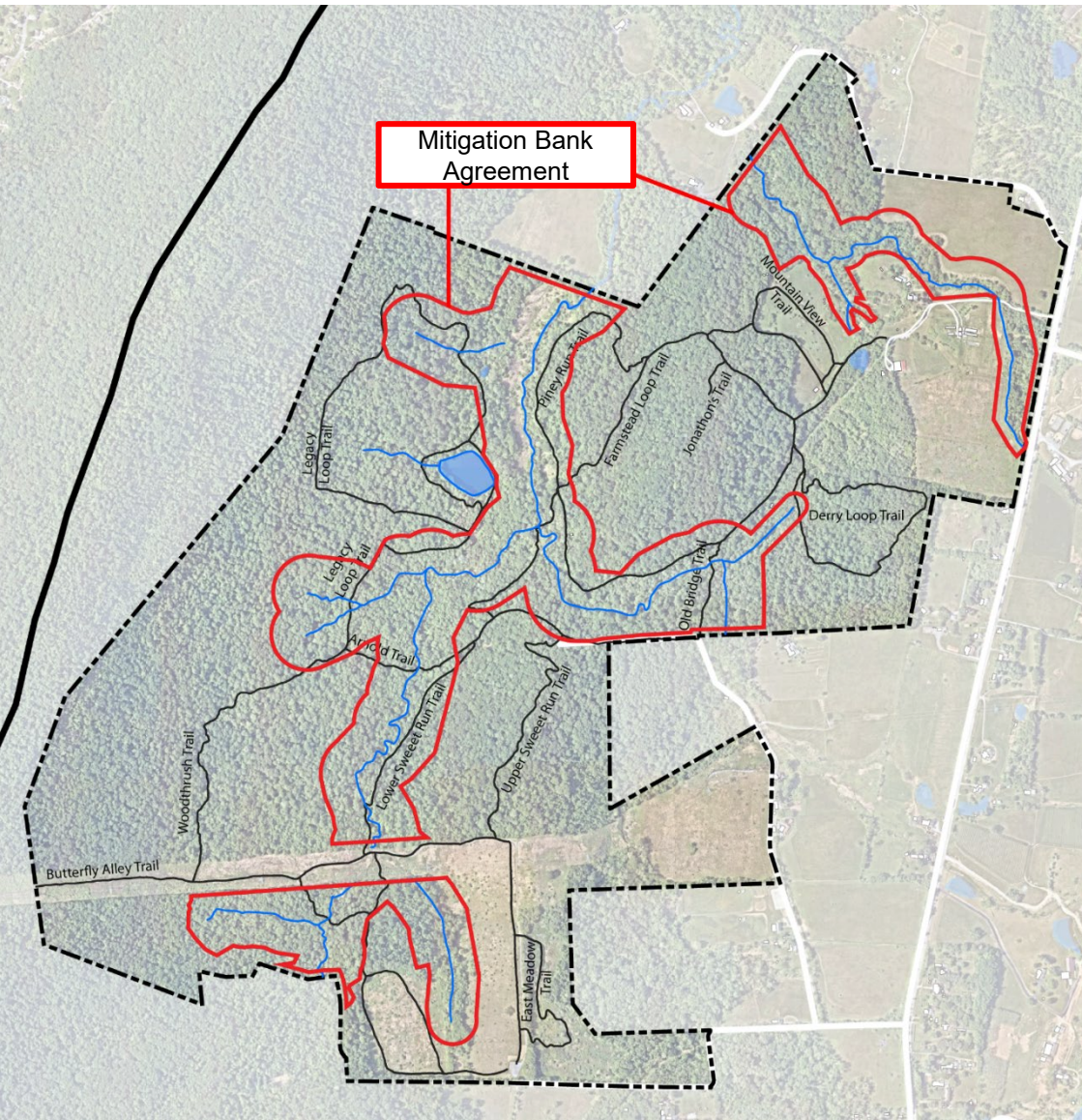
Tract 1 Conservation Easement 2 (2003):

- Permits only farming (crops, livestock, livestock products), forestry, horticultural, and viticultural use.
- Includes similar exceptions for hiking and nature study, temporary and seasonal uses, and utilities, but not permanent structures.



Easements

Mitigation Bank Agreement (2012)



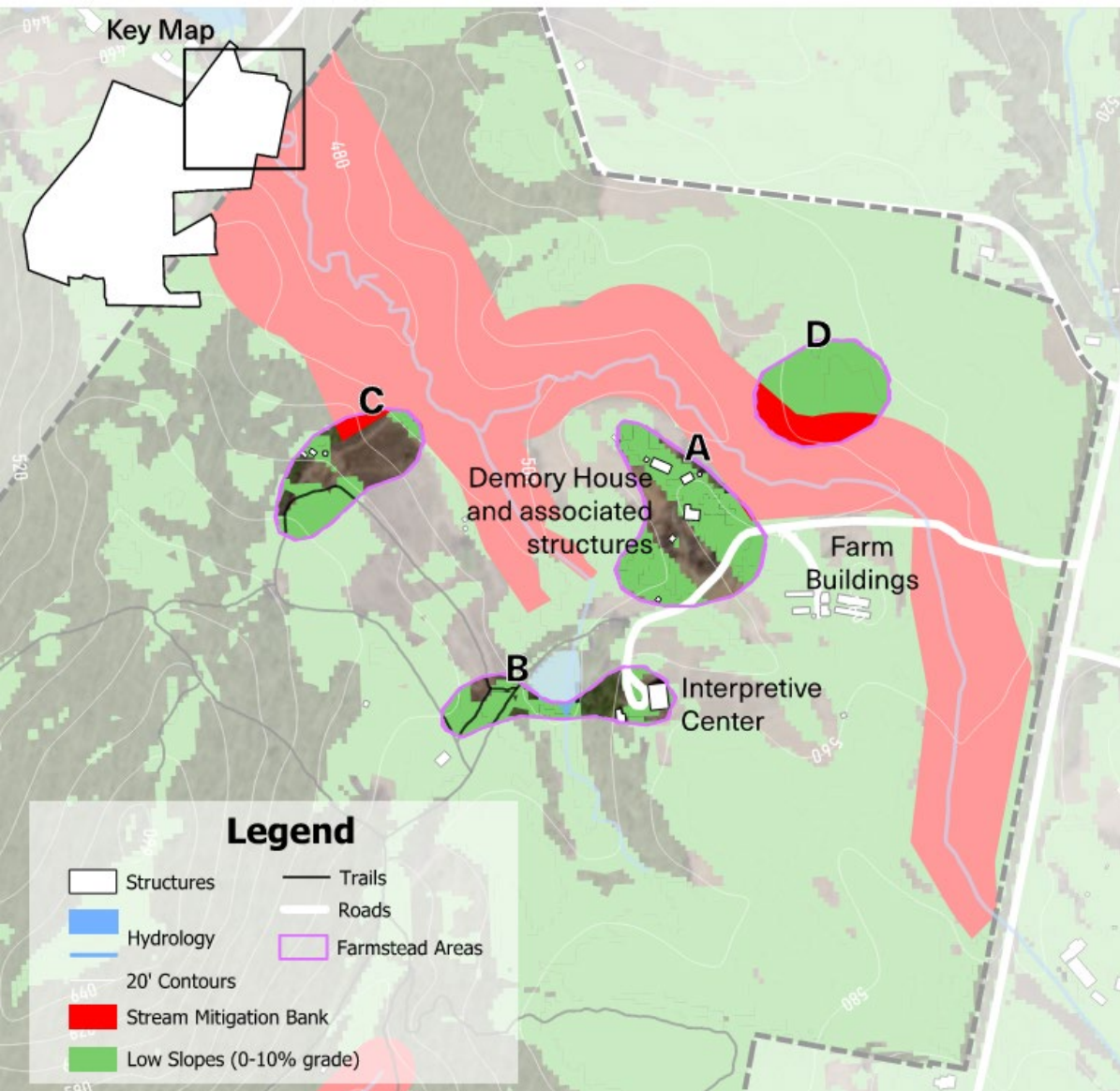
Original parties: Robert and Dee Leggett Foundation (owner; currently DCR) & Loudoun Mitigation Bank, LLC.

Applicable to: Stream buffers ≤ 300 LF from the banks of streams.

What does it do? Gives grantee sole right to conduct mitigation activities and restrict owners' use as necessary to create, use, operate, maintain, preserve, and perpetually care for the mitigation bank.

What are mitigation activities? Stream/wetland, riparian, habitat restoration/maintenance (e.g., invasive species removal), and monitoring to ensure long-term protection, selling of mitigation credits, etc.

What is restricted? Perm. structures, utilities, roads, farming, logging, land disturbance, subdivision. Certain recreational activities and trails are permitted (with limitations).



Easements

Tract 2 Conservation Easement (2003)

Original parties: Robert and Dee Leggett (owner; currently DCR) & Loudoun Board of Supervisors.

What does it do? Establishes a perpetual easement restricting the use of land and water to protect the ag., scenic, natural and aesthetic values of the property in its present state.

What is restricted? Industrial and commercial activities, construction of new buildings/improvements including agricultural, recreational, educational, and residential facilities, subdivision, signage, fences, dumping, mining, tree removal (including in 100' buffers/floodplains), hard-surfaced roads (w/ exceptions).

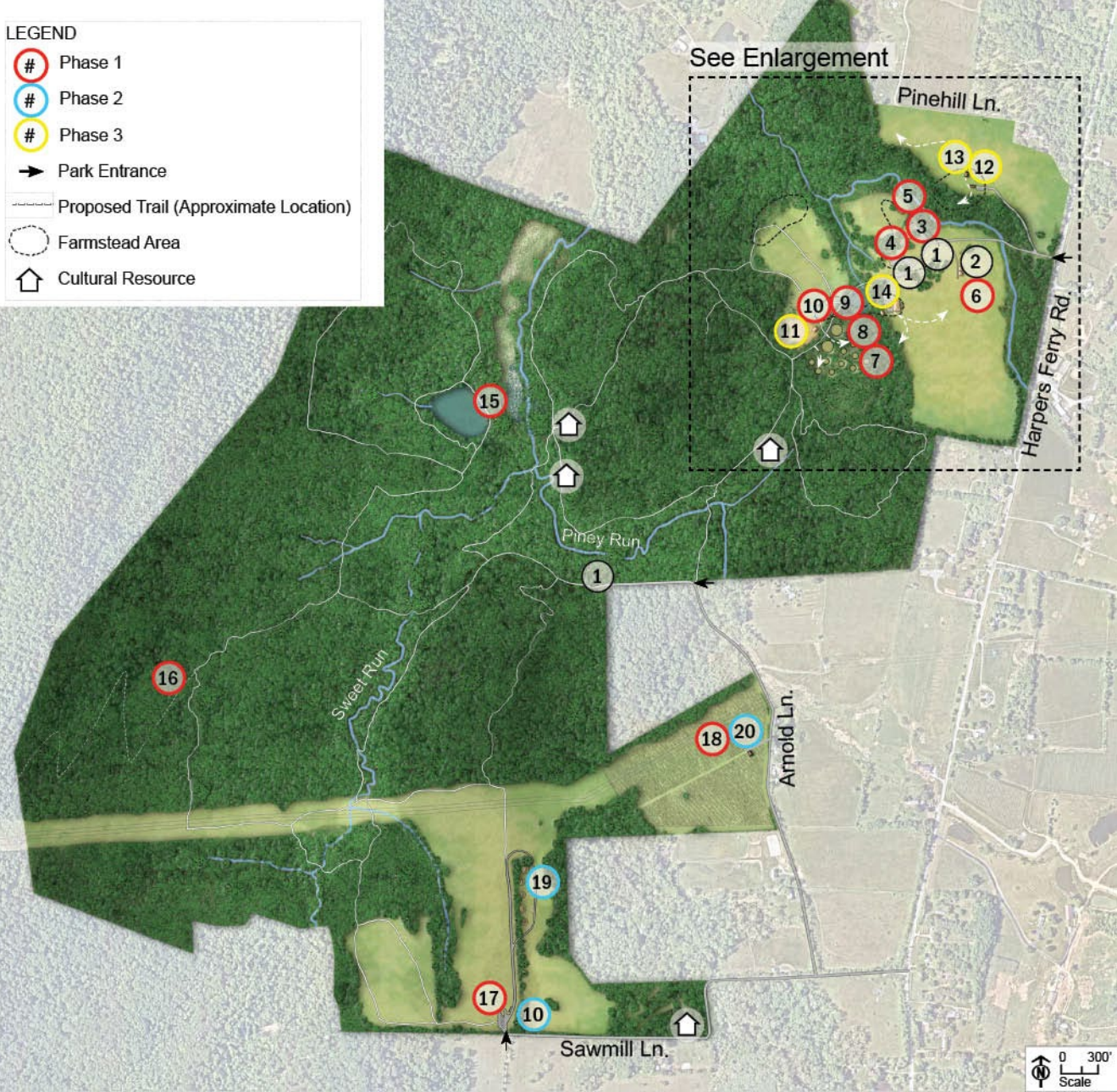
What are the exceptions? Farmstead areas (11 ac. total), existing agricultural, recreational, educational, and residential buildings or improvements, utilities serving permitted uses, hiking and nature study, temporary and seasonal uses

Easements: Clarification Regarding Exceptions

- **Trail Uses:** Prior to planning for improvements, DCR staff requested clarification regarding whether equestrian and biking are permitted on park trails. Easement holders responded that they are permitted as temporary/seasonal uses on existing trails only; all new trails constructed on the property must be solely for pedestrian use.
- **New Recreational and Educational Uses:** After initial proposals, DCR staff requested clarification regarding the proposed locations of various facilities on the Tract 2 Conservation Easement. Although proposals in the Farmstead Areas were deemed potentially permissible, the following proposed improvements outside of the Farmstead Areas were found to be inconsistent with the terms of the easement:
 - Educational/interpretive (visitor) center;
 - Contact station;
 - Entrance road;
 - Equestrian/overnight parking.
- **More Information Needed:** Proposed locations of the primitive campground and replacement agricultural support (maintenance) building will require additional information for County review.

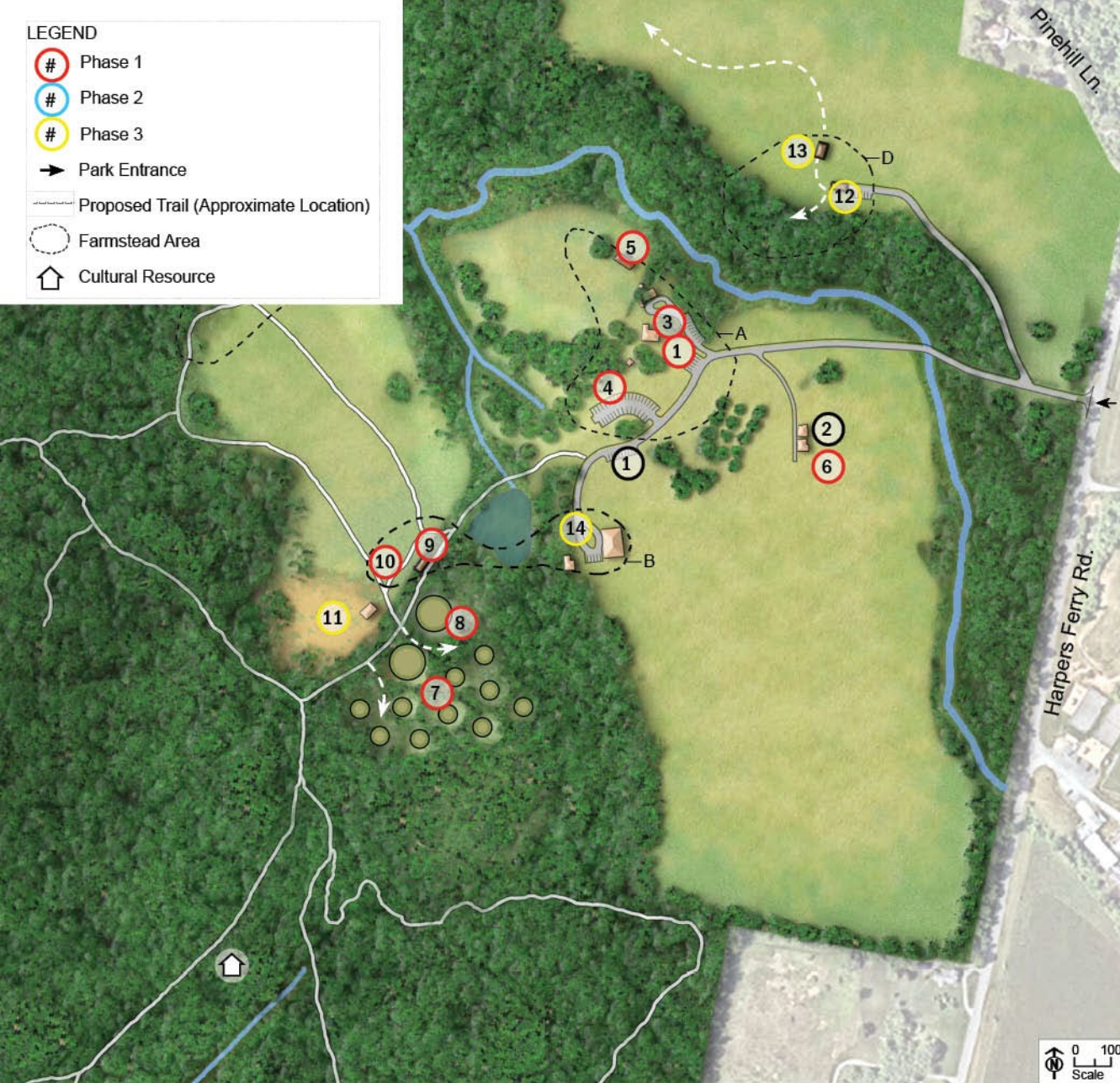
LEGEND

- # Phase 1
- # Phase 2
- # Phase 3
- Park Entrance
- Proposed Trail (Approximate Location)
- Farmstead Area
- 🏠 Cultural Resource



Phased Development Plan

- ① Existing Parking
- ② Existing Agriculture Support Facilities
- ③ Demory Complex Improvements
- ④ Day Use/Overnight Parking
- ⑤ Maintenance Area Improvements
- ⑥ Demonstration Agriculture Area
- ⑦ Primitive Camping Tent Sites (10)
- ⑧ Group Campsites (2)
- ⑨ Bathhouse
- ⑩ Picnic Area
- ⑪ Improved Nature Play Area
- ⑫ Restroom and Parking
- ⑬ Picnic Shelter
- ⑭ Repurposed Interpretive Center and Ranger Residence
- ⑮ Impoundment Assessment
- ⑯ Blue Blaze Trail Connection to AT
- ⑰ Improved Equestrian Parking and Day Use/ Overnight Parking
- ⑱ Agriculture Area
- ⑲ Rustic Camping Cabins (5)
- ⑳ Agriculture Support Facilities



Phased Development Plan - Enlargement

- ① Existing Parking
- ② Existing Agriculture Support Facilities
- ③ Demory Complex Improvements
- ④ Day Use/Overnight Parking
- ⑤ Maintenance Area Improvements
- ⑥ Demonstration Agriculture Area
- ⑦ Primitive Camping Tent Sites (10)
- ⑧ Group Campsites (2)
- ⑨ Bathhouse
- ⑩ Picnic Area
- ⑪ Improved Nature Play Area
- ⑫ Restroom and Parking
- ⑬ Picnic Shelter
- ⑭ Repurposed Interpretive Center and Ranger Residence

Phased Development Plan

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demory Complex Improvements• Day Use/Overnight Parking near Demory-Wortman House• Maintenance Area Improvements• Demonstration Agriculture Area• Primitive Camping Tent Sites (10)• Group Campsites (2)• Bathhouse• Picnic Area near Mountain View Trail• Gordon Pond Impoundment Assessment• Blue Blaze Trail Connection to AT• Improved Equestrian Parking and Day Use/Overnight Parking• Agriculture Area in Agricultural Easement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rustic Camping Cabins (5)• Agriculture Support Facilities in Agricultural Easement• Picnic Area at the Sawmill Lane Entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restroom and Parking in the north meadow along Pinehill Lane• Picnic Shelter in the north meadow along Pinehill Lane• Improved Nature Play Area
TOTAL 30 YEAR MASTER PLAN COST ESTIMATE:		\$12,426,877

Unmet Needs

- **Visitor Center** with educational facilities and interpretive exhibits, gift shop, administrative offices, and storage
- **Additional equestrian and biking trails** with trailhead parking
- **Standard full-scale maintenance facility** including maintenance building, pole sheds, materials storage, above-ground fuel storage tanks, and maintenance offices
- **Ranger residence** separated from public-facing facilities



Staffing

Title	Existing	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
Park Manager	1				1
Ass. Park Mgr.				1	1
Chief Ranger – Maintenance		1			1
Chief Ranger – Visitor Exp.		1			1
Office Manager	1				1
Volunteer Coordinator		1			1
Ranger – Maintenance	1		1	1	3
Ranger – Res. Management		1			1
Public Safety	1				1





Next Steps

- Public comment period will be open until **October 22, 2026**. Please email comments to: PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov with “Sweet Run State Park Master Plan” in the subject line
- Meeting materials and project updates will be posted on the Sweet Run State Park Master Plan project website: www.dcr.virginia.gov/sweetrunmasterplan



Next Steps

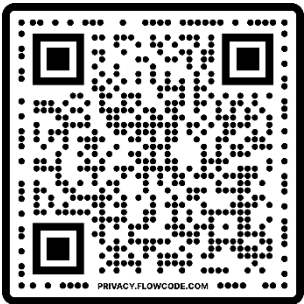
- Board of Conservation and Recreation review in January 2027
- 30-Day General Assembly review occurs in Early 2027
- Adoption is expected in March or April 2027

Questions?



Thank you for attending the Sweet Run State Park Master Plan public comment meeting!

- Meeting materials and project updates will be posted on the Sweet Run State Park Master Plan project website:
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To provide comments:

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