



# Virginia News

Paddling on the Meherrin River. Photo: NPS/Ursula Lemanski

## PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015

- NPS Unit
- ★ State Capital



### CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Blue Ridge Tunnel Restoration and Rail-Trail
2. Gloucester Blueways and Greenways
3. Hughes Waterman Heritage Trail and Conservation Project
4. Norfolk Waterway Trail System
5. Spotsylvania-Fredericksburg Park Connections
6. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Interpretive Trails
7. Reedy Creek Greenway and Youth Engagement
8. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
9. Urban Ecosystem Restoration, DC Metro Area

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

### ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff 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.

## Recent Successes

### Blue Ridge Tunnel Restoration and Rail-Trail

The Blue Ridge Tunnel is an engineering marvel of regional and statewide importance. Designed by Claudius Crozet, the tunnel was constructed with the help of a large contingent of Irish American laborers and enslaved Virginians. It was the longest tunnel in America when it opened in 1858, extending almost a mile in length. The Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation is leading a multi-jurisdictional effort to restore, reopen, and interpret the historic tunnel and construct the 2.2 mile rail-trail needed for public access. The project is a key connection in a regional trail and greenway system, which will provide a safe nonmotorized travel corridor through the Blue Ridge Mountains. In addition, successful completion of the project is expected to support and enhance the City of Waynesboro's ongoing downtown revitalization efforts..



Downtown Waynesboro. Photo: NPS

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# Current Projects

## 1. Blue Ridge Tunnel Restoration and Rail-Trail

Partners: Nelson County, Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation  
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski  
Location: Nelson and Augusta Counties  
Congressional Districts: VA - 5, VA - 6

### Project Goal

Restore, reopen, and interpret the historic Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel and create the associated 2.2 miles of trail infrastructure needed for public access. The project is a key element in enhancing quality of life, heritage tourism, and community livability and the centerpiece of a proposed multi-regional greenway and trail system.

### NPS Role

Assist with collaborative, multi-jurisdictional trail planning, organizational development, and coordination with national park system units in the project area.



The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail offers multiple avenues to explore and learn about the river's natural and cultural heritage. Photo: NPS/Ursula Lemanski

## 2. Gloucester Blueways and Greenways

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

### Project Goal

Develop a system of blueways and greenways in Gloucester County that incorporate and connect public lands and flood-prone parcels obtained through FEMA mitigation grants for recreation, wellness, and habitat conservation.

### NPS Role

Provide assistance with blueway planning and site design, flood mitigation strategies, community outreach, and capacity building to address management issues and foster long-term watershed stewardship.

## 3. Hughes Waterman Heritage Trail and Conservation Project

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

### Project Goal

Preserve and revitalize the Tyler's Beach area to serve as a community park and water access to expand opportunities for youth, elderly, and veterans; preserve local waterman and Native American history; and support education, economic development, and a working waterfront.

### NPS Role

Assist in the development of a concept plan for Tyler Beach and adjacent lands that addresses current management issues, identifies future uses, interprets local history, and links to near-by parks and historic sites along the James River.

## 4. Norfolk Waterway Trail System

Partner: City of Norfolk  
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski  
Location: Norfolk  
Congressional Districts: VA - 2, VA - 3

### Project Goal

Update and expand the Waterway Trail System Plan by identifying and prioritizing new launch sites and trail segments, shoreline restoration needs, and educational opportunities, in collaboration with civic organizations and nonprofit partners.

### NPS Role

Assist with evaluating water access needs and opportunities, including outreach to low income, minority, and disadvantaged neighborhoods; building consensus; and prioritizing actions to expand access and stewardship.

# Current Projects cont.

## 5. Spotsylvania-Fredericksburg Park Connections

Lead Partner: Spotsylvania Greenways and Spotsylvania County

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Spotsylvania County and City of Fredericksburg

Congressional Districts: VA - 1, VA - 7

### Project Goal

Development of trails and greenways in Spotsylvania County that connect community resources and National Park Service lands, to enhance interpretation, provide recreation and wellness opportunities, and inspire respect and responsible stewardship of green space resources.

### NPS Role

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

## 6. Cedar Creek and Belle Grove Interpretive Trails

Lead Partner: Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Frederick, Shenandoah, Warren Counties

Congressional Districts: VA - 6, VA - 10

### Project Goal

Development of an integrated trail system at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park that connects key resources on National Park Service and partners' lands and links the park to adjacent communities, regional bike, trail, and water trail networks, and sites associated with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Heritage Area.

### NPS Role

Coordinate and facilitate trail planning discussions to gain consensus on potential location of trail routes and trailheads, trail design standards, and strategies for balancing public access with resource protection and private lands. Identify short-term pilot projects as well as long-term implementation actions.

## 7. Reedy Creek Greenway and Youth Engagement

Lead Partner: Groundwork Richmond (RVA)

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

Location: Southern Richmond

Congressional Districts: VA - 3, VA - 7

### Project Goal

Develop a greenway and trail along Reedy Creek in Southside Richmond that connects schools, neighborhoods, community facilities, and city parkland to the James River.

### NPS Role

Assist with trail design and construction, implementation strategies, and expanding outreach to underserved communities.

## 8. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Partner: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski

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

### Project Goal

Improve quality of life for residents and visitors to the Potomac watershed through the development of an interconnected network of trails for recreation, transportation, and heritage tourism.

### NPS Role

Assist with community engagement, trail promotion, state-level policy development, regional coordination, and technical assistance to local jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia.

## 9. Urban Ecosystem Restoration, DC Metro Area

Project Partner: Urban Ecosystem Restorations

NPS Contact: Wink Hastings

Location: Washington DC

Metropolitan Region

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

### Project Goal

Establish a Washington, DC Metropolitan land trust to develop a network of protected lands comprised of small forested areas, native grass/wetland complexes, and nonstructural storm water management facilities. Demonstrate innovative approaches to land protection in highly urbanized cities.

### NPS Role

Facilitate process to establish organizational structure, develop conservation objectives, identify priority lands for protection, and build collaborative partnerships to effectively implement natural land preservation in highly urbanized environments.



Intern Tiye Ford Interviews Watermen at Tyler's Beach in Rushmere.

Photo: Ursula Lemanski (NPS)

## We're Here For You.

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



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## 2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at  
[www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca)



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## Recent Successes cont.

### Gloucester Blueways and Greenways

With over 500 miles of coastline on the lower Chesapeake Bay and tributary rivers, Gloucester County provides a diverse array of water-based recreational opportunities but its location also makes it vulnerable to storm surges and flooding. Over the past several years, the county has been acquiring flood prone lands and returning them to permanent open space. A steering committee of county agencies and stakeholders will assess potential uses of parcels acquired through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants and look holistically at floodplain management, ecological restoration, and recreation planning. In addition to FEMA parcels, the committee has been exploring a creative new partnership with private marinas to encourage public access for nonmotorized boats.



Gloucester Blueways—a scenic network of five water trails located on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.  
Photo: NPS/Ursula Lemanski



Gloucester Blueway Committee conducts site visit of potential new access.  
Photo: NPS/Ursula Lemanski



Gloucester Point Beach. Photo: NPS/Ursula Lemanski

*“Thanks for your keen insights. Your contributions with water trail planning and organizational assistance are GREATLY appreciated”*

Carol E. Steele, Director, Gloucester County Parks, Recreation and Tourism