PROJECT GOAL

To determine if a multi-use (including but not limited to ATV, blue way, hiking, bicycle, off-highway motorcycle and equestrian), public-accessible trail system — similar to the established Hatfield-McCoy trail system of West Virginia — is feasible in southwest Virginia.

Southwest Virginia Multi-Use Trail Project

AUTHORITY LEGISLATION

Legislation to form the Southwest Virginia Recreational Authority, as an authority to oversee the possible development of the trail system, has passed both the House and Senate of the 2008 Virginia General Assembly session (House Bill 1496 & Senate Bill 740).

THE PROPOSED TRAIL SYSTEM

- is intended to utilize easements on privately owned lands through cooperative agreements, mainly with large corporate landowners
- will be governed by a state authority, and patrolled by rangers with full law enforcement capabilities
- will require users to abide by a strict set of safety and conduct rules, enforced to protect users and the environment
- can provide economic diversification through development and expansion of businesses such as: outfitters; campgrounds, hotels, cabin rentals; restaurants; gift shops; supplier stores; ATV, bicycle, off-highway motorcycle, and equestrian services/sales

OUTDOOR RECREATION IN VIRGINIA IS SIGNIFICANT

- 21% of Virginia visitors participate in some form of outdoor recreation
- those visitors spend more than the average travel party ($789 versus $463 per visit)
- those visitors stay longer than the average travel party (3.3 nights versus 2.2 nights)

WEST VIRGINIA'S HATFIELD-MCCOY TRAIL SYSTEM

- provides economic output of $7.7 million
- creates a tax revenue of $622,752
- 82% of trail users are likely to return
- provides $2.7 million in income
- provides 146 jobs

PROJECT TIMELINE

2008
- Secure Funding for Feasibility Study
- Form Southwest Virginia Recreation Authority

2009
- Complete Feasibility Study
- Begin Fundraising for Trail Development/Authority Operations Plan/Map Trail System
- Establish Authority Organization – Operation Policies and Procedures

2010
- Establish Authority Executive Director Position
- Begin Trail Creation
- Develop Marketing Plan
- Establish Landowner Partnerships/ Begin Trail Creation

2011
- Open First Trail
- Implement Marketing Plan

2012
- Open Entire Trail System

The area being considered for the Southwest Virginia Multi-Use Trail Project includes Buchanan County, Dickenson County, Lee County, Russell County, Scott County, Tazewell County, Wise County, and the City of Norton.