



## 2011 Executive Summary

### Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide information, guidelines and cohesion in the creation, expansion and coordination of a safe and effective Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway system for the New River Valley region. This region includes the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski, the City of Radford, and the towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Dublin, Floyd, Glen Lyn, Narrows, Pearisburg, Pembroke, Pulaski, and Rich Creek. The region also includes Virginia Tech, Radford University and New River Community College.

The 2011 plan seeks to build on, supplement, and coordinate with existing plans. The plan recognizes and acknowledges the work and foresight of the local governments, community groups, and individuals who have created the excellent and growing network of bikeways, walkways and blueways in this region.

To prepare this plan the Planning District Commission met with each of the local governments and planning departments in the region. A major goal was to update data accurately to reflect existing facilities and identify future projects.

Ultimately, this Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan is a resource to be used as an overview of existing and proposed bikeway-walkway-blueway facilities.



Photo by: J. Wilsie

### Vision Statement

*The New River Valley is committed to the promotion of non-motorized transportation as a safe, reliable, healthy, environmentally friendly alternative to motorized transportation. Opportunities must exist for residents of the region to choose walking or biking as a means of getting to a destination.*

### 2011 Plan Objectives

1. To identify a system to accommodate the variety of Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway users.
2. To coordinate a system of bikeways, walkways, blueways, locally and regionally; and to maintain the continuity of the Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway system to encourage non-motorized transportation.
3. To identify and determine the appropriate type of facility, and coordinate Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway development with future and imminent Virginia Department of Transportation projects.
4. To showcase and focus on the natural and cultural amenities of the New River Valley when proposing bike routes and walking trails, in order to maximize trail effectiveness and increase tourism within the region.
5. To promote the health, safety, welfare and improve the quality of life within the region.
6. To facilitate the use of recycled materials in the construction of bikeways, walkways, and blueways.
7. To increase the mobility of New River Valley residents by adding multimodal options to existing transportation networks with more connections to public transit that ultimately link communities where people live, work, attend school and recreate.

### Elements of a Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway System

The Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan identifies a variety of different modes to support a comprehensive transportation system. For the purpose of this plan the following types of facilities were considered:

- Bikeways
- Shared Roadways
- Bicycle Lanes
- Multi-purpose Trails
- Mountain Biking Trails
- Hiking Trails
- Sidewalks
- Dedicated Bicycle Routes
- Blueways (Water Trails)
- Support Facilities

The 2011 plan challenges project planners to be cognizant of, and provide for, the different levels of users within each of these categories. Furthermore, delineating alternative transportation versus recreation facilities and minimizing the conflicts between them is vital to the creation of a successful multiuse system. Alternative transportation facilities should be designed for the least experienced user. Recreational facilities should be designed to accommodate a range of users with varying degrees of ability. Lastly, it is important to plan for opportunities that will enable individuals to move from one mode of travel to another (i.e., bicycling to canoeing).





Photo by: E. Sharp

### Exploring Regional Assets

Over the last 20 years the communities of the New River Valley have developed numerous facilities, and also had the good fortune of being an integral part of national and statewide efforts. Below is a list of current regional assets:

#### ➤ **Multi-purpose Trails:**

- **New River Trail State Park** – A Rails-to-Trails project stretching over 50 miles through Grayson to Carroll, Wythe, and Pulaski Counties. The trail provides numerous access points for hiking, biking, horse back riding, and boat access to the New River. Preliminary plans are under way to connect the existing trail terminus, in downtown Pulaski, to Randolph Park. A NRT Extension Project Plan was completed in 2007 that included connecting the trail to the Radford Riverway and Huckleberry Trail.
- **Huckleberry Trail** – A Rails-to-Trails project connecting Montgomery County, the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Christiansburg and Virginia Tech. The nearly six mile long

trail is entirely paved and serves as a commuting and recreational facility for bicyclists and pedestrians. Plans are underway to extend the trail north (known as the Hethwood Greenway) and connect to the National Forest Trail network. There are also plans to extend the trail south to the Christiansburg Recreation Center. Once the improvements are complete the trail will double in length.

- **Radford Riverway** – Nearly 3 miles of paved surface, ADA accessible multipurpose trail that traverses through Bisset and Wildwood Parks. The trail connects the City of Radford to Radford University and serves as a recreation and local commuter route. Future plans include expanding the trail into West Radford toward Forest Avenue and looping back to the existing terminus at Sundell Drive.
- **Dora Trail** – A connector trail that begins near the existing New River Trail terminus and runs slightly over 2.5 miles to the downtown Pulaski Historic Railway Station. The trail connects the residents and visitors of downtown Pulaski to the New River Trail.
- **Hokie Bikeways** – A system of trails developed by Virginia Tech to enhance connectivity between the Hokie Bikeway trails, the Huckleberry Trail and other Town of Blacksburg trails. The system is intended for recreation and commuting for local residents and the Virginia Tech campus.
- **Floyd Heritage Pathways** – Development of new ADA accessible pedestrian facilities that connect key activity areas in downtown Floyd. Once complete, the pathway will include signage to guide and promote tourism in the historic downtown area.

- **Glen Lyn Greenway** – Development of a new ADA accessible bicycle and pedestrian path that connects the town to Glen Lyn Park and the Dr. F. D. Morse Trail. The park features old Norfolk Southern Railway Bridge piers that remain standing in the New River. Future plans include creating an extension to the Town of Rich Creek.

➤ **Shared Roadways:**

- **US Bicycle Route 76** – One of only two established US Bicycle Routes; this designated bicycle route crosses the United States from Oregon to Yorktown, Virginia and passes through the City of Radford, Montgomery, Pulaski, Wythe, and Roanoke counties.
- **Proposed multi-jurisdictional routes** – Corridors that have been identified to connect multiple counties, cities, towns and points of interest: 221, 8, 61, 42, 11 and 114.



Photo by: J. Wilsie

➤ **Hiking and Mountain Biking Trails**

- **Appalachian Trail** – Completed in 1937, the AT is a privately managed unit of the national park system and is the nation’s longest footpath at 2,179 miles. In 1968, the AT was the first designated American National Scenic Trail spanning from Georgia to Maine.
- **Great Eastern Trail** – The future Great Eastern Trail is a collection of footpaths and hiking trails spanning across nine states, from Alabama into New York and Michigan. The alignment through the NRV will most likely follow the AT alignment and provide a potential spur into Bluestone Park in WV.
- **Jefferson National Forest Trails** – Located in Giles, Pulaski and Montgomery counties, the national forest provides multiple recreational trails. Giles County features numerous hiking and mountain biking trails including the Cascades just outside of Pembroke, and the AT near Pearisburg and Narrows. Pulaski features the Gatewood Reservoir and an assortment of recreational facilities for canoeing, hiking and biking. Montgomery features Pandapas Pond that offers recreational facilities for a variety of hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders.
- **Mountain Lake Conservatory Trails** – Located in Giles County, Mountain Lake features over 2600 acres of land ready for hikers, cross country skiers and mountain bikers to explore.
- **Claytor Lake State Park** – A 450 acre park that offers activities for water and land enthusiasts. Currently, there are

over 4-miles of easy to moderate rated hiking trails. The lake is 21-miles long and is approximately 4,500 acres.

- **Ellett Valley Recreational Area** – Located just south of Blacksburg, the recreational area includes a one-mile long hiking trail, activity area and a series of micro trails. Future plans include the development of a multi-purpose trail extension with multiple access points, a pedestrian only trail and interconnections to the existing Nature Park trail system.
- **Coal Miners Heritage Park** – A 30 acre tract of land that once hosted a mining tipple, hotel, general store and residential housing for coal miners. In 2010, a new trail was constructed for hikers and mountain bikers that ties into the Huckleberry Trail. The new trail also offers an ADA accessible spur leading to the old mining entrance.
- **Rocky Knob Trails** – Located along the Blue Ridge Parkway, lush and forested slopes of the Rock Castle Gorge suggest that man has been an infrequent visitor. In 1984, the loop trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in recognition of its outstanding features.

#### ➤ **Blueways:**

- **New River Canoe Trail** – A water trail that connects Giles and Pulaski Counties to North Carolina and West Virginia. The New River Canoe Trail was Virginia’s first designated inland canoe trail as well as the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s first water trail or 5blueway. Good canoe trails offer the visitor a well-spaced series of access sites as well as adequate support facilities between those access sites. Support facilities in

the New River Canoe Trail include campsites, rest stops, sanitation facilities, potable water, and sources of information to aid in trip planning.

- **Proposed Blueways** – Tributaries that have been identified in the 2011 plan include the Roanoke River, Peak Creek and the Little River.



#### **Planning for the Future**

The 2011 Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway Plan encourages the development of alternative transportation facilities that are tailored to the demand of each community. The plan is intended to be a resource for local governments and citizens interested in the planning and development of Bikeway-Walkway-Blueway systems in the region.

Proposed alignments and associated improvements shown within this plan are conceptual only and are intended to illustrate the connectivity between two points of interest. Providing transportation options in the New River Valley is a regional vision.