

Powhatan State Park Master Plan Public Information Meeting



September 23, 2025

Housekeeping

- Please mute your phones
- Please hold questions until the end of the presentation
- Participants watching the broadcast can email questions or comments to PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov during the presentation
- Additional comments will be received until at least **October 23, 2025** including via the email noted above
- Meeting materials will be made available at:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>



Agenda

Opening Remarks, Introduction to DCR & Virginia State Parks

- Dr. Melissa Baker, Virginia State Parks Director

Welcome, Park Background and Purpose

- Amelia Hulth, Park Manager

Meeting Purpose and Park Planning Process/Goals

- Josh Bateman, Environmental Program Planner

Resource Summaries

- David Bryan, State Parks Planner

Public Input Opportunities

Wrap Up and Q&A

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 - Doughat 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

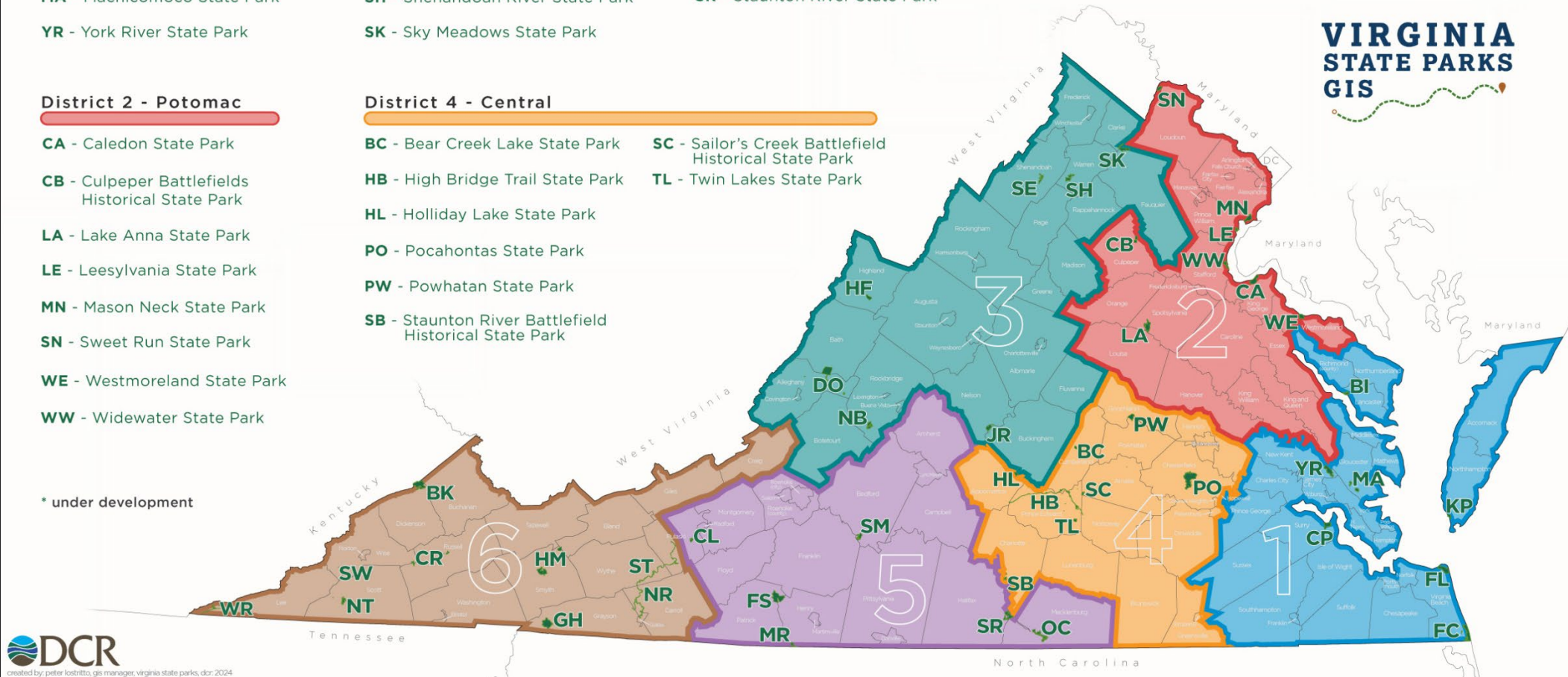
District 5 - Piedmont

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

**VIRGINIA
STATE PARKS
GIS**



Welcome to Powhatan State Park



Park Background

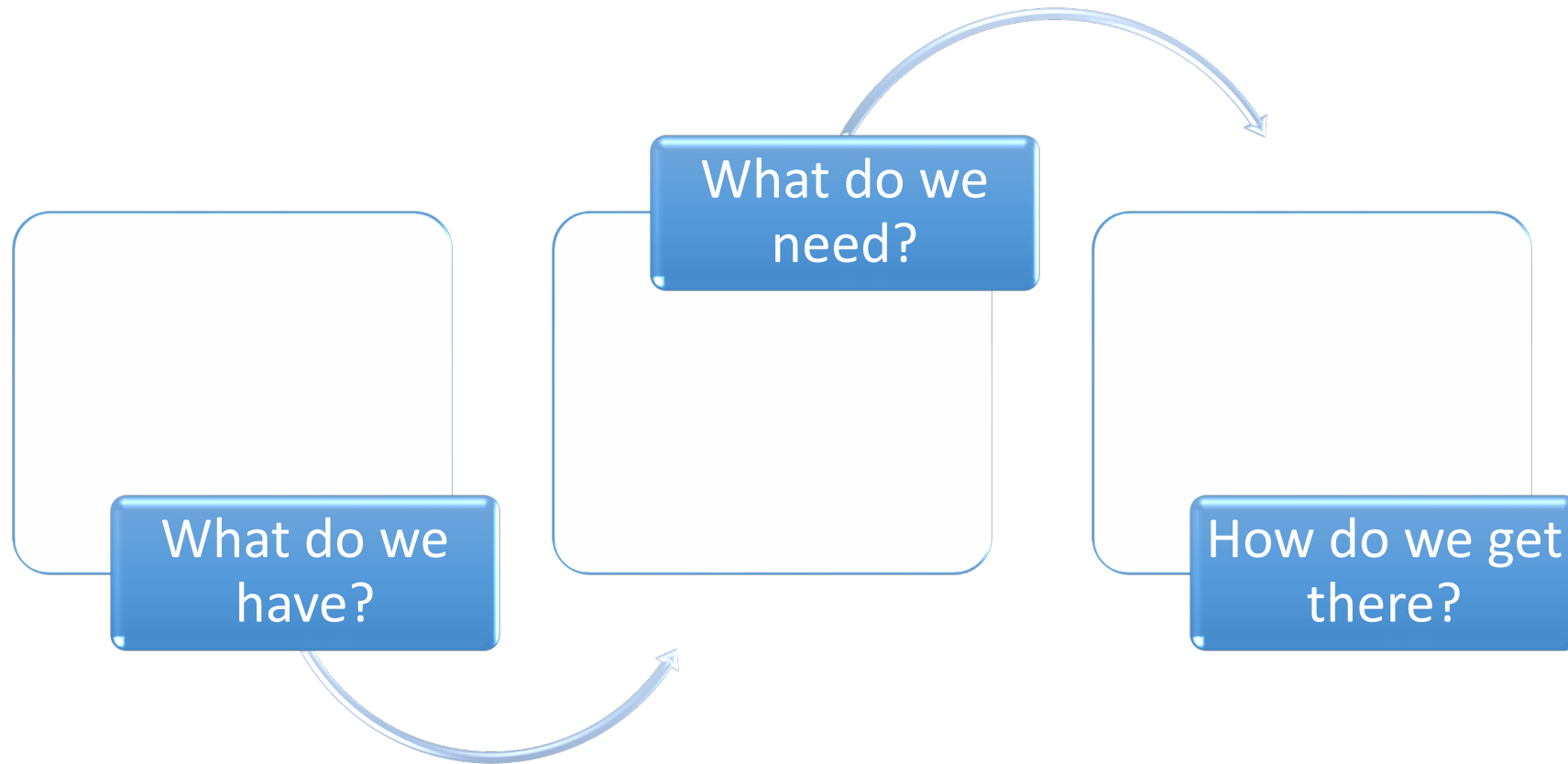


- Created by transfer in 2003 of the 1,565-acre former Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center in 2003 to DCR
- First master plan approved in 2007 followed by construction of first roads, contact station, picnic areas/shelters, canoe launches A and B, primitive campground, equestrian trailhead, park office, ranger residences and maintenance facilities.
- Opened to the public in 2012. Master plan updated that year calling for additional developments in three phases.
 - Proposed developments constructed since include extension of St. Park Ln., River Bend Campground, Canoe Launch C, and equestrian trailhead
- Proposed developments not yet built include visitor center, cabins and lodges, amphitheater, and reforestation project

Meeting Purpose and Goals

- Introduce attendees to Powhatan State Park and give the public a critical role to play at the beginning of the master planning process by sharing their stories, ideas, and experiences
- Learn more about park resources (i.e., cultural, natural, and physical resources)
- Provide public an opportunity to interact with state park and DCR staff to better inform their initial input concerning the future of the park

Master Planning Vision





Master Plan Process Overview





Master Plan Goals

- Create a Phased Development Plan for Powhatan State Park that:
 - Responsive to public input
 - Consistent with essential Visitor Experiences, park mission, and interpretive themes
 - Guided and informed by the cultural, natural and physical resources that make the park unique
 - Advances the state parks toward the 2036 centennial

Resources Lead the Way!

The Virginia State Parks mission is to conserve the **natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources** of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with good stewardship of these lands, water and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.



Resources Review

What Makes The Park Special

- Natural Resources
 - *The Park's Natural State*
- Cultural Resources
 - *Perspectives of the Park from the Human Past*
- Physical Resources
 - *The Park at Present*



Natural Resources

Watersheds:

- Park wholly within the Middle James River watershed

Flood Zones:

- ~258 acres along the James River are categorized as 100-year floodplain
- ~16 acres are categorized as 500-year floodplain
- ~1290 acres of parkland are categorized by minimal flood hazard



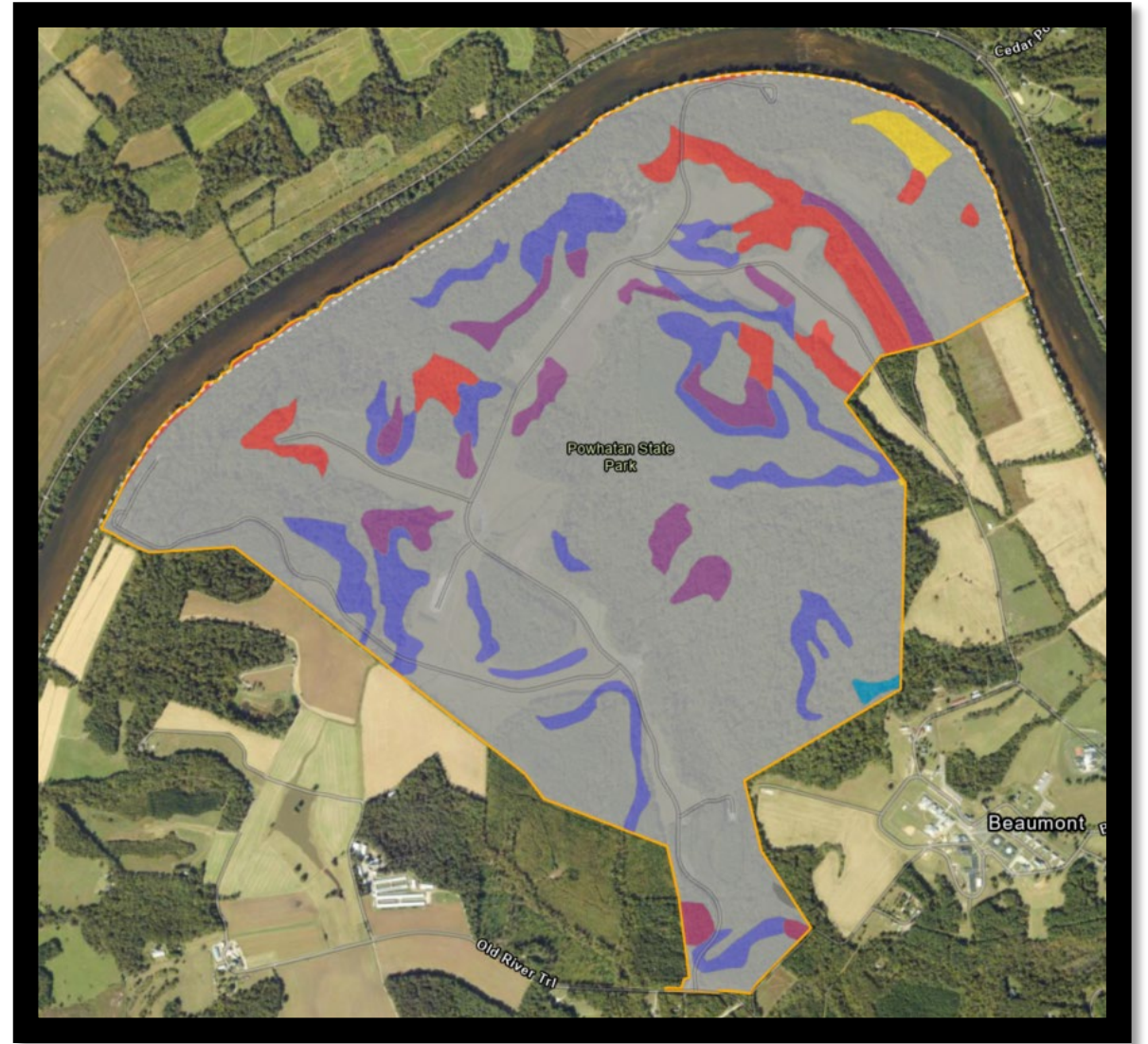
Natural Resources

Soils:

- Over 10 soils have been mapped on the property; dominated by varieties of loam soils.
- The most prevalent soil is Turbeville fine sandy loam (~646 acres).

Wetlands:

- ~3.7 acres of Freshwater Emergent Wetlands along streams and inlets of the James River.
- ~0.7 acres of Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands along the Cottonwood Trail in the northern part of the park.



Ecological Cores

- From the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment (VaNLA) developed by the DCR Division of Natural Heritage.
- Much of the Park is currently classified as a C3 Core of High Significance (yellow).
- To the extent possible, ecological continuity and integrity should be prioritized in these areas.



From Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment, DCR-DNH, Sept. 2023

Native Upland Ecosystems

- **4 Key Ecosystems:**

- Acidic Oak-Hickory Forest (~270 acres)
- Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (~195 acres)
- Basic Mesic Forest (~69 acres)
- Oak/Heath Forest (~66 acres)



Credit: TN-KY Plant Atlas

Native Lowland Ecosystems

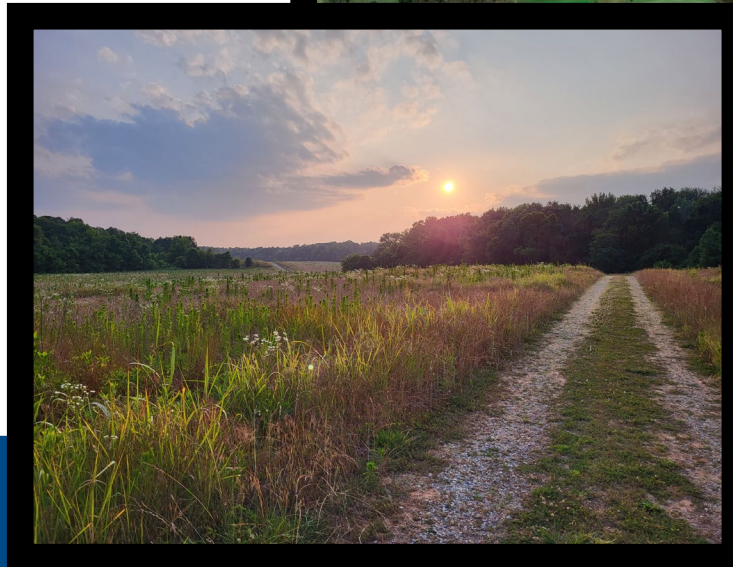
- **6 Key Ecosystems:**
 - Piedmont/Mountain Floodplain Forests and Swamps (~181 acres)
 - Coastal Plain Depression Swamps (~63 acres)
 - Floodplain Ponds and Pools (~30 acres)
 - Coastal Plain/Piedmont Bottomland Forest (~28 acres)
 - Piedmont Upland Depression Swamp (~14 acres)
 - Coastal Plain/Piedmont Seepage Swamp (~6 acres)



Credit: Gary Fleming

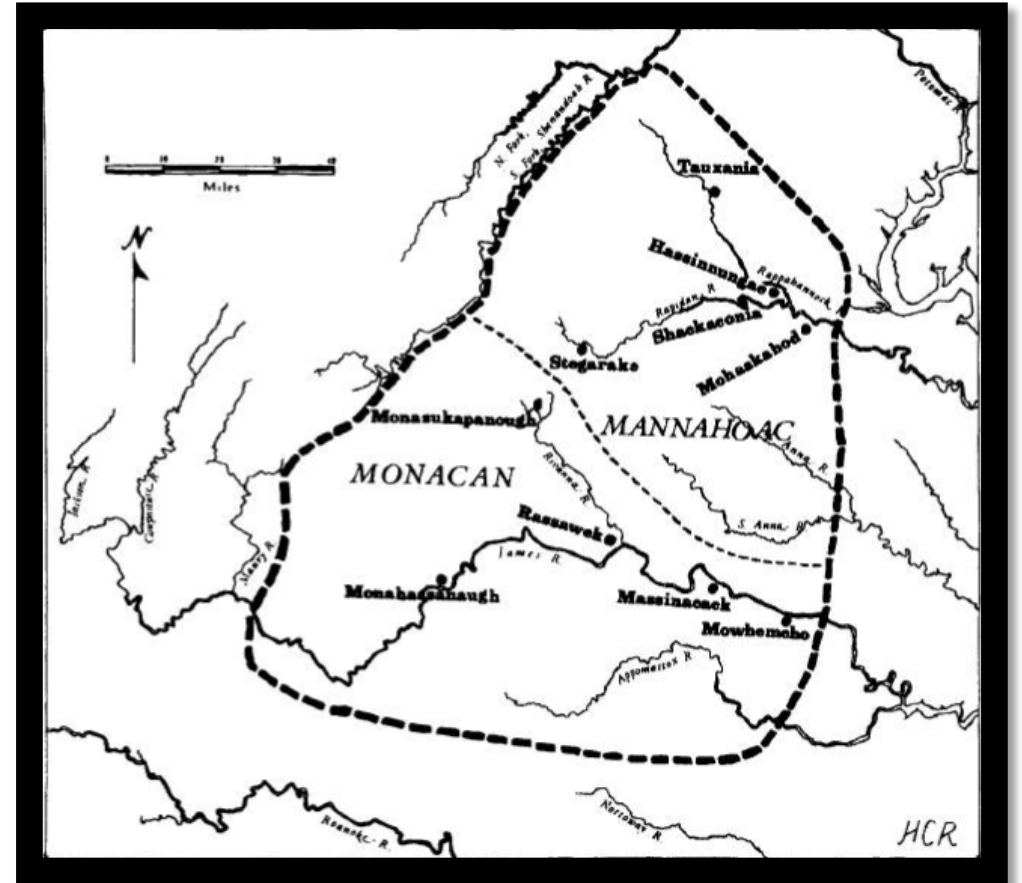
Unique Management Areas (UMAs)

- 18 UMAs
- Mostly composed of former agricultural fields.
- Three general categories:
 1. Transitioning from old agricultural fields to native wildflowers and native warm season grasses; managed by prescribed fire and other resource management practices.
 2. Transitioning to forest land (e.g. planted or natural succession).
 3. Routinely mowed and used for park operations (e.g. overflow parking for events).



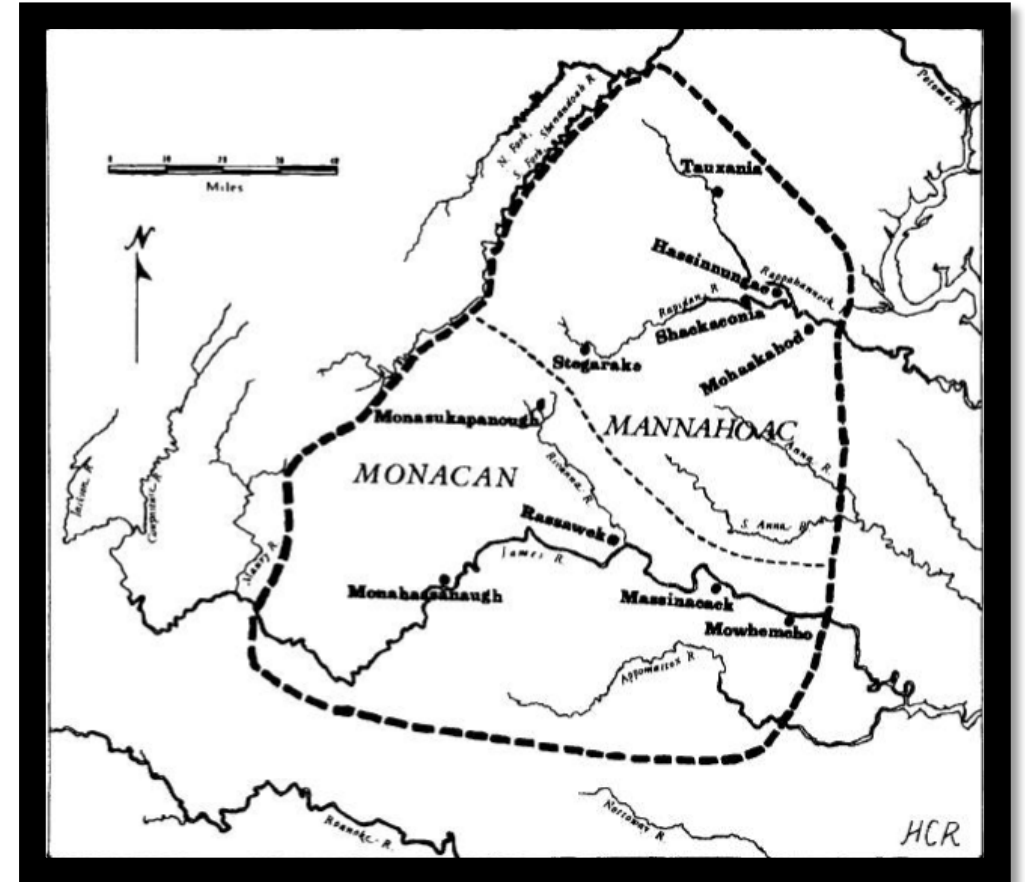
Cultural Resources

- Overview:
 - A rich human history along the James River!
 - Informed by formal and informal archaeological surveys, but these have been relatively limited compared to the total acreage of the site. More sites are likely!
- Known archaeological sites reflect:
 - Indigenous Pre-Contact life;
 - Intensive plantation operations in the 18th-19th centuries;
 - Use associated with the Beaumont Correctional Facility in the 20th century.



Cultural Resources

- Pre-Contact Archaeological Sites:
 - Five Pre-Contact sites identified!
 - Short-term tool-making or nutting stations.
 - Artifacts include lithic flakes, pottery, tools and fire-cracked rock used for tool production and food processing.
 - No villages or camps yet identified.
 - Sites range over many millennia; one site dates to the Late Woodland through the Contact period and likely relates to Siouan-speaking peoples (e.g. Saponi, Monacan).



Cultural Resources

- 18th to 19th Century Sites:
 - Five house and outbuilding sites have been identified that are linked to 18th and 19th century plantations.
 - Owned by prominent, wealthy planter families (e.g. Michaux, Walthall).
 - The Walthall's Beaumont Plantation was a major agricultural hub:
 - Tobacco was primary cash crop;
 - Established Estranola and Mount Pleasant plantation houses on what is now the park grounds.
 - Census records document a substantial enslaved population.



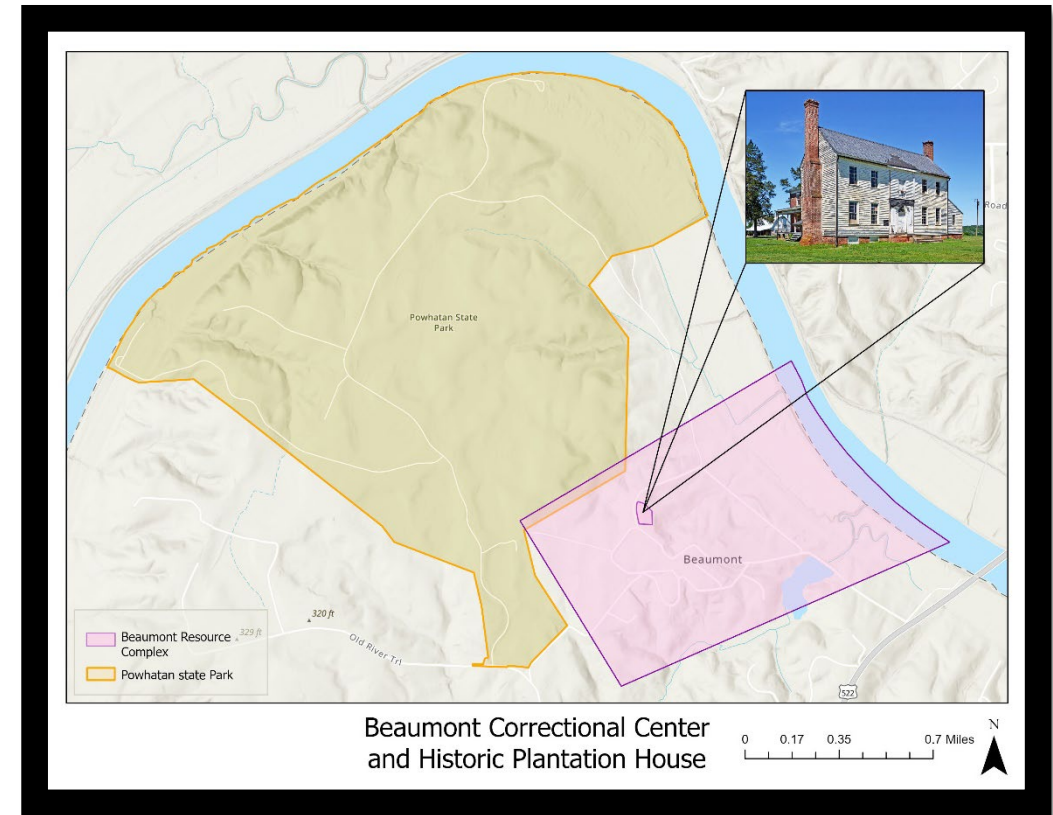
Cultural Resources

- Late 19th to 20th Century Sites:
 - After emancipation, there is evidence that many freed persons stayed as sharecroppers.
 - Five sites from post-1880s to early 1900s, likely related to sharecropper activity, have been identified.
- Cemeteries:
 - One small, unmarked, time period unknown.
 - One larger African American cemetery containing a couple marked graves from the 1870s to 1920s.
 - Likely associated with both enslaved laborers and emancipated sharecroppers or farm laborers.



Cultural Resources

- Mid- to Late 20th Century:
 - Park contains various sites associated with the Beaumont Correctional Center, first known as the Virginia Industrial School for Boys, from 1920-2017.
 - The juvenile correction facility incorporated farming as a part of rehabilitation efforts; even today there are visible remnants of farm fields and facilities within the park.
 - As the land was state-owned, State Police conducted training in facilities still present on the south side of the park.



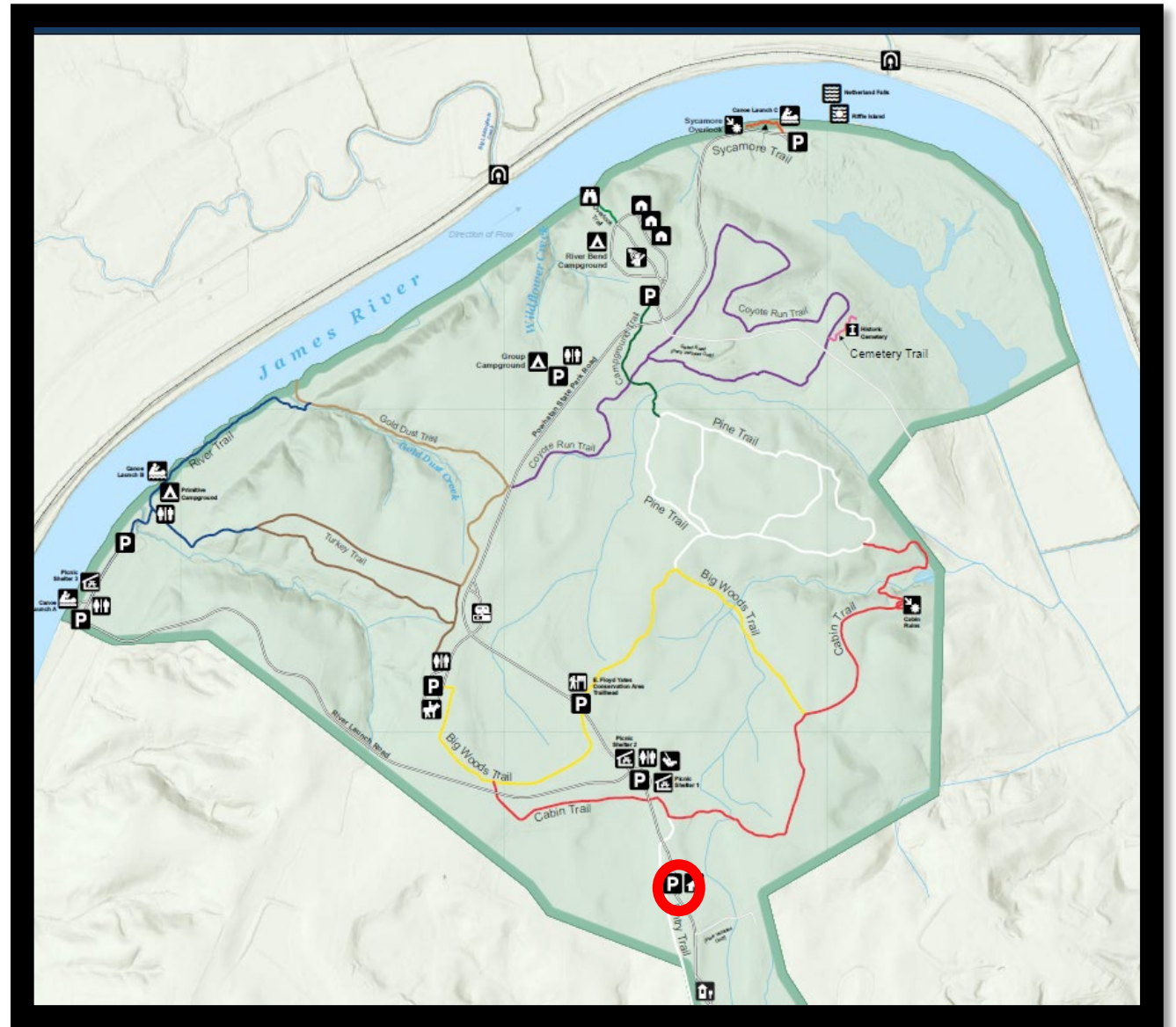
Physical Resources

Overview



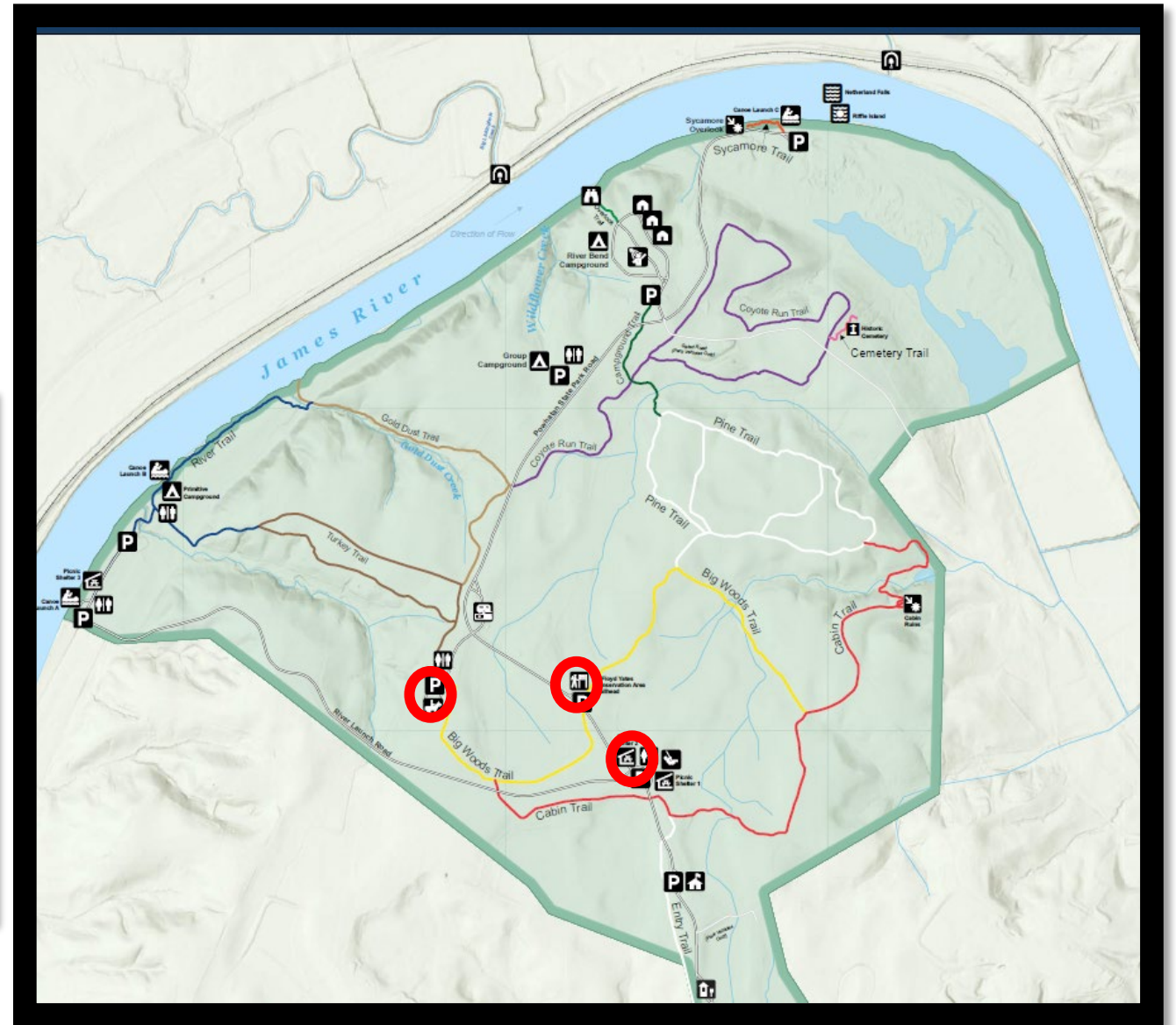
Park Office

And Gift Shop



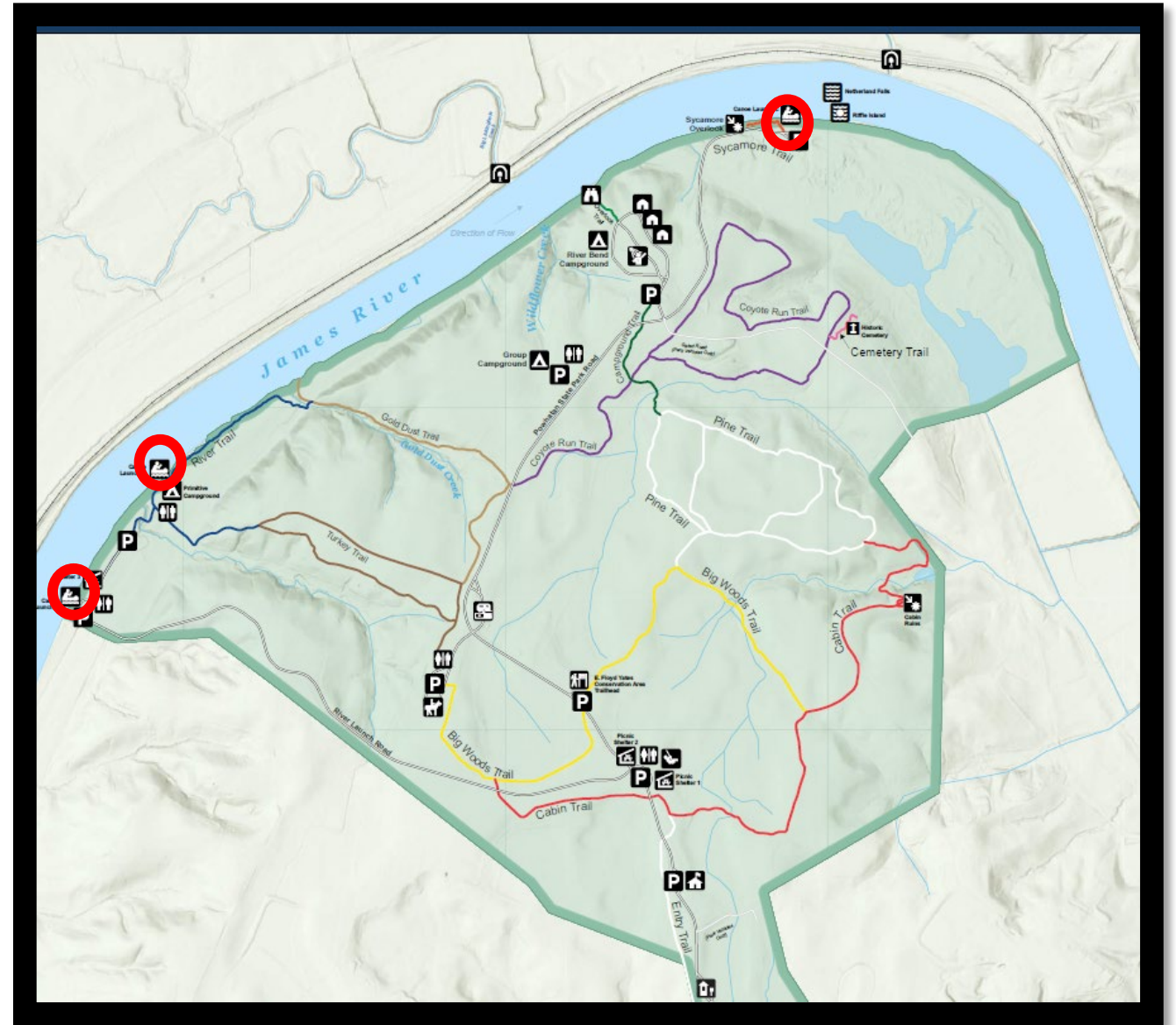
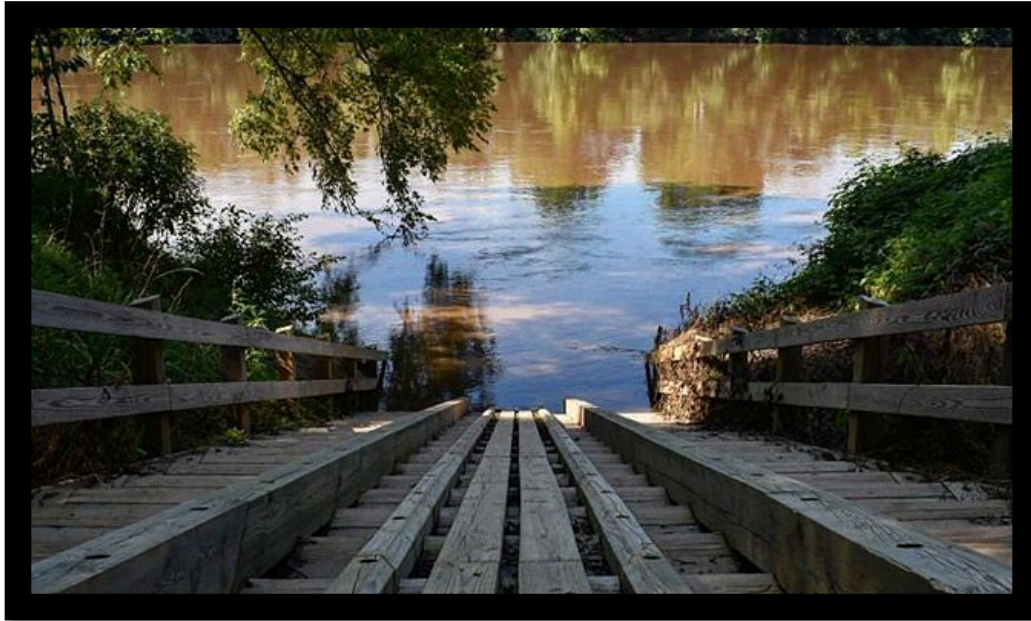
Primary Day Use Areas

Trailhead Parking, Playground,
Picnic Shelters



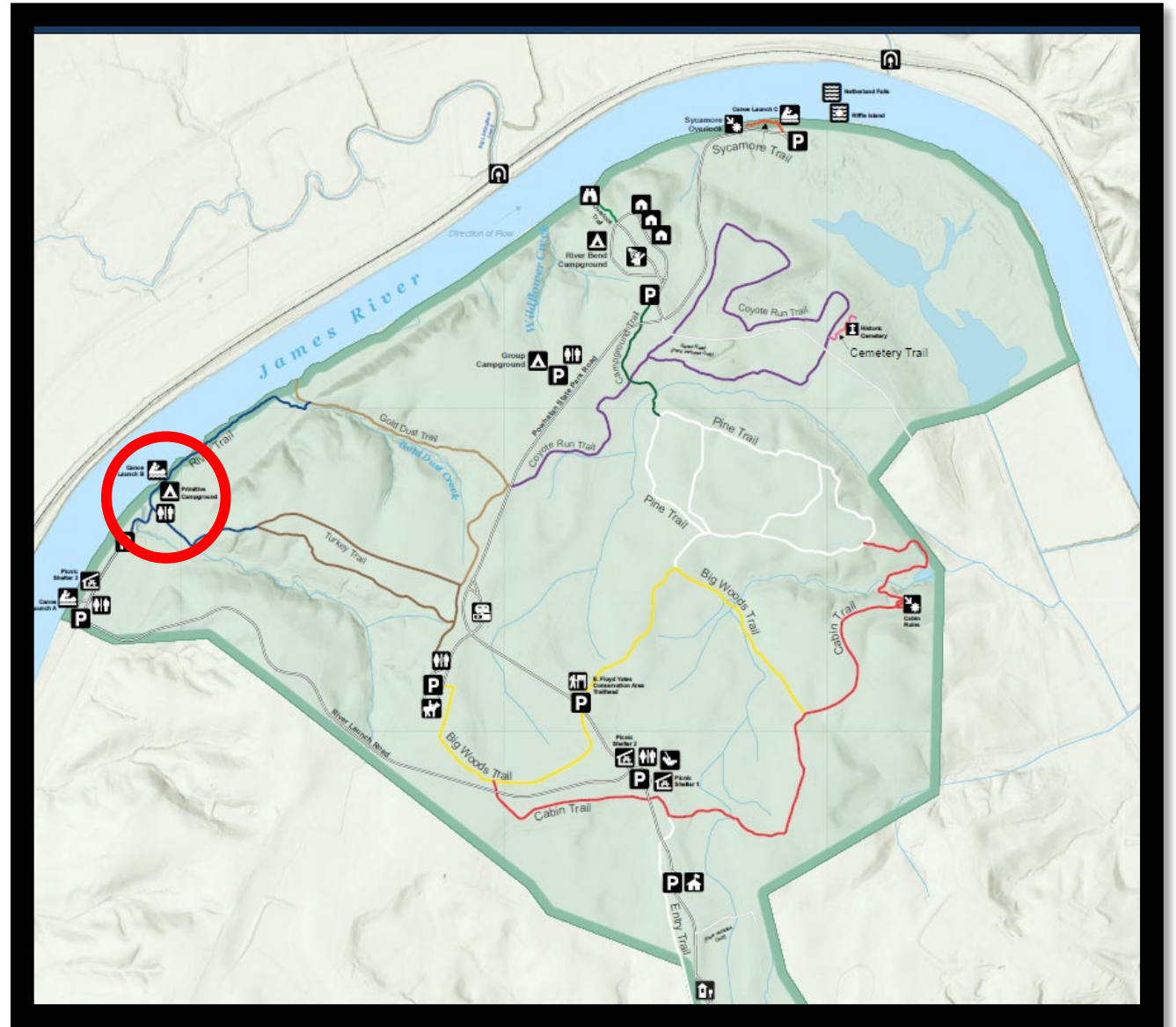
River Access Areas

River Access, Small Boat Launch,
Picnic Shelters and Tables



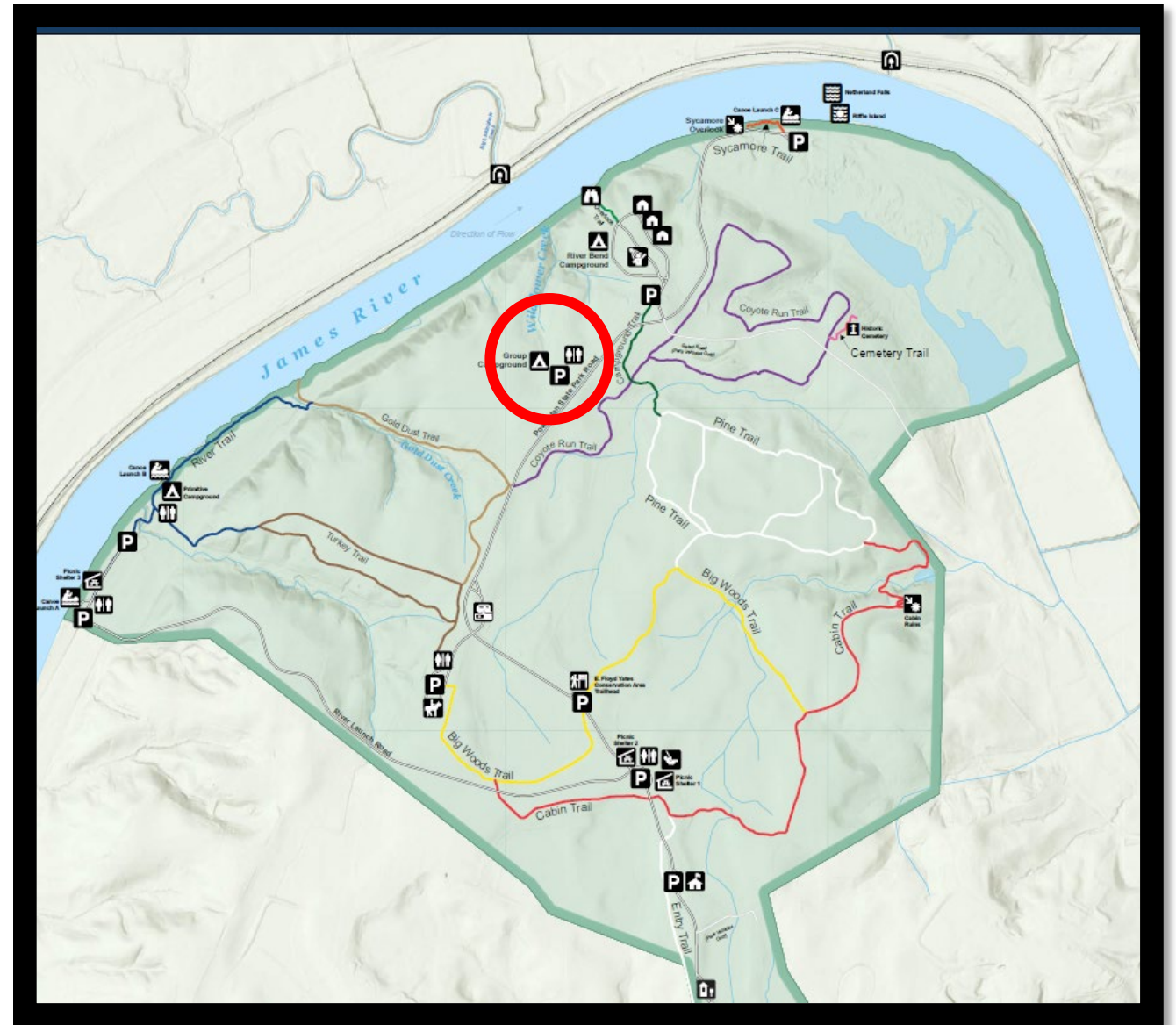
Primitive Campground

8 Primitive Sites, 1 Vault Toilet



Group Campground

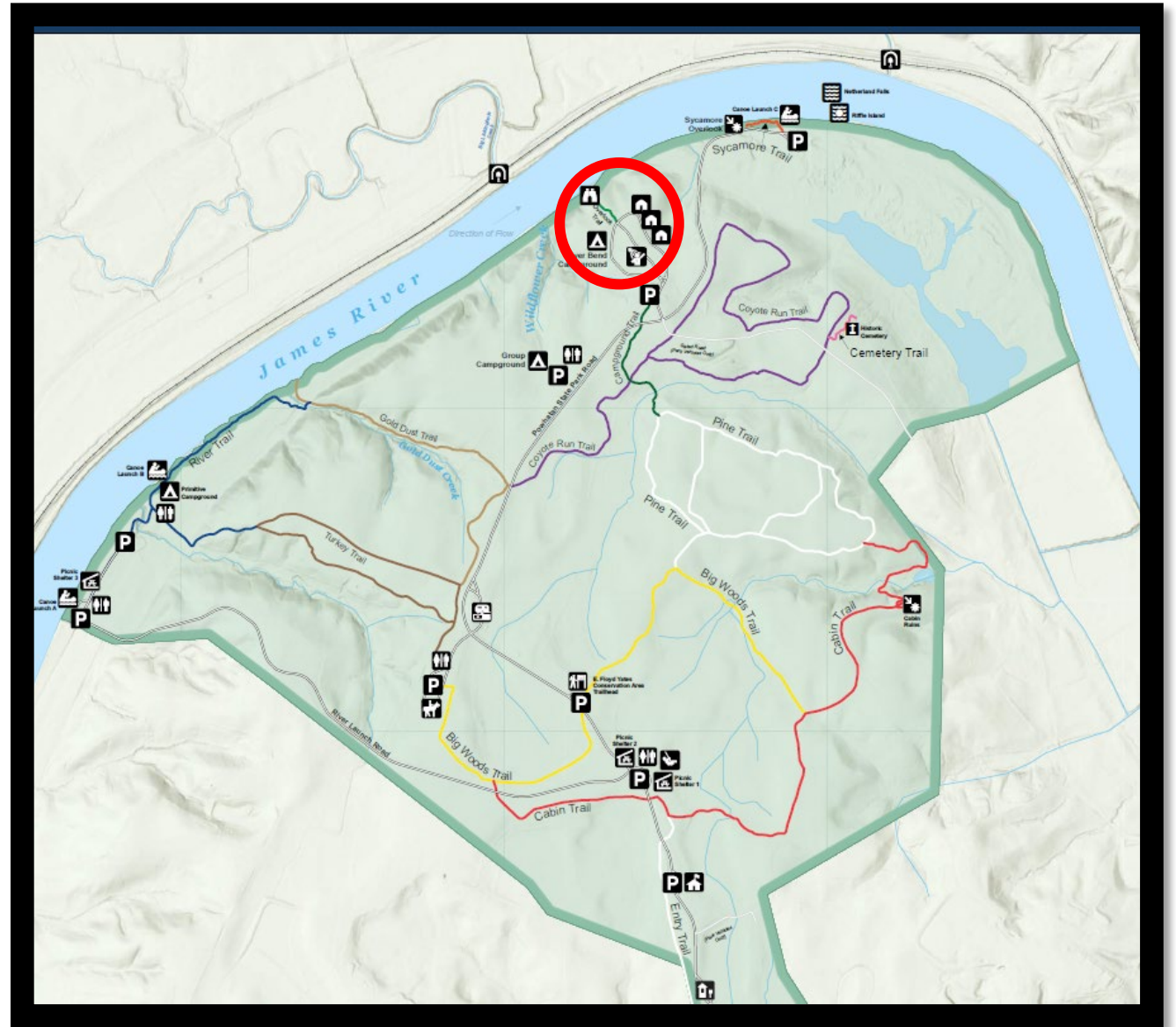
1 Group Camp with Vault Toilet, Parking for 6 Vehicles, Max Occupancy of 24

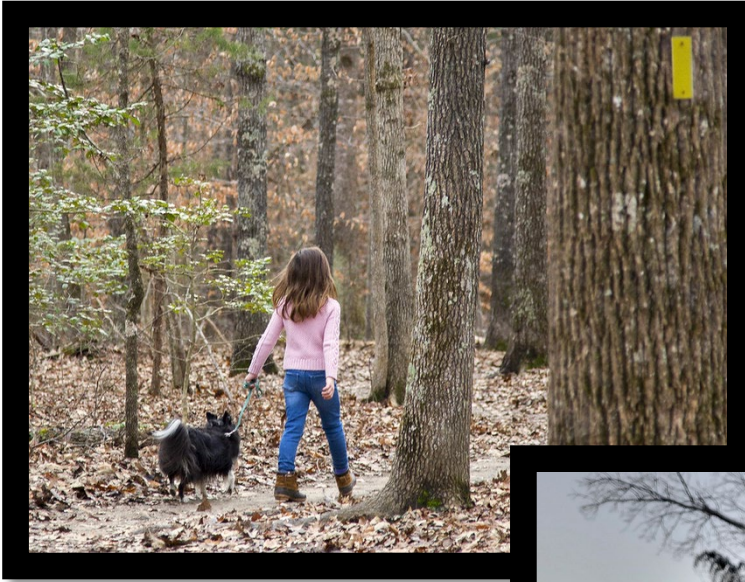


River Bend Campground

29 Sites, 1 Camp Host Site, 3 Yurts,
1 Bathhouse

29 Sites, 1 Camp Host Site, 3 Yurts, 1 Bathhouse





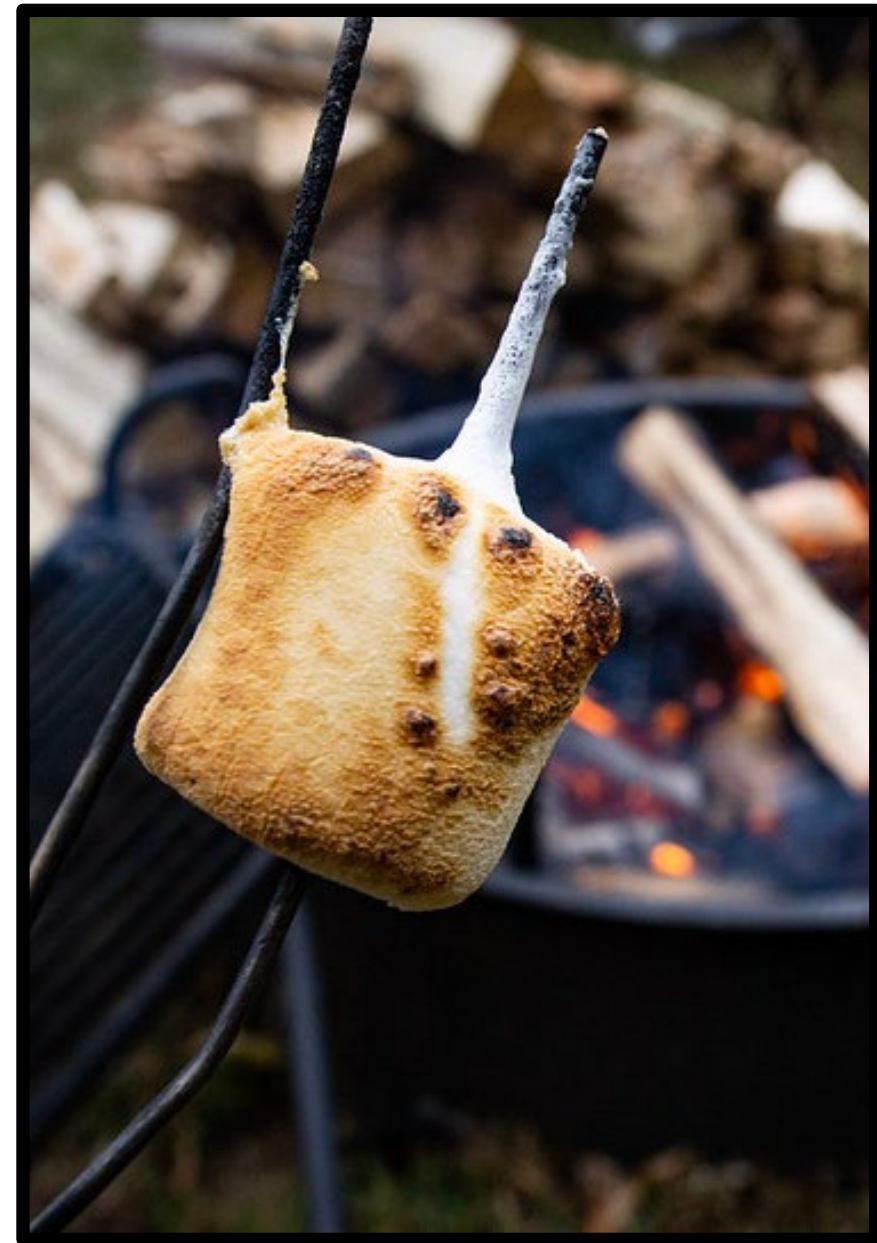
Trails

Hiking, Biking, Equestrian

- **12 Total Trails**
 - ~12 total miles
 - All available for hiking
 - 8 available for biking
 - 6 available for equestrian

Next Steps

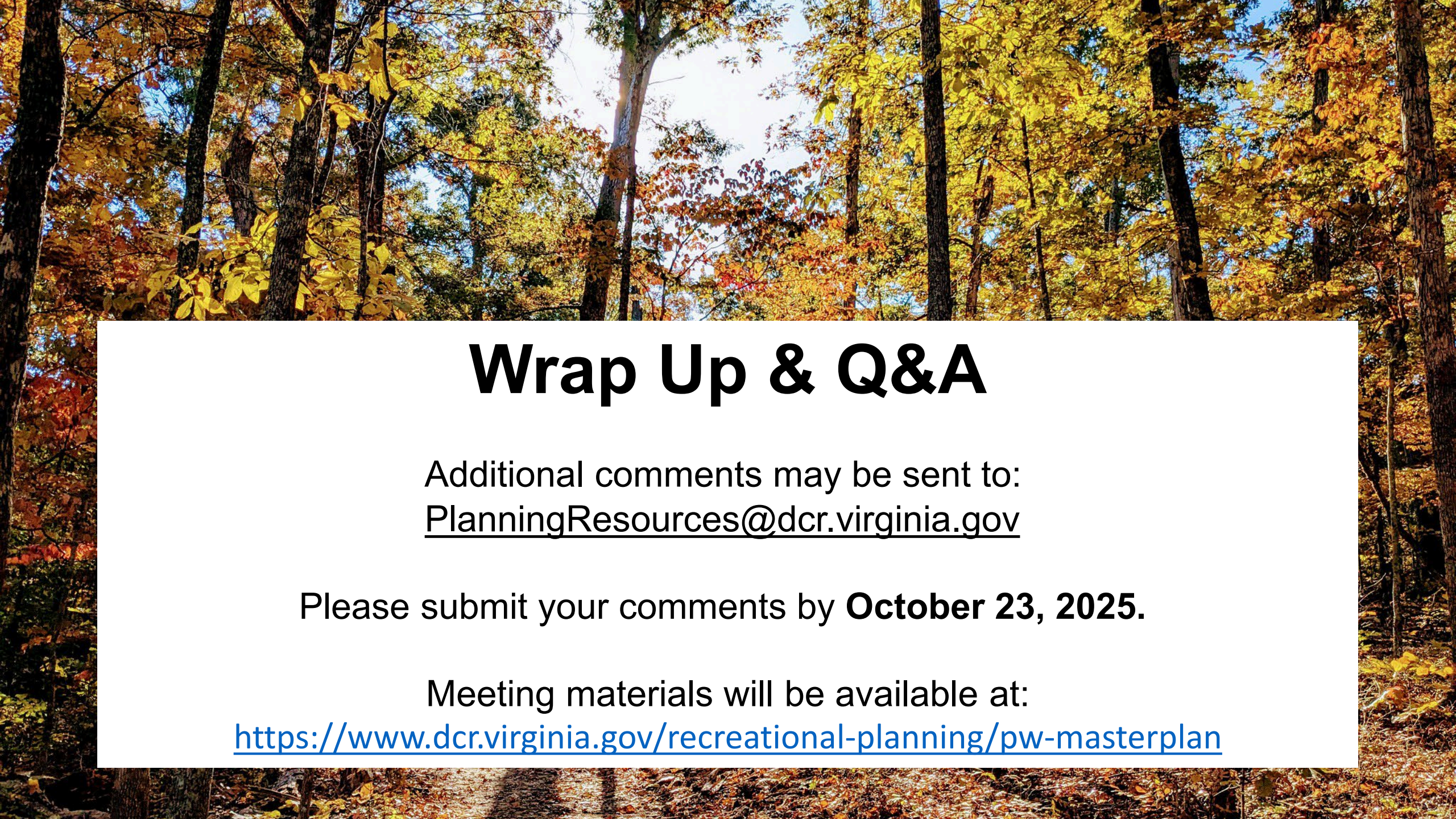
- Public input survey
- Compile survey results and summarize existing conditions
- Develop Visitor Experience and Needs Assessment sections
- Draft goals and recommendations for new (and improvements to existing) amenities and facilities
- Public comments on planning recommendations
- Finalize draft plan



Public Input Opportunities

- Your input is needed. Please complete the *Your Comments Count* survey!
- Survey will be available via the QR code to the right, or on the project webpage: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/pw-masterplan>
- Input will help inform the future of Powhatan State Park State Park and is much appreciated. Thank you!





Wrap Up & Q&A

Additional comments may be sent to:
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov

Please submit your comments by **October 23, 2025.**

Meeting materials will be available at:
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/pw-masterplan>