
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service



Blue Ridge Parkway
Roanoke County, Virginia

ROANOKE VALLEY / BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY TRAIL PLAN

Environmental Assessment

August 2011



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SUMMARY

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the National Park Service (NPS) is preparing this Environmental Assessment (EA) and recommendations to be implemented which impact the Roanoke Valley Trail System within the lands administered by the Blue Ridge Parkway (Parkway). The intent of this project is to determine whether development of an integrated trail system that would provide critical linkages between the Roanoke Valley Greenways trail network and the Blue Ridge Parkway is appropriate after consideration of project impacts. This trail system would provide the public with a greatly enhanced range of trail opportunities as well as provide the Parkway with rehabilitation and general maintenance assistance from the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission (Commission) and associated trail groups.

The purpose of this EA is to describe the affected environment and analyze potential impacts associated with a no action alternative and two action alternatives. Impacts to soils would be minor and adverse in the short-term and negligible and adverse in the long-term. Impacts to water resources would be minor and adverse in the short-term. Impacts to vegetation would be minor and adverse in the short-term. Impacts to wildlife would be negligible and adverse in the short-term. Impacts to visitor use and experience would be minor and adverse in the short-term and beneficial in the long-term, unless user conflicts could not be mitigated. Impacts to human health and safety would be long-term and beneficial. Impact to archeological resources would be negligible. Impacts to park operations would be long-term, minor to moderate and adverse.

Completion of this Trail Plan/EA does not mean that implementation of specific recommendations would be forthcoming. Implementation is dependent upon future funding availability, competing park priorities, and budget realities. Implementation of some phases of this plan may be many years into the future; this plan does not guarantee the existence of future park funds.

Note Regarding Public Comment

If you wish to comment on the Environmental Assessment, you may do so online (our preference) at the NPS planning website "Planning, Environment, and Public Comment" <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>, or you may mail comments to: Blue Ridge Parkway, Attn: Suzette Molling, Environmental Protection Specialist; 199 Hemphill Knob Road; Asheville, North Carolina 28803.

Public comment will be accepted through September 12, 2011. Our practice is to make comments, including names, home addresses, home phone numbers and email addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their names and/or home addresses, etc., but if you wish to consider withholding this information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Commentators using the website can make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private." Comments are typically treated as a public record and made available for public review. Individuals may request that the NPS withhold their name and address from disclosure. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowable by law.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHP	Advisory Council of Historic Preservation
ASL	Above Sea Level
BLRI	Blue Ridge Parkway
BMP	Best Management Practices
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Commission	Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission
DO	NPS Director's Order
EA	Environmental Assessment
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GMP	General Management Plan
IMBA	International Mountain Bicycling Association
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MP	Milepost
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OL	Overlook
PA	Programmatic Agreement
Parkway	Blue Ridge Parkway
PwR	Parkway Right
PwL	Parkway Left
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
PLUM(s)	Parkway Land Use Map(s)
ROW	Right- of- way
RVCGP	Roanoke Valley Conceptual Greenway Plan
RVRA	Roanoke Valley Resource Authority
SERO	Southeast Regional Office
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Trail Plan	Roanoke Valley / Blue Ridge Parkway Trail Plan
USC	United States Code
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VADEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation