NOTTOWAY RIVER:

NATIONAL SCENIC EXPLORATION MEETING:

SOUTHAMPTON AND SUSSEX COUNTY CITIZEN PRESENTATION

SPEAKERS TODAY

1. Honorable Otto Wachsmann – Delegate 83rd District
2. David Conmy – Deputy Manager – Sussex County
3. Brian Thrower – County Manager – Southampton County
4. Jamie Craig – Beechtree Group and riverfront landowner
5. The Southampton and Sussex Community

OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY

1. Introduction to the State Scenic Nottoway River.
2. Why is this river deemed Scenic?
3. What is a National Scenic River?
4. Conservation on the River.
5. Process and pros and cons of designation.
6. How does the community seek National Scenic Status?
7. Next Steps

HONORABLE OTTO WACHSMANN
HOUSE OF DELEGATE DIST 83

DAVID CONMY – DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR – SUSSEX COUNTY

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Local Government Perspective

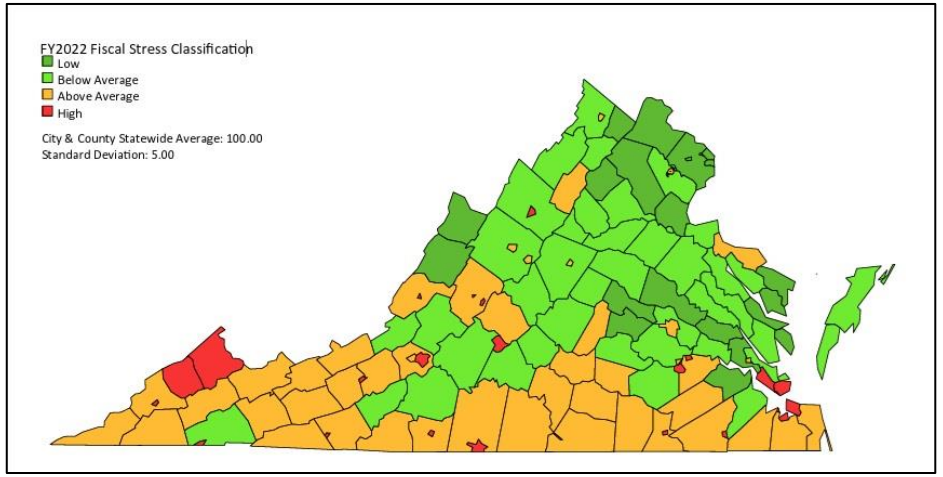
- Mandated Service Delivery
  - K-12 Education, Public Safety, Human Services, etc.
- Additional Local Priorities to Address Needs
- Socioeconomic Trends
- Local Fiscal Stewardship

Local Government Fiscal Distress

- Comparison of VA Cities (38) and Counties (95)
- Sussex - #38 Overall, #12 Counties
- Southampton - #50 Overall, #22 Counties

Economic Development

- Expand and Diversify Economy
- Tax Relief and/or Reinvest in Services



- How do we grow the rural economy in harmony with its rural character?
- What are the community's strengths, unique assets, and opportunities?
  - Agriculture and Agritourism
  - Open Space and Ecotourism
  - Outdoor Recreation

David Conmy
Sussex County

NOTTOWAY RIVER BLUEWAY GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

TIMMONS GROUP
ENGINEERING | DESIGN | TECHNOLOGY

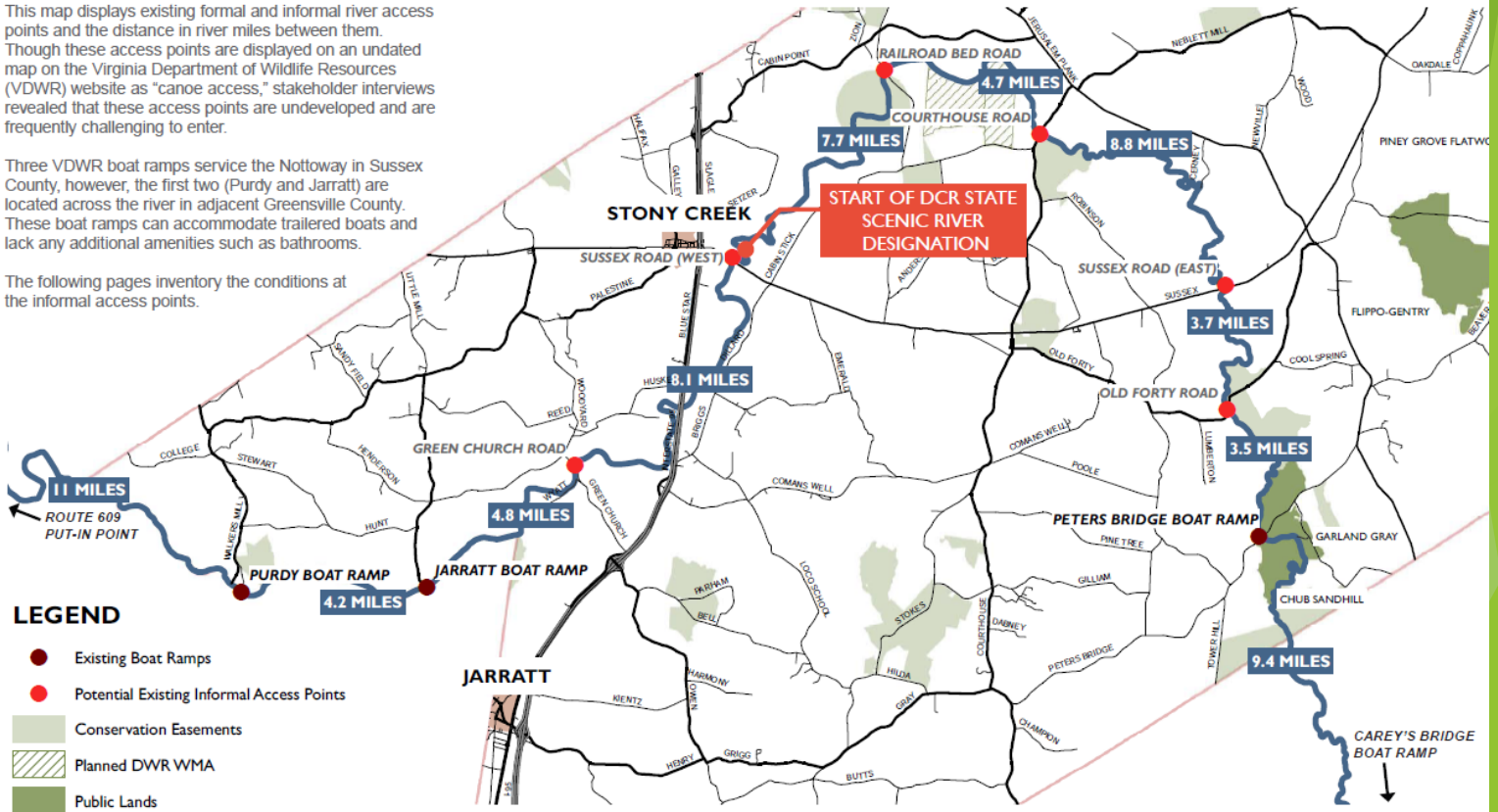
NOTTOWAY BLUE WAY MAP

Existing System

This map displays existing formal and informal river access points and the distance in river miles between them. Though these access points are displayed on an undated map on the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) website as "canoe access," stakeholder interviews revealed that these access points are undeveloped and are frequently challenging to enter.

Three VDWR boat ramps service the Nottoway in Sussex County, however, the first two (Purdy and Jarratt) are located across the river in adjacent Greensville County. These boat ramps can accommodate trailered boats and lack any additional amenities such as bathrooms.

The following pages inventory the conditions at the informal access points.



NOTTOWAY RIVER BLUEWAY GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

SUSSEX BLUE WAY ASSESSMENT

Access Point Analysis

River Interconnectivity

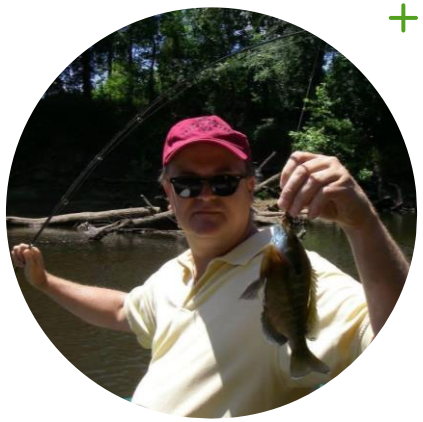
This rubric assesses the interconnectivity between existing and proposed access points by river distance. An average paddle speed is approximately 2 miles per hour. In another river's blueway master plan process found that river users prefer paddling trips of 2-3 hours (4-6 miles).

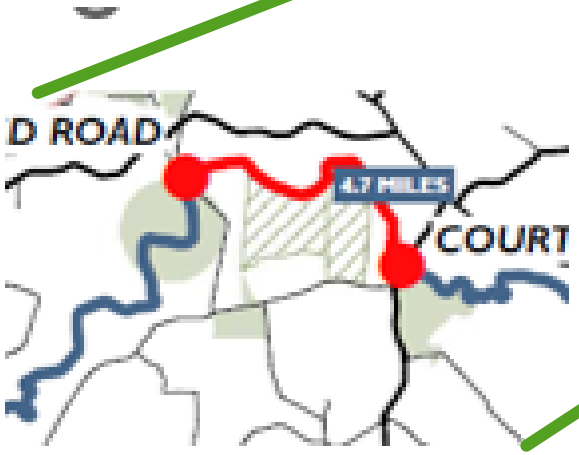
LEGEND

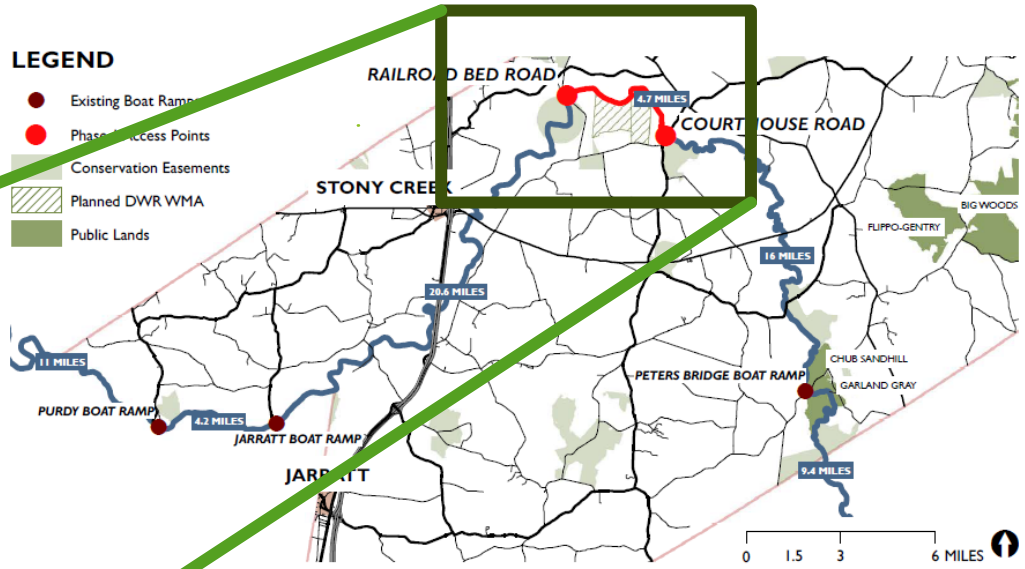
Half Day Trip	3-8 miles
Full Day Trip	8-16 miles
Multi-Day Trip	16+ miles

Mile Marker	Access Point Name	Purdy Boat Ramp	Jarratt Boat Ramp	Green Church Road	Sussex Road / Rt. 40 (West)	Railroad Bed Road	Courthouse Road	Sussex Road / Rt. 40 (East)	Old Forty Road	Peters Bridge Boat Ramp
0	Purdy Boat Ramp		4.2	9	17.1	24.8	29.5	38.3	42	45.5
4.2	Jarratt Boat Ramp	4.2		4.8	12.9	20.6	25.3	34.1	37.8	41.3
9	Green Church Road	9	4.8		8.1	15.8	20.5	29.3	33.0	36.5
17.1	Sussex Road / Rt. 40 (West)	17.1	12.9	8.1		7.7	12.4	21.2	24.9	28.4
24.8	Railroad Bed Road	24.8	20.6	15.8	7.7		4.7	13.5	17.2	20.7
29.5	Courthouse Road	29.5	25.3	20.5	12.4	4.7		8.8	12.5	16
38.3	Sussex Road / Rt. 40 (East)	38.3	34.1	29.3	21.2	13.5	8.8		3.7	7.2
42	Old Forty Road	42	37.8	33	24.9	17.2	12.5	3.7		3.5
45.5	Peters Bridge Boat Ramp	45.5	41.3	36.5	28.4	20.7	16	7.2	3.5	

PHASE 1 – PADDLE RAMP







Phase 1 Sites: Railroad Bed Road and Courthouse Road

Attributes:

- High interconnectivity (2-3 hour trip)
- Favorable ownership or easement status supporting public use
- Favorable river conditions
- On the State Scenic River designated portion of the Nottoway

Stakeholder Preferences:

Conversations with stakeholders influenced the access point conceptual design and character imagery. Stakeholders preferred:

- A low-frills approach to begin
- Gravel parking lots
- Ramps for trailored unloading of small motorcraft (jon boats) onto the river in addition to canoes and kayaks
- Few amenities to reduce maintenance costs

RAILROAD BED - PROPOSED ACCESS

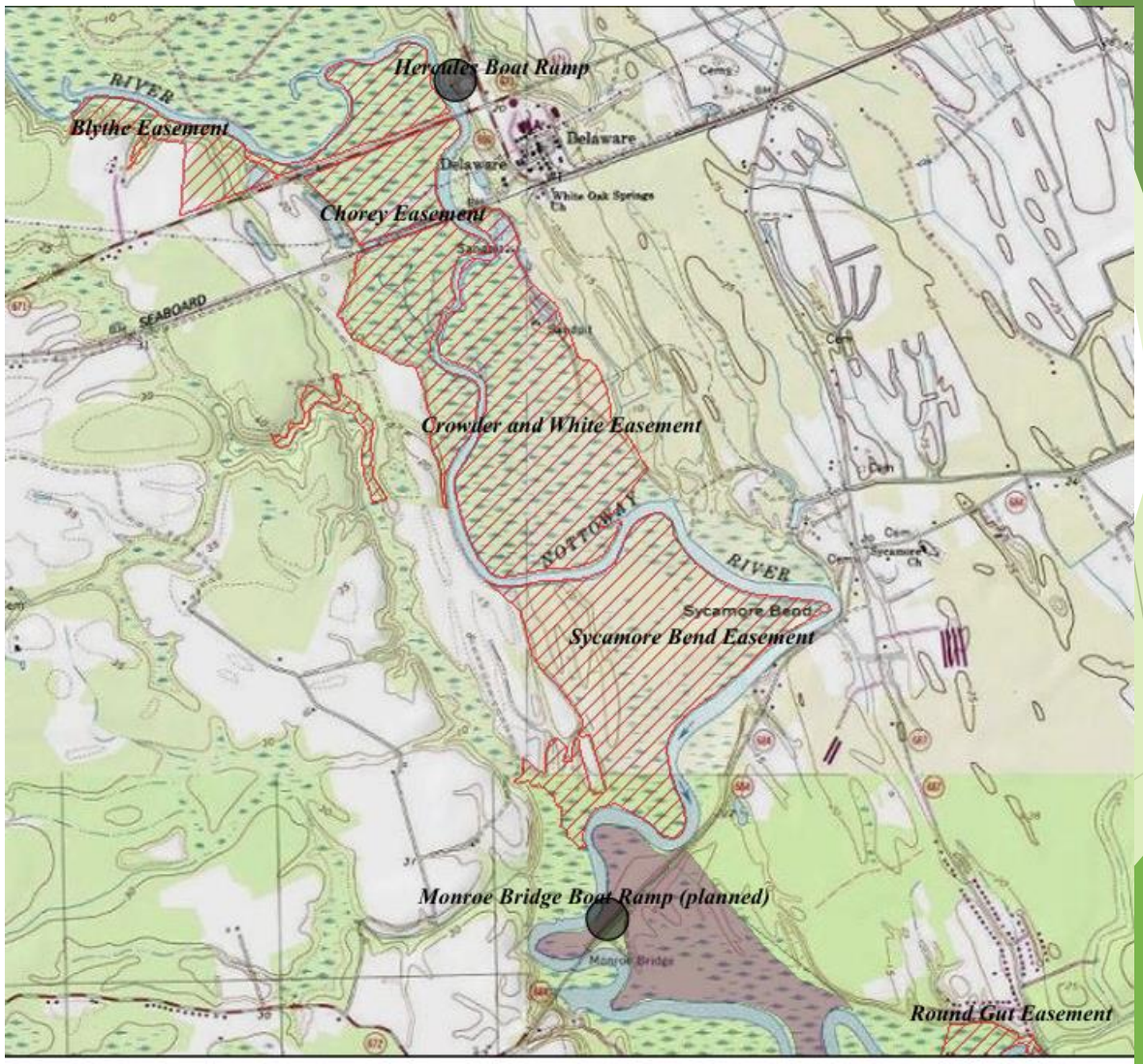
COURTHOUSE ROAD ACCESS

Access Point 2 Concept Plan: Courthouse Road

This graphic depicts a conceptual site plan for the second of the proposed two Phase 1 access points, Courthouse Road, 4.7 miles downstream from the Railroad Bed Road access point. The 8,500 square foot parking lot can accommodate approximately 12-14 vehicles and trailers. This site is constrained by overhead utility lines that may have an easement governing allowable activities underneath. Additional research is required to determine necessary offsets from the power line as well as to locate the VDOT right of way recorded as a 'gift of open space' on this parcel to finalize parking lot and ramp locations.

BRIAN THROWER
SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

SOUTHAMPTON PADDLE RAMP

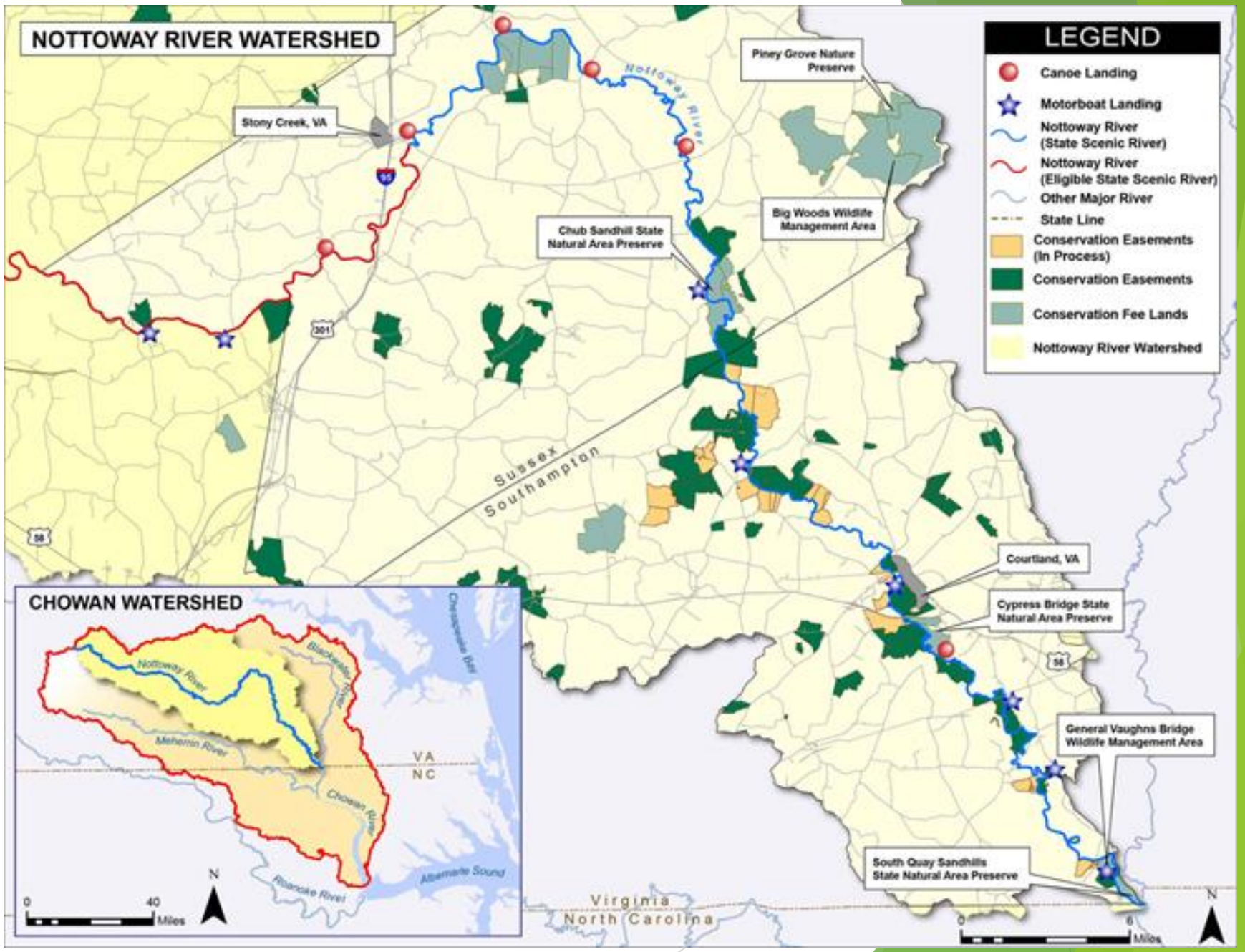


JAMIE CRAIG
PRINCIPAL – BEECHTREE GROUP AND SYLVAN RESTORATION MANAGEMENT

We are here…

THE FIRST STEP

EXPLORE	Choose Explore if you are new to the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers system, exploring designation or working toward Study legislation. The Explore page will take groups from an introduction to the program through the process of getting a Wild and Scenic River Study bill introduced to Congress, and includes resources for planning, assessment, outreach and community engagement.
STUDY	Choose Study if you are ready to conduct a PWSR river study and write a river management plan. The Study page will follow the passage of the study authorization legislation and continues through the completion of the Comprehensive River Management Plan and potential introduction of designation legislation. Resources include sample timelines, links to management plans and Congressional reports, information on identifying the outstanding values of the river and the public engagement necessary to complete the study process.
DESIGNATE	Choose Designate if you'd like to know more about the implementation of designation of a Partnership Wild and Scenic River. The Designate page is geared towards those that are managing PWSRs and includes information on the benefits of designation, such as forming a post-designation committee, innovative approaches to management, success stories, monitoring initiatives, and more.


NOTTOWAY RIVER WATERSHED
LEGEND
Canoe Landing
Motorboat Landing
Nottoway River (State Scenic River)
Nottoway River (Eligible State Scenic River)
Other Major River
State Line
Conservation Easements (In Process)
Conservation Easements
Conservation Fee Lands
Nottoway River Watershed
Stony Creek, VA
Piney Grove Nature Preserve
Nottoway River
Big Woods Wildlife Management Area
Chub Sandhill State Natural Area Preserve
Sussex
Southampton
Courtland, VA
Cypress Bridge State Natural Area Preserve
General Vaughns Bridge Wildlife Management Area
South Quay Sandhills State Natural Area Preserve
Virginia
North Carolina
0
6
Miles
N
CHOWAN WATERSHED
Nottoway River
Blackwater River
Meherrin River
Chowan River
Roanoke River
Albemarle Sound
VA
NC
0
40
Miles
N

WHY IS THIS A STATE SCENIC RIVER?

Why It's a Scenic River

Virginia designates a river as "scenic" only after a **rigorous evaluation** of its:

- Natural and scenic integrity
- Recreational potential
- Historic and cultural relevance
- Public support for conservation

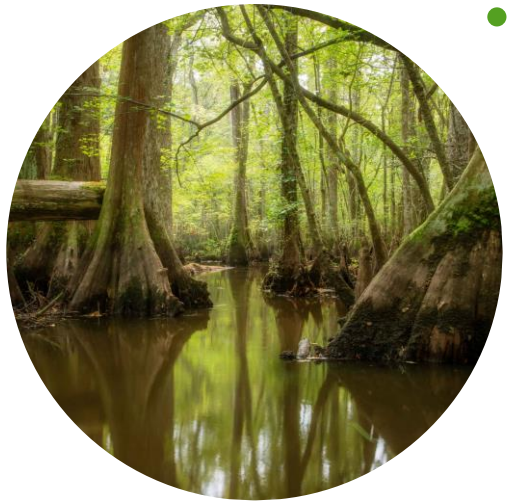
The **Nottoway River** scored highly in all these categories, making it the **longest designated State Scenic River in Virginia** (72.5 miles), and a valued part of the state's natural heritage.

NATIONAL SCENIC STATUS DEFINED

The **Nottoway River's eligibility for National Wild and Scenic River designation** is based on its **outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs)**, a key requirement under the **National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act** (1968).

For a river to qualify, it must possess one or more ORVs that are **unique, rare, or exemplary** at a regional or national level. The Nottoway River checks multiple boxes:

It is the largest intact Cypress Swamp in the Northeastern United States with over 10,000 acres of Cypress swamp.



NATIONAL SCENIC CRITERIA

Criteria	Nottoway River Status
Free-flowing	✅ Yes (no major dams)
Outstanding Scenic Value	✅ High
Outstanding Recreational Value	✅ Strong (canoeing/fishing)
Fish & Wildlife Value	✅ Significant (diverse, rare species)
Historic/Cultural Significance	✅ Documented

NOTTOWAY RIVER STUDY

1. Watershed approach to protecting the Nottoway River
2. Congressionally-authorized study to explore if the National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic River designation is a good fit for the Nottoway River and its communities
3. A locally-appointed Study Committee oversees the study
4. Goal to engage watershed communities in the long-term protection and management of the Nottoway River
5. Development of watershed management plan
6. Evaluation of PWSR designation
7. Information gathering stage to identify important watershed resources

WHY CARE ABOUT THE NOTTOWAY RIVERS FUTURE?

- Shared, connected resource among the communities of Sussex, Southampton and North Carolina downstream.
- High concentration of resources – significant natural and historic resources
- Economic importance and cultural importance to region
- Water supply for region
- Threats to resources – development, changing landscape, over use
- Stewardship

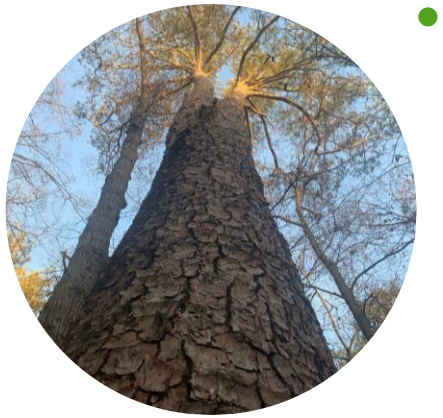
BENEFITS OF DESIGNATION

1. National recognition and prestige
2. Additional grants, e.g., fish passage, land protection, youth education, etc.
3. NPS technical and financial assistance to implement river plan/projects
4. Cooperative agreement (~$75K/year)
5. Other NPS funding (~$10K/year)
6. NPS review of federally-assisted water resources projects to protect locally identified river values
7. **Locally-appointed river council** provides long-term structure to guide future management across local jurisdictions within the watershed

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE *PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS*

Subset of National Wild and Scenic Rivers System – 208 rivers, primarily on federal lands. Twelve "Partnership Rivers" (non-federal lands)

1. **NO FEDERAL LAND OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT** RESULTING FROM DESIGNATION
2. Administration and governance through **local river council**
3. Land **use governed by existing local/state law** and regulations
4. **Locally-developed river plans**—approved prior to designation —**guide future management**
5. **Management responsibilities shared** among local, state, federal, and NGO partners
6. **Voluntary participation** by partners creates success
7. **Federal funding leverages** additional state, local, and private funding



BASIS TO RECOMMEND PWSR DESIGNATION

1. Eligibility: Free-flowing, possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) that based on professional judgment are directly river-related and unique, rare or exemplary at regional or national scale
    1. Scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or similar values
2. Suitability: Three main questions…
    1. Should river values be protected?
    2. Is Wild and Scenic the best method?
    3. What level of nonfederal commitment exists? ▫
3. Partnership Rivers:
    1. Is there a locally-developed and approved Management Plan?
    2. Is there community support?
    3. Do local river protection measures exist?
4. If the Nottoway River is found eligible and suitable for designation (with community support), Congress must enact law for the river to become a Partnership Wild and Scenic River

ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY

Economic Benefits of National Scenic River Designation:

Boost to Ecotourism and Outdoor Recreation

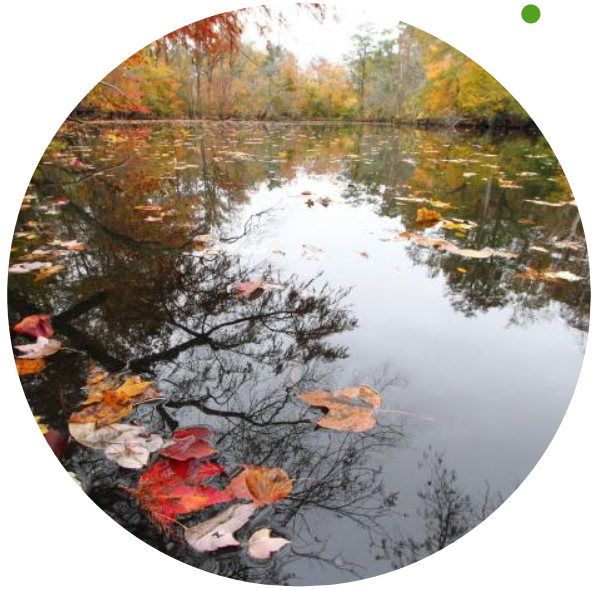
- **Increased Tourism Revenue**: Scenic river designations often lead to a rise in visitors engaging in activities like kayaking, fishing, and hiking. This influx can benefit local businesses such as outfitters, restaurants, and lodging establishments.
- **Job Creation**: The growth in recreational activities can create jobs in guiding services, hospitality, and maintenance of recreational facilities.

Enhanced Property Values

- **Proximity to Protected Natural Areas**: Properties near designated scenic rivers may see an increase in value due to the preservation of natural landscapes and the appeal of living near recreational areas.

Grants and Investments: Designation can make the area eligible for federal and state grants aimed at conservation and community development, leading to investments in infrastructure and environmental protection.

Support for Sustainable Forestry and Agriculture



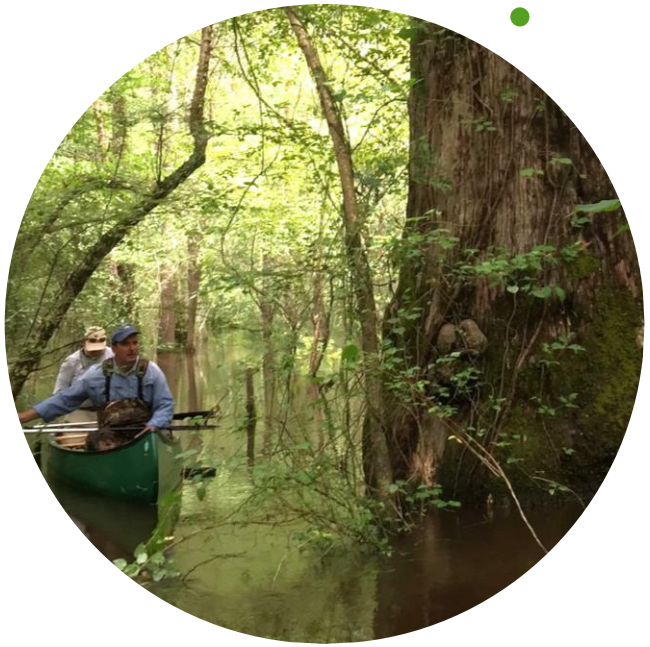
NEXT STEPS -

1. **FORM A FRIENDS OF THE NOTTOWAY RIVER organization.**
2. **Form a local citizen led committee with 3 members from Sussex and 3 members from Southampton to investigate this opportunity.**
3. **Review of existing data / studies**
4. **Conduct limited new research**
5. **Study Report / Recommendation**
    1. Decide whether to recommend Wild & Scenic Designation to community.
6. **Community-based Nottoway River Watershed Management Plan**
    1. Document valuable resources
    2. Recommend additional studies needed
    3. Recommend strategies for protecting the watershed's unique values
    4. Identify opportunities for Southampton and Sussex and partner organizations to implement the plan

WHO ARE THE GRASS ROOTS SUPPORTERS?

Key Grass Roots supporters include:

1. Landowners on the river.
2. Local Governments
3. State Agencies
4. Tribal Nations.
5. River support groups, i.e. Friends of the Nottoway River.



HOW DOES CONSERVATION WORK ON THE RIVER?

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

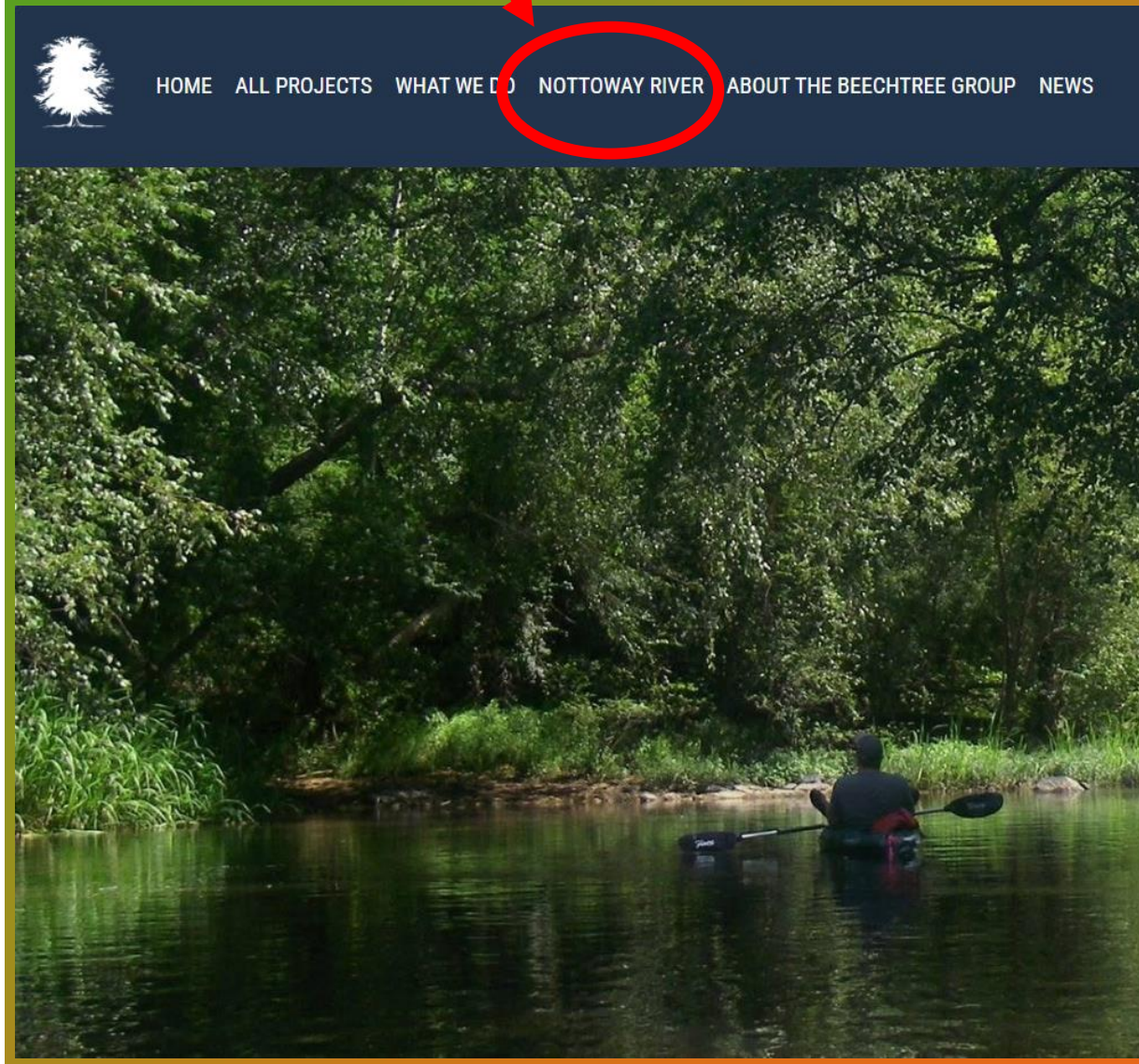
Grassroots support is not only helpful but essential to achieving **National Wild and Scenic River designation** for rivers like the Nottoway.

The process **depends heavily on local and state-level support.**

1. Provide input tonight
2. Send in photos, data, reports
3. Participate in meetings

For detailed information visit my website and click Nottoway River – all the rules, regulations, and information plus links are there for your review.

WWW.BEECHTREE.BIZ



WHO IS WILLING TO WORK TO PROTECT THIS RIVER SO IT WILL BE "LIKE IT USED TO BE" FOR YOUR GRANDCHILDREN?

Jamie Craig

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