



Adapt & Rise

Madison/Boone Resource
and Recreation Action Plan

SEPTEMBER 2023





USDA Rural Development

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The Conservation Fund

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Photography by Roger May unless otherwise noted. Roger is an Appalachian American photographer and writer based in Alum Creek, West Virginia. www.rogermayphotography.com



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WV Dance Company Event

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VISION

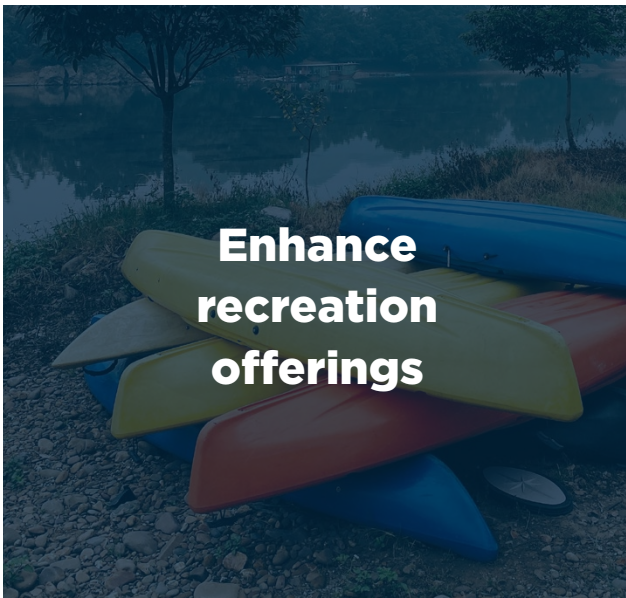
IN MADISON AND BOONE COUNTY:

Across our rural landscapes, towns and city, our community thrives through sustained collaboration that cultivates economic opportunity and community health, building from vibrant public spaces, natural resources, recreation options, pride in our history and culture, and the ability to adapt and rise.

GOALS

The vision for a community becomes reality through sustained and strategic effort across multiple organizations and individuals that is targeted to build on strengths, address gaps, and return value to the community.

Goals that are essential to achieving the vision across Boone County and in the county seat of Madison include:



ACTIONS

Goals are advanced through more specific action implementation addressing multiple items, and include the following:



A. ENHANCE RECREATION OFFERINGS

The improvement of recreation facilities and infrastructure emerged as a key theme across this project, with a focus on opportunities with a water connection. Making recreation convenient, free or low-cost, and easily accessible will allow more people to engage with recreation, with resulting health improvements. Building this infrastructure will provide a base for associated economic activity, for instance, through provision of rental equipment and visitor services such as lodging and food. Actions within this goal include:

1. Support river cleanups

River cleanups occur routinely across the Coal River watershed, and are a vital part of enhancing this recreation feature, familiarizing people with kayaking, and creating opportunities for social engagement. Continuing the cleanups and supporting them with event promotion, free trash removal from cleanup events, refreshments and T-shirts for volunteers, and periodic volunteer recognition should be undertaken through collaboration across organizations.

2. Add and enhance recreation activities & programming



Active recreation activities for adults are limited in the region, as are those that are not team-based recreation activities for youth. Trails and outdoor recreation areas can play a significant role in making it easy to kayak, hike, and bike, which can become lifetime recreation pursuits. New public lands will support these activities. Providing convenient kayak rental options at water access points and bike rental options would serve both community members and visitors. Increasing programming for all ages in community spaces would draw more people out and engage them with recreation infrastructure, and could draw on the community’s strengths and stories (such as the rivers and Miners March) and needs (such as an open house for technical training).



CATALYST ACTION

Catalyst actions are those with the greatest ability to positively impact the community and are a priority to resource and advance.

3. Add and enhance parks and recreation facilities and infrastructure



Recreation facilities are like any other infrastructure – additions, modernization, and updates are periodically required to respond to the needs of the public and keep facilities functional and safe. Maintenance and operations should be considered from design through construction to ensure facilities are able to be supported over the long-term. Recreation facilities and infrastructure within Boone County currently are predominantly city-, town- or County-owned, however the anticipated Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area will introduce a significant state presence to public land ownership and bring focus to wildlife-associated recreation activities.

High priority park and recreation updates identified during the project include: improvements to water access points (signage, ramps, online information), improvements to Madison City Park, updates to Junior Haddad Recreation Center, development of trails and trailhead access to the anticipated new public land of Rucker Branch Natural Area (Madison), and development of access, trails, and other wildlife-associated activities for the anticipated Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area (WV Division of Natural Resources). See Context, Natural Resources and Recreation (page 17) for details on these significant additions to public lands in the region. Concepts for potential trailhead development for the Rucker Branch Natural Area are depicted in Rendering A, while options for updates to the Junior Haddad Recreation Center are shown on Renderings B1 and B2. See Map 1: Madison/Danville for locations.

For more detail on implementation of actions A.2 and A.3, please see Table 2 and Implementation Detail on Actions A.2 and A.3.

Rendering A: Rucker Branch Natural Area Trailhead Concept

Mapping, water, and seating are essential at a trailhead. A bike repair station, elements of art, and interpretation can add value and keep users coming back.



Rendering B1: Junior Haddad Recreation Center Concept (Old River Road site)

Improving access for kayaks, providing a dedicated space for fishing, and adding signage would benefit this recreation area.



Rendering B2: Junior Haddad Recreation Center Concept (Old River Road site)

Updating the building to serve community meeting needs and adding the ability to rent kayaks and cabins would provide new recreation options.



Map 1. Madison/Danville Resource and Recreation Action Plan

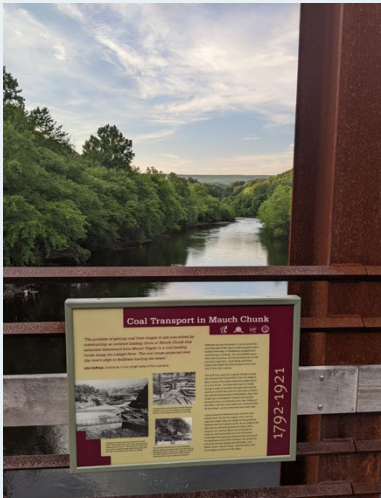
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Signage

Signs can serve multiple purposes by providing wayfinding to locations, sharing maps to orient users, incorporating art to amplify messages and inspire, and providing content on the focus message.

Signs within parks or along trails should provide needed information (such as permitted uses or trail length and level of difficulty) while also offering fun and educational elements. Art elements can be used to activate space and draw users, while interpretative language can be used to share heritage and educational content.



Photos: @Susan Elks

B. ACTIVATE THE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SPACES:

Activating public spaces with increased amenities, programming, and events builds on itself, offering recreation, the potential for economic impact, and increased visibility and safety for the community as a whole. Activating the community more generally—with programming that is directed at youth, potential entrepreneurs and business operators, visitors, and community members—can address targeted needs and add potential for economic activity. Specific actions include:

1. Add and enhance events and programming

Developing new events and refining existing ones were strongly supported by the community. Events offer social engagement and economic opportunity, and can be combined with education, interpretation, and/or recreation options. The Boone Memorial Health Farmers Market and Greenhouse (anticipated opening 2024) will provide an option for programming and events on Madison’s Main Street (see Rendering C). While events are a significant lift in terms of staff and volunteer hours (and thus require careful consideration), a few new events, refinements to build out existing events, and current and comprehensive marketing around all events can have one-time and ongoing economic and social impact in the region.

Rendering C: Madison Main Street

The Boone Memorial Health Farmers Market will bring activity to Main Street and provide a venue for events.



2. Initiate a youth mentorship and shadowing program

Youth engagement rises as a consistent theme in the community, along with job opportunities. Ongoing opportunities for area youth to become aware of job options and career pathways is essential for the social fabric of the community as a whole and the economic future of area youth. Mentorship and other youth programming that encourages high school/GED completion should be a focus. Such a program will be necessary for a measurable impact.

3. Bring in entrepreneurial and small business start-up training



Building economic diversity and stability from the ground up requires dedication and technical knowledge across various topics, but returns tremendous value to a community. For small business start-ups or entrepreneurs, the nuts and bolts of business is often a need: training on business startup, financial matters, software needs, contracting processes, marketing and more. Bringing such training into the community - in a physical space or virtual setting that makes it easily accessible, convenient and affordable - can boost grassroots economic development.

Please see Table 2 and B.3 Implementation Detail for more information.

Bringing a product or service to the market successfully requires identifying...



...CUSTOMERS

who are in need of a product or service



...MARKET FORCES

and strategy involved in being profitable



...**WHAT** industry and customer trends and projections are of influence



...**HOW** to create, price, market, and distribute the product



...**HOW** to fund labor and operations costs

Entrepreneurs and small business operators can greatly benefit from training in the areas of client, product, and market discovery. For some entrepreneurs, a pathway of greatest simplicity to a market is most desired - they want to make the product, not bog down in marketing or transactions.

C. COMMUNICATE ON INFRASTRUCTURE, EVENTS, AND PROGRAMMING:

Providing clear, current, and comprehensive information on the places to go and activities available within the region to the public is essential to attracting attendees from the local community and bringing in visitors from out of the region. The public feels more comfortable when essential information (what, when, where) is easily available and supported with more details. Providing consistent information via multiple channels reaches the widest audience. Actions within this goal include:

1. Create a website for recreation activities and visitor services



A website and linked social media channels addressing public spaces, events, activities, recreation infrastructure, visitor services, and supporting businesses would be very beneficial, and should cover Boone County, new public lands, and be associated with the Coal River watershed. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and other options connect across ages and interests, and could pre-date or go hand-in-hand with website development.

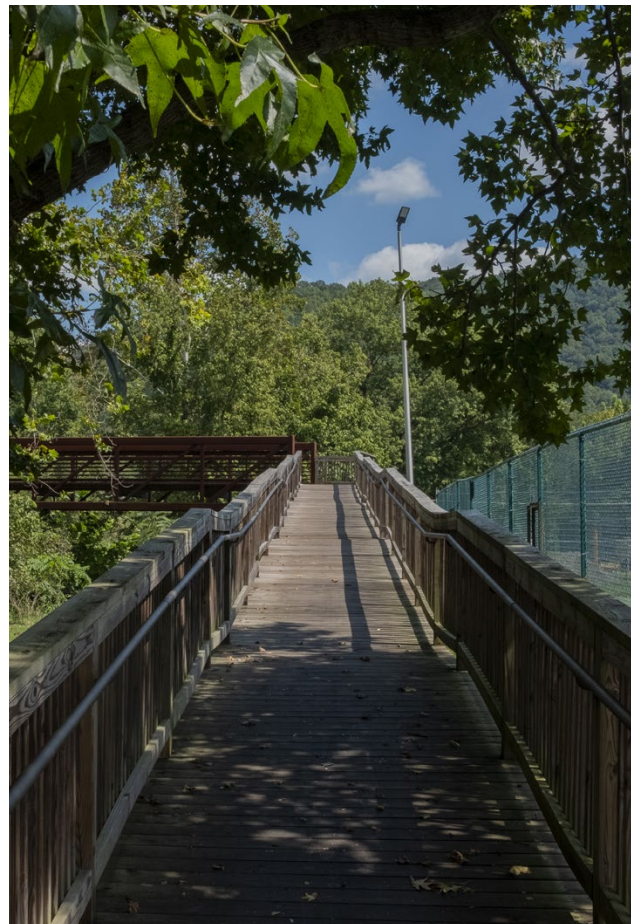
For more detail on implementation of action C.1, please see Table 2 and Implementation Detail on Action C.1.

2. Create a brochure for recreation activities and visitor services.

A printed brochure could compliment and amplify digital content when placed at key locations. Creation of a brochure, website, and social media channels at the same time helps ensure that information on available services and recreation activities is consistent, while allowing for more detail and links through a website and quick updates on social media.



Above: Inland Woods + Trails provides content on trail-based outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, including maps, permitted activities and events, and amplifies their message through multiple social media channels (photo via woodsandtrails.org)



D. PLAN COUNTYWIDE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION



While this project advanced recreation discussion in Boone County, much work remains to address the entire county comprehensively, to include infrastructure, facilities, programming, operations and maintenance. A Park and Recreation Plan for Boone County and/or the Coal River watershed should examine optimal alignments and integration for land-and water-based trails and parks, with a focus on economic and health returns. Existing facilities, programming, and activities should be examined for potential improvements, and a guide for future operations and maintenance developed to ensure facilities can be supported into the future.

For more detail on implementation of Goal/Action D, please see Table 2 and Implementation Detail on D.

Garden Ideas

The above goals and actions do not capture every action that was identified during the project. Various other ideas were put forth that offer a more specific activity, or that may garner greater support over time or with increased capacity. Additionally, some of the ideas put forth may be incorporated or advanced through an action identified under Goals A – D; however that connection is not certain at this time. The adjacent listing represents these other “garden ideas” that have merit and should be periodically reviewed as individuals and organizations work to advance social/cultural, environmental, and economic health in the region.



- Walking audit of the Madison Wellness Trail to prioritize safety improvements
- Improved pedestrian connections between town, residents, and recreation options
- Limited tree removal for increased views of the river
- Public art in recreation areas or other community spaces
- Development of an arts center
- Madison City Park improvements
- Increased blight removal initiatives
- Façade incentive program
- Development/maintenance of a shrub and tree understory in power line rights of way
- Use of public recreation sites for bike, kayak and fishing rentals
- Development of an indoor market/co-op space (public space, private lease/use)

Photo: © Susan Elks



CONTEXT

The project has taken place in and around the City of Madison and Boone County, West Virginia, of which Madison is the county seat (see Map 1: Madison/Danville). Located in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains and along an important transportation corridor through the southern coalfields of West Virginia, Madison has been called the gateway to the coalfields. While the coal industry once dominated the economy and culture, many coal mines have closed or reduced employment through technological advances, with a precipitous impact on the economy and communities. As the region seeks to retain a connection to their heritage while adapting to provide for economic opportunity moving forward, various initiatives are of relevance (see Map 2: Regional Context).



Coal heritage remains important to residents of the area and could also serve as a reason for travelers to stop and engage. This heritage includes the stories of the many who work or worked in the coal mines and the families they supported, but also the broader story of the Coal Mine Wars. The Mine Wars reflect the industry's role in our nation's development and the evolution of labor rights in the United States. The Coal Heritage Museum is located on Main Street in Madison, and Madison and Boone County played a role in the Miners March to the Battle of Blair Mountain (1921), a significant labor uprising in United States history. This unique history calls for greater understanding and interpretation, offering opportunities to share and engage.



Health Initiatives

A current health-based effort with multiple implications underway is the Boone Memorial Heath (BMH) Farmers' Market and Greenhouse. The project is anticipated to break ground on a site adjacent to the Boone-Madison Public Library on Main Street in Madison in fall of 2023, with the opening scheduled for 2024. Operations will be managed by the BMH Foundation for Community Health, with significant potential to activate the Main Street in Madison and serve as a location for economic, health, and social activities.

The project includes an indoor-outdoor farmers' market structure and a permanent greenhouse, in addition to an outdoor stage and seating area. Plans call for a weekend farmers' market, open to the public, where local growers and producers will be invited to sell their products. The greenhouse will feature a variety of both hydroponic and non-hydroponic growing methods and will serve as an experiential learning site for adults and K-12 students. These features can positively impact the social determinants of health, with an emphasis on economic stability and food insecurity, and provide agricultural education while stimulating economic activity and agritourism.

Photo: © Bibiann Avelar



Economic Development

A success story in the region that provides a case study in thinking creatively about assets and building economic strength from within is the Appalachian Botanical Company. With a farm on a former strip mine site in Ashford and a production facility in Foster, Appalachian Botanical Co has been in operation since 2019. They produce lavender essential oil, mists, creams, sachets, and four varieties of honey from approximately 38 acres of lavender fields. The first harvest was in 2020, and expansion in Fayette County is anticipated with funding from an AMLER grant. The grant will support a lavender demonstration farm on 13 acres, with additional area reserved for development of an educational, vocational, and recreational center.

Natural Resources and Recreation

The waterways of the Coal River (Little Coal River, Big Coal River, and Coal River) have been and will continue to be a strong asset in the area (see Map 3: Boone County). Founded in 2004, the Coal River Group works to protect local water quality and improve stewardship of this resource, with a focus on getting people out fishing, paddling, and recreating on the rivers. Preserving history became another key area for Coal River Group, to build a sense of place and appreciation for the rivers.

The Coal River Group supports recreational use through seasonal kayak rentals and shuttle service, mapping and signage, and the annual Tour de Coal event. They also work through the WV DEP 319 grant program to repair and replace failing septic systems, directly improving water quality. The Coal River Group, along with many volunteers and entities such as Trash Your Kayak Cleanup Crew WV and the Adventure Tourism program at Boone Career and Technical Center, holds river and creek cleanups throughout the year to remove tires, trash, and other debris from the waterways.

A significant limitation in the region in the past has been the lack of public lands for recreation, particularly those with activities for all ages and for wildlife-associated recreation. However, this is poised to change significantly. Over the past several years The Conservation Fund partnered with Greenbrier Land Company, a private landowner in Boone County, on the permanent protection of a forested 3,250-acre property, a portion of which extends within the corporate boundary of the City of Madison.



At this time it is anticipated that ownership of this acreage will be split, with approximately 240 acres being transferred to the City of Madison (referred to in this plan as the Rucker Branch Natural Area), with the remaining acreage being transferred to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR) to be managed as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

In separate action, WV DNR and Greenbrier Land Company came to agreement for the license to WV DNR on approximately 5,118 acres that is located to the south of Madison. It is anticipated at this time that WV DNR will collectively manage the 3,000 acres in ownership and the 5,118 acres under license as the Little Coal River WMA, creating a significant public land area to protect natural resources (including interior core forest, bird habitat, and water quality) while offering to community members and visitors a unique opportunity for wildlife-associated recreation and promoting a more active lifestyle.



A Path Forward

There is great need in this region, but also great promise from initiatives underway and yet to come. There is an opportunity to foster entrepreneurship at the local level, build an outdoor recreation economy within a broader shift to an asset-based economy, and lean into increasing public interest in unique outdoor, recreation, or cultural experiences, particularly in rural areas.

There is no one answer to economic revitalization. Community members and visitors have diverse interests and needs. Proactive planning and prioritization that builds from assets make the best use of limited staff and volunteer time and funds. Economic development strategy, and outdoor recreation-based economic development efforts, should seek to diversify the economic base and make it resilient and adaptable.

Madison and Boone County can build and benefit from multiple features and resources. These include their rich cultural heritage, creative and sustainable reuse of former mine lands, proximity to the state's capital, affordable housing within towns that are walkable, community parks, lands that are newly publicly accessible, strong water-based recreation options, and regional proximity to multiple outdoor recreation opportunities, including the recently designated New River Gorge National Park and Preserve.

While work remains to offer residents improved economic and social opportunities within these communities, and to attract visitors to heritage and recreation opportunities, existing features and initiatives underway provide a starting point and path forward.



At over 8,000 acres, the Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area will be a significant addition to public lands, offering residents and visitors new opportunities to be active and engage with the rich wildlife and natural resources of West Virginia.

Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

The USDA Rural Development funding for this project, delivered through the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge, is intended to help rural communities create actionable plans to collaboratively support recreation spaces, preserve cultural and historic structures, and improve quality of place in communities. Placemaking was a key guide for the effort, along with placekeeping, as the community worked to care for and improve their social, cultural, and economic fabric.

The Madison/Boone Resource and Recreation Action Plan has taken the initial steps, through its process and deliverables, to foster greater health and vitality in this rural community. Significant work remains to catalyze positive impact on the people, places, environment, and economy of this region, and the actions identified in this plan are intended to serve as a guide in that work.

The project specifically focused on identifying actions to:

- strengthen recreation options and community health,
- protect natural and cultural resources, and
- foster an emerging outdoor recreation economy and lasting economic opportunity.



PLACEMAKING

A collaborative engagement process that helps leaders from rural communities create quality places where people will want to live, work, visit and learn. By bringing together partners from public, private, philanthropic, community, and technology sectors, placemaking is a wrap-around approach to community and economic development that incorporates creativity, infrastructure initiatives, and vibrant public spaces.

USDA Rural Development



PLACEKEEPING

The active care and maintenance of a place and its social fabric by the people who live and work there. It is not just preserving buildings but keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive, while supporting the ability of local people to maintain their way of life as they choose.

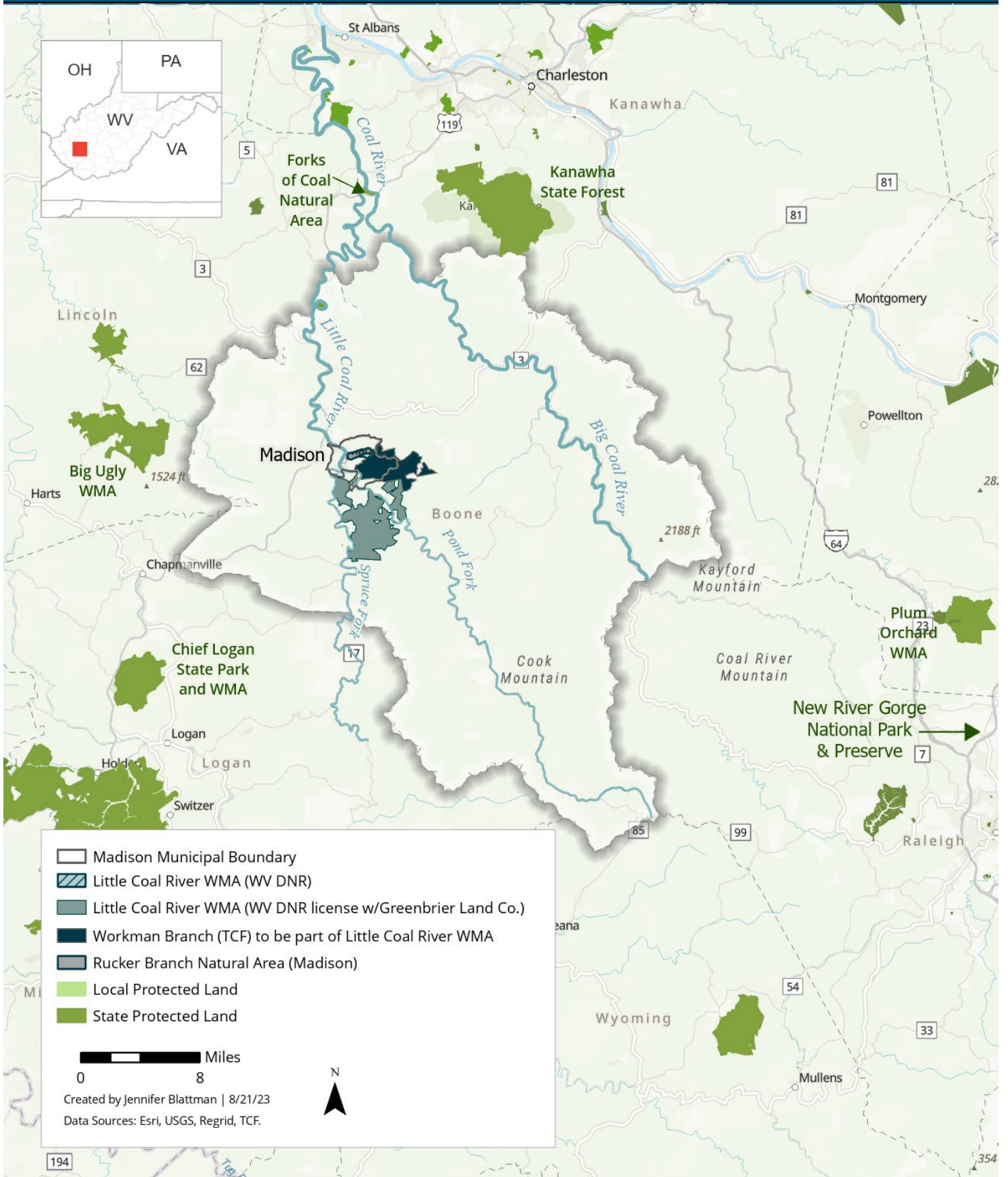
US Department of Arts and Culture

An additional focus for the project has been to conduct a process that is interactive, transparent, inclusive, and locally driven, and that provided content to grow expertise and capacity for future local implementation. While community engagement was not as robust as would have been preferred, the process repeatedly adapted to gather input and feedback from within the community. (See more details on engagement within the Process description.)

This Action Plan reflects the future vision as developed by project participants, and documents the actions to advance toward that vision.

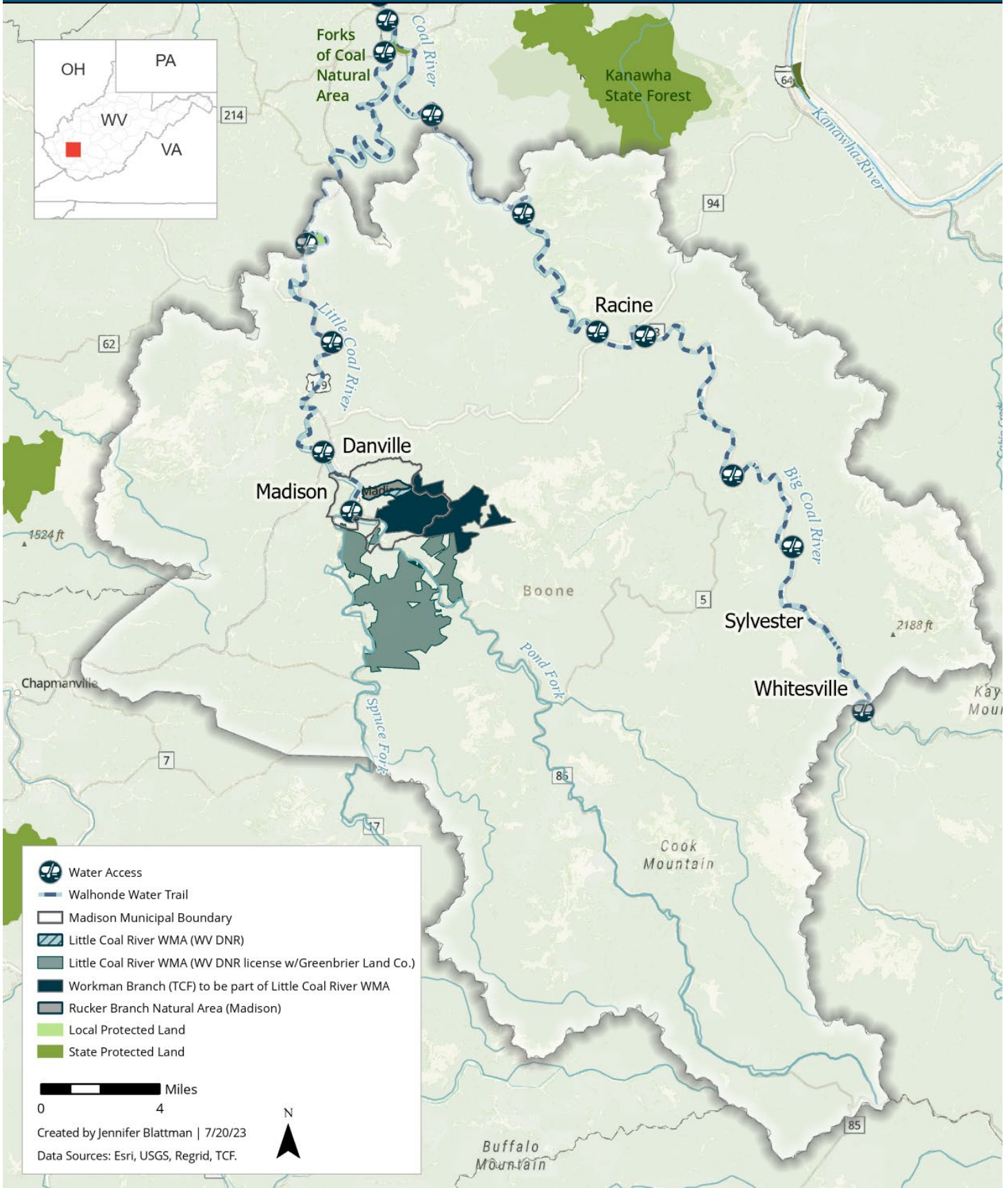
Map 2. Regional Context

Resource and Recreation Action Plan



Map 3. Boone County

Resource and Recreation Action Plan



PROCESS

The project was comprised of three components:

- a convening process to build capacity, identify a vision and solutions, and foster connections,
- this Action Plan to document results and provide a base for future action,
- and support for implementation.

Planning, training and technical assistance were delivered during the project through an on-site workshop, opportunities to attend training, and meetings of the Steering Team and project participants that included various technical content, exercises, and discussion. Beginning late in 2021 with informational interviews with stakeholders in the region, the project formally kicked off in April 2022 with a meeting of the Steering Team. Composed of 15 people representing various interests (county government, local government, private business, local and regional non-profits, academic community, state agencies, residents), members of the Steering Team have been involved throughout the project.

A multi-day workshop with presentations and group exercises was held in June 2022 with Steering Team members and additional participants, and incorporated a public open house. Following the June 2022 workshop, and based on interest expressed at the workshop, a Working Group was created to extend participation into the community, and subsequent gatherings extended an invitation to the Steering Team members, Working Group members, and other who expressed interest in the project.

Please see page 4 for the list of Steering Team and Working Group members.



Photos: @Susan Elks

Across the course of the project, one multi-day workshop, eight virtual meetings, and three in-person meetings were held, with two presentations to the Boone County Commission and one to the Madison City Council. A webpage was created to host project information for the duration of the project, and was updated to include the summer 2022 public survey results. Availability of the summer 2022 public survey was shared via a hard copy and digital postcard and social media, while the 2023 survey was shared through meetings and social media. Periodic coordination was also undertaken with Madison specifically on their Comprehensive Plan update, which was underway through this project (anticipated completion in fall of 2023).

In addition, project participants were provided the option to attend training of relevance, and multiple project participants were supported in attending the WV Trails Conference (October 2022) and/or Smith OEDC ACT Workshop (March 2023). The project also supported and promoted an evening of dance and community conversation in Madison in May 2023 in partnership with the WV Dance Company.

The project workshop and meetings provided opportunities for group exercises that identified community assets, strengths, and opportunities, as well as a guiding vision. These were supported with multiple online surveys, including a community baseline assessment survey in follow-up to the June workshop, which gathered approximately 35 responses, and polling on draft vision statements. Additionally, two public surveys were conducted (summer 2022 and summer 2023) regarding desired actions. The summer 2022 survey had over 120 respondents, while the summer 2023 survey had over 60 respondents. The input from these online surveys was considered alongside input from in-person and virtual meetings to create this plan. Please see the appendices for more detail on survey responses.

The various project gatherings and outside training opportunities were used to deliver training and technical content across diverse topics that influence and have implications for rural communities. Presentations and trainings were tailored to inform on asset-based economies and outdoor recreation, and multiple topics as noted below:

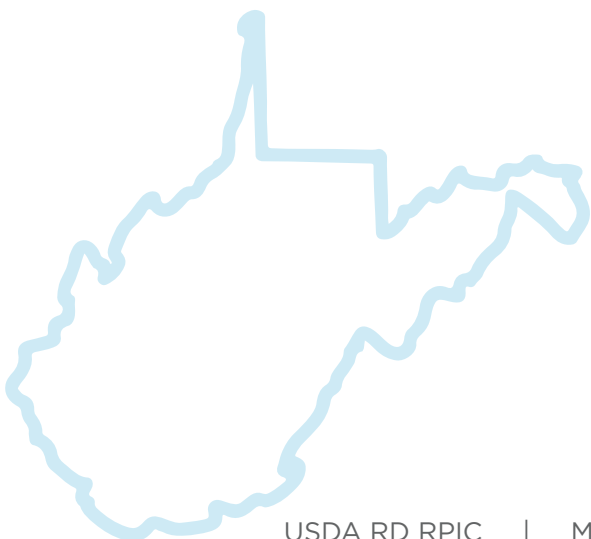
- Placemaking and placekeeping
- Arts and culture in economic development
- Asset based economic development
- Farmers markets
- Natural resources and working lands
- Trail planning and development
- Outdoor recreation economy trends
- Entrepreneurship on private lands
- Social determinants of health
- Economic development case studies
- Community branding and marketing
- Resources within West Virginia
- Project implementation
- Funding opportunities



Photo: © Jeana Bala

As part of the formal project process, direct implementation support took place across 2023. Support was provided to the City of Madison in preparing a park improvement grant application to AARP as part of their Community Challenge Grant (deadline April 2023), and to the American Water Charitable Foundation’s Water and Environment program for the Rucker Branch trailhead (deadline June 2023), which were unfortunately not funded. Both opportunities open periodically, and may be worth pursuing again in the future.

Support was also provided to Boone Memorial Health in completing an expression of interest for the Economic Recovery Corps Fellows program (deadline June 30, 2023). The application advanced through the first review, and a final response is still pending.



Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan Schedule

<p>— APRIL 6, 2022 —</p> <p>Steering Team Kick-off Meeting (virtual)</p>	<p>— MAY 19, 2022 —</p> <p>Steering Team Meeting #2 (in-person, Boone Career & Technical Center)</p>	<p>— JUNE 20-22, 2022 —</p> <p>June Workshop (Multi-day in-person workshop for Steering Team and additional invitees, Public Open House, Madison)</p>	<p>— JULY 28, 2022</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #3 (virtual)</p>
<p>Introductions; Project and schedule review; Discussion of project and workshop goals; Survey upcoming</p>	<p>Project status; Survey status; Workshop format, invitations, and speakers</p>	<p>Presentations on multiple topics, exercises and displays; Public survey opened</p>	<p>Recap of workshop; Review of community baseline and preliminary public survey results; Prep for Fall Workshop</p>
<p>— AUGUST 18, 2022 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #4 (virtual)</p>	<p>— SEPTEMBER 2022 —</p> <p>September Workshop (cancelled)</p>	<p>— OCTOBER 28, 2022 —</p> <p>WV Trails Conference</p>	<p>— JANUARY 24, 2023</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #5: (virtual)</p>
<p>Prep for Fall Workshop; Vision statement; Preliminary project ID/ vetting; Public survey results; Gift card winner selection</p>	<p>October 28, 2022 – project participants with availability attended WV Trails Conference</p>	<p>Project participants with availability attended WV Trails Conference near Beckley, WV</p>	<p>Status and schedule for 2023</p>
<p>— FEBRUARY 28, 2023 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #6 (virtual)</p>	<p>— MARCH 23-24, 2023 —</p> <p>Smith OEDC Workshop (in-person)</p>	<p>— MARCH 28, 2023 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #7 (in-person)</p>	<p>— MAY 4, 2023</p> <p>Dance Performance (in-person)</p>
<p>Presentations from Kane (PA) Area Development Center and WV Community Hub</p>	<p>Project participants with availability attended Smith OEDC Advancing Community Trails Workshop</p>	<p>Presentations from USDA RD and Smithers WV on resources and implementation; Input opportunity for draft actions</p>	<p><i>Suite West Virginia in Six Chapters: An evening of dance and community conversation.</i></p>
<p>— MAY 23, 2023 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #8 (virtual)</p>	<p>— JUNE 27, 2023 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #9 (virtual)</p>	<p>— AUGUST 3 & 24, 2023 —</p> <p>Steering Team/ Working Group Meeting #10 (in-person), #11 (virtual)</p>	<p>Presentations to Boone County Commission in March and August 2023; Presentation to Madison City Council in August 2023.</p>
<p>Presentation from ChandlerThinks on community branding and marketing; Promotion of action survey; Updates</p>	<p>Presentation from M. Miller Development Services on implementation; Promotion of action survey; Updates</p>	<p>Presentation and discussion of draft plan</p>	<p>Technical assistance provided for action implementation across spring and summer; project close-out September 2023.</p>

IMPLEMENT



A review of survey responses and other input throughout this project makes one thing clear: community members want action. They want to see visible improvements that offer social and economic opportunity, and that indicate care for public infrastructure – parks, streetscapes, and community spaces. The call for action was the strongest consensus within the project.

Such action will require time, energy, and funding. It will also require individuals and organizations to come together and work in the same direction. An Implementation Team, formed from the Steering Team and Working Group, would greatly benefit advancement of goals and actions, providing continuity of intentions and consistency of effort. An Implementation Team would meet periodically and call together partners to advance work and share status on efforts.

At times action will be focused around organizations that are currently involved in initiatives in the region (such as the Boone Career and Technical Center), and at times action will require reaching out to organizations with specific expertise that have not previously been engaged. Stewarding existing partnerships while also forming new partnerships and collaborations will be essential to advancing the project vision. Contracting for specific support, such as grant writing, should also be routinely considered to increase capacity in the region.

Table 1: Goals and Actions

A. Enhance recreation offerings

- Action A.1: Support river cleanups
- Action A.2: Add and enhance recreation activities and programming
- Action A.3: Add and enhance parks and recreation facilities and infrastructure

B. Activate the community and public spaces

- Action B.1: Add and enhance events and programming
- Action B.2: Initiate a youth mentorship and shadowing program
- Action B.3: Bring in entrepreneurial and small business training

C. Communicate on infrastructure, events and programming

- Action C.1: Create a website for recreation activities and visitor services
- Action C.2: Create a brochure for recreation activities and visitor services

D. Plan countywide for parks and recreation



Photo: @Susan Elks

There have been some difficult conversations during the project, particularly around what forms of recreation will best generate economic opportunity. The guideposts for outdoor recreation-based economic development should be whether recreation facilities and other public assets are flexible with their use, serve different ages and interests, serve community members and potentially visitors, support entrepreneurs and small businesses, and help address health conditions in the community. These guideposts will direct effort in a way that supports effectiveness and delivers results.

TABLE 2: CATALYST ACTIONS

Goal	#	Action	Parties/Partners	Timeline
Enhance Recreation Offerings	A.2	Add and enhance recreation activities and programming	City of Madison, Danville, Boone County, Coal River Group, WV Mine Wars Museum, Coal Heritage Area	Select two (activity or program) to advance in 2024, with at least one on the ground activity for the public
	<p>Notes: Steps to increase recreation activity options (such as making trail maps easily available, purchasing and installing a kayak rental “kiosk” at a key location, or investigating bike rental options through local government or the private sector) and steps to enhance recreation programming (such as developing historic interpretation signage and public art related to the Miners March along a trail, leading a topic-focused hike, or hosting a community fishing day/“test out a kayak” day) could be individually advanced, working with the partners relevant to the focus item and location.</p> <p>Programming could also highlight recreation economy job opportunities, within an existing recreation space. Such activities and programming should be developed with an eye toward activating these community recreation spaces, offering a social opportunity, exploring community heritage, and offering options for all ages. Funding options would be diverse and dependent on the specific focus, but include those related to recreation and community health.</p>			
Enhance Recreation Offerings	A.3	Add and enhance parks and recreation facilities and infrastructure	City of Madison, Boone County, WV DNR, Coal River Group	Focus on one Madison site to seek funding in 2024 for significant improvements, select a smaller project (such as signage) to fund and install in 2024, and routinely coordinate on WMA access improvements
	<p>Notes: Work to add and enhance recreation should ideally be informed by a comprehensive plan, however some needed improvements are clear at this point and could proceed, including improvements to the Junior Haddad Recreation Center, creating access to the anticipated Rucker Branch Natural Area, and creating access to the anticipated Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area.</p> <p>Water access is a focus in the region, and improvements such as signage, ramps, and online information would benefit resident and visitors. Over time, improvements should be informed by a comprehensive plan (Goal/Action D) to inform priority updates and ensures sufficient maintenance and operations. Funding options would be diverse and dependent on the specific focus, but include those related to recreation and community health.</p>			
Activate community and public spaces	B.3	Bring in entrepreneurial and small business start-up training	Public Libraries, Academic community (Boone Career and Technical Center, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College), Boone Memorial Health, WV Community Development Hub	Pilot efforts in 2024 and build into routine program through 2025/2026
	<p>Notes: Turning specific attention to gathering entrepreneurial and business start-up training and making it easily and routinely accessible would support business ventures in the region, from initiation into stabilization and then growth. Such training is available through various sources, however putting it more routinely in the community and structuring a program around it would increase impact. Pilot efforts could include having a dedicated evening for a group viewing of an online course, building in time for the group discussion.</p> <p>The guidance of WV Community Development Hub should be sought for suggestions on quality content, and the local academic community and public libraries should be involved. Topics could include creating a website, financial software, using social media, contracting processes and more – all with a lens for start-ups and small business. In addition to the direct business outcomes, such trainings would help activate the spaces used for the training and provide a social outlet. While targeted at adults, such trainings could be open to high school students to provide a view toward future opportunities.</p>			

Goal	#	Action	Parties/Partners	Timeline
Communicate on infrastructure, events, and programming	C.1	Create a website for recreation activities and visitor services	Boone County Commission, Madison Redevelopment Authority, Coal River Group, private business	2024 to obtain funding and gather content
	<p>Notes: A likely vehicle for website creation and/or development of social media content is an outside consultant, hired initially for development of the website and then contracted for ongoing maintenance. With the potential value to a diverse group, the action could attract funding from a variety of sources. A team should be formed to investigate pulling funding together, and while that is underway also gather content to help inform creation of the website with respect to public spaces (parks, recreation areas), activities and events, and services to obtain food, lodging, and supplies.</p> <p>The branding (name, logo, colors, design guide) should be an early consideration, and funding could be built into the project to address branding first and then website and social media content development. Providing clear, comprehensive and current information on recreation activities and visitor services should be the primary guide for this action.</p>			
Plan countywide for parks and recreation	D	Plan countywide for parks and recreation	Boone County Commission, Coal River Group	2024 to obtain funding
	<p>Notes: Seek funding from government and foundation sources related to outdoor recreation-based economic development and community health options (such as WV REI, WV Center for Rural Health Development); form a coalition to oversee the project from health, economic, and recreation groups (such as Coal River Group and Boone Memorial Health); identify the lead fiscal agent; advertise a Request for Proposals (RFP) when funding is obtained.</p> <p>The RFP should note the parameters of the scope of work: investigate optimal trail corridors to create an integrated network of land and water-based trails for a variety of user types, examine existing recreation facilities and community needs, explore programming and activities to activate recreation areas, make recommendations for improvements across facilities, programming, maintenance and operations to ensure the recreation facilities and activities can be supported into the future. Such a plan could be focused on Boone County as a whole or on the Coal River watershed.</p>			


Drawdy Falls

Resourcing projects requires being in contact with established partners routinely, seeking new collaborators, and responding to the focus of the community and partners. Sharing success is also important. Improvements efforts at Drawdy Falls have attracted support from many organizations and individuals within the community over a period of years, while the West Virginia Department of Tourism and the National Coal Heritage Area are new partners in enhancing this well-known and loved natural feature.



Photo: © Robert Miller

IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL


A.1 - Add and enhance recreation activities and programming	
<p>What:</p> <p>Steps to increase recreation activity options and steps to enhance recreation programming should be advanced with the appropriate partners. Potential steps for activities include purchasing and installing a kayak rental “kiosk” at a key location or investigating bike rental options (private sector or government entity). Potential steps for programming include developing historic interpretation signage and public art along a trail related to the Miners March, hosting a community fishing day/“test a kayak” day, or highlighting recreation economy job opportunities in a recreation space.</p>	
<p>When/How:</p> <p>Select two (activity or program) to advance in 2024, with at least one on the ground activity for the public. Funding options would be diverse and dependent on the specific focus but include those related to recreation and community health.</p>	<p>Why/Impact:</p> <p>Such activities and programming should be developed with an eye toward activating these community recreation spaces, offering a social opportunity, exploring community heritage, and offering options for all ages.</p>
<p>Who:</p> <p>City of Madison, Danville, Boone County, Coal River Group, WV Mine Wars Museum, Coal Heritage Area</p>	<p>Metric:</p> <p>New opportunities/amenities at public parks in Madison and surrounding area by end of summer 2024; annual tracking thereafter.</p>

Rendering B2: Junior Haddad Recreation Center Concept (Old River Road site)



IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL

A.2 - Add and enhance parks and recreation facilities and infrastructure

<p>What:</p> <p>Work on recreation sites at a regional scale should ideally be informed by a comprehensive plan, however some needed improvements are clear now and could proceed, including improvements to the Junior Haddad Recreation Center, creating access to the anticipated Rucker Branch Natural Area, and creating access to the anticipated Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Over time, improvements should be informed by a plan (see Goal/Action D) to determine priority and ensure sufficient maintenance and operations.</p>	
<p>When/How:</p> <p>Pending requests for funding on local park/recreation areas will inform advancement, otherwise visible improvements to the Junior Haddad Recreation Center or Rucker Branch Trailhead area that would not create significant limitation to future build-out should take priority. Funding options would be diverse and dependent on the specific focus but include those related to recreation and community health. Coordination between WV DNR and local entities should be a priority to inform and develop access to the anticipated Little Coal River WMA as well as wildlife-associated activities on those lands.</p>	<p>Why/Impact:</p> <p>Recreation options that are easy to access are important for social, health, and economic outcomes in the region. Improvements would benefit resident and visitors.</p>
<p>Who:</p> <p>City of Madison, Boone County, WV DNR, Coal River Group</p>	<p>Metric:</p> <p>New opportunities/amenities at public parks in Madison and surrounding area by end of summer 2024; annual tracking thereafter.</p>

Rendering B1: Junior Haddad Recreation Center Concept (Old River Road site)



IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL

B.3 - Bring in entrepreneurial and small business start-up training

What:

Gathering entrepreneurial and business start-up training and making it easily and routinely accessible would support business ventures in the region, from initiation into stabilization and then growth. Such training is available through various sources, however putting it more routinely in the community and structuring a program around it would increase impact.



When/How:

Pilot efforts could include having a dedicated evening for a group viewing of an online course that also built in time for group discussion. The guidance of WV Community Development Hub should be sought for suggestions on quality content, and the local academic community and public libraries should be involved. Topics could include creating a website, financial software, using social media, contracting processes and more - all with a lens for start-ups and small business.

Why/Impact:

In addition to the direct business outcomes, such trainings would help activate the spaces used for the training and provide a social outlet. While targeted at adults, such trainings could be open to high school students to provide a view toward future opportunities.

Who:

Boone County, Public Libraries, Academic community (Boone Career and Technical Center, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College), Boone Memorial Health, WV Community Development Hub, City of Madison

Metric:

New opportunities within Boone County related to these topics in 2024; annual tracking thereafter.

Supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses is critical to job creation and recirculation of revenue.



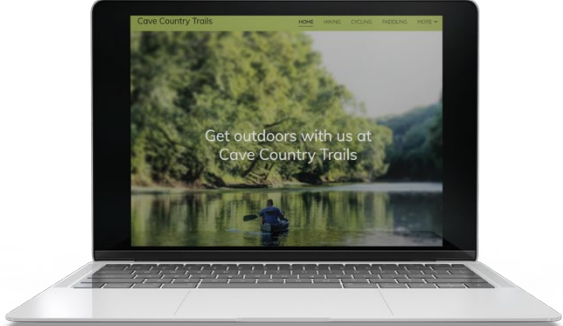
Source: U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, Report No. 444, December 2018 <https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/rs444-Small-Business-GDP-1998-20141.pdf>




Source: <http://www.civiceconomics.com/indie-impact.html>

IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL

C.1 - Create a website for recreation activities and visitor services

<p>What:</p> <p>A website and linked social media channels addressing public spaces, events, activities, recreation infrastructure, visitor services, and supporting businesses would be very beneficial, and should cover Boone County and be associated with the Coal River watershed. Providing information on places to go and activities is essential to attracting attendees from the local community and bringing in visitors from out of the region. The public feels more comfortable when essential information (what, when, where) is easily available and supported with more details, and providing consistent information via multiple channels reaches the widest audience</p>	
<p>When/How:</p> <p>A likely vehicle for creation of a website and social media content is an outside consultant, hired initially for development and then contracted for ongoing maintenance. With the potential value to a diverse group, the action could attract funding from a variety of sources. A team should be formed to investigate pulling funding together, and while that is underway also gather content to help inform creation of the website with respect to public spaces (parks, recreation areas), activities and events, and services to obtain food, lodging, and supplies. The branding (name, logo, colors, design guide) should be an early consideration, and funding could be built into the project to address branding first and then content development. Routine maintenance to keep content current is essential, as the public quickly gives up on sources of information that are inaccurate or out of date and moves on to spending their time and dollars in a place that does provide such information.</p>	<p>Why/Impact:</p> <p>Providing clear, comprehensive, and current information on recreation activities and visitors services is an essential part of competing for the attention of the public – community members and travelers – and should be the primary guide for this action. The economic benefits of public lands will remain elusive if the message of their availability and associated activities is non-existent or unclear.</p>
<p>Who:</p> <p>Boone County Commission, Madison Redevelopment Authority, Coal River Group, private business</p>	<p>Metric:</p> <p>Assemble funding for development of content and platforms (end of 2024), RFP process, retention of consultant, content live, routine updates.</p>



cavecountrytrails.com

Cave Country Trails shares content on hiking, cycling, paddling and amenities in town, linking people to recreation opportunities. The site includes starting information and links to more detail.

Social media extends the reach of the website information, and allows for messaging that is more responsive to current events and audience interaction.

IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL

D - Plan countywide for parks and recreation

What:

This project has advanced recreation planning in Boone County, however much work remains to address the entire county comprehensively, to include infrastructure, facilities, programming, operations and maintenance. Developing a Park and Recreation Plan for Boone County and the Coal River watershed would allow for better integration of water-based trails and land-based trails, investigate optimal trail alignments, examine existing facilities and recommend potential improvements, explore programming and activities, and provide a guide for future operations and maintenance.



When/How:

This effort should kick off by seeking funding from outdoor recreation-based economic development and community health options (such as WV REI, WV Center for Rural Health Development) in 2024. Early steps should include forming a coalition to oversee the identification of the fiscal agent. A Request for Proposals (RFP) should be advertised when funding and a oversight coalition and fiscal agent are in place. The RFP should note the parameters of the scope of work: investigate optimal trail corridors to create an integrated network of land and water-based trails for a variety of user types, examine existing recreation facilities and community needs, explore programming and activities to activate recreation areas, make recommendations for improvements across facilities, programming, and maintenance for sustainable operations. Such a plan could be focused on Boone County and/or the Coal River watershed.

Why/Impact:

A Park and Recreation Plan for Boone County and the Coal River watershed would allow for better integration of different recreation facility types and activities, ensuring best use of funding for improvements and supporting recreation that returns economic, environmental, and social value to the community. Such a plan would also provide a guide for future operations and maintenance to ensure ongoing support of facilities.

Who:

Boone County Commission, Coal River Group

Metric:

Assembling funding for plan development (end of 2024), RFP process, retention of consultant, draft and final plan, plan implementation.



Appendices

- Metrics
- Funding and Resource Options
- Project Timeline
- June 2022 Workshop Materials
- Survey Results
 - 2022 Assessment
 - 2022 Survey 1 Highlights
 - 2022 Survey 2 Details
 - 2023 Results
- Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation
- WV Dance Company Event

Metrics

Various demographic data can be tracked moving forward as an indicator of economic change, including population change, unemployment rates, poverty levels, and median household income. Between 2010 and 2019, Boone County lost more than 12% of its population (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey). In 2019, more than 18% of Boone County residents lived in poverty, compared to 16.0% for West Virginia (2019 American Community Survey) and 10.5% for the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplements). In May 2021, Boone County's unemployment rate was 6.3%, in comparison to the West Virginia unemployment rate of 5.5% and a national unemployment rate of 5.8% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Other quantitative data can also be tracked, such as tax revenue or building permits at the town, city or county level, to assess trends over time.

The community is encouraged, through an Implementation Team, to annually document:

- Demographic and economic data for Madison and Boone County: population, unemployment rates, poverty levels, education levels, and median household income (through American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate and Bureau of Labor data)
- Tax revenue at the local and county levels
- Building permits at the local and county levels
- Specific metrics on catalyst actions (see detail sheets)
- General activity on all actions (significant/moderate/no action)

Qualitative activity should be documented alongside quantitative data. Progress – or loss – strictly through data tells only a portion of the story, and often lags behind what is seen in the community. Documenting business openings (or closures), addition of public art, visitation at local events and community facilities, construction of trails, improvements to streetscaping, accessibility improvements, and similar activities that are less quantitative but often more visible are an important part of understanding where activity is most significant. Wins on the ground that are visible to the community are critical to encouraging continued effort.

The community is also encouraged to periodically update their community assessment (first completed in the summer of 2022 by the Steering Team) to assess trends over time and specific strengths or weaknesses. Conducting an assessment update every other year is the recommended timing for this activity.



Photos: © Susan Elks

Funding and Resource Options

Seeking funding and implementation resources - organizational partners, funding programs, or technical assistance - should be a strategic consideration on a routine basis. Appropriately connecting proposed actions and projects with sources of funding and capacity (such as technical assistance or staff/volunteer time) is a critical part of implementation. Routine coordination should take place between the community and potential funding organizations that share overlapping interests (such as recreation, physical and mental wellbeing, or economic development), with discussion focusing on how resources could be matched to proposed actions and projects. Within the community, there should be a clear priority and lead entity that approaches a potential funding partner.

For existing programs with periodic application cycles, being mindful of timing for applications is essential, as is contacting the administrator of the programs to talk through what project or action best carries forward the intentions of the community and the funding program. At times a specific project or local implementing organization may not be ready to seek funding, but building relationships over time is an important part of consistently matching resources to needs. Other organizations and resource opportunities may be less consistently a fit but can play a vital role in closing funding gaps to bring a project across the finish line. Resourcing projects requires consistently talking with partners, seeking new partners, being open to collaboration, and responding to the focus of the community and partners. The information that follows provides information on organizations and individual programs that are applicable to advancing the vision, goals, and actions of this plan.

WEST VIRGINIA BASED RESOURCES:

WV Community Development Hub (relevant technical assistance programs include Cultivate WV and Accelerate WV): <https://wvhub.org/>

Generation West Virginia: Generation West Virginia is a statewide organization for and by young people. They offer a job board/resume bank, a six-month, fully-remote, tuition-free coding school, and the GWV Fellowship - a nine-month program designed to help early-career professionals find their footing by bringing young West Virginians together to learn (through remote and in-person sessions) from leaders throughout the state. More information: <http://generationwv.org/>

Mon Forest Towns: Example of collaboration and marketing for communities in West Virginia, with an emphasis on public lands and recreation assets: <https://monforesttowns.com/>

WVU Project Development and Design Assistance: Technical assistance that brings the expertise of faculty and the energy of students together with community partners to solve critical problems of design, including site design, planning, and visioning. More information at: <https://extension.wvu.edu/community-business-safety/community-development/community-engagement-lab> and <https://brownfields.wvu.edu/services/project-development-design-assistance>

WVU Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative, based out of West Virginia University and a state-specific resource, provides support for economic development

Funding and Resource Listings

that is tied to the outdoors, particularly trails. They also gather and share research on these topics. General information: <https://oedc.wvu.edu/> and the research page: <https://oedc.wvu.edu/resources/research>

WV Main Street Affiliate: <https://wvcad.org/infrastructure/main-street-wv-and-ontrac>

WV Recreational Economies Initiative (WVREI) a collaboration between Partner Community Capital, Woodlands Development and Lending, and WV Department of Tourism, working with tourism and recreation-related businesses to provide 1:1 business advisory services and organizational development assistance in an effort to grow tourism and recreation-related businesses and jobs, offering in-house business advisory services, a technical assistance fund, and an infrastructure predevelopment fund: <https://partnercap.org/special-programs/west-virginia-recreational-economies-initiative/#:-:text=WV%20REI%20aims%20to%20grow,support%20for%20tourism%20%26%20recreation%20businesses>

The Center for Rural Health Development works to improve the health of West Virginians, especially in rural communities. They focus on working with community leaders to build on the resources in their community to create local conditions where residents have options available to them so that they can pursue a healthy lifestyle. A specific program of relevance for technical or funding assistance is Wild, Wonderful & Healthy West Virginia. <https://wvruralhealth.org/>

National Coal Heritage Area: Covering a multi-county region that includes Boone County, the National Coal Heritage Area has relevance for both interpretation of heritage and a Community Partnership Grant program that typically opens late in the year. The mission of the National Coal Heritage Area is to preserve, protect, and interpret lands, structures, and

communities associated with the coal mining heritage of West Virginia, and encompasses 13 counties in southern West Virginia. <http://www.coalheritage.org/>

BMH Foundation for Community Health: Launched only recently, the BMH Foundation for Community Health has already provided support to multiple efforts. The Foundation has a mission to improve community health by addressing the social determinants of health throughout its service area, including Boone County. Social determinants of health include economic stability; access to quality education; safe neighborhoods and living environments; social and community connection; and access to quality healthcare.

Boone County Community Foundation is an affiliate member of The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. Recent grants have included awards to organizations and projects working in the areas of youth engagement and education. <https://boonecountyfoundation.org>.

The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation is a philanthropic leader that helps strengthen community in the six-county region of Boone, Clay, Fayette, Kanawha, Lincoln, and Putnam so all people and places can thrive. In addition to helping with the creation of charitable funds, the Foundation provides grants to non-profits that meet the needs of the community, with an emphasis in Community Economic Development, Education, Health, Arts & Culture, and Basic Needs. Occasionally, the Foundation offers additional competitive grantmaking opportunities and technical assistance, including the Advancing Entrepreneurship Program, which provides funding to nonprofits for projects aimed at building the capacity of entrepreneurs, microenterprises and small business. www.tgkvf.org

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Boone County Community Foundation is an affiliate member of The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. Recent grants have included awards to organizations and projects working in the areas of youth engagement and education. <https://boonecountyfoundation.org/>

Building Bridges Leadership Initiative is a partnership between The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation and WV Community Development Hub, first hosted in 2020 and repeated in 2022. A non-profit and community-based capacity building series, the initiative brings together a cohort of emerging non-profit leaders, providing space for engagement and peer learning as well as specific content. The program serves a cohort of 20-25 with a range of technical assistance and consulting services, with the potential for mini-grant funding for projects.

West Virginia READY, West Virginia Rural Engagement Ambassadors for Development and Youth, pairs AmeriCorps members with governmental and nongovernmental agencies to assess, develop, and grow West Virginia's regional outdoor recreation economy. WV READY combines community organizing with rural economic development, providing intern capacity to strengthen current and emerging programs (potential projects include seasonal outdoor programs, youth development opportunities, asset mapping and identification, and communications and marketing assistance). Recent application cycles have opened in the fall, and the program has the added benefit of creating a pipeline to additional support from the Appalachian Conservation Corps through a conservation crew. <https://stewardslegacy.org/wvready>

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCES:

Funding and Technical Assistance:

REGIONAL:

Appalachian Regional Commission:

Overview page on tourism and outdoor recreation efforts: <https://www.arc.gov/investment/central-appalachia-expanding-tourism-through-outdoor-recreation/>

AGCI (Appalachian Gateway Community Initiative): Partnering with the Appalachian Regional Commission and National Endowment for the Arts, The Conservation Fund has convened multiple workshops as the cornerstone of the Appalachian Gateway Community Initiative (AGCI), targeted to gateway communities in the Appalachian Region. <https://www.arc.gov/investment/appalachian-gateway-communities-initiative-providing-tools-for-tourism/>

ARISE: Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) aims to drive large-scale, regional economic transformation through multi-state collaborative projects across Appalachia, strengthen Appalachian business and industry, and grow and support the development of new opportunities across multiple states: <https://www.arc.gov/arise/>

READY Appalachia is a community capacity-building initiative offering flexible funding to organizations in four key economic development pillars: nonprofits, community foundations, local governments, and Local Development Districts, and free training to the Appalachians that work for them. Participants access 10 weeks of cohort-based learning, skill development, and grant opportunities to increase their capacity to solve pressing issues and create positive economic change. <https://www.arc.gov/ready/>

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POWER: Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production, through support to projects that will leverage entrepreneurship, workforce development, and infrastructure to bolster re-employment opportunities, create jobs in existing or new industries, and attract new sources of investment. <https://www.arc.gov/power/>

ARC Annual Strategy Statement & 4-Year State Development Plan: <https://www.arc.gov/appalachian-states/>

NATIONAL:

AARP is increasingly involved in community livability, offering guides and small grant programs on livability for all ages (housing, recreation, public spaces, accessibility, etc.): <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/> as well as their Livability Index, where you can view your community's overall livability score or scores within specific topics (housing, transportation, etc.), with information available by town or county, as well as a statewide assessment: <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/livable-communities/info-2015/livability-index.html>

Citizen's Institute for Rural Design, a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Housing Assistance Council, is a technical assistance program for small communities to guide local development and shape their future through artistic and cultural resources: www.rural-design.org. Main NEA page: <https://www.arts.gov/> and all NEA grant opportunities <https://www.arts.gov/grants>.

Community Heart and Soul is a non-profit program designed for small communities that provides technical assistance and a seed grant to engage a community in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it: www.communityheartandsoul.org

Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. They offer various programs and training events, with online resources (toolkits, webinars, and guides). They also have state and town affiliates. For more information visit www.mainstreet.org and the WV affiliate: <https://wvcad.org/infrastructure/main-street-wv-and-ontrac>. Their page specific to funding opportunities: <https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/fundingopportunities>. One specific funding program: the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program. T-Mobile is partnering with Smart Growth America and Main Street America to invest in small towns. The T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program awards up to 100 small towns a year with community development project funding—up to \$50,000 each. Beginning in April 2021, this \$25 million, five-year initiative awards 25 grants per quarter to small towns and rural communities with populations less than 50,000. Projects span technology, education, environment, health care, and more – all with one common focus, making their community stronger.

NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, a technical assistance program offered through the National Park Service to communities for locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the United States (not restricted to NPS sites or communities adjacent to), addresses needs such as developing or restoring parks, conservation

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areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs. Contact your regional RTCA office before applying: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>

Ohio River Trail Towns – Community webpage at www.ohioriverway.org and the River Town Review Toolkit (a product of the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program), a step-by-step guide to help your river town connect communities and promote outdoor recreation. River Town Review Toolkit - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)

Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism:

ARTS:

Americans for the Arts has various information, but includes multiple links to studies that dive into the case for the arts and their economic, social and educational benefits: <https://www.americansforthearts.org/research>

National Governors Association and The Rural Arts Initiative is an approach for strengthening economic opportunities and vibrancy in rural communities through arts, and the website includes data (such as the value added to state economies through arts and cultural production) and an action guide among the resources (Rural Prosperity Through the Arts & Creative Sector, A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States): <https://www.nga.org/ruralarts/>

HERITAGE TOURISM:

Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present (National Trust for Historic Preservation). From the National Trust for Historic Preservation: “A high percentage of domestic and international travelers participate

in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, and those that do stay longer, spend more, and travel more often. Heritage tourism creates jobs and business opportunities, helps protect resources, and often improves the quality of life for local residents.” https://www.achp.gov/heritage_tourism

Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism in Virginia (2017): https://cura.vcu.edu/media/cura/pdfs/cura-documents/HeritageTourism_FINAL_02-16-17.pdf

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Asset-Based Community Development Institute considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future, and offers training and events. <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>

Conservation Finance Network advances land and resource conservation by expanding the use of innovative and effective funding and financing strategies, and supports a growing network of public, private and nonprofit professionals through practitioner convenings, intensive trainings, and information dissemination to increase the financial resources utilized for conservation. www.conservationfinancenetwork.org

Entrepreneurial Ecosystems helps communities increase prosperity through entrepreneur-focused economic development and ecosystem building, with a library of online resources and a podcast. They also offer mentoring and analytics support. <https://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/>

Funding and Resource Listings

Headwater Economics is an independent, nonprofit research group that works to improve community development and land management decisions. They have various data and studies available on their website, and keep current with data. General information: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/> and outdoor recreation economy by state: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/outdoor-recreation-economy-by-state/> and a recent report on gateways (Amenity Trap): <https://headwaterseconomics.org/outdoor-recreation/amenity-trap/>

Southwick Associates is a market research and economics firm specializing in the hunting, shooting, sportfishing, and outdoor recreation markets. Southwick Associates works with the private sector and natural resource agencies on economic impact analyses, market and consumer research, market reports, and demand analyses. Website: <https://www.southwickassociates.com/> and available reports: <https://www.southwickassociates.com/reports-sortable/>

U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis gathers and disseminates economic data nationally and by state, including data on business sectors, such as arts, entertainment, and recreation: <https://www.bea.gov/>

USDA Rural Development invests in rural America with loan, grant, loan guarantees, and technical assistance across multiple programs, with some funding flowing from the federal level and some through state offices. www.rd.usda.gov for the overview and <https://www.rd.usda.gov/media/publication/download/508-rd-federal-entrepreneurshipguide-021122.pdf> for the 2022 Resources for Rural Entrepreneurs: A Guide to Planning, Adapting, and Growing Your Business.



U.S. Economic Development Administration has long been active in economic development, but their funding support around travel, tourism and outdoor recreation is growing through both federal programs and funding channeled through states. www.eda.gov and <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/travel-tourism>

Wealthworks brings together and connects a community's assets to meet market demand in ways that build livelihoods that last. Their website includes a resource page with success stories, how-to guides, and videos: www.wealthworks.org

EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY:

Adaptive Adventures provides progressive outdoor sports opportunities to improve quality of life for children, adults and veterans with physical disabilities, including technical assistance and guidance. www.adaptiveadventures.org

Disabled Hikes celebrates disabled people's experiences in the outdoors and helps facilitate those experiences with information, resources, and events. www.disabledhikers.com

Funding and Resource Listings

Together Outdoors is a coalition that works to make the outdoors a more inviting place through education, training, and grants focused on inclusion, equity, and action. <https://www.togetheroutdoors.com/>

GRANT WRITING SUPPORT:

The Grant Advantage:

<http://www.thegrantadvantage.net>

GrantStation: <http://www.grantstation.com>

PLACE:

Placekeeping: honoring the cultural lives of the community, preserving and protecting local architecture, craft and other authentic characteristics of place; an epicenter of aesthetics (source: NEA, Roberto Bedoya)

Placemaking: intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place (source: ArtscapeDIY)

The Importance of Place, Ed McMahon, Chairman Emeritus of Main Street America and a Senior Fellow at the Urban Land Institute, Main Street America, Main Spotlight, January 5, 2022, <https://www.mainstreet.org/blogs/national-main-street-center/2022/01/05/main-spotlight-the-importance-of-place>

Why Public Spaces are Our Best Hope for Community and Democracy, Hollie Russon Gilman and Bridge Marquis, The Hill, October 31, 2022, <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/3712437-why-public-spaces-are-our-best-hope-for-community-and-democracy/>

Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic

development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. They offer various programs and training events, with online resources (toolkits, webinars, and guides). www.mainstreet.org

Project for Public Spaces works to bring public spaces to life by planning and designing them with the people who use them every day, creating community-powered public spaces. They offer grants (in varying locations) and trainings (online and in-person), with various publications, webinars, success stories and resources online. www.pps.org

Reimagining the Civic Commons is an initiative in cities across the country to transform public space and shared civic assets to foster engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development. Online resources include case studies, data, guidance on measuring impacts, an action guide and more. www.civiccommons.us

PA Downtown Center, Nature-Based Placemaking, (video on the program page; handbook linked below; assessments for visitor readiness are on pages 38 -39 of the handbook):

<https://padowntown.org/programs/nature-based-placemaking-program/>

https://padowntown.org/assets/NBP_Handbook_Final.pdf

Catawba Vale Collaborative/Old Fort, North Carolina, grassroots efforts to improve Main Street, add public art, expand trails and more: <https://www.catawbavalecollaborative.org/>

OUTDOOR RECREATION:

Confluence of States has brought together the states with an office of outdoor recreation to promote the four principles of conservation and stewardship, education and workforce training, economic development, and public health and wellness to ensure that outdoor recreation retains a bipartisan approach. In addition to advocacy work around the four principals, their website provides links to the involved states (16 as of 2022) and related data and planning. <https://www.confluenceofstates.com/>

International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) works to create, enhance and protect great places to ride mountain bikes, partnering with communities on equitable access to diverse, high-quality trails. Their work extends across trail planning, design, building, stewardship and assessment, and they offer accelerator grants as well as various online research and resources. www.imba.com

Outdoor Alliance unites the voices of outdoor enthusiasts to conserve public lands, with a focus on land management that embraces the human-powered experience. Data on participation and economic impact are available through Outdoor Alliance are focused on human-powered recreation - biking, paddling, hiking, etc., and include specific reports on national forests in western Colorado and on Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in North Carolina. General information: www.outdooralliance.org

Outdoor Industry Association works across multiple recreation types, and their website includes research on the outdoor recreation market, participation, consumer habits and purchasing, and workforce, along with data on specific markets such as fishing, hunting and shooting sports, etc.



Their Fall 2022 Market Report details: “According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the outdoor recreation economy produced a record \$682 billion in economic output, 4.5 million jobs, and 1.9% of the total U.S. GDP in 2021. Outdoor recreation hit a record high in 2021, with 164 million participants, roughly 54% of the U.S. population.” General information: www.outdoorindustry.org and the research page: <https://outdoorindustry.org/collections/research/research-news/>

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable is a coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations, working to promote the growth of the outdoor recreation economy and outdoor recreation activities, educate decision makers and the public on balanced policies that conserve public lands and waterways, and enhance infrastructure to improve the experience and quality of life of outdoor enthusiasts everywhere. Their website notes that outdoor recreation in the U.S. accounts for \$862 billion in annual economic output coming from the activities of America’s 144 million outdoor enthusiasts,

and that the Bureau of Economic Analysis calculates the economic output of outdoor recreation of \$862 billion surpasses industries such as mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing. General information: <https://recreationroundtable.org/>. Their economic data page offers information by industry segment and state: <https://recreationroundtable.org/economic-impact/>

PUBLIC HEALTH:

Social Determinants of Health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. They are grouped into five domains, with each having research and resources available through a variety of organizations: economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community content. Information is widely available on each domain, with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offering a good starting point. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

RURAL AMERICA:

The Center on Rural Innovation works to advance economic prosperity in rural American through creation of inclusive tech economy ecosystems that support scalable entrepreneurship and tech job creation, and offers technical assistance, mentorship, and research on economic strategies with partners. Online resources include webinars, research reports, data, and case studies. <https://ruralinnovation.us/>

USDA Economic Research Service, Rural America at a Glance: 2022 Edition is available in both report and webinar format, covering the changing structure of economic sectors, labor force, job growth, and population change in rural America. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=105154>

STORYTELLING AND IDENTITY:

International Storytelling Center is a nonprofit organization and educational, arts and cultural institution dedicated to building better lives through the art of storytelling, seeking to inspire and empower people to capture and tell their stories, listen to the stories of others, and use storytelling to produce positive change. They host events and provide various resources online, including a toolkit on how to tell stories that matter. <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/>

The Daily Yonder provides news, commentary, and analysis about and for rural America via an online paper, newsletters, and podcasts. www.dailyyonder.com

STEWARDSHIP:

Leave No Trace offers training, guidelines and support around seven principals to help ensure sustainable outdoor exploration. www.lnt.org

TRENDS OF RELEVANCE:

Wunderman Thompson 100 Trends: <https://www.wundermanthompson.com/insight/the-future-100-2022>

CHANGING WORKFORCE:

9 Future Work Trends For 2023: <https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/9-future-of-work-trends-for-2023>

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: June Workshop Agenda - Madison Civic Center, June 20-22, 2022

Monday June 20, 2022 – Dinner, Welcome and Presentations

- 5:00 – 6:00 pm Dinner
- 6:00 – 6:30 pm **Welcome & Context Setting** – *Mayor James Hudson, City of Madison and Susan Elks, The Conservation Fund*
- 6:30 – 7:30 pm **Session 1: Placemaking & Placekeeping** – *Cheryl Hargrove, Hargrove International*
- 7:30 – 8:30 pm **Session 2: Role of Arts & Culture in Rural Economic Development** – *Cheryl Hargrove*

Tuesday June 21, 2022 – Presentations, Team Exercise and Public Open House

- 8:30 – 9:00 am **Review of Purpose, Process & Outcomes** – *Susan Elks*
- 9:00 – 9:30 am **Session 3: What is an Asset-Based Economy?** – *Susan Elks*
- 9:30 – 10:15 am **Session 4: Farmers Markets: The Business of Community** – *Kristin DeBoard and Rebecca Casey, Williamson Farmers Market*
- 10:15 – 10:30 am Break
- 10:30 – 11:45 **Team Exercise I: Asset-Mapping** – *Workshop Participants*
- 11:45 – 12:45 pm Lunch
- 12:45 – 1:15 pm **USDA Rural Development** – *Ryan Thorn, USDA RD WV State Director*
- 1:15 – 2:15 pm **Session 5: Role of Natural Resources & Working Lands** – *Steve Rauch and Kieran O'Malley, West Virginia Dept of Natural Resources*
- 2:15 – 2:30 pm Break
- 2:30 – 4:00 pm **Session 6: Rural & Outdoor Recreation Economy Trends & Trail Development Case Study** – *Dr. Danny Twilley, Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative*
- 4:00 – 4:30 **Daily Wrap-up** - *Susan Elks*

An open house for public attendance and input will run from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Dinner will be provided for those staying for the public open house, and light refreshments will be available during the open house.

Wednesday June 22, 2022 – Team Exercise, Presentations and Optional Fieldview

- 8:30 – 10:00 am **Team Exercise II: Assessing Your Assets & Identifying Preliminary Projects** – *Workshop Participants*
- 10:00 – 10:15 am Break
- 10:15 – 11:00 am **Session 7: Becoming an Entrepreneur on Your Land** – *Peg Kohring, The Conservation Fund*
- 11:00 – 11:45 am **Session 8: Social Determinants of Health** – *Sharon Lansdale and Allison Toler, Center for Rural Health Development, Inc.*
- 11:45 – 12:15 **Wrap-up** – *Susan Elks*

Lunch will be provided for those staying for the optional fieldview.

- 1:00 – 4:00 **Optional Fieldview** (*Boone Memorial Hospital Main St parcels; Danville splash park & kayak launch; Madison fitness park & Danville trail connection; Workman Branch property; Madison pool site*)

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: June Workshop Attendees

Name	Company/Affiliation
Bobby Miller	BCTC Instructor
Griffin Bennett	BCTC Student
Chase Toler	BCTC Student
Ellie Griffith	BCTC Student
Craig Bratcher	Boone County Commission
Joe Linville	Boone County EDA/Coal River Group
Cozetta Miller	Boone County Schools
Kathy Hill	Boone Memorial Hospital
Sharon Lansdale	Center for Rural Health Development, Inc
Steve Byus	City of Madison Emergency Management
Abby Rice	Coal River Group
Monica Ballard-Booth	Cornerstone Family Interventions, Inc
Jeff Petry	E.L. Robinson Engineering
Elisabeth McElwee	Forester
Cheryl Hargrove	Hargrove International
Alice Rider	Madison Development Authority
Nick Dolan	Marshall University Student
Buddy Hudson	Mayor/Teacher
Paula Bias	Mountain Mama Lodging
Chris Bias	Mountain Mama Lodging
Christy Bailey	National Coal Heritage Area Authority
Doug McElwee	R&M
Marci Cline	Regional Council
Bruce Mullins	Regional Council
Kevin Bailey	Resident/Private Sector
Robin Bailey	Resident/Teacher
Danny Twilley	Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative
Allison Toler	The Center for Rural Health Development
Joe Hankins	The Conservation Fund
Peg Kohring	The Conservation Fund
Susan Elks	The Conservation Fund
Ryan Thorn	USDA Rural Development
Paul Johansen	West Virginia DNR
Chris Pauley	West Virginia Office of Economic Development
Kristin DeBoard	Williamson Farmers Market
Rebecca Casey	Williamson Health
Alexis Batausa	Williamson Health
Kem Shaw	WV DNR
Kieran O'Malley	WV DNR
Rodney Miller	WV Sheriffs' Association

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: June Workshop Notes

Assets

- Trails
 - Sidewalks/paths in town
 - Madison/Danville Wellness Trail
 - Old River Road
 - Nonmotorized
 - Clearfork Rail Trail
 - Motorized
 - Hatfield-McCoy trail system
 - Indian Creek ATV Resort
- River/Streams (Little Coal River, Big Coal River, Pond Fork, Spruce Fork)
 - Water trails
 - Canoeing/kayaking opportunities
 - Fishing opportunities (some areas are stocked)
- Coal Heritage
 - Museum
 - Miners March
 - Nellis
 - Blair Mtn history
- Forests/Mountains/Wildlife
 - Bolt Mountain
 - Pinnacle Rock
 - Elk potential
- Parks and Recreation Lands and Facilities/Campgrounds
 - Drawdy Falls Park
 - West Madison Park
 - Danville Splash Park
 - Racine Park and Pool
 - County fairgrounds
 - Sporting complexes (Nellis, Sylvester, Waterways, Lick Creek)
 - BARN Recreation Center
 - Danville Community Center
 - Madison Civic Center
 - Boone County Community Centers (7)
 - Hatfield-McCoy Visitor Center
 - Forks of the Coal Wildlife Education Center
 - John Slack Park
- Events/Performances/Art
 - Amphitheater
 - Space adjacent to Coal Heritage Museum
 - Murals in Madison
 - Coal Festival
 - Coalfield Jubilee
 - Trout Stocking
 - Witches Ride
 - Kevin's Lazy River
 - Heritage Day Festival

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: June Workshop Notes

- “Wellness Trail” needs a better name
- Public land
- Maintenance of some assets
- Need connections between assets (local and regional)

Ideas

- Communications
 - Organization to be the central point (physical location and digital footprint)
 - Advertising of assets/amenities
 - Use of social media
 - #exploreboonewv
- Façade improvements
- Local shops and food (pop-ups?)
- Target Hatfield-McCoy users for additional activities (kayaking, biking, etc.)
- Waterways
 - Access points (parking, restrooms, entry point, mapping) and signage (criteria to decide best locations to focus on)
 - Promotion
 - More physical connections to the waterways
 - Food and supply options
 - Shuttles?
 - Bike options to pair with?
 - Events – routine, could include cleanups, promoted
 - Kayak rental option
 - Open sightlines to the river in key locations
- Closer connection to DNR for establishing sightlines to the waterways, stocking information, etc.
- Ziplines
- Art center – organization and location to advance art (music, displays, murals) in the community
- Miners March/Coal Heritage
 - Art/interpretation on the ground – physical locations to interpret this history
 - Integrate with walking trails as possible
 - Interpret the history online and through events
- Trails
 - Better signage
 - Mapping (digital and hard copy, QR codes)
 - Update/add kiosks
 - Create routes/trails that loop
 - Cross county route behind Scott High School
- New public lands
 - Expand Kanawha State Forest
 - Connect Workmans Branch into Madison with a trail

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

- Beekeeping
- Mushroom cultivation
- Primate camping
- Glamping
- Maple syrup production
- Wayfinding apps for outdoor recreation

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: June Workshop Notes

- Labor Day
- Car shows/Cruise In
- Rev-Up arts and crafts
- WVU Pig Roast
- Trunk or treat
- Artisans
- Waterway Music Series
- Music performers/history: Community band, Wild Wonder Whites, Billy Edd Wheeler, Hasil Adkins
- Historic Sites/Structures
 - Whitesville School
 - Boone County Courthouse
 - Public Library (Madison)
 - Veterans Memorial (Madison)
 - Petroglyphs (currently on private property)
- Jobs
 - Boone Memorial Health
 - Board of Education
 - Government/Courthouse
 - Toyota
 - Chemical plants
 - Retail (Dollar General, gas stations, etc.)
 - Grocery/restaurants
 - EMS
 - Appalachian Botanical
 - Coal industry
- People
 - Healthcare and education
 - Volunteers in community organizations
- Visitor Services
 - Lodging: AirBnB and campgrounds primarily
 - Food/restaurant options

Strengths

- Hospitality
- Natural beauty
- Infrastructure
- Heritage
- Opportunities
- Roadway access (highway network)

Weaknesses

- Lodging (variety/enough)
- Signage
- Marketing/advertising (lack of awareness)
- Lack kayak or bike rental
- Shut off from river in most places
- No trail connection between Ice Plant and Tennis Courts

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: Community Baseline Assessment

36
Responses

Please complete this assignment for the first summer meeting if possible, or prior to the second summer meeting.

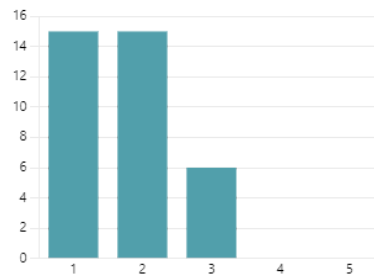
With respect to "community," interpretation may range – this could be Madison, a portion of Boone County, or all of Boone County. Please defer in your interpretation of "community" as broadly as possible given your level of familiarity.

On an individual basis please indicate your level of agreement with each statement regarding your perception of your community today.

5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 2- Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree

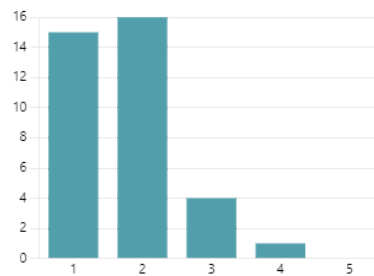
1. My community is economically healthy.

1.75
Average Rating



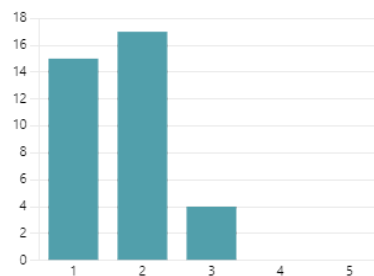
2. My community will remain economically healthy long-term.

1.75
Average Rating



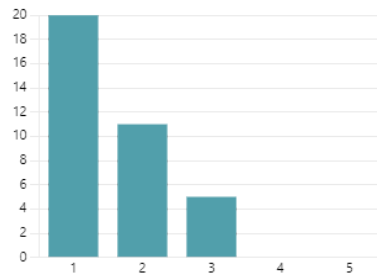
3. My community offers economic opportunity for residents.

1.69
Average Rating



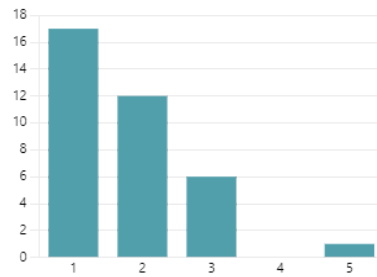
4. My community attracts entrepreneurs.

1.58
Average Rating



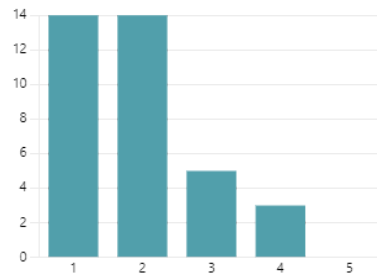
5. My community's sphere of influence extends beyond its borders.

1.78
Average Rating



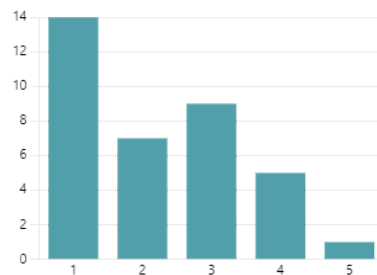
6. My community actively participates in regional affairs and collaborates with neighboring communities.

1.92
Average Rating



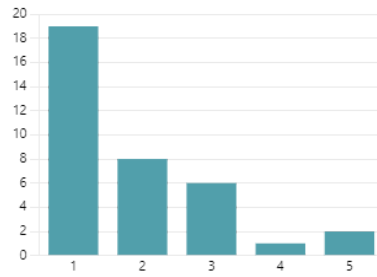
7. My community actively fosters new leaders within the community.

2.22
Average Rating



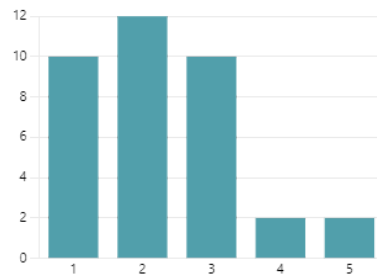
8. My community is socially diverse and inclusive.

1.86
Average Rating



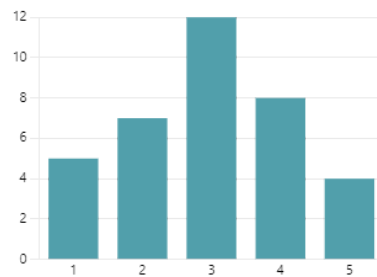
9. My community actively engages citizens of all ages, race and ethnicity.

2.28
Average Rating



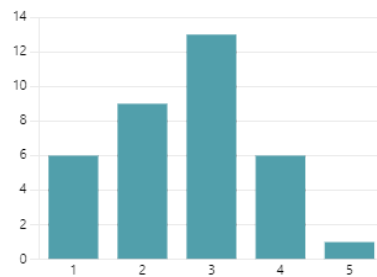
10. My community has a strong sense of civic pride.

2.97
Average Rating



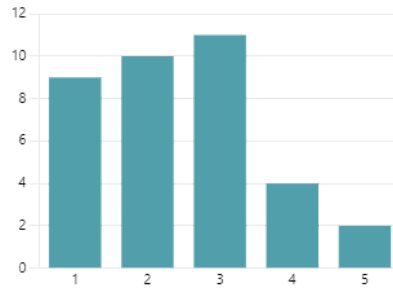
11. My community has a defined sense of place.

2.63
Average Rating



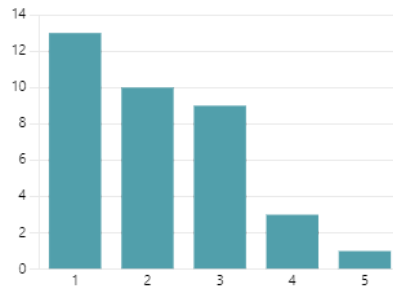
12. My community actively encourages stakeholder engagement and involvement.

2.44
Average Rating

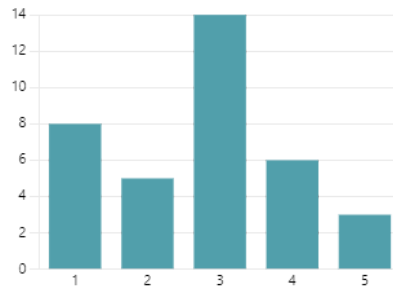


13. My community has a positive relationship with major landowners (public or private).

2.14
Average Rating

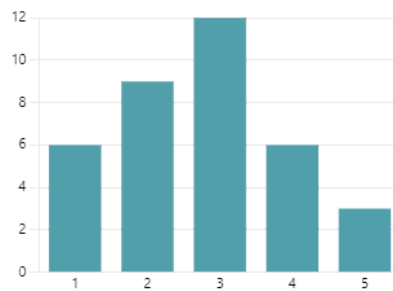


2.75
Average Rating



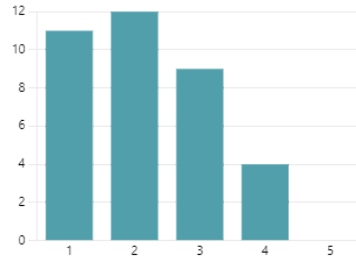
15. My community has an appreciation for its natural and cultural assets.

2.75
Average Rating



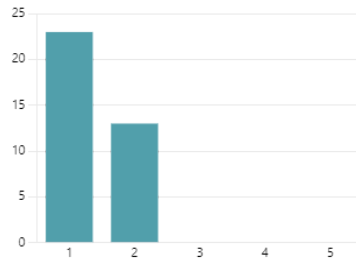
16. My community is ecologically healthy.

2.17
Average Rating



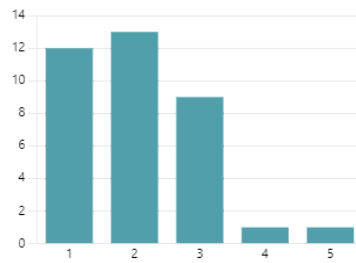
17. My community attracts/retains young people.

1.36
Average Rating



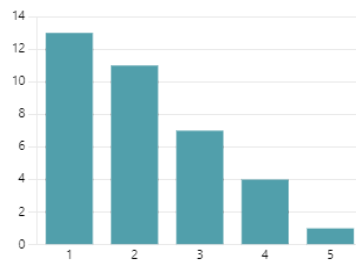
18. My community fosters active, healthy lifestyles.

2.06
Average Rating



19. My community is able to adapt and evolve.

2.14
Average Rating



Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: 2022 Public Survey Highlights

What is most important to address for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat?

#1 Expanding youth engagement and extracurricular opportunities

#2 Improving public outdoor recreation options

What aspects of **public recreation** are most important to improve or add?

#1 Equipment/infrastructure at existing parks or recreation areas

What **youth opportunities** are most important to improve or add?

#1 Career exploration and shadowing programs

What would have the most positive impact for **health and wellness**?

#1 Increased recreation and physical fitness options in the community

What aspects of **education/training** are most important to improve or add?

#1 Vocational/trades training

What recreation or resource-based opportunities hold the most promise for economic opportunity?

#1 Development of events

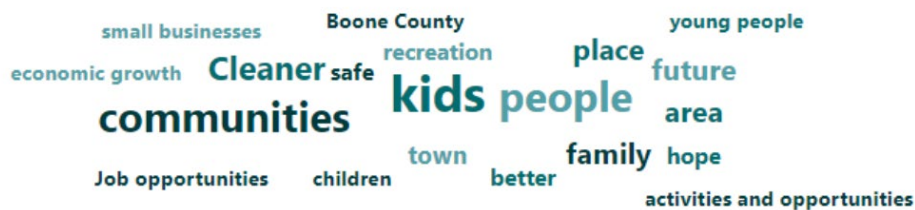
What aspects of **small business development/entrepreneurship** are most important to improve or add?

#1 Access to funding and capital

#2 Broadband service/high-speed internet

#3 Small business training

What is your hope for the future?



What improvement?



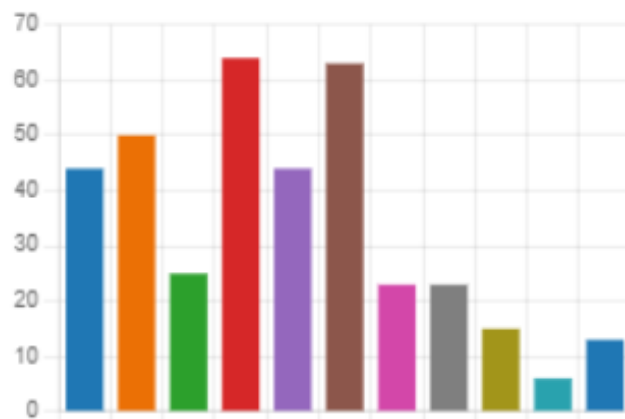
The survey was open for approximately seven weeks in the summer of 2022, and promoted through the project's Steering Team and Working Group participants, as well as through community sharing by social media and postcards (hard copy and digital distribution). 123 responses were received, with a strong resident response from the Madison and Danville areas (approximately 60% of respondents), with additional responses from multiple communities across Boone County. For a more detailed summary: www.conservationfund.org/projects/madison-boone-resource-and-recreation-action-plan

Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan: Summary of Results: Summer 2022 Public Survey

The survey was formally open for approximately seven weeks (mid-June to end of July). The survey was promoted through the project’s Steering Team and Working Group participants, as well as through postcards that were shared (hard copy and a digital version) and community sharing through social media channels. 123 responses were received for the survey. Background information on respondents is included at the end of results, but generally indicate a strong resident response from the Madison and Danville areas (approximately 60% of respondents), with additional responses from multiple communities across Boone County.

1. What topics do you believe are most important to address for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat? (Please check your top three.)

● Addressing blighted properties ...	44
● Expanding support for small bus...	50
● Expanding education and traini...	25
● Expanding youth engagement a...	64
● Growing an outdoor recreation ...	44
● Improving public outdoor recre...	63
● Improving community health an...	23
● Improving access to healthy foo...	23
● Protecting natural resources (su...	15
● Protecting cultural resources (su...	6
● Other	13

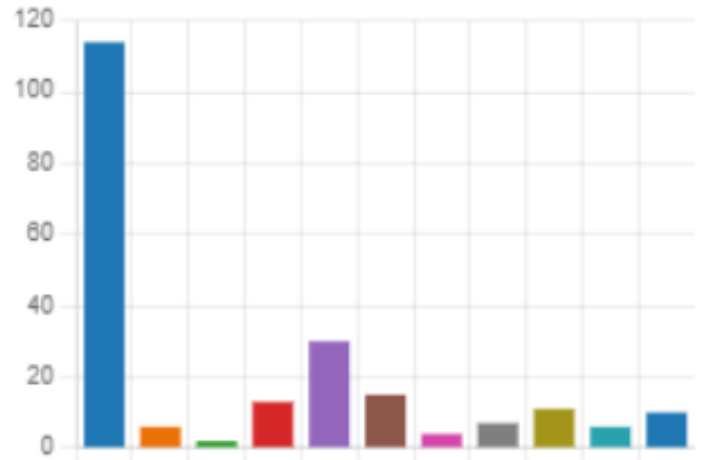


Notes on responses: Two responses received the highest level of support - Expanding youth engagement and extracurricular opportunities (selected 64 times) and Improving public outdoor recreation options (such as trails, parks, wildlife viewing areas, canoe/kayak launches, fishing, hunting) (selected 63 times). Substantial support was also noted in three additional areas: Expanding support for small businesses and entrepreneurship (selected 50 times), Growing an outdoor recreation and natural/cultural resource-based economy (selected 44 times), and Addressing blighted properties and advancing redevelopment (selected 44 times).

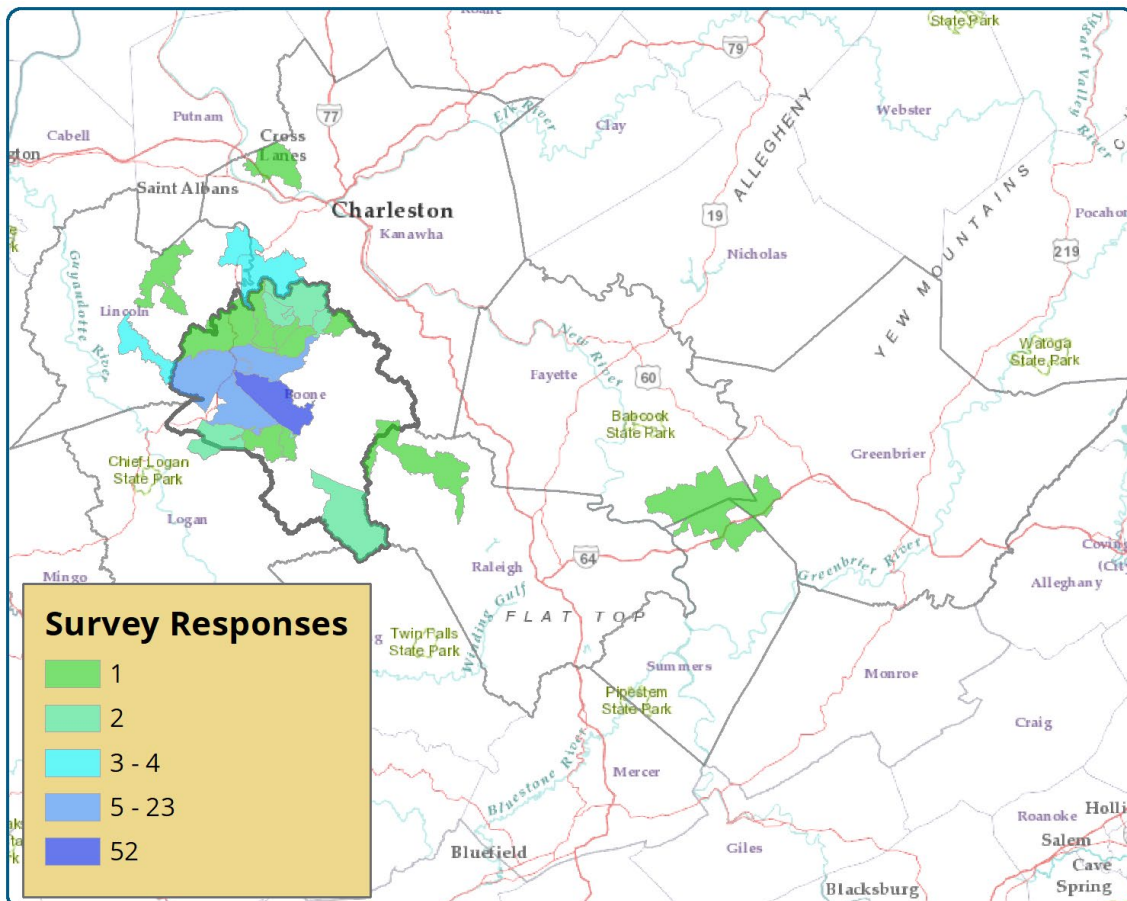
Full titles of potential responses: Addressing blighted properties and advancing redevelopment; Expanding support for small business development and entrepreneurship; Expanding education and training options; Expanding youth engagement and extracurricular opportunities; Growing an outdoor recreation and natural/cultural resource-based economy; Improving public outdoor recreation options (such as trails, parks, wildlife viewing areas, canoe/kayak launches, fishing, hunting); Improving community health and wellness; Improving access to healthy food options; Protecting natural resources (such as water quality and forest areas); Protecting cultural resources (such as historic sites and art); Other.

Interest in Boone County (multiple selections allowed):

● Resident	114
● Visitor	6
● Elected Official	2
● Business Owner	13
● Work in education	30
● Work in health and wellness	15
● Work in cultural/arts business or...	4
● Work in outdoor recreation busi...	7
● Work in another industry/sector	11
● Student	6
● Other	10

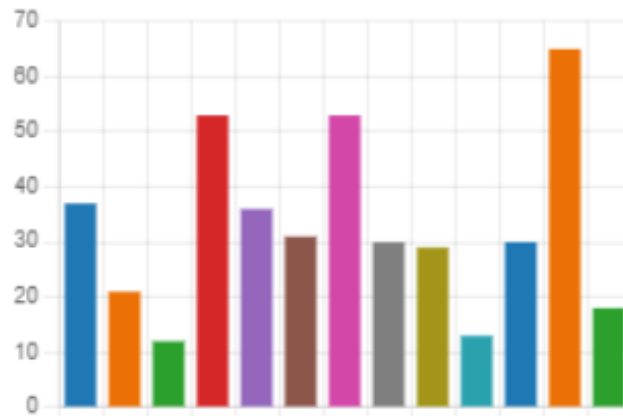


Number of Survey Respondents by Zip Code



2. What aspects of public recreation do you believe are most important to improve or add to for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat? (Please check your top four.)

● Walking trails	37
● Walking trails that are fully ADA ...	21
● Trails for e-bikes	12
● Trails for motorized vehicles (AT...	53
● Water-based trails (designated a...	36
● Canoe/kayak launches	31
● Public parks and public recreati...	53
● Public fishing areas	30
● Public hunting areas/shooting r...	29
● Public archery ranges	13
● Access to existing parks and trai...	30
● Equipment/infrastructure at exis...	65
● Other	18

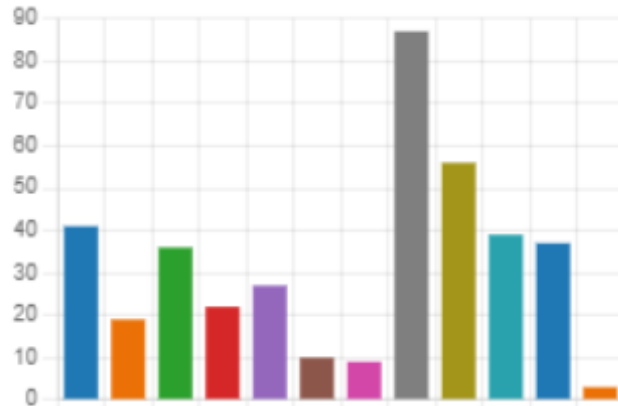


Notes on responses: The highest support was noted for Equipment/infrastructure at existing parks or recreation areas (such as playground equipment, basketball courts, fishing gear rental/lending options, or trails) (selected 65 times). Substantial support was also noted for Trails for motorized vehicles (ATVs/OHVs) and Public parks and public recreation areas (each being selected 53 times). Trails of many types received strong support overall. In addition to those already noted, walking trails (selected 37 times) and water-based trails (selected 36 times) were well supported, in addition to affiliated activities (such as Canoe/kayak launches, Public hunting areas/shooting ranges, and Access to existing parks and trails).

Full titles of potential responses: Walking trails; Walking trails that are fully ADA compliant; Trails for e-bikes; Trails for motorized vehicles (ATVs/OHVs); Water-based trails (designated and mapped); Canoe/kayak launches; Public parks and public recreation areas; Public fishing areas; Public hunting areas/shooting ranges; Public archery ranges; Access to existing parks and trails (such as parking areas, entrance signs, online information); Equipment/infrastructure at existing parks or recreation areas (such as playground equipment, basketball courts, fishing gear rentals/lending options/or trails); Other.

3. What aspects of education and training options do you believe are most important to improve or add to for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat? (Including K-12 and post K-12 education and training.) (Please check your top three.)

● K - 12 programs	41
● Post K - 12 programs	19
● Opportunities to gain college cr...	36
● K - 12 after-school academic pr...	22
● Transportation options for K - 1...	27
● Online options (K - 12)	10
● Online options (Post K - 12)	9
● Vocational/trades training	87
● Mentorship/internship/voluntee...	56
● Scholarship support	39
● Teacher recruitment and training	37
● Other	3

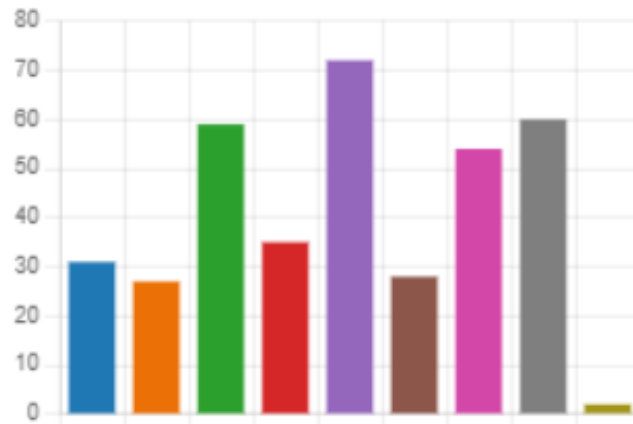


Notes on responses: Vocational/trades training was strongly supported (selected 87 times), with Mentorship/internship/volunteer placement programs receiving strong support as well (selected 56 times). A cluster of options also was well supported: K – 12 programs (selected 41 times), Opportunities to gain college credit in high school (36), Scholarship support (39 times), and Teacher recruitment and training (37).

Full titles of potential responses: K – 12 programs; Post K – 12 programs; Opportunities to gain college credit in high school; K – 12 after-school academic programs; Transportation options for K – 12 after-school programs; Online options (K – 12); Online options (Post K – 12); Vocational/trades training; Mentorship/internship/volunteer placement programs; Scholarship support; Teacher recruitment and training; Other.

4. What areas of youth (age 25 and younger) engagement and opportunities do you believe are most important to improve or add to for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat? (Please check your top three.)

● After-school programs for K - 12	31
● Transportation options for K - 1...	27
● Arts, music and cultural progra...	59
● Athletic-based options (such as ...	35
● Career exploration and shadowi...	72
● Engagement with existing non-...	28
● Environmental education and ac...	54
● STEM-focused programs and cl...	60
● Other	2

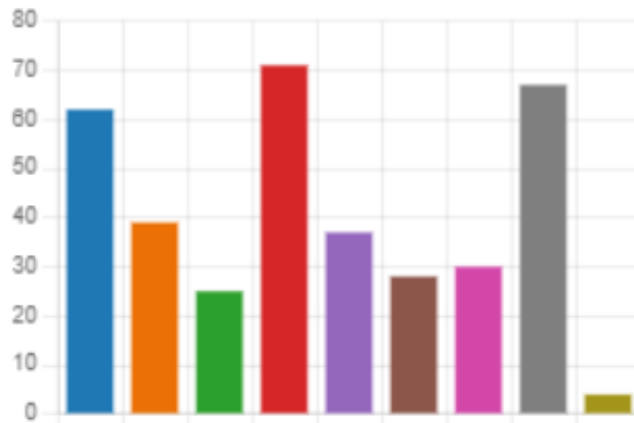


Notes on responses: Career exploration and shadowing programs had the highest level of support (selected 72 times), with STEM-focused programs and clubs (science, technology, engineering and math) (selected 60 times), Arts, music and cultural programs and clubs (selected 59 times) and Environmental education and activities (such as clean-ups, Hunter Education, Trout in the Classroom) (selected 54 times) also receiving strong support.

Full titles of potential responses: After-school programs for K – 12; Transportation options for K – 12 after-school programs; Arts, music and cultural programs and clubs; Athletic-based options (such as team sports or club activities); Career exploration and shadowing programs; Engagement with existing non-profits (such as shadowing or volunteering); Environmental education and activities (such as cleanups, Hunter Education, Trout in the Classroom); STEM-focused programs and clubs (science, technology, engineering, and math); Other.

5. What aspects of small business development and entrepreneurship do you believe are most important to improve or add to for the future strength and success of Boone County and Madison as the county seat? (Please check your top three.)

● Training on starting a small busi...	62
● Training on skills such as brandi...	39
● Training on skills such as financi...	25
● Access to funding and capital	71
● Rental space for new businesses	37
● Shared industrial space and equ...	28
● Mentor program	30
● Broadband service, access to hi...	67
● Other	4

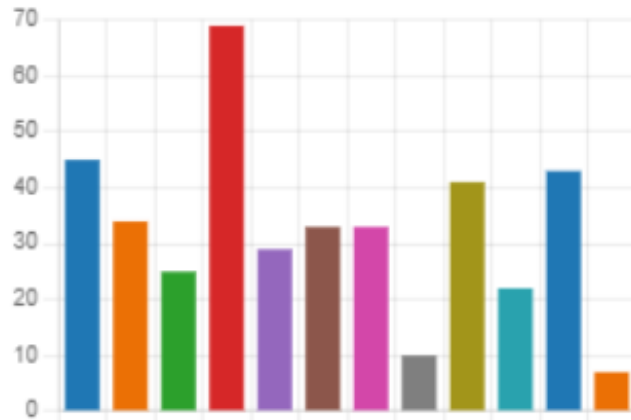


Notes on responses: Not surprisingly, Access to funding and capital received the most support within this survey question (selected 71 times). Broadband service, access to high-speed internet (selected 67 times) and Training on starting a small business (selected 62 times) closely followed. There was also good support for Training on skills such as branding and online marketing (selected 39 times), Rental space for new businesses (selected 37 times) and Mentor program (selected 30 times).

Full titles of potential responses: Training on starting a small business; Training on skills such as branding and online marketing; Training on skills such as financial tracking/reporting; Access to funding and capital; Rental space for new businesses; Shared industrial space and equipment (shared maker space); Mentor program; Broadband service, access to high-speed internet; Other.

6. While diversity of opportunity is an overall goal, what individual outdoor recreation, natural-resource based, and cultural-resource based assets and opportunities do you believe hold the most promise for long-term economic opportunity in the region? (Please check the top three that you believe should be a focus for development and enhancement.)

● Agricultural-based activities (such as beekeeping, specialty crops, syrup production)	45
● Arts and culture (such as performances, sharing the history and story of the southern coalfields, public art pieces)	34
● Artisan or craft career and economy development	25
● Development of events (such as festivals, market days, performances)	69
● Passive wildlife-associated activities (such as hiking, photography and birding)	29
● Active wildlife-associated activities (such as hunting and fishing)	33
● Shooting sports (archery and firearms)	33
● Accessibility-based focus and marketing (such as ADA compliant trails and e-bike infrastructure)	10
● Recreation land trail network – motorized	41
● Recreation land trail network – non-motorized	22
● Water trail development (such as access points, online information, designated routes)	43
● Other	7

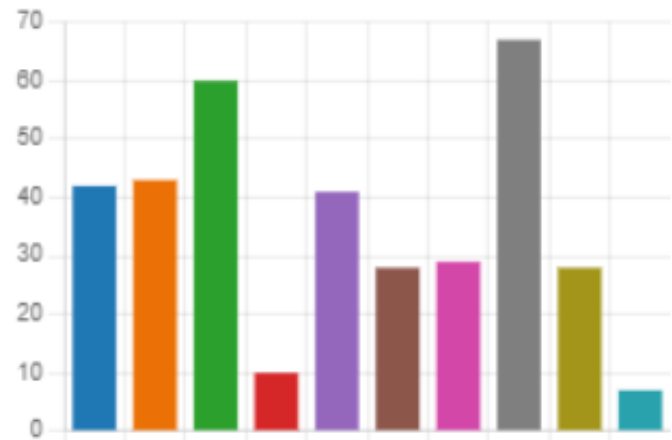


Notes on responses: Development of events had substantial support (selected 69 times), with strong support also being shown for Agricultural-based activities (such as beekeeping, specialty crops, syrup production) (selected 45 times), Recreation land trail network – motorized (selected 41 times), and Water trail development (such as access points, online information, designated routes) (selected 43 times). Support was relatively strong for Arts and culture (such as performances, sharing the history and story of the southern coalfields, public art pieces) (selected 34 times), Passive wildlife-associated activities (such as hiking, photography and birding) (selected 29 times), Active wildlife-associated activities (such as hunting and fishing) (selected 33 times), and Shooting sports (archery and firearms) (selected 33 times).

Full titles of potential responses: Agricultural-based activities (such as beekeeping, specialty crops, syrup production); Arts and culture (such as performances, sharing the history and story of the southern coalfields, public art pieces); Artisan or craft career and economy development; Development of events (such as festivals, market days, performances); Passive wildlife-associated activities (such as hiking, photography and birding); Active wildlife-associated activities (such as hunting and fishing); Shooting sports (archery and firearms); Accessibility-based focus and marketing (such as ADA compliant trails and e-bike infrastructure); Recreation land trail network – motorized; Recreation land trail network – non-motorized; Water trail development (such as access points, online information, designated routes); Other.

7. What efforts do you believe would have the most positive impact in addressing existing health and wellness issues facing Boone County? (Please check your top three.)

● Expansion of wellness programs...	42
● Expanded focus on creating eco...	43
● Expanded substance abuse prev...	60
● Expanded support and educatio...	10
● Improved access to healthy foo...	41
● Increased health and wellness e...	28
● Increased health and wellness e...	29
● Increased recreation and physic...	67
● Improved access (locations, hou...	28
● Other	7



Notes on responses: Strongest support is seen for Increased recreation and physical fitness options in the local community (selected 67 times) with Expanded substance abuse prevention and treatment programs also strongly supported (selected 60 times). Support for Expansion of wellness programs already in place (providing content on nutrition, diabetes prevention, stress reduction) (selected 42 times), Expanded focus on creating economic opportunity (selected 43 times), and Improved access to healthy food choices (selected 41 times) is also notable.

Full titles of potential responses: Expansion of wellness programs already in place (providing content on nutrition, diabetes prevention, stress reduction); Expanded focus on creating economic opportunity; Expanded substance abuse prevention and treatment programs; Expanded support and education related to health insurance options; Improved access to healthy food choices; Increased health and wellness emphasis in K – 12 school setting; Increased health and wellness emphasis and education across all ages; Increased recreation and physical fitness options in the local community; Improved access (locations, hours, transportation) to healthcare facilities and specialists; Other.

8. Please rate the value to the future strength and success of Madison and Boone County of placemaking, which is the collaborative reimagining and reinvention of a place (at a small or large scale) that seeks to maximize shared value, innovate and adapt for community strength, and support the physical, cultural and social identity in a community. (Not at all valuable – 1 star, very valuable - 5 stars.)

116
Responses



9. Please rate the value to the future strength and success of Madison and Boone County of placekeeping, which is a companion to placemaking that is focused on keeping and strengthening existing sites, resources and stories as part of a community's future. (Not at all valuable – 1 star, very valuable - 5 stars.)

117
Responses



10. In ten words or less, what is your hope for Madison and Boone County's future?

Words and phrases repeated across responses are noted below.

13 respondents (11%) answered **kids** for this question.



11. What are your favorite places in Madison or across Boone County and why? (Top 2 or 3 places.)

Words and phrases repeated across responses are noted below.

24 respondents (23%) answered **trail** for this question.



12. What improvement would make Madison and/or Boone County a better place to live or visit?

Words and phrases repeated across responses are noted below.

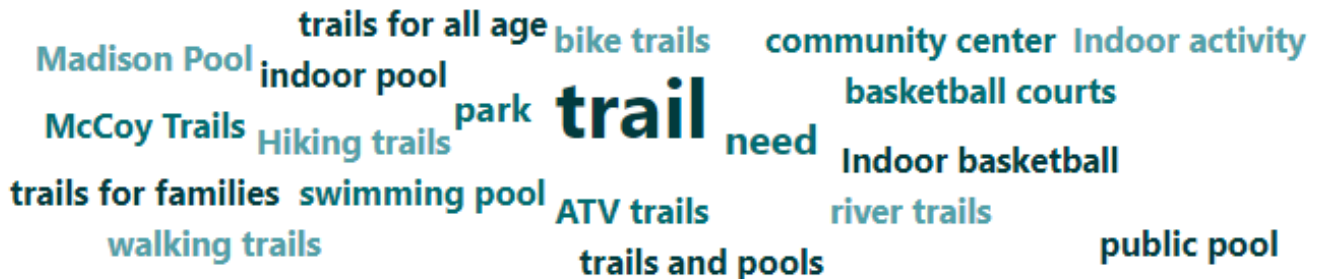
22 respondents (20%) answered **Clean** for this question.



13. What recreation options (such as trails, playground equipment, basketball courts, indoor or outdoor, etc.) are most needed in the community for different age groups (children, teens, adults, senior citizens)?

Words and phrases repeated across responses are noted below.

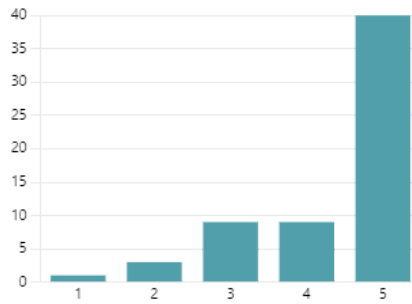
33 respondents (31%) answered **trail** for this question.



Public Survey for Draft Actions of the Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan

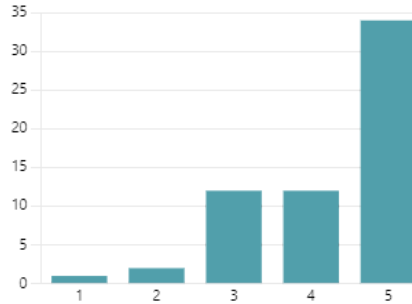
1. Development of a Countywide park and recreation plan (to address facilities, programming, potential trail corridors/alignments/uses, priority for improvements, operations and maintenance, etc.)

4.35
Average Rating



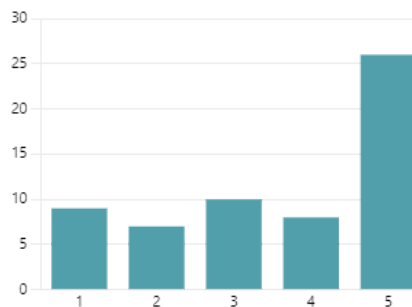
2. Improvements to existing park and recreation facilities (not site specific)

4.25
Average Rating



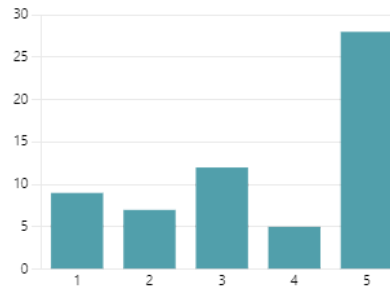
3. Improvements to Madison City Park (such as a pavilion, seating, welcome sign)

3.58
Average Rating



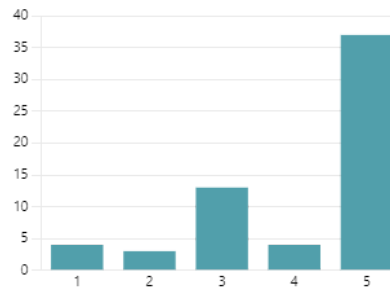
4. Improvements to Madison Old River Road recreation site

3.59
Average Rating



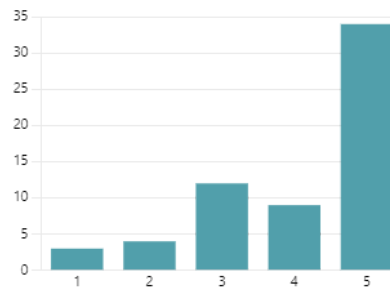
5. Develop a countywide water trails master plan

4.10
Average Rating



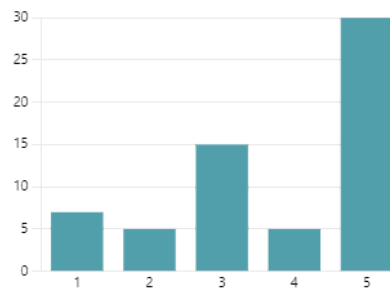
6. Improve water access points (not site specific)

4.08
Average Rating



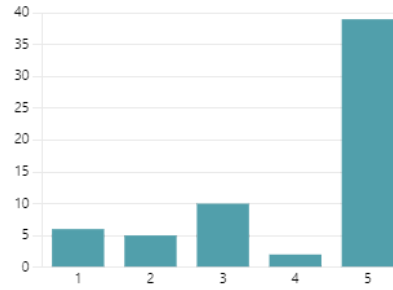
7. Improve the Old River Road recreation site in Madison to include water access as a focus

3.74
Average Rating



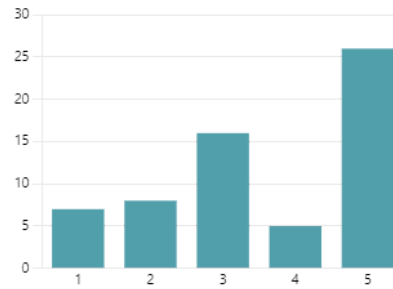
8. Develop a countywide trails (land-based) master plan

4.02
Average Rating



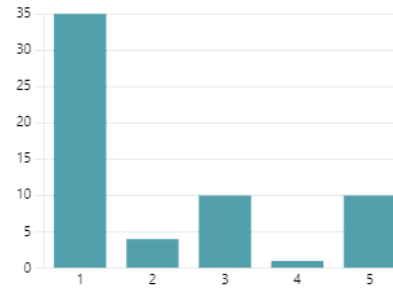
9. Plan and develop pedestrian connections between town/residents and surrounding natural areas

3.56
Average Rating



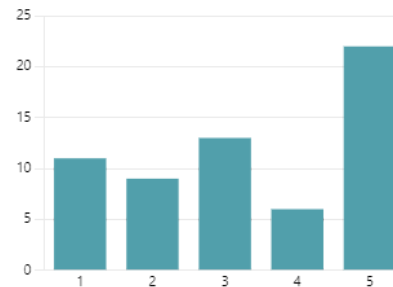
10. Rename the Madison Wellness Trail

2.12
Average Rating



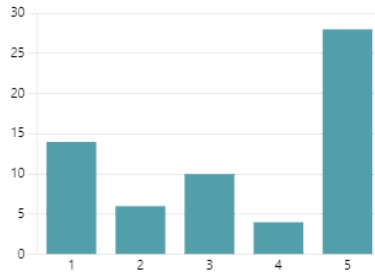
11. Advance improvements to the Madison Wellness Trail (such as closing gaps, extending, adding signs, crosswalks, providing mapping, etc.)

3.31
Average Rating



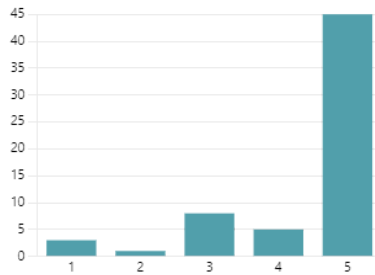
12. Investigate potential locations for limited tree removal to open views of the river

3.42
Average Rating



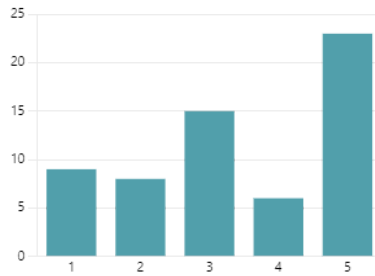
13. Support river cleanup efforts

4.42
Average Rating



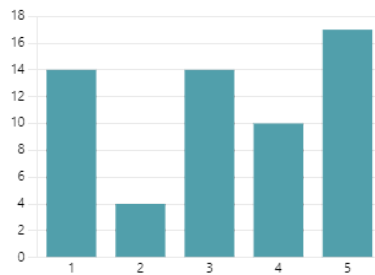
14. Advance commemoration of the Miners March in Boone County (through signage, art, events, trail, etc.)

3.43
Average Rating



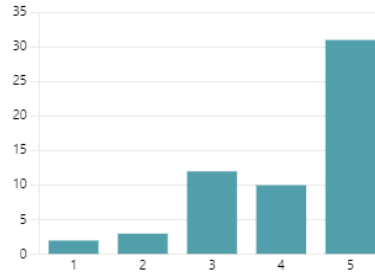
15. Develop an arts center

3.20
Average Rating



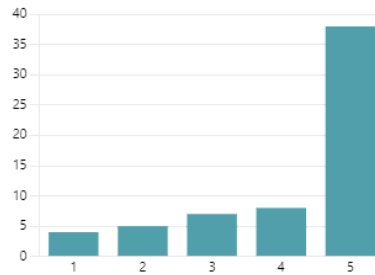
16. Develop new events and refine existing ones

4.12
Average Rating



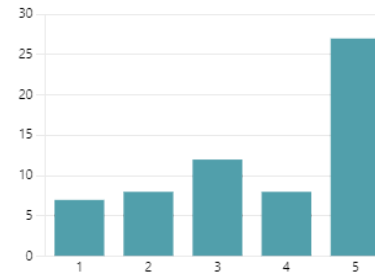
17. Create a mentorship and shadowing program for area youth

4.15
Average Rating



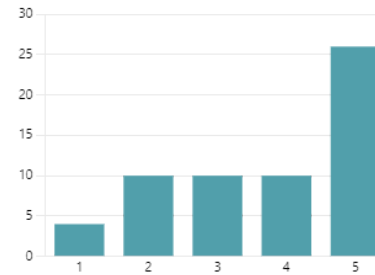
18. Advance blight removal initiatives

3.65
Average Rating



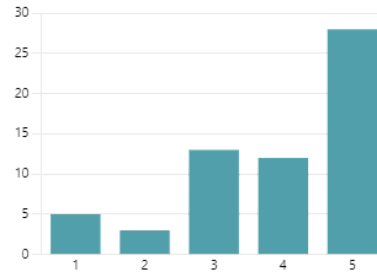
19. Create a program to support facade improvements

3.73
Average Rating



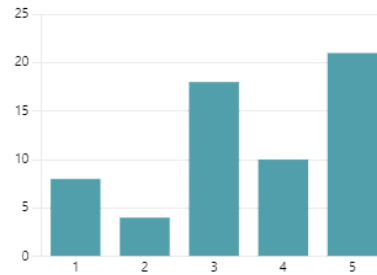
20. Investigate options for improved information sharing for residents and visitors to Boone County (website, social media, etc.)

3.90
Average Rating



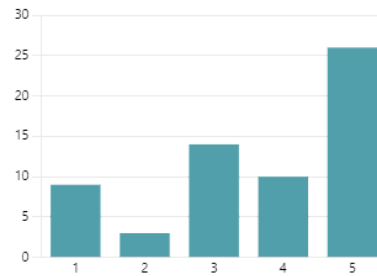
21. Investigate options for advancing storytelling for Boone County to inform branding and marketing efforts

3.52
Average Rating



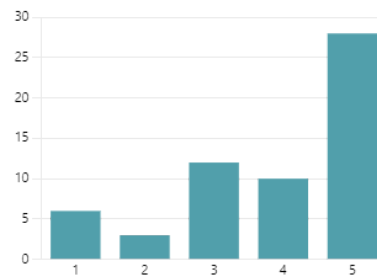
22. Support advancement of Boone Memorial Health Farmers Market on Madison Main Street

3.66
Average Rating



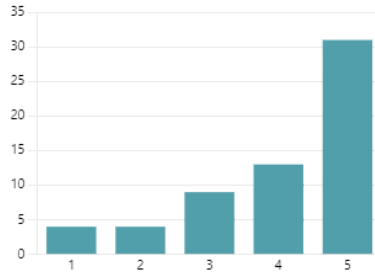
23. Support community-based products and activities for the proposed Farmers Market

3.86
Average Rating



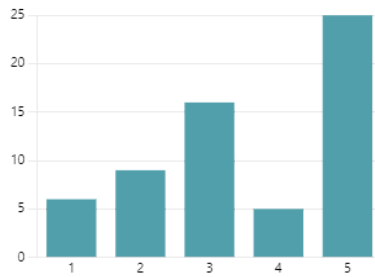
24. Use public recreation sites for rental of recreation equipment, such as bikes, kayaks, and fishing gear

4.03
Average Rating



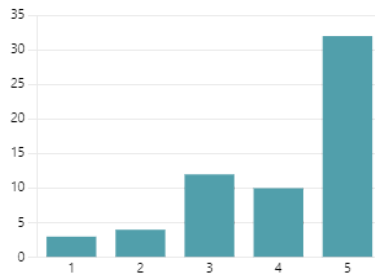
25. Develop an indoor market/co-op space (to include development or designation of an indoor, public space to lease for private entrepreneurial or startup efforts)

3.56
Average Rating



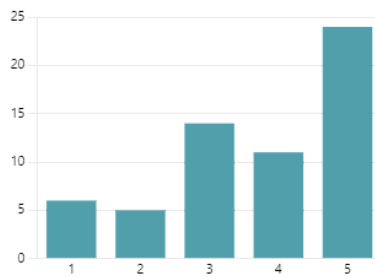
26. Bring small business start-up, financial and marketing training to the community

4.05
Average Rating



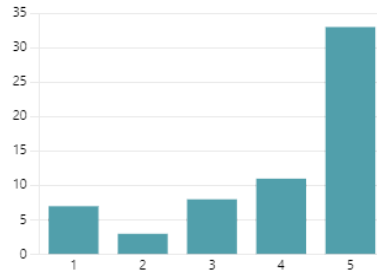
27. Provide entrepreneurs and small business owners with financial support to access training

3.70
Average Rating



28. Increase local government and non-profit grantwriting capacity (through consultant or staff)

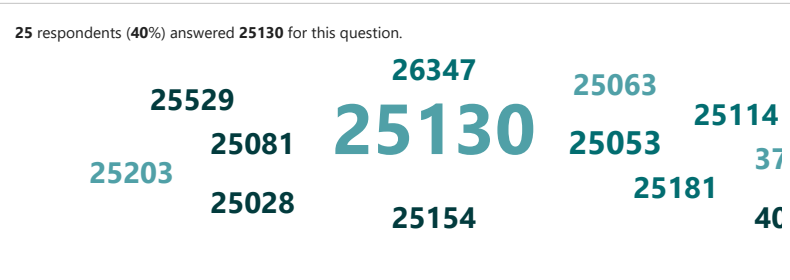
3.97
Average Rating



29. Please share your home (or business if applicable) zip code:

63
Responses

[Update](#)



Economic Impact of Recreation

Included below are general resources for recreation-related economic impact data and information, as well as specific studies and data; coverage nationally and within West Virginia and across different types of recreation is provided; focused on outdoor recreation but also noting heritage tourism information; information available online as noted and accessed in March 2023 with limited updates in July 2023. Information gathered for the Madison/Boone Resource & Recreation Action Plan.

General Resource: Outdoor Industry Association

The Outdoor Industry Association goes across multiple recreation types, and their website includes research on the outdoor recreation market, participation, consumer habits and purchasing, and workforce, along with data on specific markets such as fishing, hunting and shooting sports, etc.

Fall 2022 Market Report details: “According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the outdoor recreation economy produced a record \$682 billion in economic output, 4.5 million jobs, and 1.9% of the total U.S. GDP in 2021. Outdoor recreation hit a record high in 2021, with 164 million participants, roughly 54% of the U.S. population.”

In their 2022 report on fishing, the following was noted: “In 2021, 52.4 million Americans went fishing, up 4.5% over 2019. Americans primarily fished to enjoy the splendor of nature while escaping the usual demands of life.”

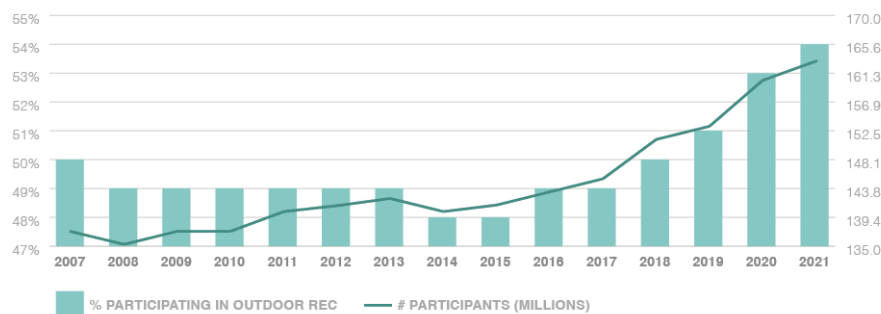
On paddlesports they noted in a 2019 report: “Paddling activities are remarkably accessible, as they can accommodate a wide range of paddlers’ interests, locations, and skill levels. In 2018, 22.9 million Americans, or 7.6 percent of the U.S. population, took to rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans to participate in at least one paddling activity. In terms of specific paddlesports, recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity and seems to be replacing many Americans’ desires to canoe.”

General information: www.outdoorindustry.org

There was a reasonable expectation that during 2021, the second year of the pandemic, outdoor participation would return to 2019 levels as indoor activity including, dining, sporting events, and fitness centers and gyms, reopened. The 2021 data indicates that participation in outdoor recreation retained momentum in 2021. This data indicates that outdoor recreation is “sticky;” once someone begins to participate, they are likely to continue to participate.

OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION GROWTH TRENDS

2007 TO 2021



<https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/2022-outdoor-participation-trends-report>

Research landing page for Outdoor Industry Association:

<https://outdoorindustry.org/collections/research/research-news/>

General Resource: Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Alliance unites the voices of outdoor enthusiasts to conserve public lands, with a focus on land management that embraces the human-powered experience. Economic impact reports available through Outdoor Alliance are focused on human-powered recreation – biking, paddling, hiking, etc.

General information: www.outdooralliance.org

Specific report on a cluster of three national forests in western Colorado. Included are details on the economic impacts of “human-powered” outdoor recreation, including paddling, hiking and mountain biking. Some details: “More than 92% of residents surveyed chose to live in western Colorado because of its unparalleled access to outdoor recreation. Colorado’s GMUG National Forests attract a broad array of people to the region. Nearly 75% of the individuals surveyed earn more than \$50,000 a year. One in four are business owners.” This report was based studies completed by Eastern Kentucky University. Full report: <https://www.outdooralliance.org/gmug-economic-reports>

Specific report on the area of Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in western North Carolina. Included are details on how one million acres of national forest land in the region generates “\$83.3 million in spending by outdoor recreation visitors and \$31.7 million in spending by residents”, specific to human-powered recreation such as paddling, climbing and mountain biking, while “also supporting local jobs and attracting both businesses and residents to Western North Carolina.” Full report:

<https://www.outdooralliance.org/nantahalapisgah-economic-reports>

Sidebar: The website includes a piece on Corey Lilly of Beckley, WV:

<https://www.outdooralliance.org/blog/2023/3/21/outdoor-allies-corey-lilly>

General Resource: Outdoor Recreation Roundtable

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable is a coalition of outdoor recreation trade associations, working to promote the growth of the outdoor recreation economy and outdoor recreation activities, educate decision makers and the public on balanced policies that conserve public lands and waterways, and enhance infrastructure to improve the experience and quality of life of outdoor enthusiasts everywhere. Their website notes that outdoor recreation in the U.S. accounts for \$862 billion in annual economic output coming from the activities of America’s 144 million outdoor enthusiasts, and that the Bureau of Economic Analysis calculates the economic output of outdoor recreation of \$862 billion surpasses industries such as mining, utilities, farming and ranching, and chemical products manufacturing. General information: <https://recreationroundtable.org/>

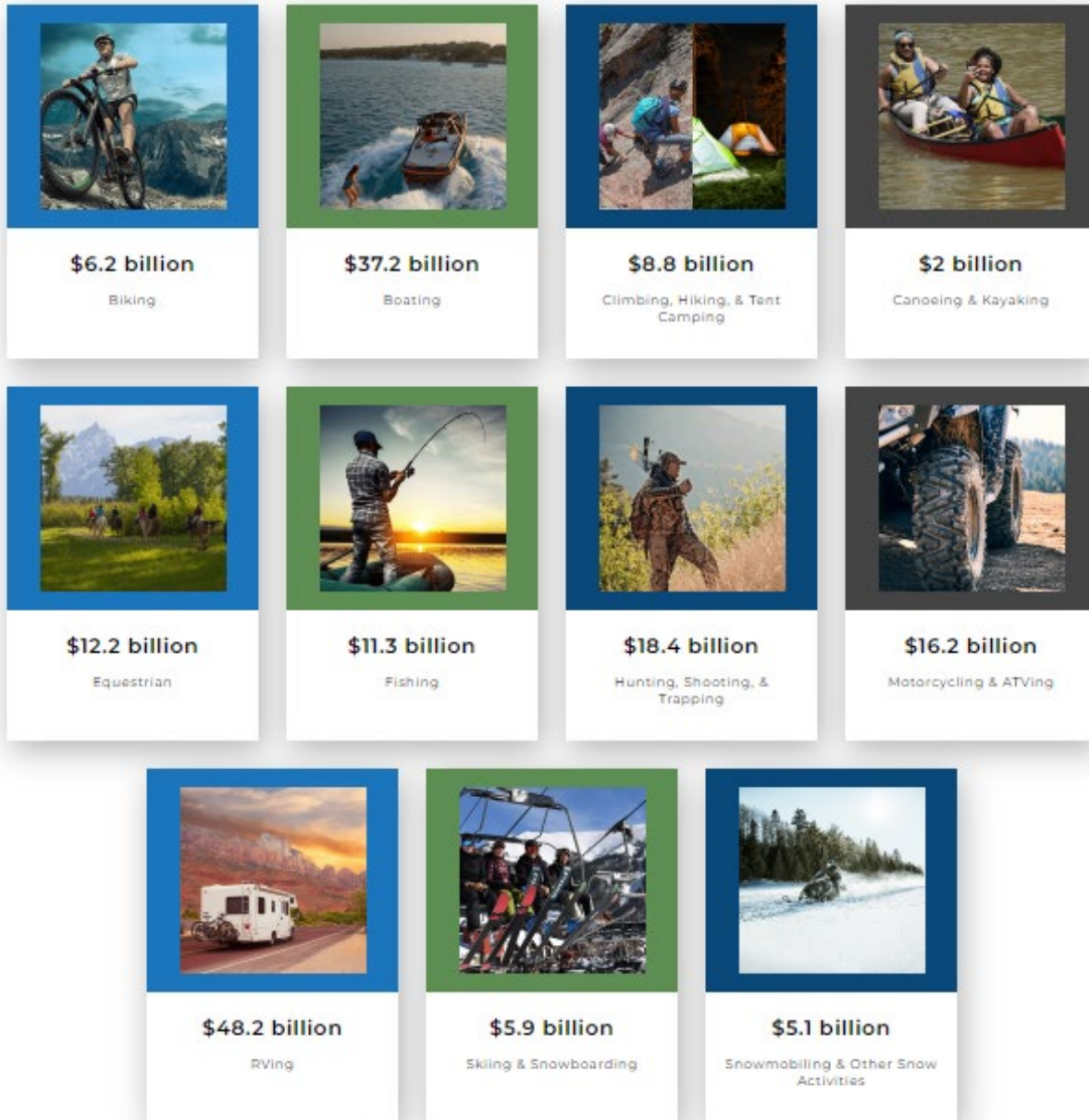
Their economic data page offers information by industry segment and state and is available here:

<https://recreationroundtable.org/economic-impact/>

The West Virginia specific information is available here: <https://recreationroundtable.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/West-Virginia-One-Pager.pdf>

A snapshot by industry segment is below.

Economic Impact by Industry Segment



<https://recreationroundtable.org/economic-impact/>

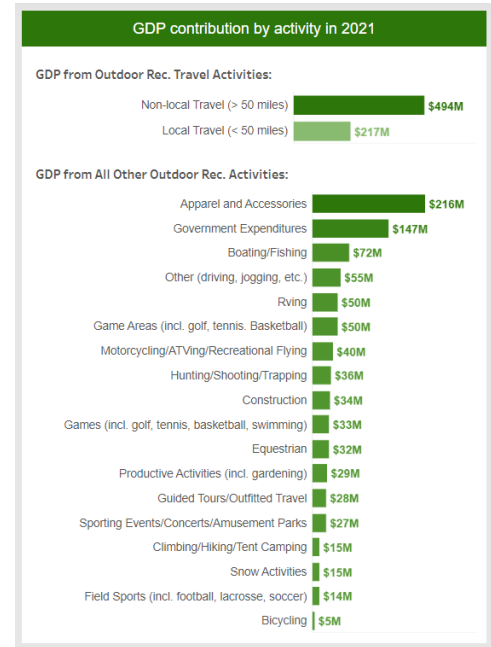
General Resource: Headwater Economics

Headwaters Economics is an independent, nonprofit research group that works to improve community development and land management decisions. They have various data and studies available on their website, and keep current with data. A few studies/data publications of relevance are noted below.

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/>

Outdoor Recreation Economy by State: Likely the most comprehensive data available that is organized and easily searched by state. In 2021, West Virginia ranked #34 in the nation, with 1.9% of the state GDP from outdoor recreation and over 18,000 outdoor recreation jobs. The chart is included for West Virginia. For comparison on one item listed: Bicycling – last in WV, \$5 million; in Utah (ranked #10) Bicycling is \$42 million, in Michigan (ranked #33) Bicycling is \$54 million. More detail:

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/outdoor-recreation-economy-by-state/>



Recreation Counties Attract New Residents and Higher Incomes: Findings include: “People are more likely to move to Recreation counties than to Non-Recreation counties, particularly in Rural places. Households moving into Recreation counties have, on average, higher income than households moving into Non-Recreation counties. Recreation appears to drive varied economic benefits, including short-term support for tourism-related businesses and longer-term support by recruiting new residents who may be business owners, entrepreneurs, or workers.” January 2019. Accessed through:

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/economic-development/trends-performance/recreation-counties-attract/>

General Resource: WVU Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative

Based out of WVU and a state-specific resource, Smith OEDC provides support for economic development that is tied to the outdoors through various programs and technical assistance, with specific focus on youth and quality of life for residents. They also gather and share research on these topics. General information: <https://oedc.wvu.edu/> Research page:

<https://oedc.wvu.edu/resources/research>

Economic Impact Data by Recreation Type – Birdwatching:

Providing a deeper dive on data and studies that are available on the specific types of recreation, below is a snapshot of data/studies on birdwatching (given the high-quality bird habitat located in the area).

News article: “It is estimated that over \$800 billion is spent a year in outdoor recreation in the United States, with birdwatching having an economic benefit of \$41 billion dollars. Roughly \$17.3 billion is spent annually in wildlife-watching trip-related expenses in the U.S., with more than 20 million Americans taking birding-specific trips.” Accessed at: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/birding-yes->

[birding-is-a-multi-billion-dollar-ecotourism-industry#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20over,benefit%20of%20%2441%20billion%20dollars.](#)

Michigan State University: “It’s no surprise really but birders have a direct impact on the economy. It has been estimated that birders spend more than \$40 billion a year on travel and equipment alone. The ripple effect can be felt across communities where birding is particularly popular or where large festivals take place. In a recent study of the Maumee Bay area in Ohio, it was estimated that their annual birding festival, the Biggest Week in American Birding, along with other birding activity generates more than \$26.4 million in economic activity. Birding benefits go beyond economic impact though. The simple act of being outdoors and walking improves physical health as well as a growing body of evidence of mental health benefits. A recent study showed having more birds to hear and see helps lower rates of anxiety, depression and stress. Birding can be said to be good for the community and good for the individual.” Accessed through: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/watching-birds-is-fun-good-for-your-health-and-michigan-s-economy-too-msg21-nelson21>

Small sight—Big might: Economic impact of bird tourism: A detailed study on bird-watching tourism, in-depth, with links to multiple sources for the data, that includes the following: “Participation in U.S. nature-based outdoor recreation has increased over the past decade, continuing a long-term, upward trend [1]. Wildlife-related activities, especially wildlife viewing have increased by 20% between 2011 and 2016, outpacing participation in hunting and fishing [2]...Among increasing wildlife-related tourists in the U.S., birdwatchers, also called birders, have seen steady increases in participation and are considered the world’s largest group of “eco-tourists” [4]...Birdwatchers can also include local residents within a community...Studies show that birding tourists tend to be well-educated, wealthy, and committed to their chosen tourism activity [6].” Small sight—Big might: Economic impact of bird tourism shows opportunities for rural communities and biodiversity conservation; Tobias Schwoerer, Natalie G. Dawson; Published: July 6, 2022; <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0268594>. Accessed through: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0268594>

West Virginia specific information:

Preparing for Growth: Readyng the Elk River Trail Towns for the Future (published in 2022 by Downstream Strategies): https://downstreamstrategies.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FinalPlan10_3.pdf -- JULY 2023 ADDITION --

The Elk River Trail System in central West Virginia runs through portions of Kanawha, Clay, and Braxton Counties and was the focus of this study and plan. The trail system provides recreation opportunities for anglers, boaters, cyclists, hikers, and equestrians living in or visiting the center of the state, and is seen as a potential game changer for area communities.

Various content of the plan is of relevance to Boone County and the Coal River watershed communities as they seek to maximize the economic development power of trails and recreation lands and waters. The market analysis is of significant relevance, particularly given the proximity of the two areas and recreation focus. Information is included on consumer profiles (such as day visitors, cyclists, kayak anglers, heritage and cultural tourists, etc.), visitor projections, and the impact of visitor spending.

Hatfield-McCoy Study (published in 2020): <https://trailsheaven.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-Hatfield-McCoy-Trails-Economic-Impact-Study.pdf>

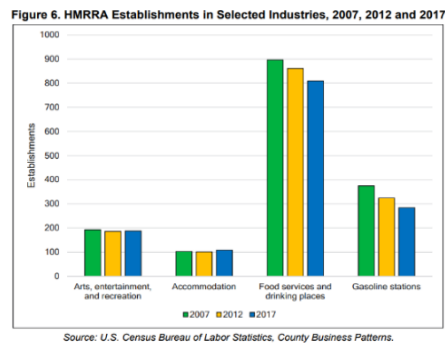
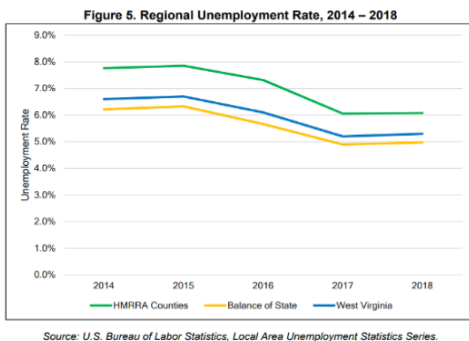
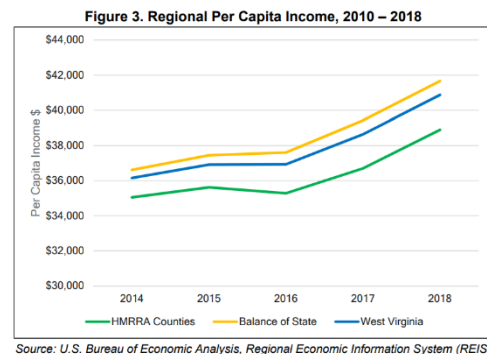
Geographic scope of the Trail System: “...the network opened in 2000 with three trail systems and nearly 300 miles of cleared trails. Today, the Hatfield-McCoy Trails have expanded to include a total of eight trail systems totaling more than 700 miles of trails” across 14 counties

Economic impact across the Trail System/State (construction and operational dollars, economic activity, employment): “...nearly \$4.3 million in spending conducted by the HatfieldMcCoy Trails generated an additional \$4.6 million in economic activity within the State, for a total operational impact of \$8.9 million. Even more notably, the Hatfield-McCoy Trails bring non-local visitors to the area whose spending is estimated to generate an additional \$29.1 million in economic activity in West Virginia. Combined, the total estimated economic impact of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails is more than \$38 million. In addition to the dollar value of economic activity, the Hatfield-McCoy Trails supports employment and thus provides household earnings. The Hatfield-McCoy Trails directly sustain 24 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs year-to-year and can be credited with supporting a total of approximately 430 FTE positions across the State”

Trail System users: “In 2019, more than 56,000 riding permits were sold for the Hatfield-McCoy Trails, of which more than 47,000 were out-of-state permits.” (This is across the 14 counties that comprise the H-M trail system network.)

While there has clearly been economic benefit from the Trail System, the demographic and economic trajectory for the counties and residents in the region has not significantly changed, and in some instances the gap in comparison to the state as a whole, or against non-Trail System counties, has widened:

“The estimated total population in Hatfield-McCoy Trail system counties declined by more than five percent from 2014 to 2018 (see Table 2 and Figure 2). This decline outpaced those for both West Virginia and the counties making up the balance of the state (-2.4 percent and -1.1 percent respectively). Roughly two-thirds of total population losses from 2014 to 2018 came from Hatfield-McCoy Trail system counties.”



Economic Impact of Other Recreation Options in WV: National Parks and Fishing:

Included for the comparison of economic impact values within West Virginia related to recreation.

“National park tourism in West Virginia creates \$131 million in economic benefit - New report shows visitor spending supports 1,447 jobs in West Virginia” Data released in 2022. Accessed through:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1465/national-park-tourism-in-west-virginia-creates-131-million-in-economic-benefit.htm#:~:text=National%20park%20tourism%20in%20West%20Virginia%20creates%20%24131%20million%20in%20economic%20benefit,-New%20report%20shows&text=WASHINGTON%20%E2%80%93%20A%20new%20National%20Park,in%20the%20state%20in%202021.>

Recreational fishing in West Virginia: “485,400 anglers spent \$375.3 Million while fishing in West Virginia”. American Sportfishing Association: https://asafishing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/West_Virginia/2023_ASA_Senate_Handout_Digital_West_Virginia.pdf

Heritage Tourism:

Given the interest in the area of developing sites related to the Miners March, some general information on heritage tourism and distinctions from outdoor recreation tourism is included.

Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present (National Trust for Historic Preservation). From the National Trust for Historic Preservation: “A high percentage of domestic and international travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, and those that do stay longer, spend more, and travel more often. Heritage tourism creates jobs and business opportunities, helps protect resources, and often improves the quality of life for local residents.”

https://www.achp.gov/heritage_tourism

Virginia-specific information: “On average, tourists who stay overnight spend \$458 per household per trip, while day-trip tourists spend approximately \$340. International travelers spend approximately \$1,134 per person, per trip.” Data from the Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism in Virginia:

https://cura.vcu.edu/media/cura/pdfs/cura-documents/HeritageTourism_FINAL_02-16-17.pdf

Visitation at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

This information is included to note the growth in visitation since the “National Park and Preserve” designation. While not in the region, NRGNP&P is in proximity/travel distance, and the difference in visitor type (more international, different recreation interests) is of relevance with an eye toward long-term trends and opportunities.

<https://www.travelawaits.com/2733881/new-river-gorge-sets-visitor-record-2021/>

<https://wvpublic.org/new-river-gorge-national-park-set-visitor-record-in-2021/>

Evening Performance by the
**WEST VIRGINIA
DANCE COMPANY**

Free Admission!



with student guests from Chapmansville Regional High School

THURSDAY - MAY 4TH - 7:00 PM

Scott High School Gymnasium

Madison, West Virginia

Presented by The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation,
The Conservation Fund, & US Department of Agriculture Rural Development

A performance centered around WV themes, suitable for audiences of all ages. The performance will incorporate storytelling, music composition and movement choreography, featuring the work of Hazel Dickens, Dr. Richard Grimes, Adam Booth, and Holden Akers-Toler.

wvdanceco.com