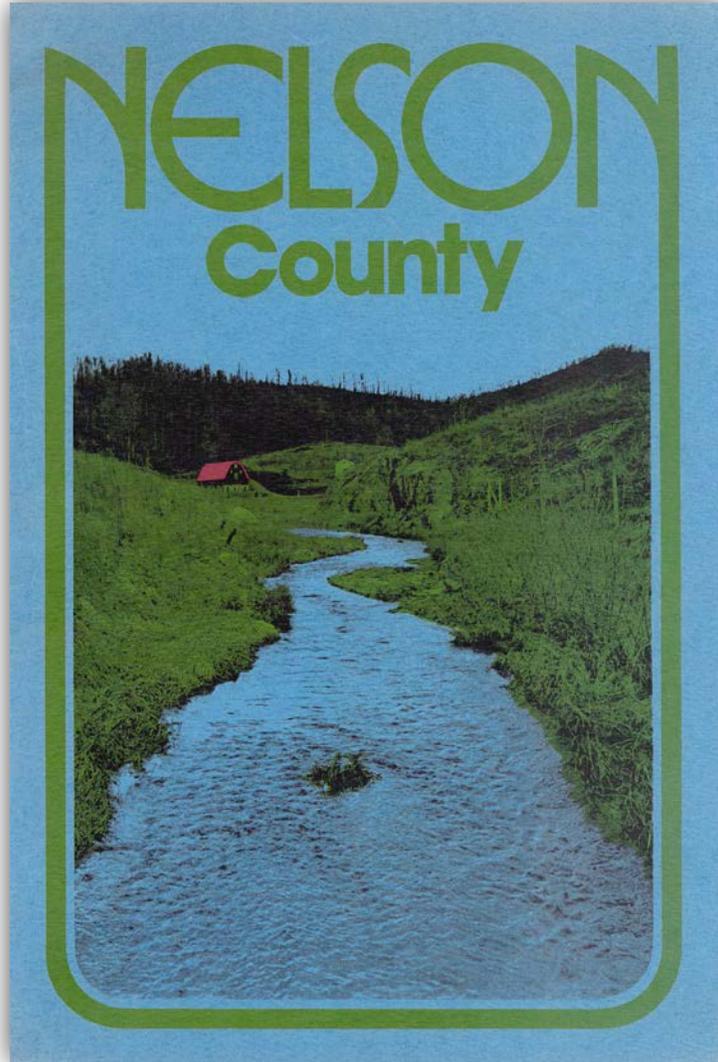


ROCKFISH VALLEY AREA PLAN

Summary of Existing Plans



Original Nelson County Comprehensive Plan (cover) - 1971

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Transportation Plans – page 4

Infrastructure Plans – page 6

Economic Development & Tourism Plans – page 8

Other Plans: Environment, History, and Recreation – page 11

GENERAL PLANS

Nelson County Comprehensive Plan (2002; updated 2014)

The Comprehensive Plan acts as a blueprint for the future of Nelson County, and guides citizens, the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, state agencies, and private developers. Implementation of the Plan occurs through an official map, a capital improvements program, the zoning ordinance and zoning map, and the subdivision ordinance.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies Goals and Principles in 8 key areas: Economic Development, Transportation, Education, Public & Human Services, Natural & Scenic Resources, Recreation, Development Areas, and Rural Conservation.

The Comprehensive Plan specifies 5 Development Models: Rural Small Town, Rural Village Development, Neighborhood Mixed Use Development, Mixed Commercial Development, and Light Industrial Development. Areas not designated as one of the five Development Models are labeled Rural Areas, which is divided into Rural Residential Districts appropriate around designated development areas, and Rural and Farming Districts comprised of agricultural uses and open spaces.

The Future Land Use Plan is organized around the Development Model and Rural Areas concept, and is based on two fundamental principles: new growth and development should be concentrated into the County's designated development areas; and the County's unique rural heritage should be preserved and the agricultural and forestal landscapes should be maintained.

The Future Land Use Map describes the bulk of the county as Rural and Farming, a designation adhering to the Land Use for Plan Rural Areas.

Original Nelson County Comprehensive Plan (1971-1973)

Nelson County's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 8, 1971 and published in 1973. It was produced by the Nelson County Planning Commission and Virginia's Division of State Planning and Community Affairs. The Plan's abstract is as follows:

"The Comprehensive Plan is developed to give directions to both private and public decisions so that the most beneficial arrangement of land use can be recognized, as well as the orderly provisions of public service for present and future residents; provides a basis for intelligent discussion by the public and its elected representatives on the future development of the Community. It is the beginning of the continuing planning process for Nelson County."

The Comp Plan provides analysis of the County's physical characteristics, existing land uses, and community facilities. It also provides a summary of the County's population and economy.

Regarding recommendations and strategies for future growth and development, the Plan adopts a 20-year planning horizon. It states that, "The plan may undergo change many times before 1991, but only for good and justifiable reasons based on established goals and sound planning principles. ... Periodic revision is essential if the plan is to remain flexible and to continue to serve as a reliable guide for community growth." It further states that, "...[C]hanges in overall

concept and major objectives should be approached very gradually, if they are to be changed at all during the next twenty to twenty-five years.”

To those ends, the Plan includes the following planning elements: *Land Use & Major Thoroughfares Plan; Land Use Policies & Recommendations; Comprehensive Plan (Map); Recommendations for Future Growth and Development; and Implementation.*

Land Use Policies & Recommendations include the following goals:

General Goals: “Start a planning process wherein the needs and desires of the citizens of Nelson County will be realized. ... To provide a framework for the orderly growth of a community, wherein the demands for residential, commercial, public, and other land uses can be accommodated in a harmonious manner.”

Agricultural Goals: “This district although primarily concerned with facilitating existing and future farming operations should provide for the **orderly** expansion of urban development...”

Industrial Goals: “Industry is essential to the future economic growth and development of the county and therefore is encouraged to locate in the county. ... All industry should be located in park settings with adequate buffer zones for neighboring uses, with obnoxious, nuisance-type industries isolated from residential districts.”

Commercial Goals: “Where at all possible, strip commercial development along major transportation routes shall be prohibited with all commercial development in planned commercial areas of a regional nature.”

Residential Goals: “Single-family residential must be protected from through traffic and nonrelated uses ... [and] higher density residential should be encouraged near good transportation access; near major commercial areas and employment centers; and near potential sources of public service such as water and sewer. Adequate buffer zones should be established between residential and commercial or industrial areas to maintain property values and physical attractiveness.”

Recommendations for Future Growth and Development include the following strategies:

Agriculture, General: “Due to the predominantly rural character of the existing land use pattern much of the county has been retained in an agricultural land use for the extent of the planning period .. This will tend to discourage intensive development which requires necessary public services, thereby encouraging this development in more favorably located areas established to absorb this greater concentration of people.”

Agriculture, Limited: “This classification was established in order to offer some degree of protection of land areas which now are in private ownership, but may in the future be acquired for public use” such as “wildlife protection” and “recreation facilities.”

Residential: “The major consideration of residential areas in Nelson County are Lovington, Shipman, Arrington, Piney River, and the Avon [and] Afton areas of the Rockfish Valley ... These areas should be zoned accordingly in order to prevent encroachment of conflicting land uses. ... Public water and sewer systems should be provided where at all possible ... in order to facilitate an orderly process of development.”

Commercial: “The commercial areas...are logical expansions of existing businesses which serve the surrounding neighborhood. Most of the commercial areas are found along the major transportation routes ... Lovington...should expand as U.S. Route 29 is improved.”

Industrial: “Additional industries locating in Nelson County would greatly boost the overall income and employment opportunities for the county citizens. Indeed, such growth is essential if Nelson County is to keep the future generation in the County.”

Parks and Recreation: The Plan notes an increasing demand for recreation areas, and identifies opportunities to enhance tourist opportunities in connection with the Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive, George Washington National Forest, and Appalachian Trail. The Plan also focuses on perceived opportunities associated with the proposed “George Washington County National Parkway,” the James River near Wingina, Lake Nelson, James River Wildlife Management Area, Lesesne State Forest, and several proposed impoundments along the Rockfish River as identified by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

Conservation/Flood Plain: “This classification is intended for the conservation of water, and other natural resources of Nelson County ... These areas also include the lands within the high water mark of the flood in August, 1969.”

Implementation emphasizes “Periodic Re-evaluation” as follows: “Application of these [recommended] methods within a continuing planning process will enable Nelson County to pass on to future generations, a harmonious community with an unspoiled environment.”

Nellysford Community Plan (2007)

The purposes of the Nellysford Community Plan were to: plan a safer transportation network for vehicles, pedestrians, transit, and bicycles; improve and enhance the overall business environment; identify potential development of housing opportunities; guide the development of new public spaces; and to guide the pattern and design of future development.

To encourage business development, the Plan recommends encouraging new businesses to locate within existing commercial centers, and the creation of a new mixed-use development center. Transportation recommendations include constructing a local road network running parallel to Route 151. Community development recommendations include regulatory changes to facilitate development. To increase community involvement, an emphasis has been placed on residents actively engaging one another, and the support and patronage of local businesses and restaurants.

The Nellysford Community Plan was not adopted by Nelson County.

TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Route 151 Corridor Study (2013)

The corridor study evaluated the operations and safety of Route 151 for 14 miles between Route 664 (Beech Grove Road) and U.S. 250. Route 151 is an important tourist route, with increasing vehicular traffic due to close proximity to Wintergreen Resort, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the George Washington National Forest; its designation as a Virginia Scenic Byway; and the increasing popularity of wineries, breweries, and other agritourism attractions in the Rockfish Valley. Route 151 is also used as a shortcut for commercial vehicles traveling between Interstate 81 and U.S. 29.

Goals were to obtain public input and to identify corridor improvements, which improve safety for all users, enhance operations and access management, provide safe multimodal opportunities, retain two lane cross-sections, promote appropriate economic opportunities, and preserve and incorporate the corridor's cultural heritage and historic resources.

A comprehensive safety assessment was conducted, examining 15 intersections to identify deficiencies that contribute to crashes. The operational and safety analysis concluded that the study intersections, as well as the corridor as a whole, required improvements. Route 151 at US 250 needs capacity improvements to provide a sufficient level of service. Three other locations did not need operational improvements, but rather improvements to address safety and geometric deficiencies. The dominant safety issue in many intersections is the lack of sight distance.

Short term actions included maintenance, roadway restriping, and adding projects to the six-year improvement program. Long-term projects required additional studies and design efforts. Ongoing actions include maintenance to remove overgrown vegetation, and monitoring the effectiveness of intersection improvements and regulation enforcement. Mobility for residents without a personal vehicle could be improved by expanding the existing JAUNT rural demand response service to include another day of operation.

Previous Route 151 Corridor Study (2001)

The previous 151 Corridor Study, completed in 2001, examined the safety and operational issues at 8 critical intersections. The analysis evaluated existing conditions to identify operational deficiencies (based on 1999 data); estimated future conditions in the year 2025; and developed recommendations for improvements.

Short-term recommendations were to address a lower grade at the intersection of Route 613; adding a left turn lane on the south and westbound approaches of Route 6 south; adding a left turn lane on the north and eastbound approaches at Route 635 south (Rockfish School Lane); reconstructing the roadway at Route 784 (Bland Wade Lane); sloping the embankments (to improve sight distance) at Route 849 (Tanbark Drive); and lastly, improvements at Route 635 north (Greenfield) and Route 709 (Chapel Hollow Road).

Long-term recommendations included reconstructing the existing roadway of Route 634 south to Route 6 south, to accommodate two 12-foot travel lanes with shoulders marked as bike lanes.

TJPDC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The TJPDC's Bike and Ped Plan describes existing conditions, goals and objectives, potential routes, design guidelines, and proposed guidelines. Overarching goals include providing a comprehensive and coordinated biking and walking system, to provide safe bike and walking networks, to educate the public regarding facilities, safety, and regulations, and establishing a system to implement the plan. Nelson County's existing conditions offer country roads, close proximity to the James River, and challenging terrain in the Blue Ridge Mountains, which provides something for cyclists of all skill levels. The Blue Ridge Parkway is a major bike route, and is part of BikeCentennial Route 76. There are a number of loops that are promoted by the Nelson County Tourism office, and bicycle groups have developed other recreational routes. Greenway trails should be used to connect communities, and trails are the most appropriate pedestrian right-of-way in rural settings.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS

Rockfish Valley Corridor Water and Sewer Study (2002)

This study by Draper Aden Associates was prepared for Nelson County and the Nelson County Service Authority for the following purposes:

- To evaluate short term solutions to solve the immediate problems in the Nellysford area;
- To evaluate options to provide public water and sewer systems to other areas of the corridor such as Beech Grove and Avon/Afton as development pressures continue; and
- To provide a preliminary long term water and sewer master plan for providing water and sewer service, as the service areas along the Route 151 corridor develop.

The study notes that Beech Grove, Nellysford, Avon, and Afton areas are all served by individual wells and septic drainfields – there are no public utilities available for existing uses or to support potential future growth. The exception is the Wintergreen Valley Utility Company, which provides both water and sewer systems for the Stoney Creek development and the Valley Green Center retail area.

The study attempts to develop a water and sewer distribution plan to accommodate future growth. The Rockfish Valley corridor is expected to have a high growth rate over the next 20 years. There is speculative evidence that on-site wells and drainfields will not be sufficient to promote the desired economic growth. Several of the drainfields in Nellysford are failing, or are constructed in high water tables.

For the purposes of the study, the corridor was divided into five (5) service areas: Beech Grove, Nellysford, Rockfish Central, Avon, and Afton. The study notes that it is impractical to provide sewer and/or water services to all five service areas at once, and determining how to phase the development of the system will be complex. Due to location and density of uses and residents, the study envisions developing utilities for the Nellysford and Beech Grove area and also for the Afton and Avon area as the higher priorities.

The study suggests that initial service improvements or expansions should begin in Nellysford, where there is an existing utility system and a more densely concentrated customer base. It also identifies Nellysford as the highest priority due to several failing drainfields along Route 151.

The study states that the concept for the long term water master plan is to simply run lines up and down Route 151 to serve the primary service areas, and to divide the areas into pressure zones using tanks, booster pumps, and pressure reducing valves.

The study notes that the water source for the corridor will initially need to be groundwater, and that subsurface water quality tends to be good in this area. Regarding subsurface water supply, the groundwater study concludes it may be possible to obtain as much as 1-1.5 million gallons per day of groundwater throughout the entire corridor – but even that amount may not be a practical long term solution for the growing capacity needs of the corridor. The ultimate long-term solution may be to build an impoundment on one of the creeks along the corridor to store water for a surface water treatment plant.

The study also notes that the development of the sewage collection and treatment system(s) will generally follow the phasing of the service areas, although the sewage treatment plant locations will be different. The interim solution may be to construct small, subsurface package treatment plants until the customer base can support a larger centralized facility. The study notes that “the majority of the soils along the primary Route 151 corridor do not appear to be suitable for sanitary drainfields, but the secondary areas [further from the highway and rivers] do show some potential. If it is desirable to utilize conventional drainfields or even modified options ... for development along the corridor, a more detailed analysis in specific locations will be necessary.”

Region 2000 Water Supply Plan (2011)

The major sections of the Water Supply Plan include information on water sources, water use, regional natural resources, water demand management information, and information on public participation.

The Plan identified existing water sources in Nelson County owned and operated by the Nelson County Service Authority, including three surface water reservoirs; the Schuyler, Lovington, and Wintergreen Mountain Village systems; and one stream intake in Gladstone. The Plan also states that many homes and businesses utilize private groundwater wells across large portions of the County.

The Plan noted that Nelson County does not purchase water from water supply systems outside the County; and that there are currently no known significant or feasible sources of water that could be purchased from outside the County, or even outside the boundaries of the Region 2000 planning area.

The County is expected to experience a water supply shortage around 2058, and it is estimated that an additional 0.45 million gallons per day of supply will be required by 2060.

Nelson County Broadband Project Plan

Nelson County has been awarded \$1,826,646 for a Broadband Project. The project plans to address underserved areas by deploying 31 miles of new fiber, four new wireless towers, and directing thirteen community anchor institutions. These anchor institutions include seven county government facilities, four K-12 schools, the Blue Ridge Medical Center, and the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library. This should provide speeds from 10 Mbps up to 1 Gbps, and also create more affordable service. This should enhance public safety by allowing emergency services to communicate more efficiently, as well as to provide residents, students, and teacher’s access to multimedia educational information and distance learning opportunities. The project has strong community support, and letters of interest have been received from service providers, the Blue Ridge Medical Center, county representatives, community anchor institutions and other local entities. Partners include the Blue Ridge Medical Center, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, International Broadband Electric Communications Inc., Nelson Cable Inc., and the Nelson County School Board.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM PLANS

Nelson County Economic Development Authority Plan

The goal of Nelson County's economic development plan is to promote the diversity and growth of the county's economic base. Specific focuses include:

1. Business and Industry Development
2. Communications and Relationships with Other Economic Development Actors
3. Education, Workforce, and Technology
4. Tourism

Within Business and Industry Development, objectives include business retention and expansion, the rehabilitation and renovation of existing vacant buildings, and a target industry study. Within the second focus (Communications), objectives include encouraging other economic development groups to become more active and to develop relationships with other stakeholders. To accomplish that, the EDA will meet with the Chamber of Commerce, NAMA, the School Board, the Farm Bureau, the Planning District Commission, etc. The second major objective is to disseminate information about the EDA's services to the general public. Regarding the education goal, objectives include working with the county school district to develop entrepreneurship, conducting workforce audits, preparing for adult education, monitoring internet technology opportunities and developing internet access plans. Finally, the objectives for the tourism goal include improving signage in the County, diversifying the tourism base in the County, developing infrastructure to support tourism, and maintaining an inventory of tourism and related infrastructure.

Virginia DRIVE Tourism Plan (2014-2015)

The Virginia DRIVE Tourism Plan was developed by the Nelson County Tourism and Economic Development Office in partnership with Virginia Tourism Corporation. The Plan process included extensive involvement from local tourism stakeholders across 2014 and 2015.

Executive Summary: Tourism generated over \$173 million in revenue for Nelson County businesses in 2012 (an increase from \$148 million in 2009). That revenue is a powerful driver of our local economy. By adopting and implementing a practical marketing strategy, as represented in this Plan, the Nelson County Tourism and Economic Development Office intends to increase the economic impact of tourism in our area by making the Sunrise Side of the Blue Ridge Mountains the preferred authentic Virginia mountain experience.

Mission Statement: To enhance the economic prosperity of Nelson County by promoting, selling and marketing the destination to travel consumers

Strategies:

- Increase economic expenditures to Nelson County from the business and leisure market segments (individual travel)
- Increase economic expenditures from group travel segments
- Build community support for tourism as an economic development strategy
- Influence product development and infrastructure improvements that are consistent with the mission and the image for Nelson County

- Conduct research that tracks accountability and provides rationale for strategic marketing decisions.

Virginia State Tourism Plan (2013)

The Virginia State Tourism Plan acts as a blueprint for communities to develop a competitive edge without sacrificing the authenticity of a specific region. It features a five-year guide for tourism direction within the Commonwealth as a whole, built with the collaboration of Virginia's tourism industry stakeholders. This is a larger tourism strategy, not a marketing plan featuring advertising and slogans.

The State Tourism Plan was formed with a great deal of stakeholder input, from more than 1,300 Virginians, 180 participants in workshops, 140 individual discussions, and a survey that received 1,000 completed responses. In 2011, tourism in Virginia had an economic impact of \$20.4 billion, which was an 8% increase from 2010. This supports 207,000 jobs in the state, and is the fifth largest non-farm industry. There is a diversity of tourism products in the state, including history, heritage, outdoor recreation, arts, music, culinary, sports, and meetings.

The State Tourism Plan includes a section focusing on Central Virginia, which encompasses the Lynchburg, Charlottesville, and Richmond metropolitan areas. The Central Virginia section includes the following highlights:

- **Tourism Situation:** Central Virginia is an established tourism region, and more rural areas are continuing to emerge. The region is rich in culinary experiences, including wine, craft breweries, distilleries, agri-tourism, and diverse dining experiences. Central Virginia is a major contributor to Virginia's national and international recognition within the wine industry. Visual and performing arts also diversify the region's tourism offerings.
- **Industry Vision:** The desire among Central Virginia stakeholders is to build upon the historical and heritage assets in an authentic manner and to further develop outdoor recreation, culinary, cultural, and other assets to increase tourism.
- **Consumer Perspective:** Visitor insights show that Central Virginia was rated highly by most past and prospective travelers for its historical attractions, food and dining, accommodations, and being good for families. While many also recognized Central Virginia as scenic, outdoor recreation activities such as camping, hiking/exploring nature, and viewing wildlife/birds were not as prominent in visitors' minds.
- **Competitive Perspective:** For Central Virginia, several urban, rural, and historical areas of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania were analyzed – including Asheville, Charleston, and Philadelphia and its countryside. Central Virginia, with its own rich history, culinary, culture, and nature experiences, is well-positioned to compete.

The State Tourism Plan also provides applicable objectives and strategies for Central Virginia, which are presented for the five plan outcomes of Products, Pillars (infrastructure), Partnerships, Promotions, and Policies. “High-Level Regional Takeaways” include:

- Leverage history and culinary as unifying themes for the region, further enhancing interactive history experiences and using wine to build and expand other culinary experiences

- Cluster development and enhance connectivity
- Continue to build creative economy
- Leverage younger population base in college towns for music, outdoor, and entertainment attractions
- Develop complementary products and signature experiences
- Maintain character and authenticity and create new development in a sustainable manner

Nelson County Sales Gap Analysis (2005)

This sales gap analysis provides a wealth of information for commercial district revitalization programs, offers insights into current conditions, and identifies areas for possible development and economic expansion.

The analysis of Nellysford, an affiliate Main Street community, includes:

- Comparison of taxable retail sales
- Average sales per retail business
- Composition of businesses and other uses
- Market position
- Demographic profiles
- Nelson County residents' estimated buying power
- Estimated unmet market demand
- Potential sales targets and market-based strategies

OTHER PLANS: ENVIRONMENT, HISTORY, AND RECREATION

Nelson County Green Infrastructure Plan (2010)

This “Healthy Watersheds, Healthy Communities” project by the Green Infrastructure Center includes the *Nelson County Watershed Stewardship Guide for Residents Businesses, Communities, and Government* as well as the *Nelson County Policy Guide for Green Infrastructure & Local Planning*.

The overarching goals supported by the Green Infrastructure Plan include:

- conserving wildlife habitat and biodiversity;
- supporting the county’s agricultural and timber economy;
- educating the public about the significance of habitat cores and corridors; and
- encouraging businesses and industries that strengthen the agricultural economy, which can also be achieved through supporting local food initiatives.

The *Policy Guide* identifies specific opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure planning principles into Nelson County’s Comprehensive Plan. It also recommends the creation of a new Agricultural District designation in the Zoning Ordinance which could be voluntarily used to rezone A-1 lands with prime agricultural soils and with parcel sizes greater than 20-acres. This recommendation would support the protection of remaining undeveloped farm lands.

The *Stewardship Guide* identifies Nelson County’s existing green infrastructure resources, and notes that the need to protect those resources is urgent due to recent increases population growth rates. It also identifies tools and actions which can be taken by residents, including residential and agricultural best practices, stream monitoring, and educational activities.

The *Stewardship Guide* also provides the following “Guiding Principles” for Community Stewardship: protect high-quality forests; sustain agriculture and working farms; ensure clean, healthy water; and celebrate recreation and heritage. It also identifies opportunities to incorporate stewardship tools into local community planning and zoning processes, such as:

- Comprehensive Planning that relies on community input to identify community goals and priorities for the future;
- Zoning Ordinance components such as cluster development ordinances, steep slope ordinances, and low impact development (LID) standards; and
- Overlay and Special Use Districts to protect sensitive and unique areas, such as Riparian Overlay Districts and Entrance Corridor Overlay Districts
- Proffers which are designed to offset the impacts associated with new development.

VA DEQ Rockfish River TMDL Study (2011 – 2012)

The Rockfish River TMDL Study gives details about state and federal requirements, a review of the Rockfish River Bacterial TMDL Study, a synopsis of the implementation planning meetings, implementation actions, measurable goals, stakeholder roles, and potential funding sources. The goals of TMDL implementation are to restore water quality so they comply with water quality standards.

The Rockfish River study area contained approximately 67,500 acres within the greater James River Basin. The predominant land use is forest (84%), with pasture, cropland, and developed areas covering 7%, 3%, and 5% of the study area, respectively.

Public participation, used to develop the TMDL implementation plan, occurred through a series of public meetings starting in September 2011. The goals of these meetings were: to present the bacteria TMDLs for the Rockfish River and the sediment TMDL for Taylor Creek; to provide a basic introduction to the process of implementing TMDLs; to engage the community through the Steering Committee and the Working Groups; and to explain the roles and responsibilities of each Working Group. Implementation actions consisted of selecting appropriate control measures and quantification of control measures by pollutant source.

Groundwater Pollution Potential Map (1993)

This countywide map was produced in 1993 by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission using methodology published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The map notes that, "Nelson County is a beautiful and mountainous county ... [and] is primarily agricultural, with portions in the Rockfish Valley undergoing rapid suburbanization." It also states that, "Groundwater quality is important to residents as most of the population depends on private wells for drinking water."

The map indicates that areas along the river bottoms within the Rockfish Valley have a relatively high DRASTIC index, which indicates a higher potential for groundwater pollution potential. Specifically, the areas defined as "River Alluvium Hydrogeologic Settings" found along Reids Creek, South Fork Rockfish River, Stoney Creek, and North Fork Rockfish River and its tributaries are shown as having the highest DRASTIC index. This is primarily due to the geology and soils characteristics, which include rapid discharge and recharge rates as well as shallow aquifer depths.

Rockfish River Watershed Study (1990's)

The Rockfish River Forum Steering Committee was formed to identify environmental values important to the community; to learn innovative tools to protect, manage, and monitor the watershed; and to devise strategies to protect social, cultural, and environmental resources. The mission statement of the Forum was to safeguard the health, scenic beauty, and cultural heritage of the Rockfish River and its watershed.

A two-day forum was held where basic hydrology and a brief overview of the issues concerning the Rockfish River were discussed. Participants identified an action plan to restore and protect the watershed. The Plan notes that the Rockfish River watershed is primarily rural, but that the area is experiencing pressures from development, especially in the Northern part of Nelson County, due to a close proximity to Charlottesville and the Wintergreen Resort.

Overarching goals include:

- (analysis and evaluation): better understand the current condition and health of the watershed, to make better decisions about its management and to be able to measure progress;

- (stewardship): implement land management practices and processes that lead to better stewardship for the watershed;
- (education): create a community of residents and businesses that are informed about watershed issues and are motivated to take actions to protect the watershed. This information should be both accessible and widely distributed to all residents and businesses.
- (zoning): develop and implement County planning and legal tools to facilitate protection and improvement of the Rockfish River watershed

Virginia Outdoors Plan (2013)

The Virginia Outdoors Plan is a comprehensive statewide document which identifies and evaluates existing recreation and environmental resources, and which specifies future priorities. The Outdoors Plan was most recently updated in 2013 after extensive public outreach and stakeholder participation.

Lesesne State Forest, comprised of 422 acres in Nelson County’s West District, acts as a wildlife sanctuary and is an outdoor research laboratory for the American Chestnut. Two nature preserves are also located in Nelson County: Crawford’s Knob and Naked Mountain. Route 29, in Nelson County, should be evaluated to determine if it qualifies as a Virginia Scenic Byway. Scenic resources in the County include Crabtree Falls and Wintergreen Mountain. Nelson County affords some on-road bicycling opportunities, including a portion of the Bicycle Route 76 along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and other scenic loops.

The Plan identifies the James River as an important environmental and recreational asset, and supports the development of the Middle James Water Trail and James River Heritage Trail along the James River Valley corridor. Another recommended project in the Plan is to restore, reopen, and interpret the Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel, as well as creating 2.2 miles of trail infrastructure for public access.

South Rockfish Rural Historic District

The South Rockfish Rural Historic District was formally established and added to the Virginia Landmarks Register in June 2016.

From the Virginia Department of Historic Resources:

“The South Rockfish Valley Rural Historic District comprises a 1,620-acre swath of historic farms, agricultural landscapes, small crossroads, and residential communities. The district boasts a well-preserved rural landscape with a continuous tradition of farming since the first half of the 1700s. An exceptionally fertile valley, its agricultural history chronicles the rise of tobacco cultivation for international export from the 18th through the late-19th centuries, the transition to a thriving apple orchard industry from the 1880s through early 1940s, and the present mix of cattle farming and experimentation with viticulture and cider orchards.

The district hosts a vibrant collection of 18th, 19th, and early-20th-century residences and buildings, representing a variety of vernacular and more formal architectural styles. Particularly noteworthy are several well-preserved late-18th- to early-19th-century farmhouses including three that are individually listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of

Historic Places, as is the 1908 Wintergreen Country Store. The historic crossroads community of Wintergreen saw a succession of stores, mills, and schools from the 1840s through the early 20th century, and the sites of these buildings appear to hold excellent archaeological potential.”

From the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form:

“The South Rockfish Valley Rural Historic District comprises 1,620 acres of bottomland in northwestern Nelson County, Virginia. ... The district’s cultural landscape retains an exceptional degree of integrity. Historic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farmhouses with complexes of historic domestic and agricultural outbuildings stand on parcels that have remained largely intact. Historic fence lines, farm roads, and the settlement pattern of small crossroads communities amid large tracts of agricultural land that have been farmed for more nearly three centuries add to the continuity of the traditional, rural cultural landscape. Natural features such as the [Rockfish River], tributary streams, and areas of woodland contribute to the district’s character. Unobstructed views toward surrounding Devil’s Knob, Black Rock Mountain, Grassy Ridge, Crawford Knob, and Horseshoe Mountain are also important features.”

Virginia Main Street Program

Nellysford is currently an Affiliate Main Street member, which is an option is for communities that are exploring downtown revitalization, that are preparing for designation, or that may not be eligible for designation. It provides access to all Virginia Main Street training and limited on-site assistance, as resources permit.

Virginia’s Main Street Program offers a range of services that can address the need for revitalization of small to mid-sized downtowns, using the Main Street Approach. To be eligible, there must be at least 50 commercial enterprises and 70 commercial structures in the proposed Main Street District. Traditionally, at least 25 percent of the linear street frontage should have a setback of 15’ or less from the sidewalk, and it should be possible for pedestrians to walk comfortably. The Community is required to propose specific boundaries for the district, and to provide evidence showing that it meets the requisite criteria.

Design elements in the revitalization efforts include renovating buildings, constructing compatible development, improving signage and displays, and creating attractive and usable public spaces. Economic restructuring includes building entrepreneurial economies, strengthening existing businesses and recruiting new ones, developing financial incentives, finding new economic uses for existing Main Street buildings, and monitoring the economic performance of the district. Consulting services include architectural design services, organization tune up visits, economic restructuring visits, and small town merchant visits.