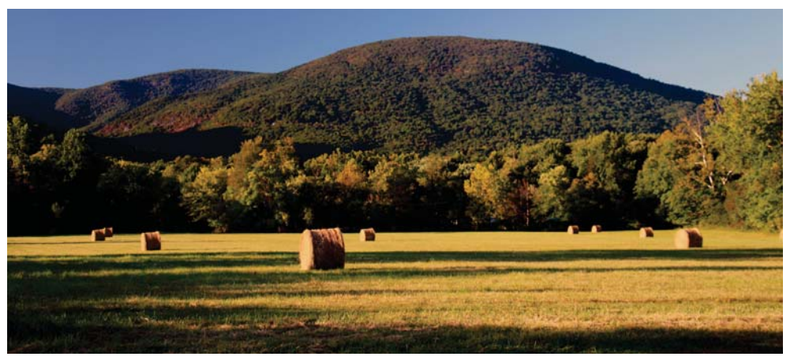
Agriculture

Overview

The Rockfish Valley supports a thriving agribusiness and agritourism economy, including numerous award-winning craft breweries, cideries, wineries, and a distillery. The area is also home to more traditional agricultural activities including orchards, raising cattle, the production of forage, crops, nurseries, and timber harvesting. The area's agricultural industry and landscapes help to define the authentic rural character that is such an important part of the community. Working farmlands also benefit the region by protecting open spaces and natural habitats, and providing recreation opportunities for hunting, fishing, and hiking. Most agricultural activities in the area are concentrated in the valley floors, where the flattest and most fertile agricultural land can be found. Further up slope, agricultural lands transition from fields and pastures to orchards and vineyards, which benefit from the rocky soil, cooler temperatures, and desirable solar aspect.

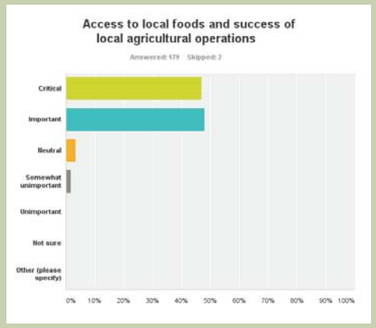
Facts and Figures

- Amount of land in agriculture: 8,243 acres (13%)
- Total value of agricultural products sold: $15,807,000 (Countywide)
- Total value of livestock: $5,430,000 (Countywide)
- Cattle: $4,785,000 (Countywide)
- Total value of crops: $10,377,000 (Countywide)
- Fruits, tree nuts and berries: $463,900 (Countywide)
- Timber Harvest Value: $2,845,360 Ranked 29th in the state (VDOF 2012)

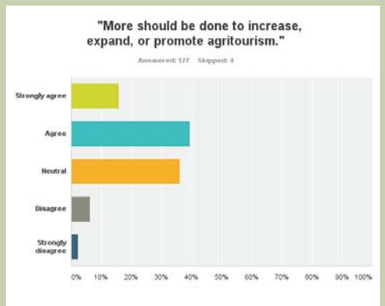


Public Survey Results:

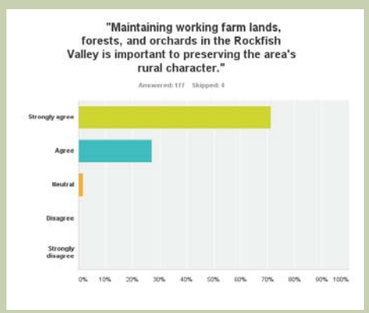
What is the community saying about Ag? Do you agree with the results of the survey?



Over 90% of respondants said local foods and local ag are important.

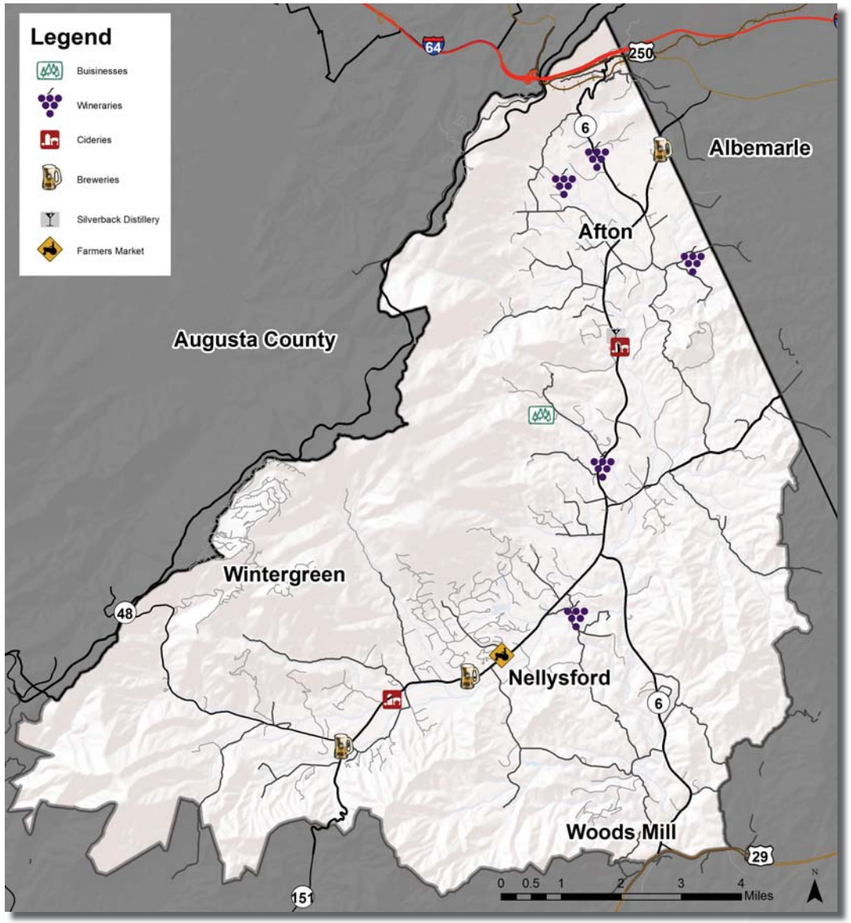


55% of respondants were supportive of more agritourism.



Over 95% of respondants agreed that working agricultural lands are important to the area's character.

Agritourism Destinations



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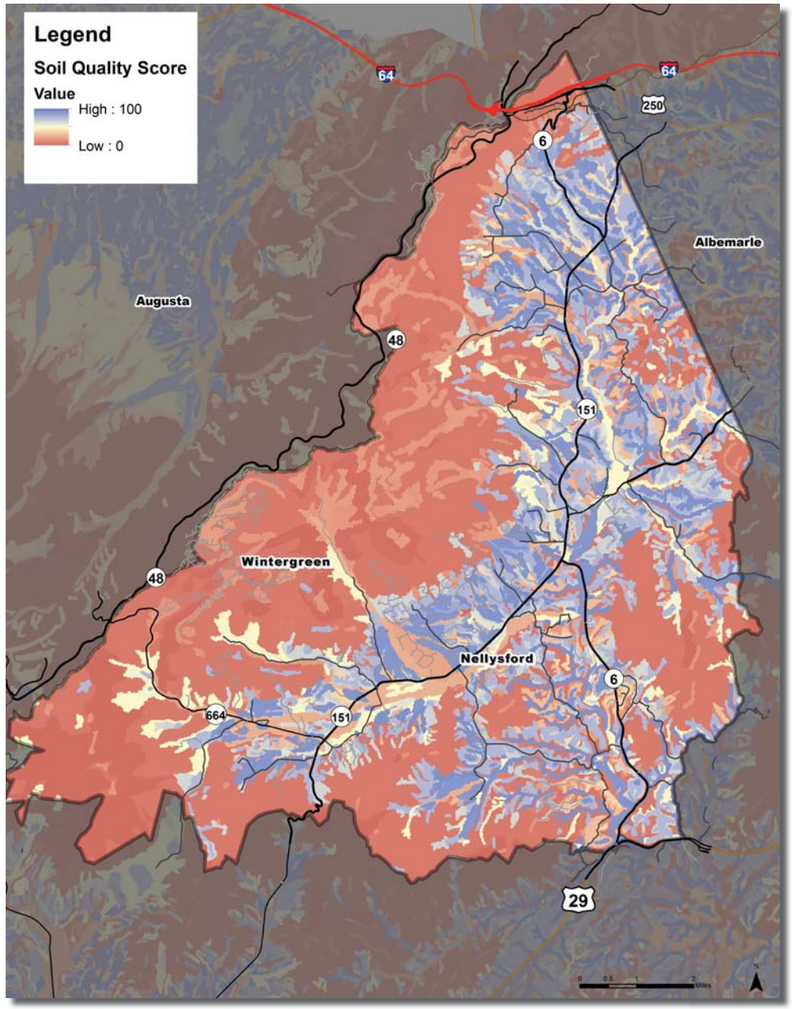
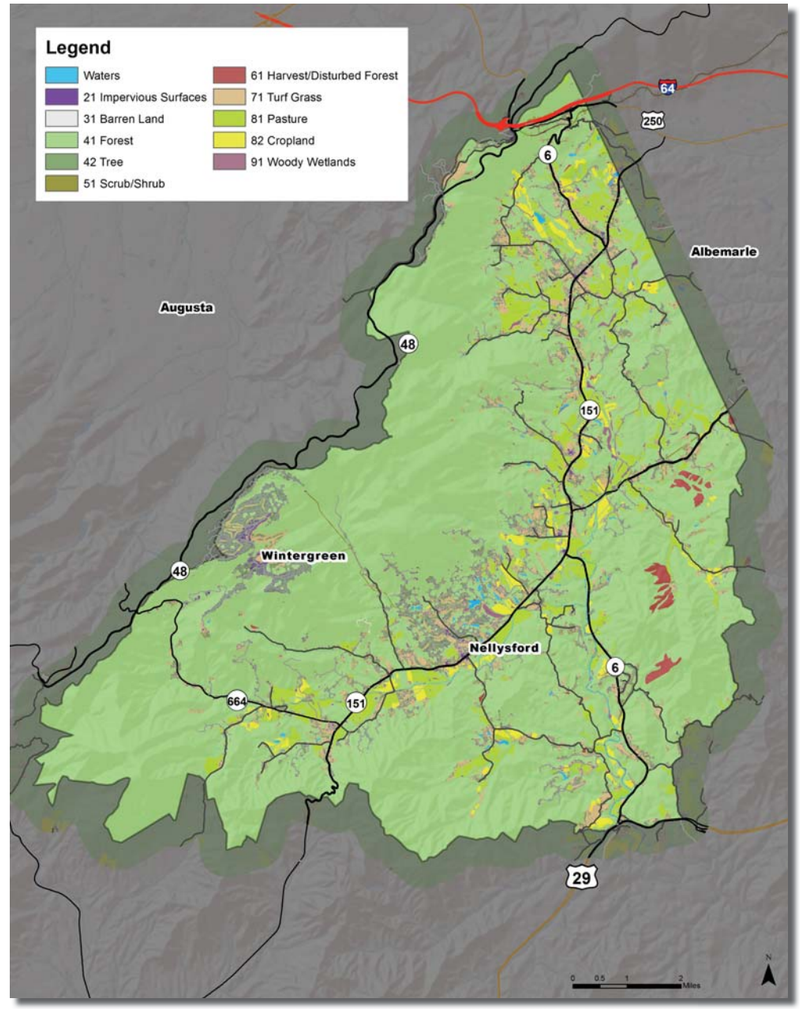
The Rockfish Valley's authentic agricultural heritage is an essential element of the area's sense of place. Traditional agriculture and the growing agritourism industry are vitally important components in the local economy.

Soil Quality



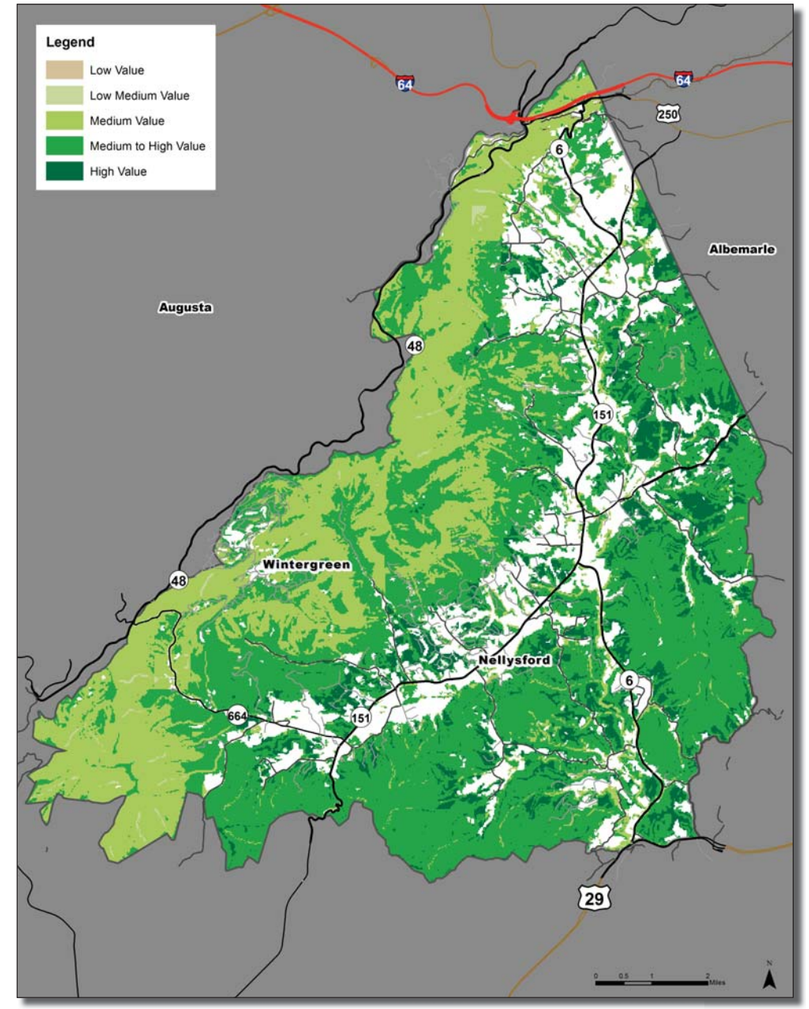
The Soil Quality Index is a map produced by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The dataset combines several factors relating to soil quality for agricultural uses. These include prime agricultural soils, the threat of flooding, soil type, and terrain. The index scores range from 100 (optimal) to 0 (unsuitable for agriculture). This map demonstrates that high-quality soils are primarily concentrated along streams and river bottoms.

Land In Agriculture



This map uses the Virginia statewide land cover dataset to highlight different types of land cover (i.e. forest, pastures, and cropland) across the Commonwealth. This map highlights where agricultural land uses are occurring in the study area. Most of the agricultural land uses are located in the valley bottoms in close proximity to areas of growth and development, which are represented as impervious surfaces.

Forest Economics Model



The forest economics model was developed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Forestry to highlight forest lands with economic value. The data classifies forest blocks into five values ranging from high to low. Forest value was determined based on a combination of environmental and access factors. The dataset can help guide land management and planning decisions by highlighting which areas of forest have a high economic value.