

ROCKFISH VALLEY AREA PLAN



(Draft) Scope of Work

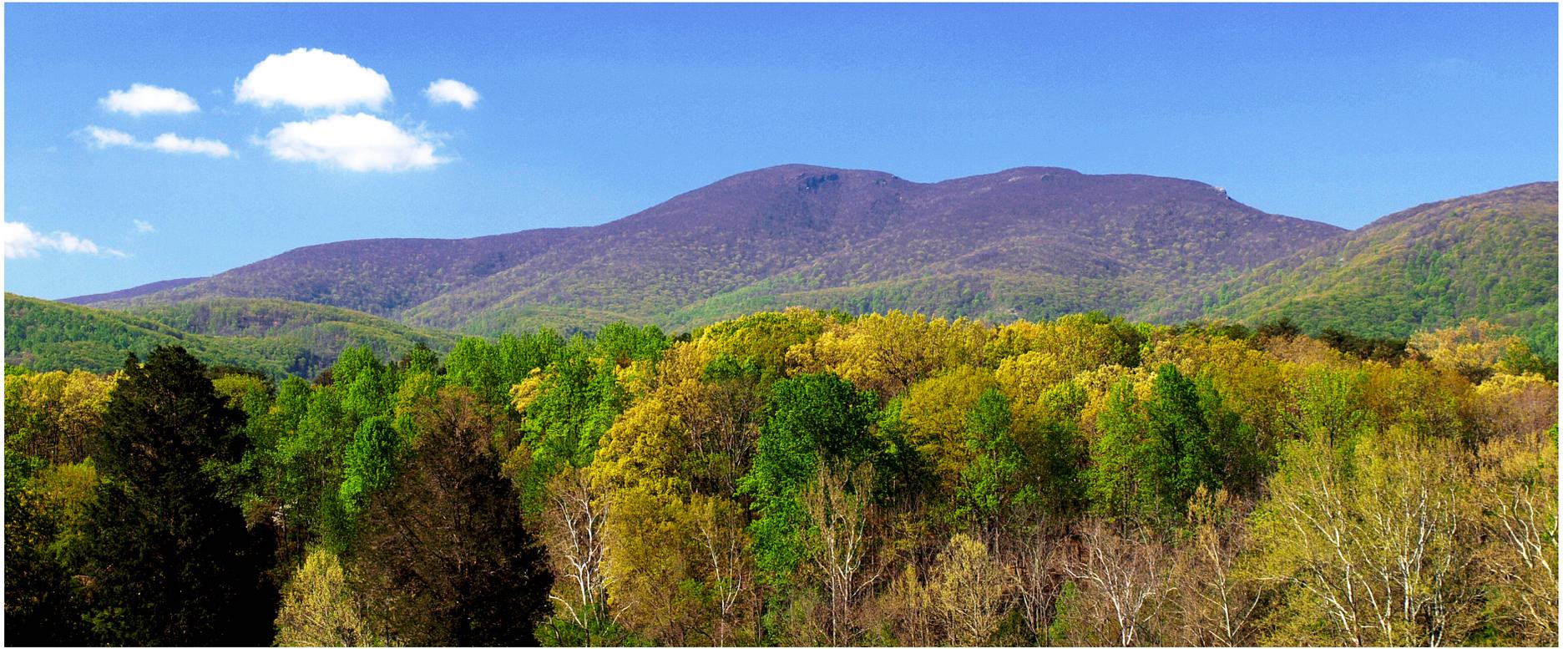


Prepared April 25, 2014 by
Nelson County Dept. of Planning & Zoning
for Review and Comment

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Based on preliminary conversations among County staff, this document provides a (draft) Scope of Work for a proposed public planning process focusing on the Rockfish Valley. This document is organized into the following elements:

- 1. Issue Introduction** “*What is this issue all about?*”
- 2. Issue Summary & Project Justification** “*Why is this project important and beneficial?*”
- 3. Project Intent & Purposes** “*Why has this project been proposed? What are the purposes for doing this?*”
- 4. Project Scope** “*What geographic area would this project encompass?*”
- 5. Deliverables & Outcomes** “*What would this project accomplish?*”
- 6. Participants & Stakeholders** “*Who would be involved in this project?*”
- 7. Timeframe & Sequencing** “*How would this process work – and when would it happen?*”
- 8. Budget & Resources** “*What resources would this project require?*”



Humpback Mountain in early spring from Route 6 Virginia Scenic Byway (Afton Mountain Road)

Introduction:

The Rockfish Valley is widely recognized as a special place – a highlight of Nelson County and all of Virginia. The Rockfish Valley’s sense of place, natural beauty, recreation resources, and tourism destinations and events combine to make the area a place that is cherished by many. Yet these qualities are also attracting an expanding number of visitors, as well as an increasing amount of interest and activity in new commercial development projects.

With regard to these characteristics, trends, and issues, there is an increasingly urgent need to ensure that the area is well-planned. It is imperative that the special qualities of the Rockfish Valley are identified, protected, and enhanced; and that the County establishes a

framework to ensure that future development patterns and characteristics are complimentary to, and harmonious with, the invaluable qualities of the Rockfish Valley.

The Comprehensive Plan is generally the best tool for addressing such issues. However, Nelson County’s Comp Plan was adopted in 2002, and it is outdated. The County does not currently have any up-to-date assessment or community development goals for this continuously changing, commercially successful area of the County.

As such, some kind of public planning process is presently needed, in order to establish an updated assessment reflective of

recent (and ongoing) change, growth, and development in the area; and to also develop up-to-date, fact-based, forward-thinking recommendations which anticipate future growth potential – and which also protect and enhance the area’s rural character, natural beauty, and special sense of place.

In 2013, VDOT completed the “Route 151 Corridor Study” which focused on transportation safety, traffic analysis, and mobility issues. This recent project provides a great opportunity to continue the public focus on this area, with an expanded scope of work that includes community development goals, economic development goals, and land use planning goals.

Issue Summary:

The Rockfish Valley is presently in need of a public planning process that establishes a thorough, strategic, asset-based community development framework, with an emphasis on accomplishing the following public benefits:

- to provide appropriate guidance and policies for current and future land uses;
- to ensure that private investments are well-coordinated and positioned for success;
- to maximize the efficient use of public resources and capital improvement projects;
and
- to identify, protect, and enhance the area's rich treasury of community assets.

Project Justification:

Responsibility:

- to avoid unplanned growth and undesirable change
- to identify future land use patterns that are desirable and appropriate
- to protect rural residential areas
- to maximize quality of life for area residents

Opportunity:

- to ensure continued economic vitality
- to help attract the desired types of growth
- to maximize Nelson County tourism "brand"
- to help guide development towards the most appropriate areas

Priority:

- the area's ongoing commercial growth – as well as anticipated future development pressures – create an urgent need for a proactive response

Stoney Creek watershed and Wintergreen Resort ski trails in late winter



Project Intent & Purposes:

A strategic planning process for the Rockfish Valley would provide the following:

- an inventory of the area's community assets;
- an accurate assessment of the area's current conditions and trends;
- an analysis of anticipated future opportunities, issues, and threats;
and
- asset-based development recommendations that best serve the area's families, businesses, and visitors by protecting and enhancing the Rockfish Valley's community assets, character, and sense of place.

A more descriptive summary of the important purposes for developing a Rockfish Valley Area Plan is provided on this page.

Purpose – Nelson County Mission Statement

- "It is the mission of the Board of Supervisors to maintain Nelson County as a beautiful, safe, healthy, and prosperous rural county;
- ...where citizens are involved in all aspects of their governance; and
- *...where the community is well planned to assure respect for and dedication to its traditions and resources, while continuing to improve its economic viability."*

Purpose – Economic Development

- Develop strategic recommendations that complement and strengthen the area's existing businesses and industries
- Develop strategic recommendations that help to attract new compatible commercial uses and activities
- Establish a practical framework to guide commercial investments and new developments to the most appropriate locations throughout the area

Purpose – Public Participation

- Ensure that public participation by a broad representation of stakeholders is a genuine part of the process, which will result in recommendations that reflect the values of the area's residents and businesses
- Develop an accurate understanding of the community's current interests and concerns
- Identify community concerns and desires regarding the future of the Rockfish Valley

Purpose – Comprehensive Plan

- Identify any elements of the existing 2002 Comp Plan to be updated, expanded, replaced, or otherwise revised
- Produce up-to-date, forward thinking recommendations that can be considered for adoption into the existing 2002 Comp Plan

Purpose – Community Development

- Develop strategic recommendations to protect the area's rural character, natural beauty, and special sense of place
- Develop strategic recommendations to protect rural residential areas from unplanned commercial development(s) and from other unharmonious land use changes

Purpose – Code of Virginia

- §15.2-2280: "protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare"
- §15.2-2283: "facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive, and harmonious community"
- §15.2-2284: The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map must reasonably consider the: "existing use and character; ... trends of growth or change; ... conservation of natural resources; ... [and] the encouragement of the most appropriate use of the land."

Purpose – Zoning Policy

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of how the current Zoning Ordinance tools and regulations affect this area
- Identify opportunities to update the A-1 Agricultural District policies and procedures for regulating agri-tourism and agri-business activities throughout this area
- Identify other pertinent opportunities to review the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map for appropriate amendments

Proposed Project Scope:

The Rockfish Valley Area Plan would address a relatively large area, expanding well beyond the Route 151 corridor. The proposed project scope roughly encompasses the entire Rockfish River watershed above Route 29 as a general geographic boundary.

Specifically, the proposed project scope would include much of the North District and Central Districts, including the area from Afton to Beech Grove and to Reids Gap; and also the area from the Martin's Store substation (at the Rockfish Valley Highway / River Road intersection) to Woods Mill (at the River Road / Route 29 intersection).

This scope provides the best opportunity for a consistent, coordinated evaluation of current (and future) issues that are common throughout the area. The majority of the project area is comprised of the Route 151 corridor and the Route 664 corridor, which share similar characteristics. They are both designated Scenic Byways passing through the heart of the Rockfish Valley; and both corridors experience the highest intensity of tourism activities and associated tourism and agri-business land uses.

The inclusion of Route 6 (to Woods Mill) will provide a broader analysis of the Rockfish Valley, and allow the Rockfish Valley Area Plan to have a logical nexus with Route 29 – another strategic corridor for Nelson County and a Corridor of Statewide Significance for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Proposed Project Scope: Afton - Woods Mill - Reids Gap



Proposed Project Deliverables:

PHASE I: AREA ANALYSIS

Summary of Existing Plans:

A document providing a review, analysis, and synthesis of key recommendations from each previous study or plan pertaining to the proposed project scope

Asset Inventory:

A document that identifies and describes the Rockfish Valley's exceptional community assets, resources, attractions, and valuable characteristics

Area Assessment:

A report that provides an analysis of trends, issues, concerns, "threats," and opportunities... This will include an area-wide analysis focused on existing zoning patterns, land use patterns, future development scenarios, and favorable opportunities for commercial entrance sites

*Historic Dodd Cabin on
Route 664 Scenic Byway (Beech Grove Road)*



PHASE II: AREA PLANNING

Public Survey:

A public outreach process conducted in both an online format and a traditional format (provided by mail)...

This effort will solicit public perspective(s) on issues, concerns, "threats," and opportunities, which will influence and inform the project team's efforts, and be incorporated into the Area Plan documents

Vision Statement & Area Recommendations:

Materials that identify strategic goals and objectives for the area's economic development, physical development, environment, land use, and transportation/mobility issues

County Policy Review:

A detailed report that identifies specific recommendations for potential updates to the Comprehensive Plan and/or potential amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map, in order to best facilitate the public's desired outcomes for this area

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

- Board of Supervisors adoption of Area Plan (either as a stand-alone document or element of the Comprehensive Plan)
- Development of a clear, coordinated vision for facilitating positive economic development activity and inducing private investment (with an emphasis on attracting targeted industries into the most appropriate locations)
- Development of a clear vision and strategies for the protection and enhancement of the area's rural character, sense of place, and quality of life
- Identification of deficiencies with existing land use policies and patterns
- Identification of important opportunities to adaptively update the Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map (including formal actions by the Governing Body to amend the Zoning Ordinance and/or amend the Zoning Map; with an emphasis on):
 - Specific, reasonable recommendations for updated zoning policies which respond to current development activities and which anticipate future growth potential; and
 - Specific land use policy recommendations for the Rte. 151 and Rte. 664 corridors, which are the fastest-changing, highest-profile portions of the Rockfish Valley

Proposed Project Team:

○ **Project Management & Administration:**

Tim Padalino – Project Manager

Primary Roles and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate and collaborate with TJPDC staff
- Communicate with Nelson County BOS
- Lead the design and delivery of public events and other participatory efforts
- Lead the production, management, and editing of all project deliverables
- Provide project oversight / quality control

Steve Carter and Maureen Kelley – Lead Project Support Team

Primary Roles and Responsibilities:

- Provide participation, assistance, and guidance for all aspects of project
- Coordinate, collaborate, and communicate with County Supervisors (SC)
- Coordinate, collaborate, and communicate with various project area stakeholders (MK)

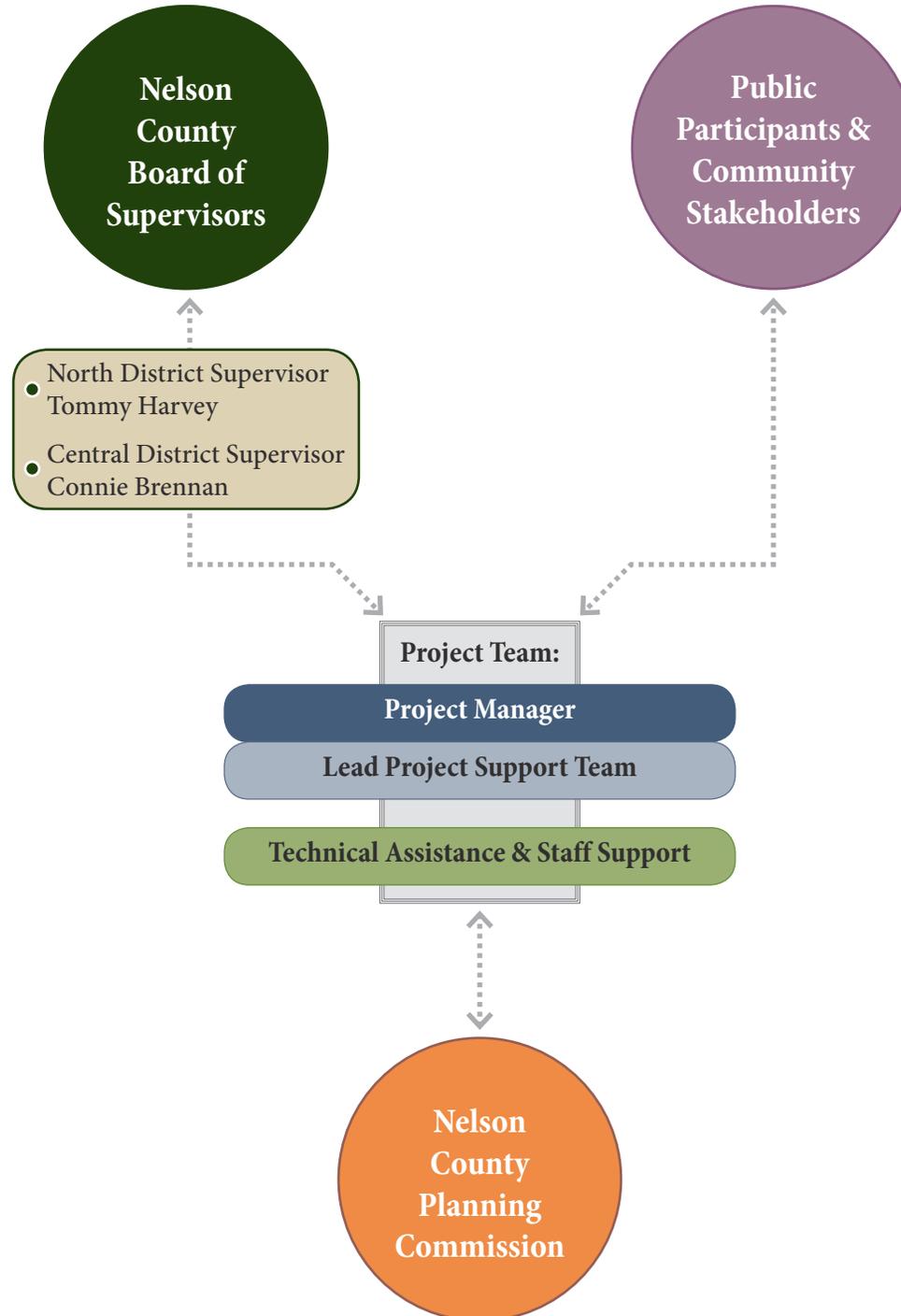
○ **Technical Assistance:**

TJPDC Staff – Project Team Tech. Assistance

Primary Roles and Responsibilities:

- Provide technical assistance with land use analysis and mapping
- Assist with the design and delivery of public events / outreach efforts
- Assist with public outreach and communications: online survey, website setup and management, etc.
- Provide additional assistance with other preparation, tasks, and deliverables (TBD)

Proposed Project Participants:



Proposed Sequence & Timeline:

Public Meeting

PREPARATION

2013

December 2013 - May 2014

- internal County preparation and process design, to include:
 - Board-approved final Scope of Work
 - Board-approved Project Team participants and roles
 - Board-approved project schedule, public meetings schedule, and project budget

PHASE I: AREA ANALYSIS

2014

(late) May

- conduct project kick-off meeting with project team members

June - July

- project team prepares Phase I (Area Analysis) presentation materials for initial “open house” public meeting

June - July

- conduct Phase I community survey(s) and compile public input

(late) July

- conduct initial public meeting (“open house” to present [draft] Phase I deliverables; present community survey responses; and conduct informal public engagement)

(early) August

- project team makes revisions to Phase I deliverables based on project team meetings and informal feedback from first “open house” public meeting

PHASE II: AREA PLANNING

August - September

- project team prepares Phase II (Area Planning) presentation materials for second public meeting

August - September

- conduct Phase II community survey(s) and compile public input

(middle) October

- conduct second public meeting (present [draft] Phase II deliverables; present community survey responses; and solicit public comments and questions)

October - November

- project team makes revisions to Phase II deliverables based on project team meetings, feedback from second public meeting, and any additional public comments

November - December

- project team prepares presentation materials for entire Area Plan for final public meeting

December

- conduct third and final public meeting (present entire Area Plan project; and solicit public comments)

2015

December - January 2015

- project team makes any necessary final revisions

January or February 2015

- finalize deliverables and present to BOS for consideration

Project Budget & Resources:

A primary requirement will be staff time, with the following time commitments anticipated for County staff:

- Tim Padalino: 12-16 hours weekly on average (*with additional time likely being required in advance of key deadlines, public meetings, and/or presentations*)
- Maureen Kelley: 4-8 hours weekly on average
- Steve Carter and/or Candy McGarry: 2-4 hours weekly (total) on average

Another primary consideration for County resources would be the establishment of a partnership with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) for staff support and technical assistance.

County staff have already initiated preliminary discussion with TJPDC staff about their potential role(s) in this project; and County staff will continue those discussions in greater detail to begin negotiating the terms of a possible partnership which would provide Nelson County with staff support and technical assistance on this project.

Other resources to consider include postage and office supplies to send information materials to area residents and businesses. This anticipated cost is currently unknown; and could be reduced significantly by timing this (possible) one-time mailing to be included in official County correspondence that would already need to be mailed out to the public (such as Commissioner of Revenue mailings).

Additional resources might include materials related to the proposed public meetings, although this would be minor (and would likely be accounted for in existing Department budget(s) for “Printing & Binding” 81010-3006 and/or “Office Supplies” 81010-5401).

