

WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?



Accordingly, this Rockfish Valley Area Plan is a new local public planning effort to analyze the area's trends and characteristics; and to identify appropriate long-range and short-term goals and strategies for the area regarding a wide variety of public issues.

This County project is an attempt to determine how future land uses patterns and economic development activities can be complimentary to, and harmonious with, the existing land uses and the invaluable qualities of the one and only Rockfish Valley.

Such an effort is equally important for area residents, local businesses, and touring visitors. Everyone benefits from the Rockfish Valley's rural character, natural beauty, special sense of place, and high quality of life. And everyone stands to lose if the area's attractive qualities and important characteristics are compromised by unplanned growth or inadequate land use policies.

Therefore, this project will attempt to provide a community planning framework that facilitates the best possible balance between the area's future growth and economic development potential, and the careful preservation of the area's authentic local character and rural Blue Ridge landscapes. Such balance between new growth and rural tradition is a necessity in order for the Rockfish Valley area to enjoy the highest possible quality of life for all, and to support the strongest, most sustainably successful local tourism industry possible.

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

Project Introduction:

The Rockfish Valley is widely recognized as a special place – a highlight of Nelson County and all of Virginia. The area's rural landscapes, Blue Ridge mountain scenery, public recreation opportunities, tourism destinations, and special events combine to create an amazing place that is cherished and enjoyed 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 and other recent trends and issues associated with this area, **there is an important and increasingly urgent need to ensure that this special place is well-planned.**

The Rockfish Valley is so highly special to area residents, and is achieving such success and renown as a premier tourism experience, that

the area cannot be subjected to unplanned growth. In a relatively small area like the Rockfish Valley, such unmanaged change can quickly contribute to a diluted quality of life for residents, a diminished experience for visitors, and a difficult challenge to local businesses.

New changes will inevitably occur to the communities within the Rockfish Valley, and that is not automatically a good or bad thing. But without question, it is simply good practice for communities to attempt to manage such changes proactively, and to maximize the degree to which those changes are positive.

As new economic development activities and new land uses continue to occur within this popular and successful tourism area, now is the perfect time to bring public focus to such community planning and development issues.