

# APPENDIX B: RIVER REVIEW AND ACCESS

## REVIEW OF RIVERS IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

Steve Spencer, Ed.D, Western Kentucky University, Department of Kinesiology, Recreation and Sports, 2009.

Numerous rivers exist for recreation and tourism in Southwest Virginia. This area has river segments that are suitable for everything from flatwater floating, all the way to Class V whitewater which should be navigated only by experts.



Many of these runs are for Kayaks only and are extreme. Whitewater boating carries inherent risks and paddlers running whitewater creeks and streams understand this inherent risk.

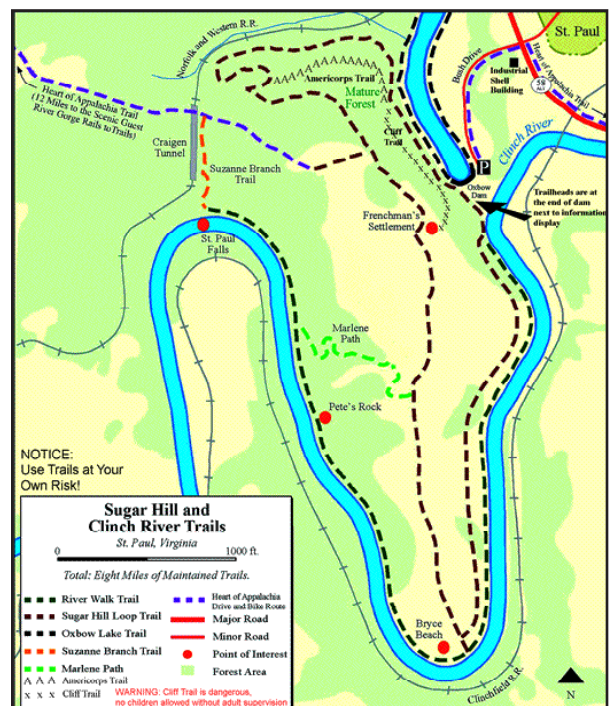
For tourism purposes, the extreme whitewater boater would probably not be a viable tourism option. Most whitewater boats of this variety have their own equipment and due to the infrequent water levels that make the rivers extreme, there are not many public access points on these creeks and streams.

In SW. Virginia, tourism related paddling is a relatively untapped market. The wide variety of streams offers unlimited options to be developed for the middle paddling range market. For paddling to become a financial benefit, marketing and livery operation must be developed. One ideal area to be considered for tourism development and livery operation is the Clinch River from St. Paul to Dungannon.

### CLINCH RIVER

Portions of this river have been designated as a Virginia Scenic River. This stretch of the river runs 18-21.6 miles depending on put-in and take-out choices and source of river information.

**St. Paul to Dungannon:** There are two public access points in St. Paul (one is at the old little league park and the second is near the industrial park). There are also two access points in Dungannon. The preferred access is below the VA 65 Highway Bridge which offers a large parking area and boat ramp. (See *River Access*)



Map above shows the Industrial Park Access at St. Paul

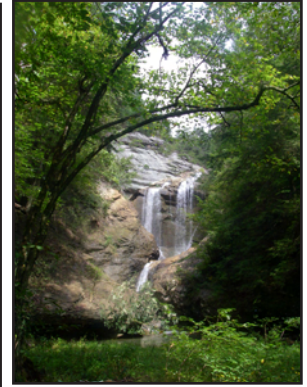
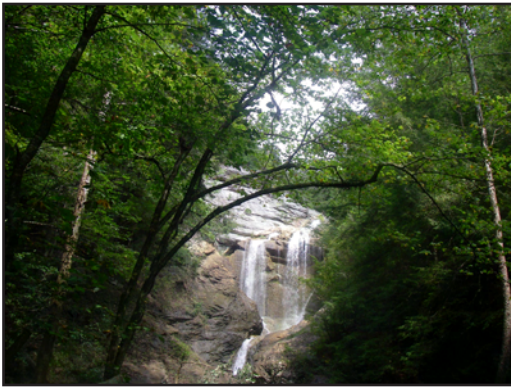


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The Clinch River below St. Paul has some interesting features. While this section has a slower current, the river quickly takes on the persona of a remote river with only the nearby railroad to dispel the emerald beauty. A significant tributary enters river right approximately two miles below the second Dungannon access.

This is Russell Creek. Beautiful Russell Creek Falls (*see photos below*) may be viewed from the Clinch River or a short hike improves the view.



The section of the Clinch below the confluence with the Guest River is the part that is designated as a Virginia Scenic River.

The Clinch River below the Guest River confluence enters a magnificent gorge that has continual class I-II water. The gorge section is about 7 miles long. It is a beautiful river with high bluffs and has little habitat or changes due to agriculture until about two miles above Dungannon. At this point in the river, a few houses begin appearing along the river's right bank. The only negative about this whole stretch is the fact that a railroad track runs the length of the Clinch River valley. The railroad, while not always obvious visually, is active with approximately one train per three hours (*estimate*).

This section of the Clinch River would be an excellent choice for mild whitewater canoe and kayak trips. It is an excellent river opportunity for tourism and livery service. The visual beauty, mild challenge and continual (*for the most part*) river flow are what participants desire on a good river trip.

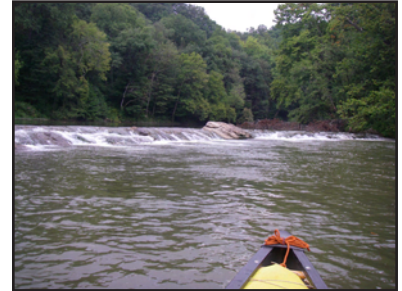


### Suggestions for safety of paddlers on the Clinch River.

This river will require the boater to control their craft with a modicum of skill. It is definitely a class II river in many places. No hard boats (canoes and kayaks) should be rented without suitable skill. However, inflatable crafts (duckies) would provide even unskilled paddlers every opportunity for a great experience. Inflatable (duckies) would also provide a great option for younger paddlers.

Noted rapids that should be marked:

- There is a river-wide three to five foot drop about 2 miles (45 minutes) from the 2nd access put-in at St. Paul. It is a gradual sloping drop that the boater can scout from the river or portage either side of the river. This drop will most likely be scratchy as the boater drops into the pool below.
- There is one rapid, that is 2 and 1/4 miles (about 1 ½ hour) from the 2nd access put-in at St. Paul. It is below beautiful Russell Creek Falls (picture 14, 15,16) on river right. This rapid has a pinning rock and will produce a high percentage of dumping boaters. This rapid may be rated as high as class III due to the chance for pinning a craft which depends on the route selected.



**RECOMMENDATION: Signage should be developed above the two noted rapids above. This would denote the danger and offer a portage on river right.**

### Management:

One suggestion for management of this section of the Clinch River that would improve options for canoe/kayak/inflatable rental would be to develop a section where a public midway access could be developed.

Currently there are farms and homes at an approximate half way point (*see right top*) that would be an excellent access point for shorter trips. However, currently these are private land holdings.



History of the Clinch River is considerable. A historical point that should be emphasized is the development of St. Paul as a French outpost and the location of the old French fort is noted by signage that may be seen from the river (*see right bottom*). The fort is located a little more than 1 mile below the 2nd St. Paul access on river right. A trail runs on river right about the first six miles of the route and the French fort is in this trail system.



Primitive camping may be an option on parts of this section. However, proximity to the railroad may make this a less than desirable option.

### Clinch River--- other sections

The Clinch River has many other sections that may be utilized but none as beautiful and accommodating as the St. Paul to Dungannon stretch.

For AWA information, see: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/1918/>

For river facts information on line see: <http://www.riverfacts.com/maps/13441.html>

River gauge data for levels and CFS is available and accurate for this section of the Clinch at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Gauge2/detail/id/1780/>

Two other sections of the Clinch River show up on the American Whitewater pages. Numerous sections of the Clinch are paddleable as float trips, and may be targeted for livery services. However, the section between St. Paul to Dungannon has huge potential of becoming a major tourism draw to the area.



**Other notable rivers in SW Virginia include three whitewater rivers.**

### RUSSELL FORK

A tributary of the Big Sandy River, the Russell Fork River is a scenic series of rapids, pools and tortuous twists. World class whitewater rafting opportunities are available on the river running through the Breaks Canyon (Breaks Interstate Park) below the John Flannagan Dam four weekends in October when water is released from the dam. Whitewater rating; Class III-V+, depending on the stretch of river. The opportunity exists to run easier rapids or harder rapids dependent upon one's skill level. Kayakers or rafters will enjoy this intense river.



### GUEST RIVER

The Guest River from Coeburn, VA to the Clinch River confluence is also a Virginia Scenic River. However, this section of the Guest River is rated class IV-V with an average gradient of 100 fpm. Under no means should the Guest River be marketed as an attraction to boaters. Expert whitewater boaters will know about the Guest River. It is extreme whitewater.

### POWELL RIVER

This is an extreme whitewater stream that drops 130 feet in a mile in some places. The section from the town of Appalachia to Big Stone Gap should only be paddled by expert whitewater boaters. It is a tight stream that is only navigable in high flow conditions. A unique aspect is that these “high flow conditions” produce water that resembles chocolate milk. Hwy 23 runs parallel to the this stream.



Due to the extreme elevation gradient, it is best paddled by expert kayakers. This is not a stream that would safely and enjoyably be paddled by canoes and rafts, unless handled by experts adapted for this specialized setting.

This section of the stream should be marketed to the general public for whitewater. This is extreme whitewater.

*Note: American Whitewater Description of the Powell River from Appalachia to Big Stone Gap:*  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/detail/id/1989/>

*Description of other sections of the Powell may also be viewed on the AWA, Virginia web page at:*  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/River/state-summary/state/VA/>

There is a section of the Powell River in Lee County that does have the potential to attract boaters but the shortage of public access sites limits the duration and types of trips that can be offered. Facilities for canoe-in camping and public rest stops are also needed at appropriate distances along the river.

### MOCCASIN RIVER – Not a whitewater river

This is a stream that has been noted as a whitewater stream but is not on the American Whitewater Association web page. It is a tight stream that is navigable in high flow conditions, only. Due to the small stream bed, it would be best paddled by kayaks. This is not a stream that would safely and enjoyably be paddled by canoes and rafts, unless adapted for this specialized setting. This is not a stream that should be marketed to the general public for whitewater. It might be marketed for fishing. However, it crosses considerable private land and would have a high potential for user-landowner conflicts.

**RECOMMENDATION:** State and local officials should work with river user groups to develop a canoe trail for the Powell and Clinch Rivers. And develop a management plan that addresses law enforcement, education, camping, sanitation, access management and maintenance. Powell River also needs additional public boat launching and bank fishing opportunities. Cooperative partnerships could also be cultivated to allow the Russell Fork to draw more boaters to use the river throughout the year. This might also be considered for the area around John Flannagan Reservoir. More research is needed.

**A FEW OF THE RIVER ACCESSES IN THE SPEARHEAD TRAILS AREA**

**CLINCH RIVER ACCESSES IN WISE COUNTY**



*St. Paul River Access onto the Clinch at Ballfield (#6 on the River Map)*



*St. Paul River Access at Sugar Hill behind the industrial park offers ample parking and easy access.*

**CLINCH RIVER ACCESSES IN SCOTT COUNTY**

**UNOFFICIAL RIVER ACCESS AT NOTTINGHAM (HWY 614) & WADLOW ROAD**



*Explore the possibility of making this a public access.*

*Features swing bridge down river.*

**PUBLIC RIVER ACCESS AT BRIDGE STREET (T837) NEAR CLINCH RIVER ROAD**



*Easy road access, good signage, and ample parking makes this an excellent site ready for visitors.  
(#14 on the River Map)*

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### UNOFFICIAL CLINCH RIVER ACCESS BELOW OB DARNELL MEMORIAL BRIDGE



*Fort Blackmore Access area (#12 on River Map)*

### EXCELLENT PUBLIC RIVER ACCESS AT DUNGANNON IN SCOTT COUNTY



*Excellent access with ample parking and two boat launch areas. This would be a prime location for a canoe outfitter put-in and take-out area for a river trip from St. Paul to Dungannon and Dungannon to Clinchport. Highly recommend moving forward on this. (River access #9 on River Map)*

### RUSSELL COUNTY'S TWO PUBLIC RIVER ACCESSES ONTO THE CLINCH RIVER CARTERTON'S CLINCH RIVER ACCESS IN RUSSELL COUNTY



*Gravel parking and easy road access to site off Riverside Drive (#5 on River Map)*

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## NASH'S FORD CLINCH RIVER ACCESS IN RUSSELL COUNTY



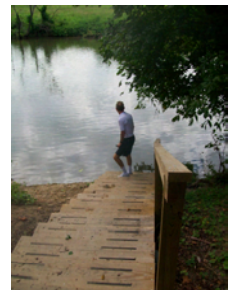
*Nash's Ford River Access in Russell County near Lebanon (#4 on the River Map)*

## CRANES NEST TRAIL AND RIVER ACCESS IN DICKENSON COUNTY ON THE RUSSELL FORK RIVER



*Once completed, river access will be handicapped accessible.*

## TWO PUBLIC ACCESSES ONTO THE NORTH FORK OF THE HOLSTON RIVER IN SCOTT COUNTY LOCATION #1 ACROSS FROM WARM SPRINGS FARM



*Located off Apple Orchard Road across from Warm Springs Farm. River access has wonderful amenities but limited parking. (#35 on the River Map)*

## LOCATION #2 – BELOW THE NORTH FORK OF THE HOLSTON BRIDGE



*Second river access is located at T614 and 707 beneath the bridge provides picnic area above.*



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### RIVER ACCESS BELOW THE RESERVOIR AT BIG STONE GAP IN WISE COUNTY



*Excellent fishing with massive bluffs on both sides of river. Paddling upriver to put-in is only access out.*

### BELOW THE TAILWATERS OF THE JOHN W. FLANNIGAN DAM IN DICKENSON COUNTY



*John W. Flannigan Dam & Reservoir provides excellent fishing and whitewater opportunities.*

### PRATER CREEK FLOWS THROUGH THE TOWN OF HAYSI



*The pavilion overlooking the river at Haysi is an excellent location to view paddlers as they head down river. A river access and campground should be built just upriver on property already owned by the Town and a canoe outfitter encouraged to set up business in this location. (#32 on river map)*



*Entrance to campground. Site work will be needed to get it ready for visitors. A swing bridge is one of the features.*

# Water Related Recreational Opportunities in Southwest Virginia

Access/Takeout Sites		
Location Number	Name of Water Route Location	County Names
1	Laurel Bed Lake	Russell
2	Blackford Bridge	Russell
3	Puckett's Hole	Russell
4	Nash's Ford	Russell
5	Carterton	Russell
6	St Paul	Wise/Russell
7	Miller Yard Access	Scott
8	Virginia whitewater-Little Stony Creek take out	Scott
9	Dungannon	Scott
10	Clinch River, Virginia/ take out	Scott
11	Rt. 659 Takeout	Scott
12	Fort Blackmore Access	Scott
13	Hill Station Access	Scott
14	Clinch Port	Scott
15	Speer's Ferry Access	Scott
16	State Line	Scott
17	Virginia whitewater - Big Stony Creek take out & Big Stony- Devil's Fork take out	Scott
18	Virginia whitewater- Big Stony- Devil's Fork put in	Scott
19	Virginia whitewater- Big Stony- Mountain Fork take out & Big Stony Creek put in	Scott
20	Virginia whitewater- Big Stony- Mountain Fork put in	Scott
21	Virginia whitewater-Little Stony River- Ramey Fork take out	Wise/Scott
22	Virginia whitewater-Little Stony River- Ramey Fork put in	Wise/Scott
23	Virginia whitewater-Little Stony Creek put in	Scott
24	Bark Camp Lake	Scott
25	Virginia whitewater-Guest River put in	Wise/Scott
26	Virginia whitewater - Pound River, Cumberland Plateau Mountains put in	Wise/Dickenson
27	Virginia whitewater - Pound River, Cumberland Plateau Mountains take out	Wise/Dickenson
28	Virginia whitewater - Pound River, Cumberland Plateau Mountains put in	Dickenson
29	Virginia whitewater - Pound River, Cumberland Plateau Mountains take out & Russell Fork, CPM put in	Dickenson
30	Virginia whitewater- Russell Fork, Cumberland Plateau Mountains take out	Dickenson
31	Virginia whitewater - Prater Creek, Cumberland Plateau Mountains take out	Dickenson
32	Virginia whitewater - Prater Creek, Cumberland Plateau Mountains put in	Dickenson
33	Lake Keokee	Lee
34	Virginia whitewater- Big Mocassin Creek put in	Scott
35	Virginia whitewater- Big Mocassin Creek take out	Scott

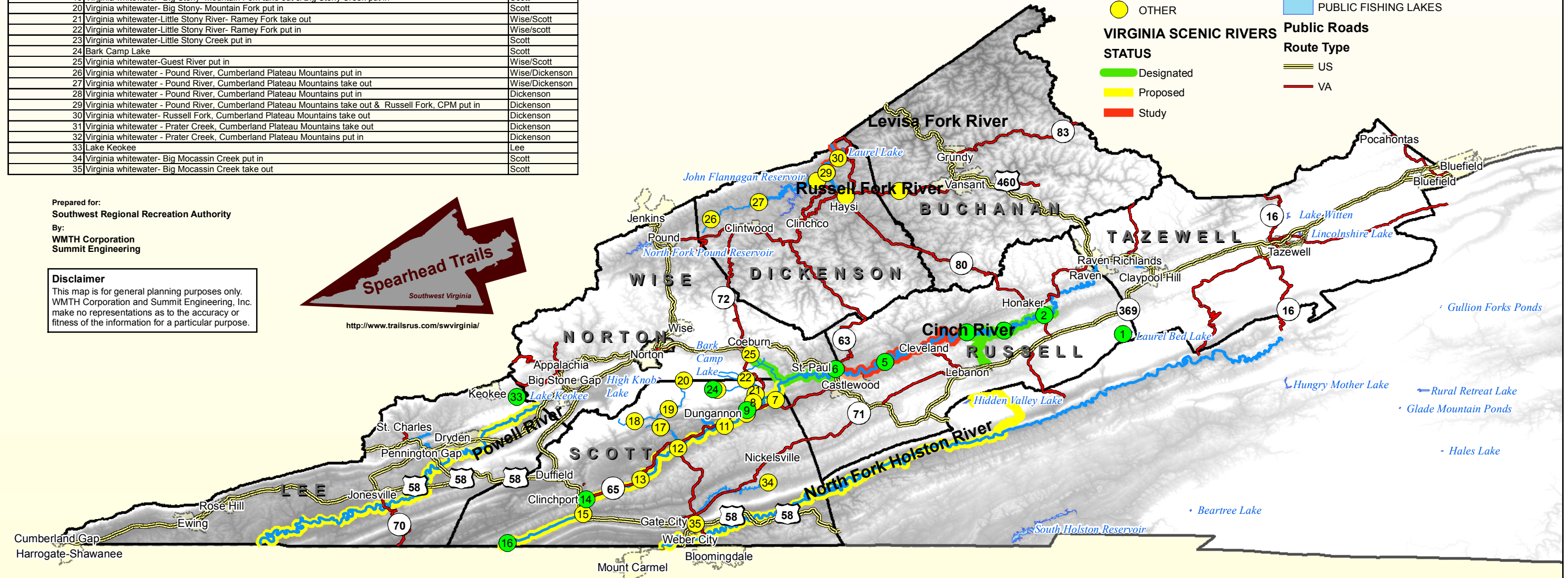
Legislatively Designated Scenic Rivers			
River Name	From	To	Length in mi.
Clinch River	Confluence with Little River	Rt. 645 (Nash Ford Bridge)	20
Guest River	Rte. 72	Confluence with Clinch River	6.3
Big Cedar Creek	Near Lebanon	Confluence with Clinch River	5.8
Clinch River	Route 58 in St. Paul	Confluence of the Guest River	9.2

Potential Components			
River Name	From	To	Length in mi.
Clinch River (desired)	Nash Ford	Rt. 58	23.7
Russell Fork (desired)	Entire River in Break Interstate Park	-	10.4
Powell River	Entire Length in Lee county	-	61.4
Clinch River	Confluence with Guest River	VA - TN Line	41.7
North Fork Holston	Confluence with Big Brumley Creek	Tennessee state line in Scott County	31.4

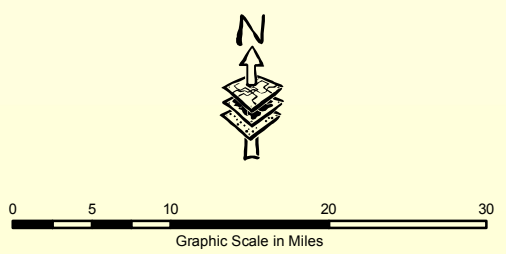
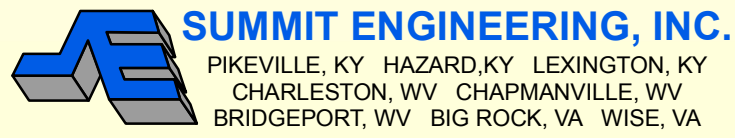
\*Source: Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation

- Legend**
- Boat / Canoe / Kayak Access
    - NAVIGABLE STREAMS
    - SELECTED ADDITIONAL STREAMS
  - Owner
    - DGIF
    - OTHER
  - VIRGINIA SCENIC RIVERS STATUS
    - Designated
    - Proposed
    - Study
  - Public Roads Route Type
    - US
    - VA
  - CITY BOUNDARIES
  - PUBLIC FISHING LAKES

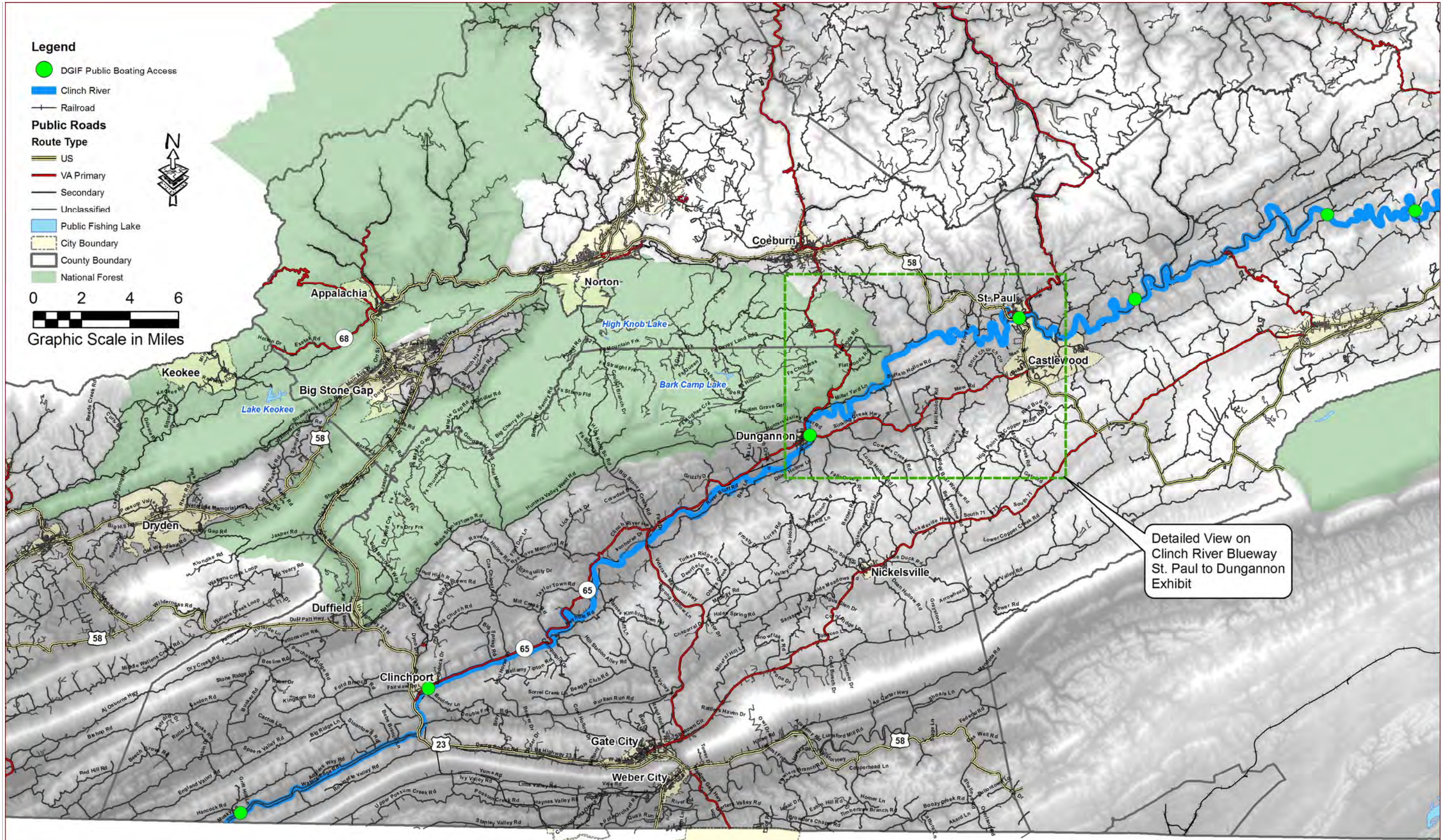


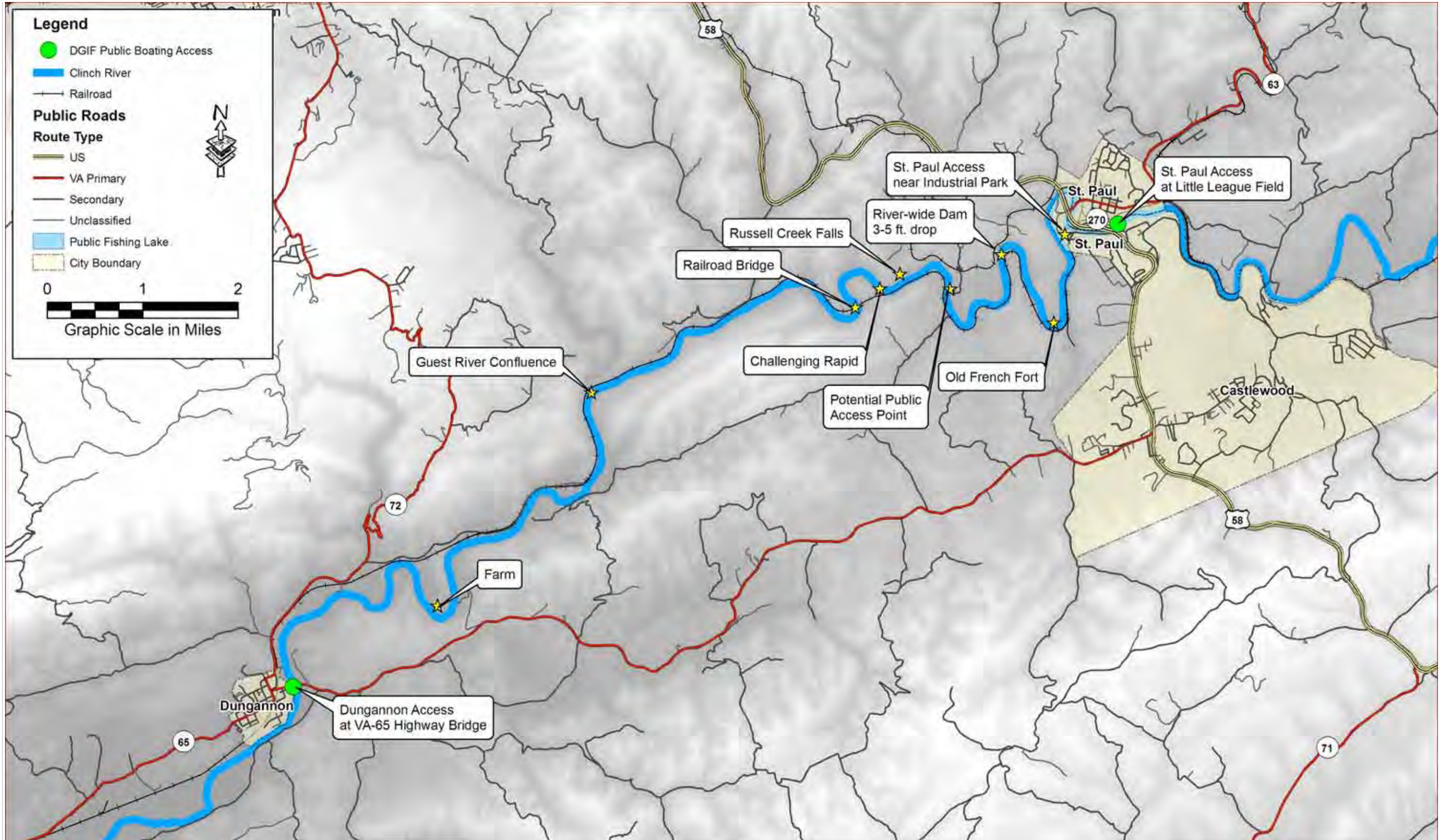
Prepared for:  
Southwest Regional Recreation Authority  
By:  
WMTH Corporation  
Summit Engineering

**Disclaimer**  
This map is for general planning purposes only. WMTH Corporation and Summit Engineering, Inc. make no representations as to the accuracy or fitness of the information for a particular purpose.



Float Trips				
River	To	From	Location	Length in Miles
Clinch	St. Paul	Dungannon	6 to 10	21.6
Little Stony Creek-Ramey Fork	North of Dungannon- Wise Co.	North of Dungannon - Scott Co.	22 to 21	3.2
Guest River	South of Coeburn	Dungannon	25 to 9	13.7
Little Stony Creek	Bark Camp Lake	North of Dungannon	23 to 8	7.6
Big Mocassin Creek	South of Nickelsville/East of Snowflake	Weber City	34 to 35	21.7
Big Stony- Mountain Fork	South of Norton on Scott/Wise Co. Line	Near 657 North of Fort Blackmore	20 to 19	5.2
Big Stony Creek	Near 657 North of Fort Blackmore	Northwest of Fort Blackmore Near 619	19 to 17	3.6
Big Stony Creek- Devil's Fork	Three Forks	Northwest of Fort Blackmore Near 619	18 to 17	4.3
Pound River	Norland	Flannagan Reservoir	26 to 27	7.8
Pound River	Flannagan Reservoir	Bartlick	28 to 29	2
Prater Creek	Prater	Haysi	32 to 31	7.75
Russell Fork	Bartlick	Garden Hole Rd.- Breaks Interstate Park	29 to 30	1





**ENGINEER'S OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST  
BASIC RIVER ACCESS**

ITEM NO.	ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
<b>1</b>	<b>RIGHT OF WAY</b>				
1a	Obtain Access Easement and Purchase Site Property (Note 1)	2.0	ACRE	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 16,000.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>GENERAL CONDITIONS</b>				
2a	Seeding	1	LS	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
2b	Landscape Allowance	1	LS	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 2,500.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>STATION FACILITIES</b>				
<b>3a</b>	<b>Site Access Improvement</b>				
1	Road Excavation and Grading/Ditch Construction	400	CY	\$ 6.00	\$ 2,400.00
2	Gravel Surfacing (access road and parking lot) (18' wide roadway)	970	SY	\$ 26.00	\$ 25,220.00
3	Asphalt Surfacing with Base Aggregate (access road and parking lot) (18' wide roadway)	0	SY	\$ 45.00	\$ -
4	Installation of CMP Drainage Culvert	20	LF	\$ 40.00	\$ 800.00
5	Right-of-Way Clearing/Tree Removal (40' Right of Way)	300	LF	\$ 2.00	\$ 600.00
<b>3b</b>	<b>River Access Ramp</b>				
1	Type I - Gravel - 5' width	1	LS	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
2	Type II - Gravel - 10' width	0	LS	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
3	Type III - Concrete 10' width	0	LS	\$ 7,500.00	\$ -
4	Type IV - Concrete 15' width	0	LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
<b>3c</b>	<b>Picnic Shelters</b>				
1	Basic Shelter with Concrete Slab (20'x24')	0	LS	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -
2	Basic Shelter with Men & Women's Restrooms & Showers	0	LS	\$ 75,000.00	\$ -
<b>3d</b>	<b>Station Amenities</b>				
1	Vending Machines (by vendor)				No Cost
2	40 Gallon Outdoor Garbage Can (Concrete)	0	Each	\$ 400.00	\$ -
3	Picnic Table - Pressure Treated Lumber	0	Each	\$ 200.00	\$ -
4	Picnic Table - Poly Resin	0	Each	\$ 750.00	\$ -
5	Park Bench	0	Each	\$ 500.00	\$ -
6	Charcoal Grill	0	Each	\$ 400.00	\$ -
7	Steel Fire Ring	0	Each	\$ 250.00	\$ -
8	Concrete Drinking Fountain	0	Each	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -
9	Security Lighting (Pole Mounted - Photo cell light)	1	Each	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
10	Signage	1	LS	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>3e</b>	<b>Gravel Parking Area</b>				
1	(See Site Access Improvements Section)				\$ -
<b>3f</b>	<b>Campground Areas</b>				
1	Tent Camp Area (brush clearing, grass or mulched area, added landscaping, etc.)	0	LS	\$ 2,500.00	\$ -
2	RV Camp Area (by private investor)				No Cost
<b>3g</b>	<b>Recreational Facilities for Campers</b>				
1	Sand Volleyball Court	0	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -
2	Basketball Court	0	LS	\$ 80,000.00	\$ -
3	Playground	0	LS	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -
<b>3h</b>	<b>Utilities</b>				
1	Water - Connect to Public Water System	0	LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
2	Water - Cistern Water System	0	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -
3	Sewer - Connect to Public Sewer System	0	LS	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
4	Sewer - Install Leach Bed Sewer System	0	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -
5	Sewer - Install Holding Tank Sewer System	0	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -
6	Sewer - Provide Portable Restroom (Costed for First Month's Rent) (See O&M Section for Annual Costs)	0	Each	\$ 150.00	\$ -
7	Power - Connect to Public Power System	1	LS	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
<b>3i</b>	<b>Canoe Liveries</b>				
1	Full Service Canoe Livery (by private investor)				No Cost
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 37,520.00</b>
	<b>TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST</b>				<b>\$ 56,020.00</b>

Notes:

1 Assumes all site property must be purchased. Assume \$8,000 per acre. Site acreage is estimated. Actual acreage may vary upon final station design.