

TOURISM OFFERINGS AND AMENITIES

OVERVIEW OF TOURISM AMENITIES AND OFFERINGS WITHIN THE SPEARHEAD TRAILS AREA

At the start of the five month study, an inventory of tourism offerings and amenities was compiled for all seven counties and the City of Norton to determine if the current infrastructure could handle an increase in visitors to the area and, if so, were there offerings available that would complement the Spearhead Trail System and encourage people to stay in the area longer. What the researchers found was that the Spearhead Trails region of Southwest Virginia is blessed with numerous tourism amenities, more than enough to entice potential trail users to stay multiple days.

Many of the businesses were then contacted to see if they could handle a significant increase in visitation to their establishment. All hotels, restaurants, camping facilities, and attractions contacted said that they could. Below is an overview of all of the offerings in the Spearhead Trails region. A more detailed listing is provided in the next section of this document.

FEDERAL AND STATE OFFERINGS

The Spearhead Trails area is blessed with a large national forest in five of its counties, two state parks, an interstate park and a national recreation area.

State & Federal Parks, Forests or Recreation Areas	Counties in which they are located
Natural Tunnel State Park	Scott
Wilderness Road State Park	Lee
Cumberland Gap National Historic Park	Lee
Breaks Interstate Park	Dickenson, Buchanan
George Washington/Jefferson National Forest	Dickenson, Lee, Scott, Tazewell, Wise, City of Norton
Mount Rogers National Recreation Area	Russell

THEMED DRIVING TOURS

The Spearhead Trails region is also blessed with six themed driving tours and two bicycle routes that tend to entice people to tour the back roads of southwest Virginia and experience more of its many offerings than if they were to stay on the major thoroughfares and interstate highways.

Themed Driving Tours	Counties they cross into
Virginia Coal Heritage Trail	Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell
The Crooked Road	Dickenson, Lee, Scott, Wise, City of Norton
Wilderness Road	Lee, Scott
Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail	Lee
Rincastle/Cumberland Gap Turnpike	Russell, Tazewell
Round the Mountain SW VA Artisan Network	In the Works
TransAmerica Bike Route	Dickenson, Russell, Tazewell
Heart of Appalachia Bike Trail	All 7 Counties plus Norton, Bluefield, Tazewell, Grundy

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CULTURAL VENUES

Below is an overview of the many cultural venues offered throughout the Spearhead Trails region of the State. The seven-county area is blessed with eleven museums, eight cultural centers, art galleries, music venues and numerous historic structures open to the public.

MUSEUMS AND THE ARTS
Dickenson (3)
Dickenson County Arts Center & Gallery
Ralph Stanley Museum & Traditional Mountain Music Center
Dennis Reed Railroad & Coal Museum
Lee (3)
Appalachian African American Cultural Center
Long Hollow Log School Museum
Historic Martin's Station
Russell (5)
Honnaker Heritage Museum
Cleveland History & Heritage Museum
Dante Coal Mining & Railroad Museum
Dickenson Bundy Log House
Family Bluegrass Barn
Scott (3)
Wilderness Road Block House
A.P. Carter Museum & Carter Fold
The Homeplace Mountain Farm & Museum
Tazewell (5)
Appalachian Arts Center
Burkes Garden
Pocahontas Exhibition Mine & Coal Heritage Museum
The Sanders House Center and Outbuildings
Historic Crab Orchard Museum
Wise (9)
Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
Harry W. Meadors Jr. Coal Museum
June Tolliver House and Folkart Center
Lonesome Pine School & History Center
Historic Lays Hardware Center for the Arts
Derby Coal Camp
John Fox Jr. Museum
Appalachian Children's Theater
City of Norton (2)
Virginia-Kentucky Opry
Appalachian Tradition- Country Cabin II

TOURISM OFFERINGS AND AMENITIES

COMPARISON BETWEEN WEST VIRGINIA AND VIRGINIA

Below is a chart providing an overview of our findings for the Spearhead Trails area of southwest Virginia.

Two years prior to this, a similar inventory was compiled for eight counties in West Virginia. Five of the counties are located in the heart of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails area. The second chart provides an inventory of the tourism offerings and amenities of those eight counties in West Virginia.

TOURISM OFFERINGS AND AMENITIES WITHIN THE SPEARHEAD TRAILS AREA OF SW VIRGINIA

ATTRactions	Buchanan	Dickenson	Lee	Russell	Scott	Tazewell	Wise	City-Norton	TOTAL
Cultural	0	3	3	5	3	5	9	2	30
Community Parks	6	0	1	2	6	5	12	4	36
State Parks	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4*
National Parks/Rec.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3*
National Forests	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1*
Driving Tours	3	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	8*
Lodging Facilities	4	12	5	3	5	7	8	4	48
Campgrounds	2	2	1	1	1	0	7	1	15
Golf Courses	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	8
Unique Restaurants	4	4	5	6	3	3	7	6	38
Vineyards	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Speedway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	20	28	24	25	28	27	50	21	193

*There are 30 different museums and cultural centers within the Spearhead Trails region. (See following page for breakdown)

**There are a total of 2 state parks, 1 interstate park, 3 federal lands (national parks, national forests, national recreation area) and 8 driving tours.

TOURISM OFFERINGS AND AMENITIES OFFERED IN EIGHT COUNTIES OF WEST VIRGINIA

ATTRactions	Braxton	Clay	Fayette	Lincoln	Logan	McDowell	Mingo	Wyoming	TOTAL
Cultural	2	0	7	0	1	3	6	1	20
Community Centers/ Parks	4	1	2	3	1	0	0	1	12
State Parks	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	4
National Parks/Rec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Forests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Driving Tours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lodging Facilities	6	4	8	0	15	4	12	5	54
Campgrounds	1	1	1	0	3	1	1	2	10
Golf Courses	0	0	5	0	1	0	2	4	12
Unique Restaurants	3	4	4	6	9	12	3	2	43
Vineyards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speedway	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	16	11	29	9	31	21	24	15	156

*Not listed are the whitewater rafting venues in both Virginia and West Virginia.

TOURISM OFFERINGS AND AMENITIES

A comparative analysis between the two regions reveal that in most cases, SW Virginia has as much or more amenities to offer visitors than West Virginia. In fact, upon further review of the regions, it has been found that the current infrastructure and carrying capacity in SW Virginia far exceeds West Virginia.

COMPARISON OF TOURISM OFFERINGS IN SW VIRGINIA & WEST VIRGINIA

ATTRactions	SW VIRGINIA	WEST VIRGINIA
Cultural	30	20
Community Parks	36	12
State Parks	3	4
National Parks/Recreation	2	0
National Forests	1	0
Themed Driving Tours	8	2
Lodging Facilities	48	54
Campgrounds	15	10
Golf Courses	8	12
Unique Restaurants	38	43
Vineyards	2	0
Speedway	0	1
TOTAL	193	156

Part of this is due to the current attractions and amenities available as noted above, but part of this is due to the topography. Similar to eastern Kentucky, the coalfields of West Virginia tend to have steeper mountains and less flat buildable space than SW Virginia. In fact, without literally moving a mountain, some areas where tourism is occurring cannot expand nor accommodate additional development. A large portion of SW Virginia offers larger valleys, more rolling hills and much more “flat lands” in which to build. More research would be needed to determine exactly how much more.