

CHAPTER III: ROUTE, MAPS & ROAD DESCRIPTIONS **Of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail**



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This Chapter addresses the #1 FHWA requirement for a CMP by providing maps identifying the corridor boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, and land uses in the corridor. U. S. Geological Survey maps highlighting the routes are located on pages 33 thru 39. A mile by mile inventory of the route is provided in Appendix A and includes both descriptions and photos. This chapter also provides recommendations and suggestions for modifying the route to make it possible for all vehicle types to travel the route as well as include some byway intrinsic qualities that may otherwise be missed (#13 on the FHWA requirements). An evaluation of design standards and how proposed changes may affect the byway's intrinsic qualities has not been fully addressed.

In 2007, the Virginia Department of Transportation erected state byway signage along the entire byway route. We sincerely applaud their work. They did an excellent job in making sure a traveler not familiar with the route nor the area could find their way.



Signage along State Byway

This chapter provides a breakdown of the entire route and detailed maps of the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail, St. Paul Loop and Norton Loop. There are only a few places where additional signs are needed to avoid confusion and to provide either confirmation or a warning of an upcoming turn in the route. These sign locations are noted in both *CHAPTER VII: Issues to Address* and in *APPENDIX A: Snapshot View of the Byway*.

Byway signage is also needed:

- Directing travelers traveling the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail to:
 - Take Business 421 through Cedar Bluff.
 - Go through the communities of both Richlands and Jewell Ridge.
 - Turn left on Hwy 680 to Hwy 460 to take the historic route through Buchanan County or right on Hwy 628 for the more scenic route.
 - Sign at Bearwallow Road to go through the community of Dante
 - And the left turn off Hwy 63 at the light through the Town of St. Paul.

- Directing travelers traveling the St. Paul Loop to:
 - Get into the right lane and turn right onto Hwy 65 (Mew Road) coming off of Hwy 58 otherwise one will miss the turn.
 - Take Hwy 23 E down to the dam and past the interpretive display and scenic pull-off for the Copper Creek Railroad Trestle.
 - Take Hwy 72 through downtown Coeburn and Tom's Creek.

- Directing travelers traveling the Norton Loop



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- Turn onto Hwy 600 in downtown Appalachia which takes one to the coal towns of Stonega and Derby (two of the most complete coal towns along the entire route).
- Through the community of Big Stone Gap, taking one past the Coal Museum and other designated sites along the route.

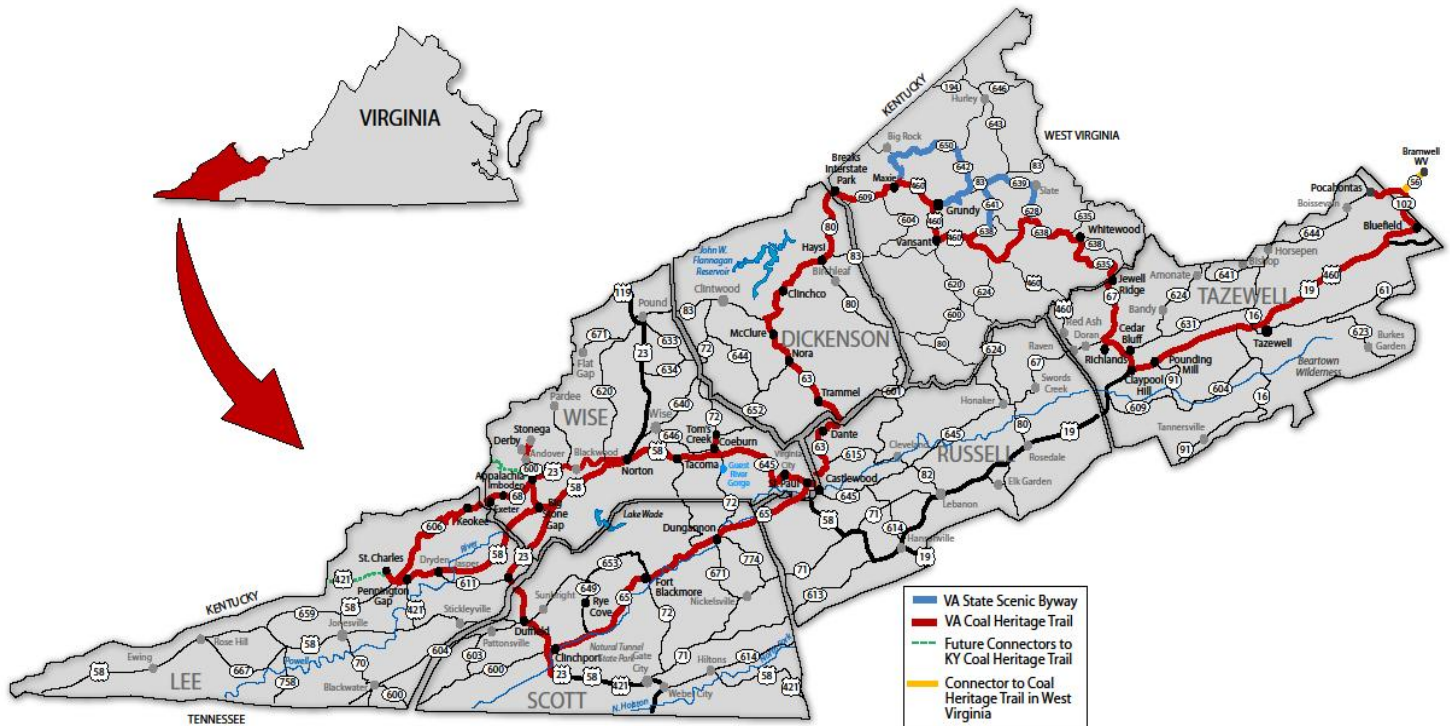
Recommendation:

The Virginia Coal Heritage Advisory Committee and participating communities need to immediately follow-up with the Virginia Department of Transportation (V-DOT) to ensure byway signage is installed at all necessary and remaining locations where it has been identified as a need. Note: Action has already been taken with V-DOT to address the byway sign recommended at the turn-off from Hwy 58 onto Mew Road (Hwy 65).

DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

The Virginia Coal Heritage Trail officially begins at the Pocahontas Exhibition Mine in Pocahontas Virginia and travels 325 miles through seven counties. Each of the counties along the route developed individual brochures highlighting their particular section of the trail. The information contained in each of the brochures is provided online at trailsrus.com/vacoaltrail under each of the counties. Recognizing the fact that the average visitor would probably not be stopping at a county line, it was decided to provide overall maps of the entire route in each of the publications.

MAP OF THE VIRGINIA COAL HERITAGE TRAIL STATE SCENIC BYWAY



Working with the communities along the route, it was also decided that it would be best to divide the trail into three parts for better management as well as to enable the traveler to begin and end their trips in areas offering amenities such as gas, food and lodging. An inventory of basic amenities offered along the route is provided in APPENDIX B.

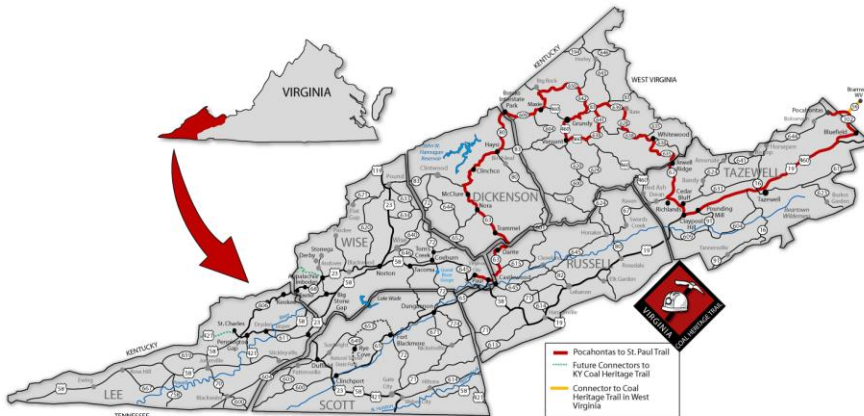
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The route was divided into the Pocahontas to St. Paul Trail, the St. Paul Loop and the Norton Loop. The beauty of loops is that it enables the traveler to start anywhere along the trail and always end back where they originally started. Maps of each of the routes are provided on the following pages along with a short overview of the towns one will pass and a few of the sites one will see along the way.

**Note: Recommended change in a section of the route through Buchanan County.
See CHAPTER VIII: Public Participation – Buchanan County for details.*

POCAHONTAS TO ST. PAUL TRAIL



The Pocahontas Trail starts in Tazewell County, traveling through the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, and Russell and ending at St. Paul near the Wise County/Russell County line.

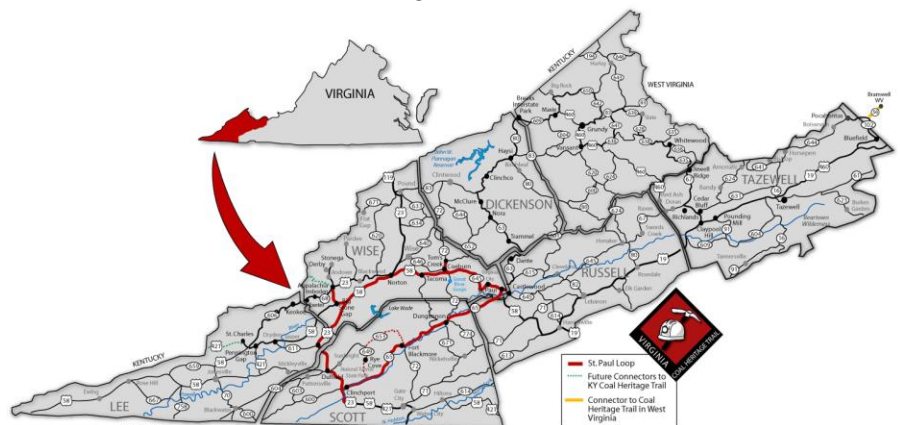
The main section of the trail starts in Pocahontas, the first and largest mining town in the Virginia coalfields. It is a continuous 157 mile trail from Pocahontas to the community of St. Paul through the counties of Tazewell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell & Wise. The primary stops along the way are in the communities of Pocahontas, Crab Orchard, Richlands, Jewell Ridge, Mountain Top Golf Course, Grundy, Breaks Interstate Park, Haysi, Clinchco, McClure, Dante, and St. Paul. There are over 50 coal-related sites visible from this section of the byway. *Original route through Buchanan (shown above)*



Another unique feature of this particular trail is the community in which it starts (Pocahontas) is less than 4 miles from Bramwell WV, another historic coal camp community and a stop on West Virginia's National Coal Heritage Trail.

ST. PAUL LOOP*

The St. Paul Loops travels a short distance into Russell County before crossing into the counties of Scott, Lee, and Wise, ending back where one started.

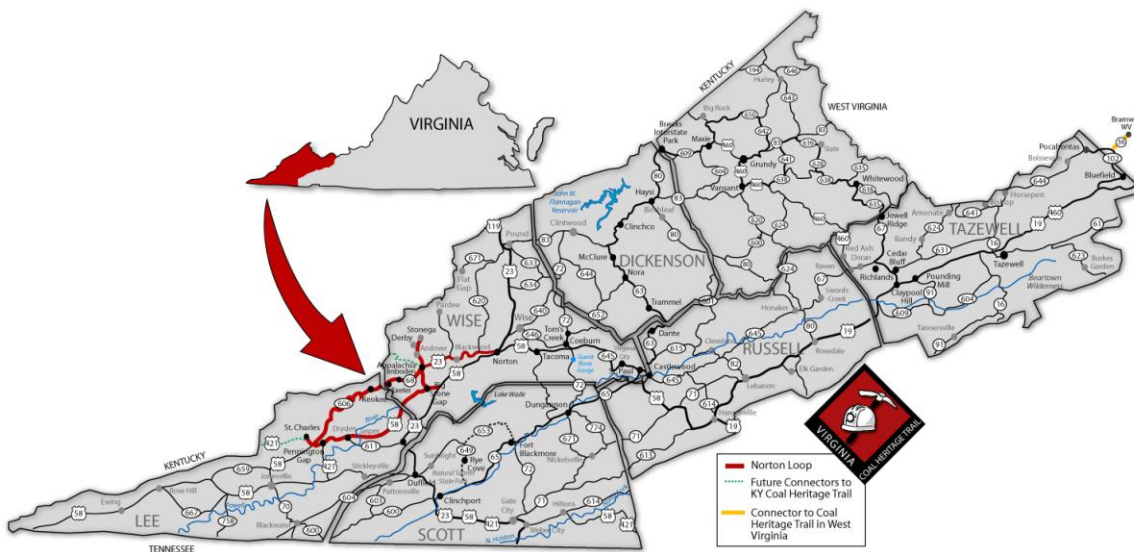




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The St. Paul Loop is an 87 mile section starts at St. Paul and travels along 58A, Hwy 65, U.S. 23 then back to Hwy 58A passing through or by the communities of St. Paul, Dungannon, Clinchfield, Duffield, Big Stone Gap, Norton, Tacoma, Coeburn, Tom's Creek before ending back at St. Paul. One has a choice of going either east or west on Hwy 58A but will eventually end back in St. Paul. The focus of this section is railroads and how they played an intricate part in the story of coal in Southwest Virginia. Included on this trip are two depots, trestles, the Natural Tunnel State Park, a railroad museum and more.

NORTON LOOP*



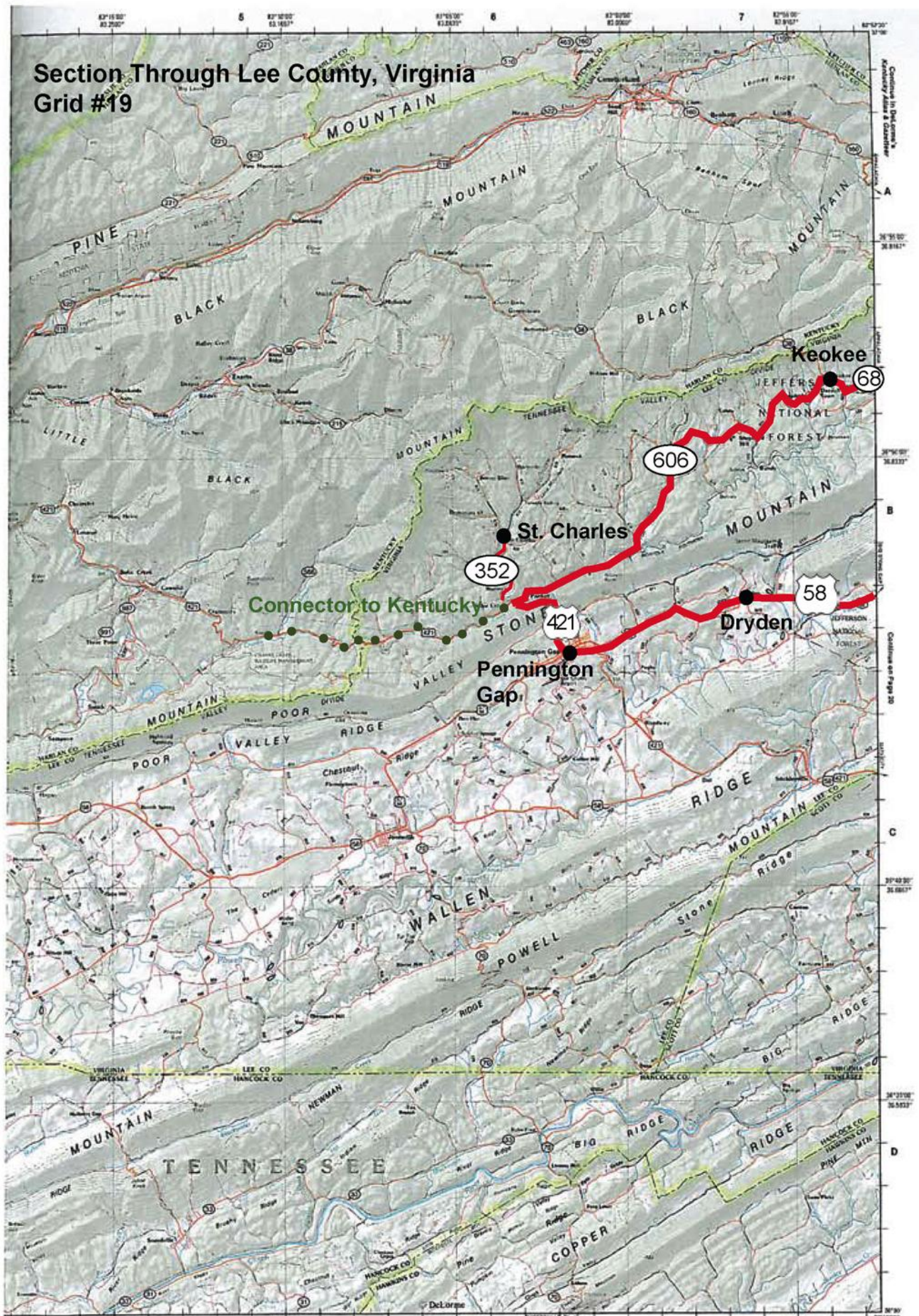
The Norton Loop travels through the City of Norton, Wise County, Lee County then back into Wise County before ending back where one started.

The third section is also a loop that begins and ends wherever one starts. This 68-mile loop travels through downtown Norton through the communities of Appalachia, Pennington Gap and Big Stone Gap taking a few back roads past old and new mining camps such as Kooke, Exeter and Imboden. Many of these roads are curvy, twisty with just a few hairpin turns. Some of the back roads are not heavily traveled which makes this section ideal for motorcycles and those wanting a unique and interesting ride. Within this loop, there are over 30 coal-related sites to see.

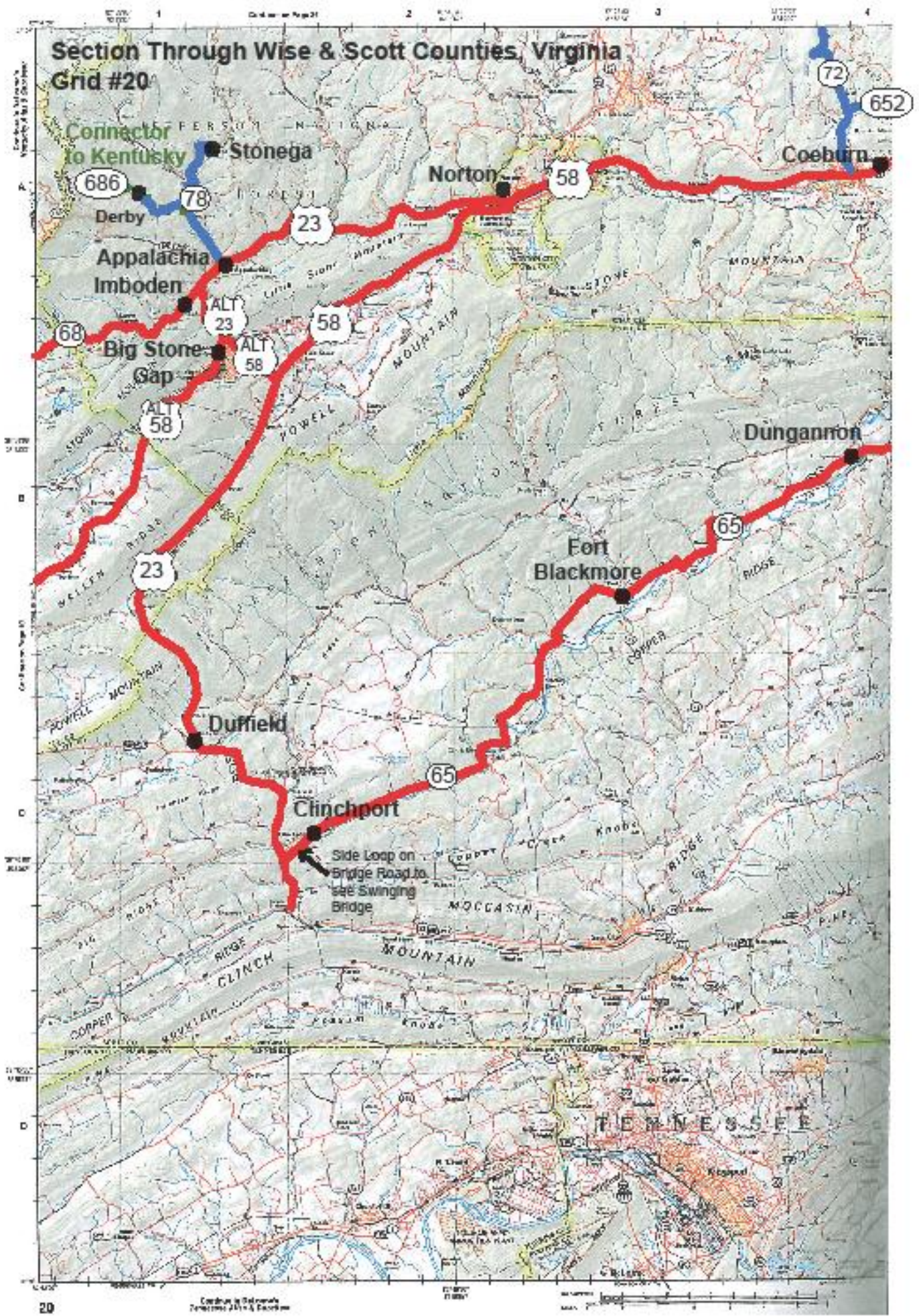
**As noted, loops enable the traveler to start anywhere along the trail and always end back where they originally started. More in-depth road descriptions for each section of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail is provided towards the end of the chapter.*

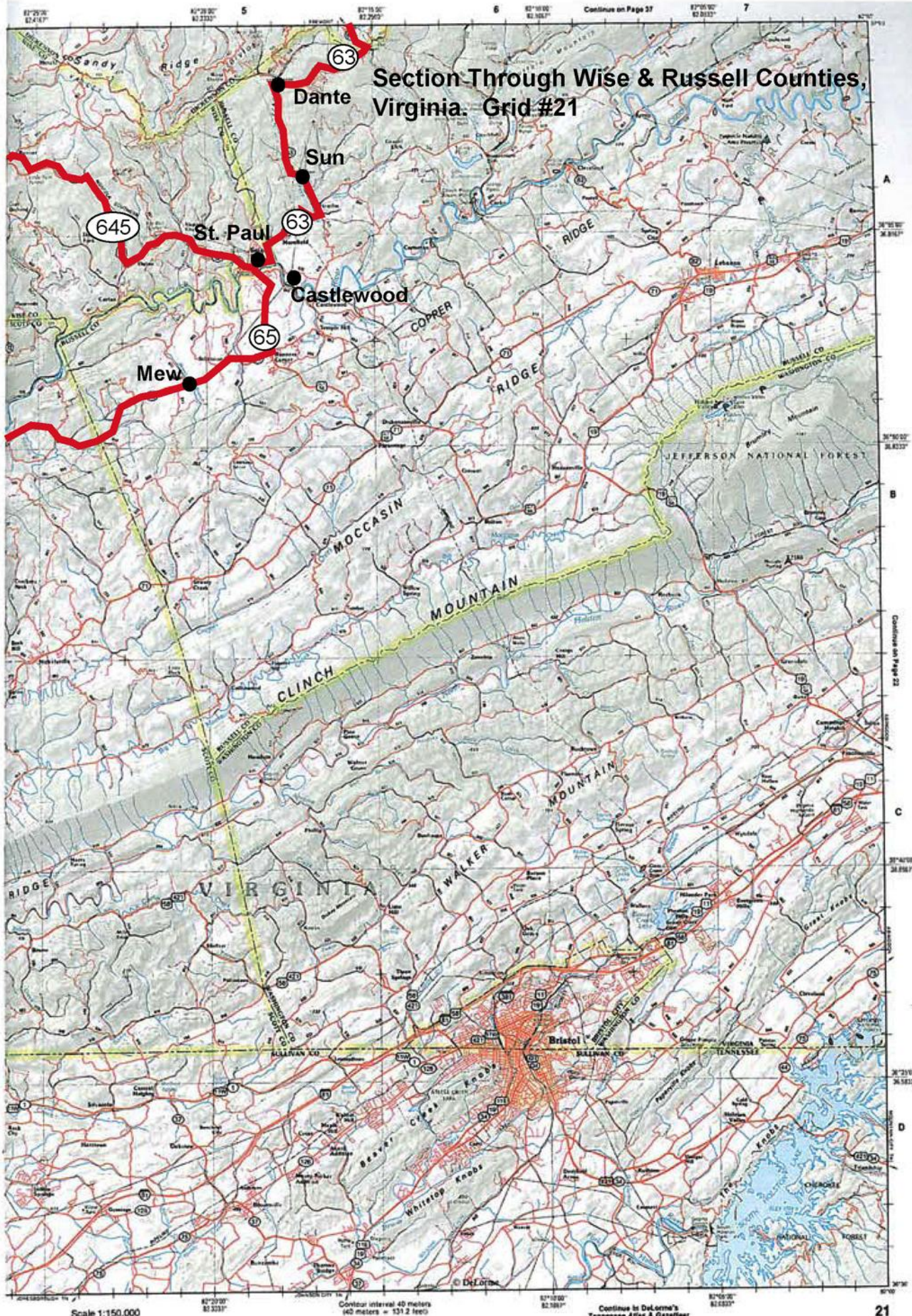
On the following pages are topographical maps of the route.

Section Through Lee County, Virginia Grid #19



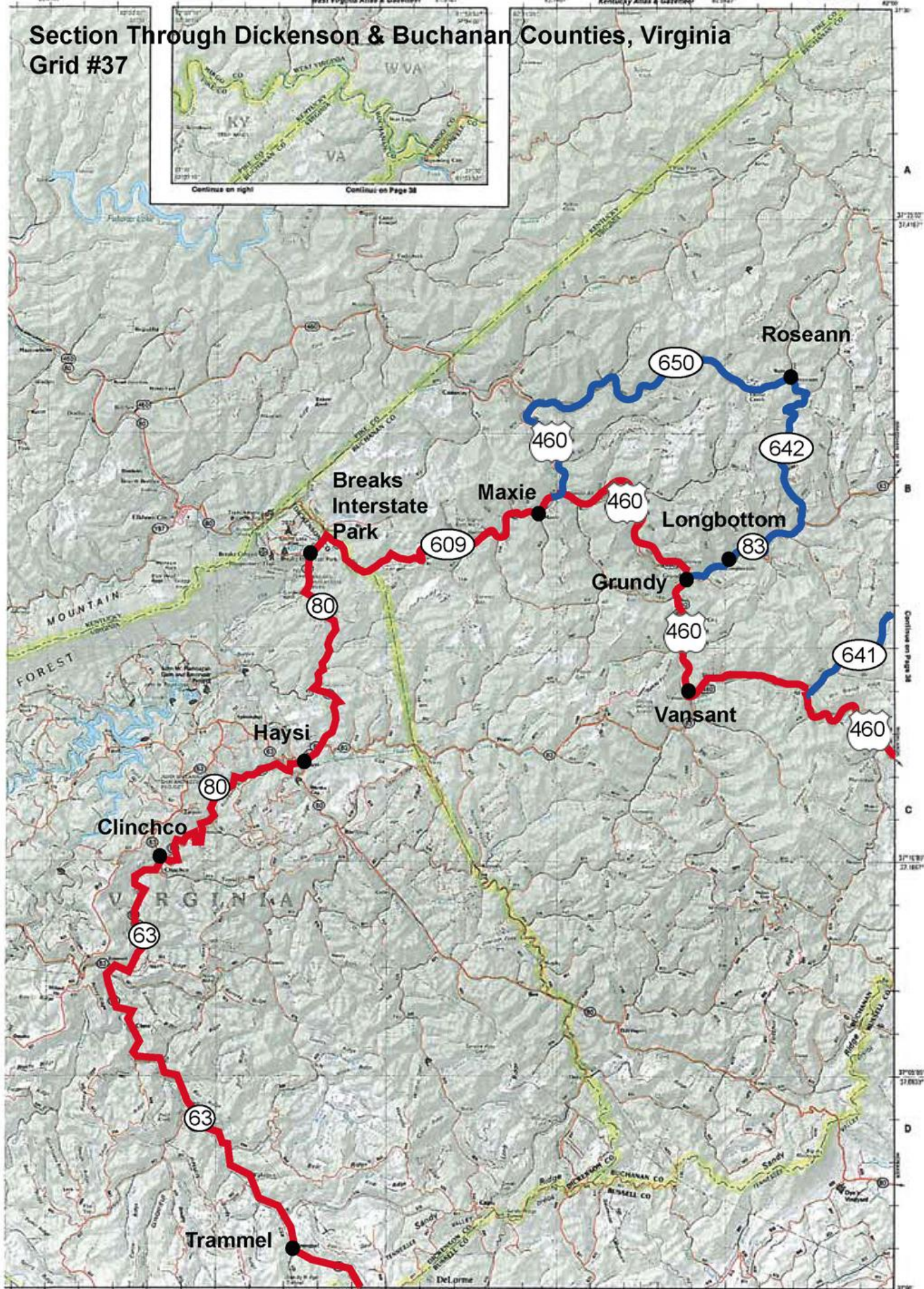
Section Through Wise & Scott Counties, Virginia Grid #20



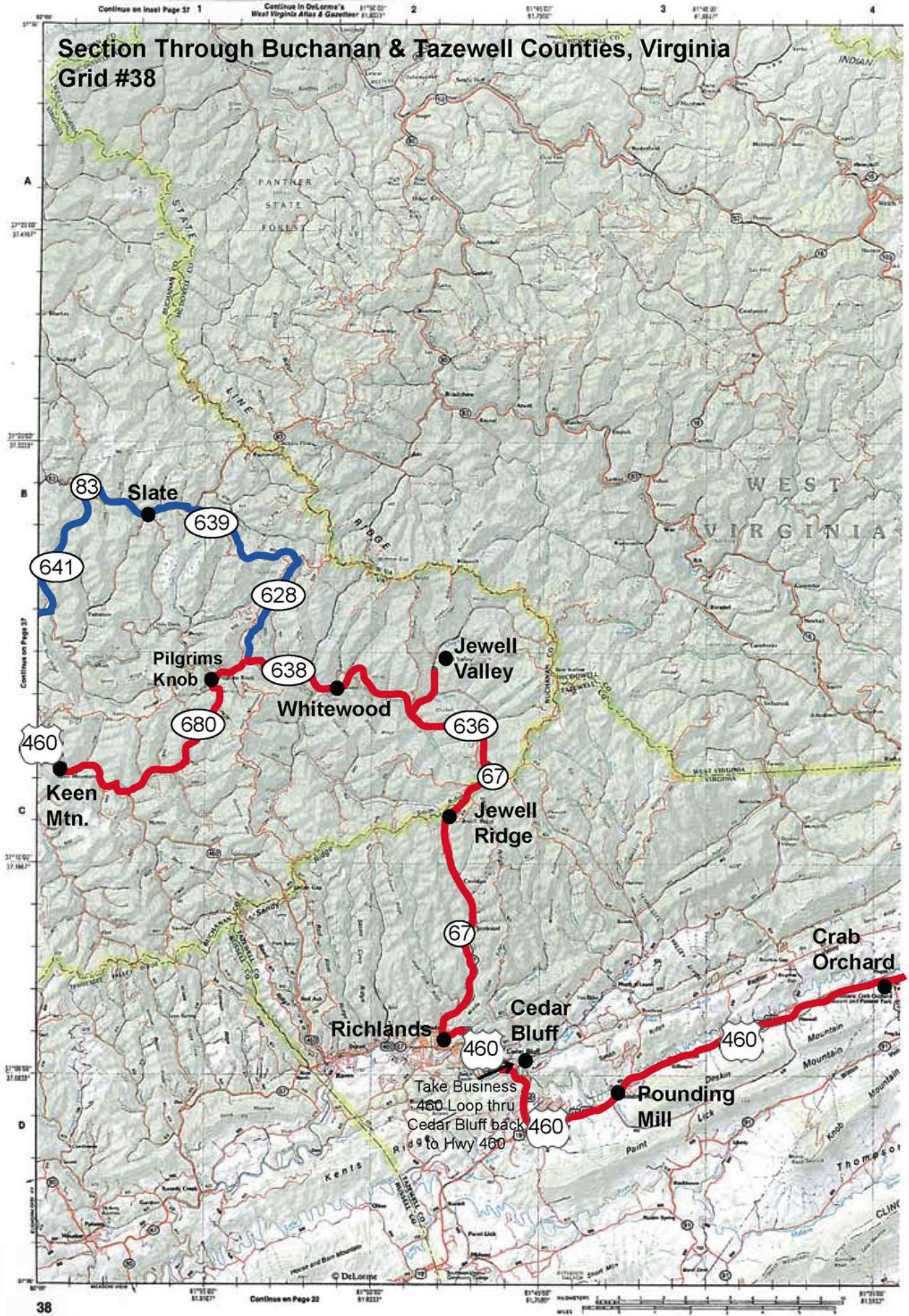


**Section Through Wise & Russell Counties,
Virginia. Grid #21**

Section Through Dickenson & Buchanan Counties, Virginia Grid #37



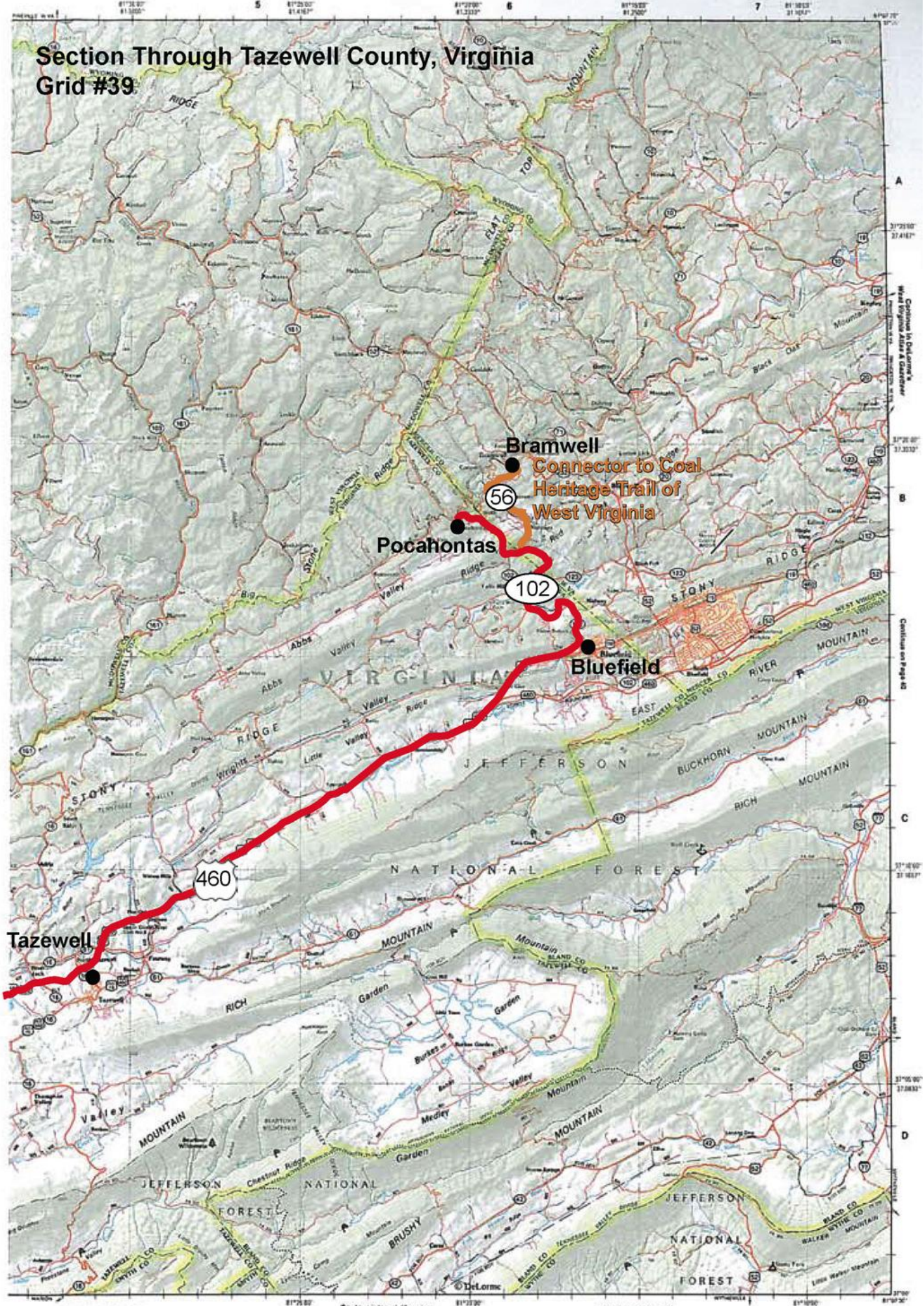
Section Through Buchanan & Tazewell Counties, Virginia Grid #38



Continues on Page 37

Take Business 460 Loop thru Cedar Bluff back to Hwy 460

Section Through Tazewell County, Virginia Grid #39



Bramwell
Connector to Coal
Heritage Trail of
West Virginia

Pocahontas

Bluefield

Tazewell

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GENERAL HIGHWAY/ROAD INFORMATION

The Virginia Coal Heritage Trail is located entirely within the Bristol District on paved roads. Below is an overall review of the types of roads, total miles and surface types in each of the counties.

OVERALL MILES OF ROADS PER COUNTY

Buchanan County	187.04 Miles of Primary Roads 925.64 Miles of Secondary Roads
Dickenson County	168.43 Miles of Primary Roads 810.72 Miles of Secondary Roads
Lee County	351.11 Miles of Primary Roads 1,146.22 Miles of Secondary Roads
Russell County	295.84 Miles of Primary Roads 1,184.07 Miles of Secondary Roads
Scott County	293.64 Miles of Primary Roads 1,402.34 Miles of Secondary Roads 6.90 Miles of Frontage
Tazewell County	367.21 Miles of Primary Roads 944.75 Miles of Secondary Roads 2.12 Miles of Frontage
Wise County	337.69 Miles of Primary Roads 804.46 Miles of Secondary Roads 4.72 Miles of Frontage

SURFACE TYPES

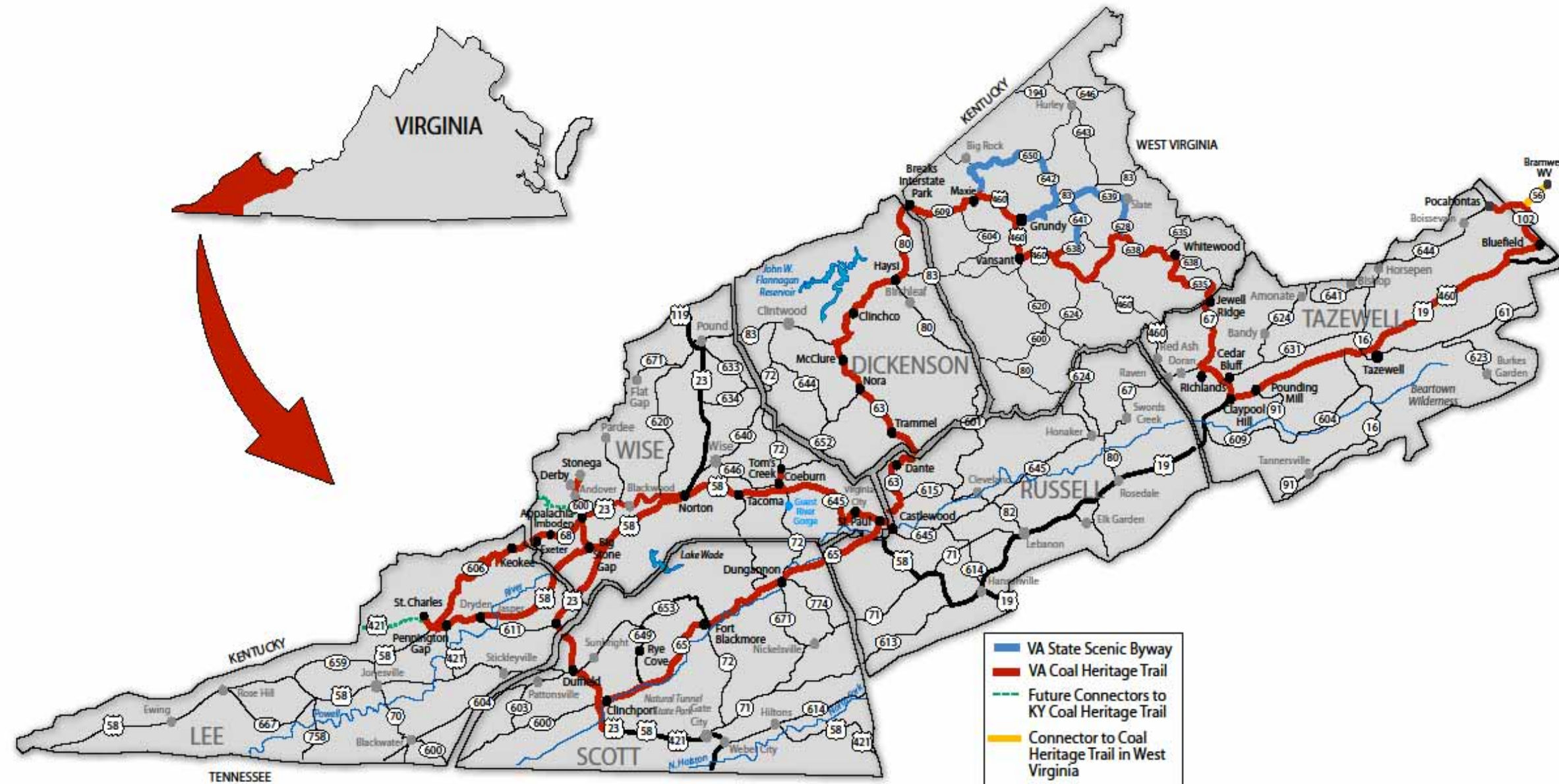
COUNTY	PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE	BITUMINOUS CONCRETE	TOTAL PAVED	TOTAL HARD SURFACED
BUCHANAN	--	72.82	72.82	72.82
DICKENSON	--	81.65	81.65	81.65
LEE	--	114.36	114.36	114.36
RUSSELL	--	100.06	100.10	106.29
SCOTT	--	117.78	117.78	118.33
TAZEWELL	--	125.68	125.68	125.78
WISE	--	113.17	113.17	114.01

PRIMARY SURFACE

COUNTY	DIVIDED	4+ LANES	3 LANE	2 LANE				
				24+	22	20	18	16-
BUCHANAN	15.54	4.97	0.38	10.57	5.07	34.71	1.58	--
DICKENSON	--	--	5.13	25.23	10.58	40.71	--	--
LEE	47.93	1.18	2.80	11.27	20.00	28.07	.89	2.22
RUSSELL	41.73	--	--	.87	6.04	51.46	.25	5.94
SCOTT	24.25	2.00	4.76	15.60	3.86	42.19	25.31	.08
TAZEWELL	51.38	1.38	.21	2.50	4.78	38.34	21.43	11.25
WISE	53.44	.14	1.12	19.69	8.27	28.88	2.82	.41



PROPOSED COAL HERITAGE TRAIL NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY ROUTE THROUGH SEVEN COUNTIES IN SW VIRGINIA



This 300+ mile scenic byway goes past numerous coal camps, historic buildings, and beautiful vistas.