Vibrant Communities

The Clinch River

In addition to its remarkable natural heritage, the Clinch provides exceptional canoeing, fishing, tubing, bird watching, swimming, and environmental education opportunities. The Clinch winds its way through remote ridges, enchanting forests, pastoral valleys, and small towns offering an incredible outdoor experience.

Natural Tunnel State Park

Natural Tunnel State Park has been attracting visitors to the mountains of Southwest Virginia for more than 100 years. This 953-acre park offers not only spectacular sights, but also swimming (seasonally), camping, hiking, rental cabins, picnic tables, restrooms, amphitheater, historic blacksmith, chariot, and a variety of interpretive/educational programs. Visit www.virginiastateparks.gov.

Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve

Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve is characterized by fascinating geological formations and a diverse array of rare plants, animals and natural communities. This 776-acre preserve has four miles of hiking trails, fishing along Big Cedar Creek and the Clinch River, a suspension footbridge over Big Cedar Creek, canoeing and kayaking between Puckett's Hole and Nudie Ford on the Clinch River, picnics, tables, and day use shelters. Bicycles are only permitted on designated trails. Horse-back riding, rock climbing, off-road vehicles, camping, and collecting plants, animals and minerals are prohibited. Visit www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage.

Channels State Forest

Channels State Forest, covering 4,376 acres of hardwood forest and rare plant species, contains a 720-acre parcel that has been dedicated in perpetuity as the Channels Natural Area Preserve. The Preserve is known for its impressive 400-million year old sandstones outcropping that visitors can walk through and explore. Activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting and fishing. A State Forest Use Permit is required for hunting, trapping, fishing, biking and horseback riding on Virginia State Forests. Horseback riding is restricted to existing roads and not on the Channels Summit Spruce Trail as this trail is foot-travel only. Visit www.dof.virginia.gov.

Jefferson National Forest

Jefferson National Forest covers 690,000 acres of hardwood forests, providing habitat for a wide variety of species of plants and animals. Hiking, mountain biking, camping, and fishing are the most popular activities but boating, bird watching, picnicking, swimming, hunting, and horseback riding are among the wide variety of recreation opportunities to enjoy. Visit www.fs.fed.us.

The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) is a pioneering effort to build local economies in Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley—one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed scale with many local partners, this collaborative grassroots effort is connecting downtown revitalization, outdoor recreation, water quality, entrepreneurship and environmental education along the Clinch River.

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