



Biscuit Run State Park  
Scottsville Road (State Route 20)  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

# **Biscuit Run State Park**

## **MASTER PLAN**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
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# **BISCUIT RUN STATE PARK**

## **Master Plan Executive Summary October 2013**

Biscuit Run State Park is located in Albemarle County just south of the City of Charlottesville along Biscuit Run. The park consists of approximately 1,195 acres with frontage on Routes 20 and 631. The Commonwealth acquired the land from Forest Lodge LLC in December 2009. The developer had intended to construct a subdivision, as well as retail and office space, on 828 acres, but instead sold the land to the state for \$9.8 million and tax credits.

This original master plan for Biscuit Run State Park was developed in accordance with the master planning process set forth in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. An advisory committee comprised of Albemarle County and Charlottesville residents, adjacent landowners, government officials, user groups, and local businesses helped craft a master plan with the guidance of the public. As part of the development of the park master plan, goals and objectives and a park purpose statement were developed. The purpose statement for Biscuit Run is:

*To provide opportunities for people to engage and learn from the unique natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of Albemarle County and the Commonwealth by connecting to urban and rural recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.*

Established goals provide for conservation of existing park resources, a wide range of recreational day-use activities, overnight camping and cabin facilities, educational and interpretive programs, and management and maintenance of the park.

Many visitors are expected to visit Biscuit Run once the full facility development is complete, thus providing a variety of economic benefits to the community and the state at large. There will be positive economic impacts from development costs, permanent and seasonal jobs, and general expenditures of visitors in the park and the surrounding area. At the completion of Biscuit Run's Phase I development the annual park and visitor spending is estimated at approximately \$1.8 million plus creation of an additional 32 jobs. Of this, approximately \$992,470 is estimated to be the local economic benefit. Master plan recommendations designed to increase visitation and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should have a further positive impact on the region's economic vitality.

Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville continue to attract new residents, making it one of the most highly populated areas in Virginia. As the population of Albemarle County continues to grow, demand for enjoying traditional family-oriented outdoor recreation activities and access to open space areas will be met in part by the development of Biscuit Run State Park. The park is in close proximity to the City of Charlottesville and the many miles of planned park and connecting trails will provide popular close to home trail access for area residents. Overnight facilities will help attract visitors from throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

Biscuit Run State Park is not far from U.S. Bicycle Route 76, and the proposed James River Heritage Trail along Route 20 would provide a direct connection from the park to Scottsville and the James River. Other ideal connections would include a shared-use path from Route 20 to

Avon Street and trail connections to the Virginia Discovery Museum at the downtown mall and the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center at Darden Towe Park. Improvements along Old Lynchburg Road could provide a connection to Walnut Hill Park as well as another route into the city.

Existing trails not far from the park include the Monticello Trail, 15 miles of single-track mountain bike trails at Walnut Creek Park, and the Rivanna River Trail, which circumnavigates the city and links to many other outdoor activity opportunities. Scenic roadways nearby include the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway and Natural Heritage Area, Skyline Drive, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Planned access to Biscuit Run State Park is along State Route 20, Scottsville Road. There is also an access on Route 631, Old Lynchburg Road, which provides access to the private in-holdings on the west side of the park. No public roads bisect the park. Except for the 32+/-acre in-holding in the western section of the park with its easement for access, the lands that comprise the park are contiguous. The long property boundary outlines the cross-like park shape with many adjacent private land holdings. Several informal trails established by hikers, mountain bikers and all-terrain vehicles connect the park to adjacent private lands creating management challenges with no current on-site staff.

A system of existing unpaved trails and single lane farm roads provide access for park maintenance and management. With improvements and connectors, portions of these trails can be used for a multi-use trail system. Some of these single lane roads will be upgraded to function as part of the interior park road system connecting trailheads, day-use areas, and the environmental education center.

Biscuit Run State Park is located in the Northern Piedmont physiographic province and situated just east of the Blue Ridge. The topography is dominated by three low ridges that are incised by downcutting ravines on their flanks and separated by broad, flat floodplains along Biscuit Run and one of its major tributaries. The site has a long history of agricultural use. Much of it was cleared at one time, and the portions that currently support the oldest forest have been cut over. The current land cover is a mosaic of old fields, some open and some in shrubs and early-successional pine – hardwood forests. Three areas of older hardwood forest occupy the higher and steeper parts of the landscape.

The banks along Biscuit Run, a stream that defines a portion of the property boundary, are high and steep. Ongoing bank erosion is a challenge to proposed facility development. Development along the bank, including wading and fishing sites, will need to be built and managed through appropriate methods to create a healthier streambed. Biscuit Run is not suitable for boating or swimming.

A wide range of soil types is present on the uplands, including very sandy and stony loams on the high ridges and deeper loams and silt loams on the side slopes. Most upland soils on the site appear to be strongly to extremely acidic, with low fertility, but richer vegetation in a few spots suggests local areas of higher soil fertility. The soils within Biscuit Run State Park are marginal for most construction activities and include areas with a high water table. Electricity is located within the park, and local water and sewer infrastructure is in close proximity. Connection to public water and sewer lines is planned for Phase I development.

Proposed park facility development includes day-use, over-night and trail facilities. Phase I of the three-phase development plan for Biscuit Run State Park includes basic infrastructure: roads,

trails, utilities, maintenance and administrative facilities; day-use recreation areas; and a discovery/visitor center. Non-motorized trails, picnicking, playgrounds, and play areas will attract day-use visitors. Plans for later phases include a multi-purpose pavilion/amphitheater, additional trails, and overnight accommodations.

The proposed discovery/ visitor center will interpret the park's natural and historic resources. The actual interpretive themes will be determined through the development of the park's *visitor experience plan*. The master plan includes a multi-purpose pavilion/amphitheater to accommodate a variety of music, dance, and educational programming. A recreational water feature is planned near the campground. Other overnight use areas include a group camp and a cabin area.

Please find the Biscuit Run State Park Phased Development Plan on next page.

## **Biscuit Run Phased Development Plan**

The development plan has three phases. Phase I is primarily focused in the eastern portion of the park beginning with access from Route 20, Scottsville Road, the main entrance to the park. The other phases, as listed below, expand the footprint of the park to the north and west (see Map).

### **Phase 1**

- Contact Station
- Park office/overnight registration
- Maintenance area
- Roads with walk – bicycle shoulder
- Staff residences (2)
- Discovery/Visitor Center with shelter and parking for cars and buses
- Picnic area (no shelters) with restroom and parking
- Playground at picnic area
- Water and sewer connection
- Trails – primarily for walk-in pedestrians
- Dam rehabilitation of pond
- Amphitheater economic study

**The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$15,472,346.**

### **Phase 2**

- Amphitheater and multi-purpose pavilion and shared car parking
- Picnic shelters (4)
- Pedestrian and bike trailhead with parking
- Campground – 30 sites
- Water feature (spray ground and la-z river)
- Staff residence (1)

**The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$13,357,825.**

### **Phase 3**

- Equestrian parking and trails
- 20 cabins (1-6 bedroom, 12-2 bedroom and 7-3 bedroom)
- Road connection to cabins (across Biscuit Run)
- Linen facility in cabin area
- Staff residence near cabin area (1)

**The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$13,652,670.**

**The total cost to bring Biscuit Run State Park to its desired condition is \$42,482,840.**

## **Staffing and Operations**

Staffing and operational costs for the new Biscuit Run State Park are based on fiscal year 2014 budget projections. Each development phase has specific staffing needs and operational costs. In addition, each phase will have one-time expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations.

The total cost for Phase 1 development including salaries for five (5) permanent staff, wage, OTPS expenses, and one-time costs is \$723,000. At complete build-out of all three proposed phases, an estimated \$1,096,000 in annual operating costs will be needed, which includes salaries for eleven (11) permanent staff. The total one-time cost for all three phases is \$518,000. Without the projected staffing, operating and one-time costs for the three development phases, there will be insufficient funds or staff to adequately operate the park at full build-out. The total cost to operate Biscuit Run State Park at full build-out is projected to be \$1,614,000.

<b>Biscuit Run State Park – Operating and Staffing</b>			
<b>PHASE 1</b>	<b>PHASE 2</b>	<b>PHASE 3</b>	<b>FULL BUILD OUT</b>
<i>STAFFING</i>			<b>STAFFING</b>
Park Manager			Park Manager
	Asst. Park Mgr		Asst. Park Mgr
Chief Ranger		Chief Ranger	Chief Ranger (2)
	Educ. Specialist		Educ. Specialist
Park Ranger (2)	Park Ranger	Park Ranger	Park Ranger (4)
		Housekeeper	Housekeeper
Office Manager			Office Manager
<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>	<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>	<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>	<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>
\$276,000	\$167,000	\$150,000	\$536,000
<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>	<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>
\$65,000	\$59,000	\$116,000	\$240,000
<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>	<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>	<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>	<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>
\$87,000	\$29,000	\$147,000	\$263,000
<b>ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS</b>	<b>ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS</b>
\$428,000	\$255,000	\$413,000	\$1,096,000
<b>ONE TIME COSTS*</b>	<b>ONE TIME COSTS*</b>	<b>ONE TIME COSTS*</b>	<b>ONE TIME COSTS*</b>
\$295,000	\$91,000	\$132,000	\$518,000
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>
\$723,000	\$346,000	\$545,000	\$1,614,000

NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY14 budget projections.

\* One time operational expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations.