

CRAIG COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Adopted on  
December 6, 2018

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## Purpose of the Plan

The scope and purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is summarized in the Code of Virginia, Title 15.2, Subtitle II, Chapter 22, Article 3, Section 15.2-2223:

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Code of Virginia mandates that every incorporated jurisdiction in the Commonwealth adopt a comprehensive plan. Furthermore, the Code mandates that each jurisdiction review/reassess their Plan every five years. This mandate supports the need for an on-going process of plan reassessment -- the plan should never be viewed as a "static" document. Over the years, the Virginia General Assembly has approved additional topics that must be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan including affordable housing, open space, and a detailed transportation element.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a general guide for local officials in their decisions concerning land development, expansion (or development) of community facilities, and the establishment of community-related services. Since one major purpose of the Plan is to guide land use decisions, the Plan should be general in nature and should emphasize the long-range needs of the County. As such, the Plan can be utilized to examine trends in order to meet existing needs and respond to new opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan is meant to encourage coordinated and harmonious land use in the County and should be used in conjunction with the County's Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances as a guide for future development.

In December of 1979 the Craig County Board of Supervisors adopted the County's first Comprehensive Plan titled *Land Use Plan, Craig County, Virginia*. During the process of reviewing the 1979 document, the County Planning Commission proposed to expand the scope of the update to include a more detailed look at housing, economic development, recreation and human services. In 1989 a revised Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the County. In March 1998, Craig County adopted several amendments and revisions concerning the goals and objectives for commercial activity, education, facilities improvements economic development, transportation, housing and recreation. During the period 2000 - 2002, the Planning Commission again undertook the task of revising the Comprehensive Plan with public hearings held in April and May of 2002. The previous Comprehensive Plan was formally adopted by the Craig County Board of Supervisors on August 20, 2002. In 2010 an update of the plan began. A draft of the updated Plan was completed in January 2013. The final version of the plan was adopted on November 7, 2013.

## Chapter 1 History

Craig County is blessed with a beautiful physical environment that has fostered a rich and intriguing history of colorful characters, events, and places. Craig County was formed in 1851 from Botetourt, Roanoke, Giles and Monroe Counties. There were several additional annexations from Alleghany, Giles, Monroe, and Montgomery Counties after Craig County's formation. The County was named for Robert Craig, delegate from Roanoke County to the General Assembly, who was instrumental in the County's formation. Exploration of the area had begun about 1751 and by 1774 there were several permanent settlements. New Castle was established as the County seat when Craig County was formed and is the only incorporated town in the County. Arrival of the C&O Railroad's Craig Valley Branch in the 1890s brought on expansion plans for the County. The 1830s brought the Cumberland Turnpike which served as a major transportation corridor for southwestern Virginia.

Laid out in 1818 and formally established in 1819 New Castle was originally within the boundaries of Botetourt County. In 1849, more than 200 citizens in and around New Castle petitioned the Virginia General Assembly to form a new County with New Castle as its seat. The 1830s marked the arrival of the Cumberland Gap turnpike which served as a major transportation channel. New Castle continued to serve as a center for Craig County commerce and small-scale artisan manufacturing. The Craig County Court responded quickly to news of Civil War in the spring of 1861. The court passed special levies to raise troops for the confederacy and to provide support to the soldier's families. Although Federal troops moved through Craig County in 1863 and 1864, New Castle recovered quickly from the war and was incorporated in 1873.

### Historic and Cultural Landmarks

The following sites have been listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

**Craig Healing Springs** - Craig Healing Springs is significant as a collection of nearly thirty well-preserved early Twentieth Century resort buildings. Developed as a resort between 1909 and 1920 by the Craig Healing Springs Company, the resort flourished with the advent of automobile travel in the years between the two world wars but declined with changes in vacation and travel patterns of the 1950s. The Christian Church in Virginia purchased the property and has adapted the site for use as a conference center, carefully maintaining the original grounds and buildings as well as many of the furnishings.

**Huffman House** - The Huffman House site, also known as Huffman Farm, features six contributing buildings: an early nineteenth-century barn, a 1835 farmhouse, a corn crib, a wash house, a garage, and an early twentieth-century store. Located along Route 42, the complex developed over time and has had many commercial and travel related uses in addition to its primary purpose as a family farm.

**New Castle Historic District** - The New Castle Historic District encompasses nearly 70 acres of the downtown commercial center and adjacent residential areas. The original district, nominated in 1973, was expanded in 1993. The historic district formed around the Craig County Courthouse and the tavern which is now the core of the Central Hotel. From the 1890s through the 1920s the Bank Square subdivision lots along main street were sold and developed as commercial property. The typical New Castle building was a two-story frame store with false front parapet and large first floor display windows. Building types represented in the district include a courthouse, a



sheriff's office/jail, a hotel, boarding houses, single-family dwellings, a church, stores, service stations, domestic and agricultural outbuildings, artisan workshops, and offices. Architectural classifications within the district include variations of the Greek Revival, Italianate, Beaux Arts, Eastlake, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival Styles. The period of significance for the district ranges from 1818, the date of the original town plat, to 1940, the construction date for the most recently contributing buildings in the commercial and residential areas.

**Local Natural, Scenic and Historical Areas**

Craig County is rich in historic buildings and cultural areas, unique scenic areas, and recreational spots. Historic buildings, rural historic districts, and historic cultural landscapes should be taken into account during planning for the County's future. Potential preservation sites are listed below.

Craig County features many historic churches. New Bethel Christian Church, 1912 is located on Route 42 along with five other lovely old churches. Hebron Church, located on Route 606, the oldest standing church in Craig County was built in the 1840's. There are 14 churches in Craig County built before 1900.

Table 1  
Natural, Scenic and Historical Areas

The Stacks	Pines Campground
Fenwick Mines	Hebron Church
Sweet Springs Turnpike	Scott Tavern
Barbours Creek	Botanical Area
Bailey Tavern	Virginia Mineral Springs
Paint Bank	Potts Creek
Tingler's Mill	Shires Cave
Potts Mountain	Circle Gorge
Town Hill	New Castle Historic District
Carper's Cave	Civil War Grave
Craig Healing Springs	Johns Creek
Buttermilk Falls	Sinking Creek Church
New River - James River Divide	Meadow Creek
Salem Methodist Church	Murder Hole
Craigs Creek	Arnolds Knob
Route 42	Bellview Farm
Hall Road	Webb's Mills
Appalachian Trail	Miller's Cove
Waiteville Road	Blue Healing Springs
Valley Roller Mill	Watershed Dams
Sinking Creek	Mississippi Steamboat House

## **Chapter 2 Natural Environment**

The following information on Craig County's natural environment was obtained from numerous sources including: the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### **Topography**

Craig County has a land area of 336 square miles. It lies in the south central portion of the Valley and Ridge Province of Virginia and borders the State of West Virginia and the Virginia counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Giles, Montgomery and Roanoke. Several major ridges, running in a northeast-southeast direction reach altitudes of 3,000 to 3,900 feet. The highest peaks are Arnold's Knob at 3,939 feet and Peters Mountain at 3,886 feet. The County claims many fertile valleys, the largest of which is along Sinking Creek. Also within the County are several large streams: Barbours Creek, Craig Creek, John's Creek, Meadow Creek, Potts Creek and Sinking Creek.

### **Geology**

#### Introduction

The Sinking Creek Valley is a unique geologic feature, one of two raised valleys in this geologic province. The other perched valley is Burke's Garden in Tazewell County, Virginia. There is a sign at the Great Eastern Continental Divide where the watershed divide crosses Route 42, Cumberland Gap Road, just west of New Castle. Sinking Creek flows from the Great Eastern Continental Divide on Sinking Creek Mountain in Craig County to the New River in Giles County. The high point on Sinking Creek Mountain marks the divide for three major creeks: Craig Creek, Sinking Creek and Meadow Creek. While Craig Creek and Meadow Creek flow to the James River and into the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean, only the Sinking Creek flows to the New River and on to the Gulf of Mexico. Johns Creek, Potts Creek, and Barbours Creek also all flow to the James River. Sandstones armor and cap the mountain ridges.

#### Importance

The location and orientation of Craig County's watersheds means that a lot of people's water resources begin in Craig County. The county should think "downstream" when making decisions about water protection. The county's water, which is filtered by trees and soils and channeled through our geology, is used by those that live downstream. Craig County also has natural wetlands due to the local geology. The entire Sinking Creek Valley is Karst, which makes it especially fragile and its water vulnerable to pollution. Caves, sinkholes and springs occur throughout the Valley.

#### Geological Background

The Saltville Fault is one of the major structures of the Valley and Ridge Belt as a whole, with its northeastern termination of the fault near the nose of Sinking Creek anticline near New Castle, Craig County, Virginia. The Sinking Creek Valley is a southwesterly dipping anticline, eroded to the Cambrian formations. The fault runs all the way down the Sinking Creek Valley through Saltville, Virginia and extends to Alabama. Generally, the Saltville Fault juxtaposes the Cambrian

Honaker Dolomite in the hanging wall against Devonian and Mississippian units of the Greendale Syncline in the footwall block. The Earthquake of 23 August 2011, centered in Louisa County, Virginia, was felt at the same time in New Castle as in Happy Hollow in the Sinking Creek Valley.

Southeast of Sinking Creek Mountain ridge, on the Craig Creek side of the mountain, are ancient, giant, rock block slides of shale. These lie mainly in the George Washington Jefferson National Forest. The geomorphology of the slides and the resultant flora and soils formations has been a topic for scientists of all degrees.

### Past Uses

In the past, Oriskany iron ore was produced by underground and surface mining in northeastern Craig County. The iron ore was used primarily in local iron ore furnaces. Mining operations for iron ore ceased about 1925. Manganese deposits occur at several locations and have been mined in the vicinity of Simmonsville, New Castle, Paint Bank and on Sinking Creek Mountain southwest of New Castle. Limestone and dolomite have been quarried near New Castle, Simmonsville and Huffman for road stone and other uses. Samples of clay and shale from selected localities in the County have been tested and found to be potentially suitable for brick, tile, drain tile, pottery and lightweight aggregate. Sandstone in the County offers a potential source of construction and industrial stone. The Castle Sand Plant northeast of New Castle is an active sand mining operation.

### Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service completed the *Soil Survey for Craig County, Virginia* in 2011. The soil survey is not designed for use as a primary regulatory tool in permitting or citing decisions but may be used as a reference source. Readers should refer to the *Soil Survey for Craig County* for soil classification, soil characteristics and maps. Site specific soils need further on-site evaluation.

The soils in a survey area occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, organisms and natural vegetation, relief, climate and time. Soils of New Castle and surrounding areas on mountains and mountain foot slopes formed in residuum weathered from shale or sandstone or in colluvial material weathered from shale or sandstone. Soils on mountain foot slopes formed in colluvium, alluvium on high terraces, or residuum weathered from limestone can be found in Sinking Creek Valley.

The geology of an area influences the soils. Craig County is entirely in the Valley and Ridge Province and does not extend to the Blue Ridge Mountains (which include metamorphic rocks). The county's geology is all sedimentary (no igneous nor metamorphic geology). For Craig County, the mountain's ridges are generally capped with sandstone and the lowlands are generally shale geology. The soils formed in transported material (colluvium) from the ridge tops have higher sand contents and the soils formed in limestone have more clay. The soils formed in shale have a higher silt content and may be shallower than the soils formed in colluvium of either sandstone or limestone, but not always. Soils are naturally variable. Climate characteristics effect soils and are used in the taxonomy of soils. Craig County has a mesic soil temperature range (470 to 590F) and udic soil moisture regime, where in most years, the soils are not dry as long as 90 cumulative days. Craig County has five of the twelve Soil Orders: Mollisols, Inceptisols, Entosols, Alfisols and Ultisols.

Planners, farmers and others using soil survey information can evaluate the effect of specific land uses on productivity and on the environment in all or part of the survey area. The survey can help planners to maintain, protect, preserve or create a land use pattern in harmony with the natural, non-renewable soil available.

Two topics of concern in planning for the future of Craig County are the availability of land for continued agricultural production and suitable areas for residential development utilizing septic system drain fields.

In an effort to identify the extent and location of important farmlands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with other interested Federal, State, and local government organizations, has inventoried land that can be used for the production of the Nation's food supply.

Map 1 illustrates the units in the survey area that are considered prime farmland.

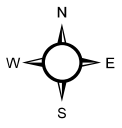
- *Prime Farmland*, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas.
- *Farmland of Statewide Importance* is land other than Prime Farmland which has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops.

Much of the area within Craig County is considered *Prime Farmland* or *Farmland of Statewide Importance*. These areas should be considered, and avoided, when planning future residential, commercial or industrial development in Craig County. The availability of farmland plays an important role in maintaining the economy and rural character of the county.

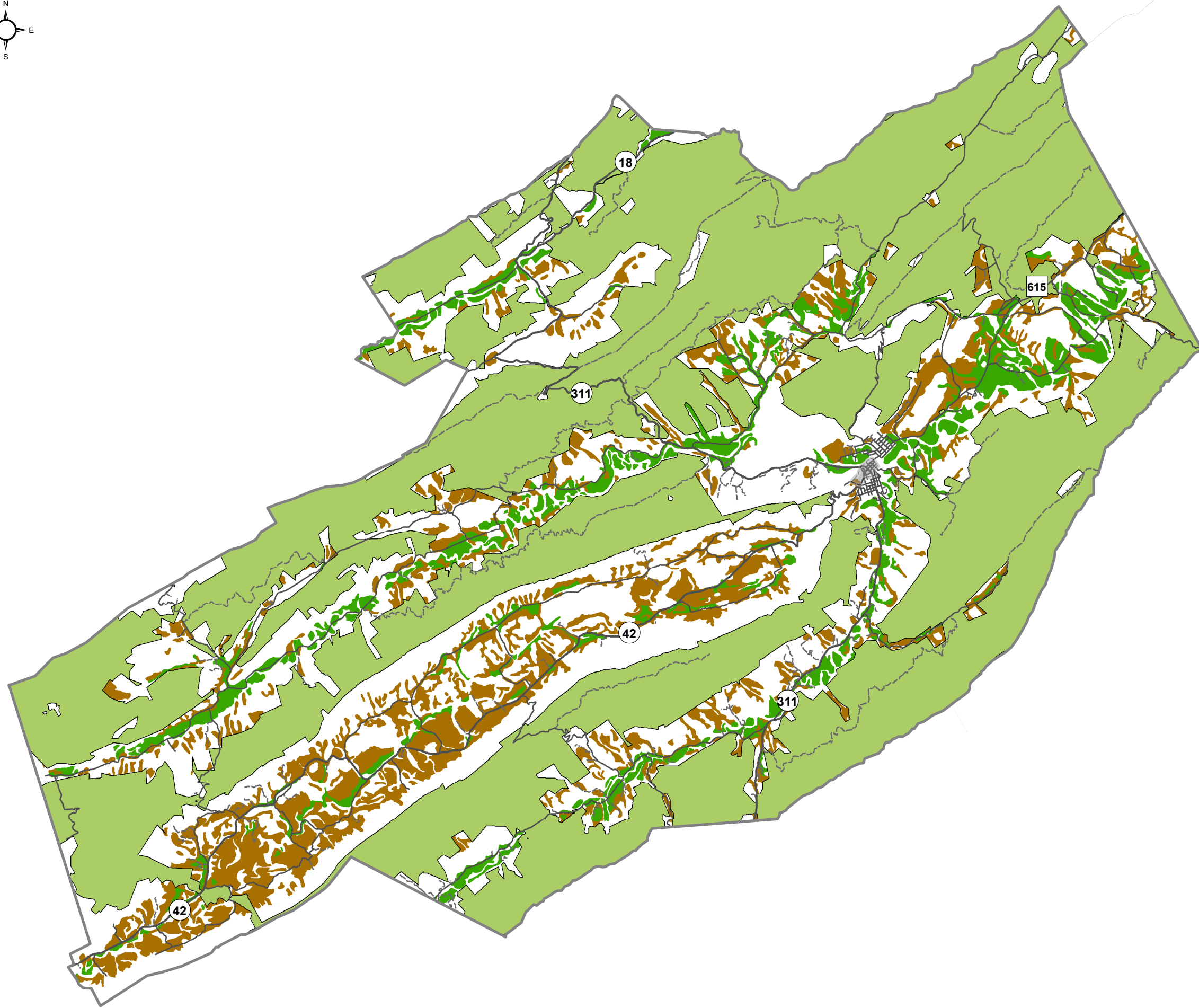
Map 2 shows the degree and kind of soil limitations that affect septic tank absorption fields, sewage lagoons, sanitary landfills, and daily cover for landfill. Rating class terms indicate the extent to which the soils are limited by all of the soil features that affect these uses. Availability of land suitable for septic fields impacts residential development.

- *Not limited* indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for the specified use. *Good* performance and very low maintenance can be expected.
- *Somewhat limited* indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use. The limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation. Fair performance and moderate maintenance can be expected.
- *Very limited* indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. The limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures.




Note that most of the land in Craig County excluding the U.S. Forest Service property is classified as *Very Limited* or *Somewhat Limited*. These soil characteristics will have to be taken into consideration when planning for future development in the county.



# Map 1 Prime Farmland

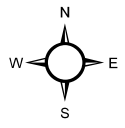


## Legend

-  Prime Farmland
-  Farmland of Statewide Importance
-  US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.



# Map 2 Septic Suitability



**Legend**

**Soils Septic Absorption Rating**

- Very Limited
- Somewhat Limited
- Not Rated
- US Forest Service

## **Climate**

The temperate climate of the region brings relatively cool summers and mild winters to the area. The winds through the region generally blow from the west/northwest at an average of 8-10 miles per hour. Yearly rainfall ranges in New Castle from 35" to 50" of rain/liquid precipitation and Happy Hollow of Sinking Creek Valley receives between 35" to 71" of liquid precipitation. Rainfall can come in high intensity short duration rains that amount to five inches in New Castle. However, many summers can be extremely hot and dry, causing drought to occur. When the rain returns in the fall (often as a result of a tropical depression or storm in the vicinity) flooding may occur in low-lying areas of the County because of poor soil permeability.

Temperatures in Craig County remain fairly mild year-round, with an average annual maximum temperature ranging in the low to mid 60s and the average minimum temperature ranging in the low to mid 40s.

## **Groundwater**

Care should be taken when planning for development in the County in order to protect groundwater supplies. Approximately 20 percent of the County's housing units are served by a public or private central water system. The remainder relies on groundwater or some other source of drinking water. Most wells in Craig County's mountainous areas are less than 300 feet deep and generally yield five to twenty gallons per minute. In the Potts Mountain area, dry holes have been drilled as deep as 250 feet. Wells in the valleys are generally less than 200 feet deep and yield less than 40 gallons per minute.

One of the deepest and most productive wells in the County penetrates shale and limestone at the Paint Bank Fish Hatchery. This well is 400 feet deep and was test pumped for 24 hours at 323 gallons per minute with only 89 feet of drawdown. All but five gallons per minute were obtained from calcareous shale at depths of between 300 and 400 feet. Artesian wells located near Route 311 have also been located and found to produce 1200-1300 gallons per minute.

Craig County has a State Observation Well (SOW 232) maintained by Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and sited on Happy Hollow Road in Sinking Creek Valley. This well monitors the water table elevation. The landowners of Silver Lining Farm have a 100-year agreement with the DEQ that the agency may use the well. The well is located in Karst terrain and the water table level was 39.92 feet below the surface of the ground on May 17, 2018.

Alluvium in broad valleys may reach sufficient thickness to yield moderate supplies of water. A few perennial streams are present in the County and yield varying amounts of water. Several springs occur south of New Castle on the southeastern side of Sinking Creek Mountain.

The limestone and dolomite formations offer the best possibilities for future groundwater development in Craig County. However, the erratic nature of occurrence in this type of rock and the lack of well data makes reliable estimates of potential per unit area difficult. Adequate water supplies may be obtained from sandstone and shale if these types are sufficiently fractured to provide storage and movement of groundwater.

Wells in limestone may yield hard water and iron is frequently excessive. Sulfur occurs in some wells, particularly east and northeast of New Castle. Alum has been reported in water from the Craig Healing Springs area.

Sinking Creek Valley is in Karst, water soluble rock, in limestone. The caves and sinkholes drain surface water and take in underground. Some of the groundwater reemerges to daylight as cool, fresh, mountain spring water. The water in Karst is vulnerable to pollution and animals getting into it when it is on the surface. In Karst, surface water becomes ground water and then becomes surface water, again. This provides a Significant Nexus or justification for regulation for protecting the waters and wetlands of Craig County.

## **Surface Water**

Craig County lies within the James River Basin and the New River Basin. The Great Eastern Continental Divide sheds surface and ground waters at the highpoint of Sinking Creek Mountain, splitting water between Sinking Creek, Craig Creek and Meadow Creek. Sinking Creek (and its tributaries) of Sinking Creek Valley drain to the New River. Meadow Creek, Craig Creek, Johns Creek, Barbour's Creek and Potts Creek (and their tributaries) drain to the James River.

The quality of surface waters in the county is good but relatively hard. Large volumes are available during periods of normal flow, however, storage is necessary to provide continuous supplies during drought periods. Stream flow gauging stations have been maintained on Johns Creek at New Castle since 1926 and at Parr in Botetourt County since 1925. Records of temperature, water quality data, flow during duration and high- and low-flow sequence data are available for these gauging stations.

Craig County administers a state mandated Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance designed to minimize the effects of erosion on creeks and streams from construction, timber harvesting operations, and other projects.

## **Flood Hazards**

Craig County has adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance (1996) as part of its Zoning Ordinance. The Town of New Castle has adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance that requires new residential buildings to be elevated to or above the base flood elevation. Additional requirements prevent the obstruction of the floodway. A new Stormwater Management Ordinance, as required by recently adopted state regulations, was adopted in 2013.

The County and Town of New Castle participate in, and are in good standing with, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by enforcing floodplain management regulations that meet federal requirements. This program allows property owners to purchase flood insurance from NFIP. There were 57 NFIP policies in force in the County in 2012.

The County participates in a flood warning system developed by the National Weather Service called Integrated Flood Observing and Warning System (IFLOWS). Through the use of radio-transmitted information, this system provides advanced flood forecasting to the Craig County Emergency Operation Center. There is one IFLOW station located in the County.

A lack of countywide floodplain information studies for Craig County hampers flood prevention planning efforts at this time. The county should work with the Corps of Engineers, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, and FEMA to develop complete Flood Insurance Studies for the major watersheds of Johns Creek, Craig Creek, Potts Creek, Sinking Creek and Barbour's Creek. Existing flood hazard planning information is shown on Map 3.



The *Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000* requires that local governments, as a condition of receiving federal disaster mitigation funds, must have a mitigation plan that describes the process for identifying hazards, risks and vulnerabilities, identifies and prioritizes mitigation actions, encourage the development of local mitigation and provide technical support for those efforts. Craig County adopted the Regional Plan in 2005 and 2013. The plan is currently being updated and is expected to be adopted in Spring 2019. The Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan affects unincorporated areas, towns, cities and counties within the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission service area. While the plan does not establish any legal requirements for the localities, it does provide a framework for natural hazard mitigation planning.

The region has experienced nearly all types of natural disasters, the major ones being flooding, landslides, winter storms, and wildfires. Other disasters that might occur in the region include earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes. The natural hazard most likely to affect the region is widespread flooding or flash flooding. Watersheds in the region are typical of the Blue Ridge region in which smaller streams collect water which then flows through steep terrain, picking up velocity, and into the valleys and flatlands along major rivers where development has occurred.

As part of the development of the Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, loss estimates were calculated for flooding only. Other disasters are too variable and widespread to determine any useful loss estimates. The methodology for determining flood losses varied depending on the data available for each locality. Structure losses were assumed to be 100 percent. Content losses for residential structures were estimated to be 50 percent of the structure value. Content losses for commercial structures were estimated to be 100 percent of the structure value. The average number of people per household, from the 2000 US Census, was used to estimate the number of people affected by residential structure loss. Data was not available to estimate losses relating to roads or other infrastructure.

Table 2  
Craig County Flood Loss Estimate (including New Castle)

	Structures in Floodplain	Value of Structures in Floodplain	Structure Damage at 3 ft Flood Depth	Contents Damage at 3 ft Flood Depth	Total Estimated Damage
Residential	93	\$6,170,000	\$2,036,100	\$1,110,600	\$3,146,700
Mobile Homes	27	\$270,000	\$270,000	\$270,000	\$540,000
Commercial	6	\$600,000	\$198,000	\$120,000	\$318,000
Total	126	\$7,040,000	\$2,504,100	\$1,500,600	\$4,004,700

Average Damage per Residential Structure in Floodplain: \$33,835  
 Average Value per Residential Structure in Floodplain: \$66,344  
 Average Damage per Commercial Structure in Floodplain: \$53,000  
 Average Value per Commercial Structure in Floodplain: \$100,000

No structures in the Town of New Castle appeared to be in the floodplain.

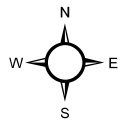
There are four dams located in Craig County. Built in the late 1960s by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, four flood control dams help protect Craig County residents and farmland in the Johns Creek Valley. Although they are located on private property, Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District and Craig County are co-owners of the dams and oversee their maintenance and safety inspections.

The largest of the dams, Johns Creek Dam #1, is the only one of the four dams physically situated on Johns Creek itself. Over 18 square miles drain to the lake created by this dam, which is known as McDaniel's Lake. The other three dams are built on tributaries of Johns Creek in the Maggie area of Craig County. Johns Creek Dam #2 is built on Little Oregon Creek, Johns Creek Dam #3 on Mudlick Creek, and Johns Creek Dam #4 on Dick's Creek. Together, these three dams serve a drainage area of an additional 14 square miles.

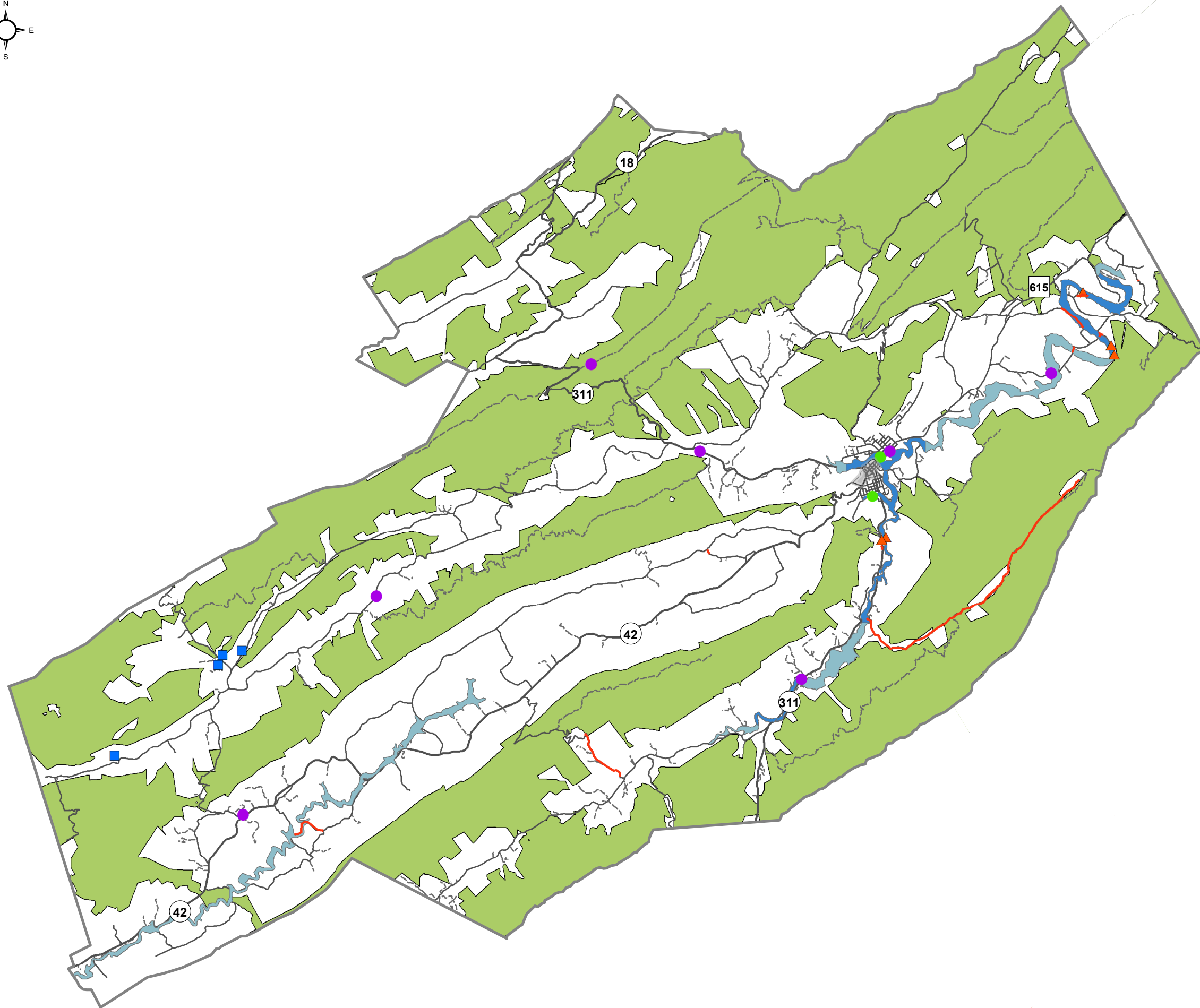
Mountain Castles SWCD contracts annual maintenance of the dams, which includes mowing and tree removal. While it is important that grass grows on the dams in order to limit soil erosion, trees are a liability. Over time, tree roots can compromise the structural integrity of the dam. Heavy brush not only attracts unwanted burrowing animals, it limits visibility of the dam, so potential structural issues could go unnoticed.

All four dams are inspected regularly, including a complete inspection by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation every two years.

All four dams are classified as having a high hazard potential, meaning that failure will cause probable loss of life or serious economic damage (to buildings, facilities, major roadways, etc.). Hazard potential is not related to the structural integrity of a dam but strictly to the potential for adverse downstream effects if the dam were to fail. The Natural Resources Conservation Service initiated planning for rehabilitation of the Johns Creek 1 dam in 2016 to determine if improvements or changes are needed at the dam.



# Map 3 Flood Hazard



### Legend

- Dams
- Flood Prone Roadways
- ▲ Craig Flood Loss Sites
- IFLAWS Gages
- USGS Stream Gages
- 100 Year Flood Zone - Approximate
- 100 Year Flood Zone
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

## Forests

The forestland of Craig County has always played an important role in the lives of the County's residents. The oak-hickory forests provide recreation, clean water source, wildlife habitat, and raw material for the wood products industries.

Craig County contains 154,170 acres of forest land which covers 78 percent of the total land area. Most of the forestland, 117,902 acres, is owned by the U.S. Forest Service (see Map 9 Existing Land Use, p. 61).

The harvest or stumpage value in Craig County contributed on average, \$141,469 annually to private forest landowners from 2000 to 2010.

Table 3  
Craig County Private Forest Harvest Value

Year	Pine Value	Hardwood Value	Total Value
2000	\$19,160	\$73,865	\$93,025
2001	\$18,391	\$48,276	\$66,667
2002	\$10,926	\$92,647	\$103,573
2003	\$10,062	\$53,873	\$63,935
2004	\$23,515	\$152,441	\$175,956
2005	\$148,176	\$250,213	\$398,389
2006	\$46,459	\$114,574	\$161,033
2007	\$27,438	\$170,535	\$197,973
2008	\$22,007	\$76,401	\$98,408
2009	\$51,241	\$102,342	\$153,583
2010	\$6,183	\$37,429	\$43,612

Source: Virginia Department of Forestry, 2017.

While forestland provides many benefits to the county, federally owned land has an impact on the local government's tax collections and budget. Generally, federal lands may not be taxed by state or local governments unless the governments are authorized to do so by Congress. Because local governments are primarily financed by property and sales taxes, this inability to tax the property values or products derived from the federal lands affects the local tax base, sometimes significantly. Instead of authorizing taxation, Congress chose to create various payment programs designed to compensate for lost tax revenue. The most wide-ranging payment program is called "Payments in Lieu of Taxes" or PILT. It is administered by the Department of the Interior and affects most acreage under federal ownership including that of the U.S. Forest Service.

The Payments in Lieu of Taxes Act of 1976 was passed at a time when U.S. policy was shifting from one of disposal of federal lands to one of retention. The policy meant that the retained lands would no longer be expected to enter the local tax base at some later date. Because of that shift, Congress agreed with recommendations of a federal commission that if these federal lands were never to become part of the local tax base, then some compensation should be offered to local governments to make up for the presence of non-taxable land within their jurisdictions.

In some counties, the PILT payment greatly exceeds the amount that the county would receive if the land were taxed at fair market value, while in others it is much, much less. Given such

problems, and the complexity of federal land management policies, any change in the PILT law has been difficult, particularly when Congress has a stated goal of reducing spending. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 provided for mandatory spending of the full authorized PILT level for five years, FY2008-FY2012. Future allocations for the program are uncertain at the time this comprehensive plan was developed.

The formula used to compute the payments is contained in the PILT Act and is based on population, receipt sharing payments, and the amount of Federal land within an affected county. PILT payments are in addition to other Federal revenues (such as oil and gas leasing, livestock grazing, and timber harvesting) that the Federal Government transfers to the states. Table 3 illustrates the PILT paid to Craig County and the variability of the payment from year to year.

Table 4  
Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Year	Payment	Acreage
2000	\$76,761	117,361
2001	\$100,361	117,203
2002	\$113,145	117,203
2003	\$117,367	117,203
2004	\$122,404	117,203
2005	\$125,259	117,240
2006	\$123,722	117,243
2007	\$120,017	117,283
2008	\$123,235	117,295
2009	\$205,766	117,295
2010	\$65,393	117,295
2011	\$93,534	117,295
2012	\$110,743	117,295
2013	\$135,172	117,295
2014	\$156,087	118,119
2015	\$180,930	118,049
2016	\$174,608	117,842
2017	\$177,033	117,902

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017.

Every National Forest has a Resource Management Plan that describes how the U.S. Forest Service will manage the national forest for the next 10 to 15 years. It explains what Forest Service managers plan to do and what public benefits are anticipated. Long-term planning of this kind is required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976. The Forest Plan provides broad guidance; it does not make decisions about particular sites, stands, roads, trails, etc. Those decisions are made in individual site-specific Project Plans in compliance with the goals, guidelines, and standards of the established Management Plan. The *Jefferson National Forest Plan* that covers Craig County was revised in 2004.

Officials of Craig County and its residents should work with the U.S. Forest Service to address uses in the national forest including recreation, timbering, and tourism.

Although the potential of increased forest production in the future is good, there has been rather strong opposition from some County residents about extensive timbering in the National Forest. The main concern of residents appears to be that increased timbering will force the Federal government to cut many new roads into the forest, possibly affecting the hunting and aesthetic qualities of the land.

The National Forest also serves as a draw for tourists to the county. Residents and visitors utilize U.S. Forest Service land for camping, horseback riding, fishing, hiking, hunting, and other forms of recreation. The county should continue to work with the USFS to maintain these uses.

### Niday Place State Forest

This 254-acre forest on John's Creek Mountain in Craig County has typical mountain hardwood stands. A gift to the commonwealth, the forest is a wildlife sanctuary and used as an outdoor laboratory, and for preservation of wildflowers.

Niday Place is open daily from dawn to dusk. A State Forest Use Permit may be required for visitors to the state forests. Motorized vehicles of any type are prohibited on all state forests. Camping is not allowed. Horses are permitted on the forest. Hunting is prohibited on the Niday Place State Forest. Fishing in designated areas only in accordance with state fishing regulations. Niday Place State Forest is managed by staff from the Buckingham and Cumberland state forests.

### **Special Biological Areas**

Rare Communities and other special biological areas in the Jefferson National Forest have been identified through a cooperative effort between the Forest and the Virginia Department of conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage. These special biological areas are managed to include lands that support key components and concentrations of the forest's biological diversity. These lands serve as core areas for conservation of the most significant and rarer elements of biological diversity identified to date on the Forest. These areas or communities are assemblages of plants and animals that occupy a small portion of the landscape, but contribute significantly to biological diversity. These areas are identified along with other conservation lands on Map 10 Existing Land Use.

These areas typically include high quality ecological communities such as high elevation mountain tops, shale barrens, caves and karst features, wetlands, and diverse habitat for threatened and endangered species, sensitive and locally rare species. These lands contain individual threatened, endangered, or rare natural communities found within major forest communities.

For the US Forest Service, management of ecological communities primarily involves the use of timber harvest and fire to influence vegetation composition and structural diversity of habitats. Specific standards and desired conditions for the areas were adopted in the agency's *Land and Resource Management Plan*. Specific management activities necessary to maintain, restore, or enhance threatened, endangered, sensitive, and locally rare species for each special biological area are described in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage, *Reports of Special Biological Areas* and other pertinent biological reference material.

Table 5  
Special Biological Areas

Site	Type	Acres*
Bald Mountain Sandstone Glades	Glade, Barren and Woodland	140
Broad Run Barren	Glade, Barren and Woodland	18
Given Shale Barren	Glade, Barren and Woodland	25
Kelly Knob/Big Pond	Mountain Wetlands Area	592
Lick Branch Shale Barrens	Glade, Barren and Woodland	49
Maggie Shale Barren	Glade, Barren and Woodland	31
Mudlick Branch Woodland	Glade, Barren and Woodland	10
Potts Cove	Mountain Wetlands Area	349
Sarver Barrens	Glade, Barren and Woodland	154
Sevenmile Mountain	Glade, Barren and Woodland	187
Shires Saltpeter Cave	Cave and Mine Area	381
Sinking Creek Mountain	Glade, Barren and Woodland	207
Trout Creek Shale Barren	Glade, Barren and Woodland	13

Source: Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, US Forest Service, 2014.

\*Note that acreage extends outside of Craig County for some sites.

### Wildlife Diversity

Craig County's unique landscape and low levels of development contribute to the diversity of wildlife species found in the county, including many species of conservation concern. Two federally endangered species (Indiana bat and James spinymussel) and one federally threatened species (Northern long-eared bat) have been confirmed in Craig County. Additionally, three state endangered and six state threatened wildlife species are confirmed or likely in the county. Virginia's State Wildlife Action Plan identified the following additional species of conservation concern in Craig County:

- Tier I (Critical Conservation need) = 9 species;
- Tier II (Very High Conservation Need) = 15 species;
- Tier III (High Conservation Need) = 19 species; and
- Tier IV (Moderate Conservation Need) = 53 species

In total, 108 wildlife species in Craig County have been identified as species of conservation concern. Many of these species are associated with the County's unique karst topography, freshwater resources, and large areas of forest habitat.

## *References*

The information of Craig County's natural environment and natural resources was obtained from numerous sources including: the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and private Citizens of Craig County.

*Geology of the Saltville and Pulaski Fault Blocks, Southwest Virginia*, F. Webb, Jr., L.A. Raymond and W.W. Whitlock, 2008. 38th Annual Virginia Geological Field Conference

Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Web Soil Survey. Available online at: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.gov/>.

*Damplands, Intermittently Wet Lands and Wetlands of the Valley and Ridge Province*, Nan Gray and the Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists, 2002. Soil Science Field Excursion.



## Chapter 3 Demographics

### Population Trends

Craig County’s population has fluctuated over the past century with the greatest change occurring during the period of 1910-30 and 1940-60. From 1910 to 1930 there was a 24 percent decrease in population while during the decades of 1940-60 there was an 11 percent decrease. The County population has continued to increase since 1960, growing from 3,356 to 5,190 in a fifty-year period. Annual estimates of the population from the Census Bureau show the population hovering around 5,200 with changes of less than 1 percent annually from 2010 to 2016. The tables below present the numerical and percentage changes in population.

Table 6  
Population Trend

Year	Population	Change
1900	4,293	-
1910	4,711	13.0
1920	4,100	-9.7
1930	3,562	-13.1
1940	3,769	5.8
1950	3,452	-8.4
1960	3,356	-2.8
1970	3,524	5.0
1980	3,948	12.0
1990	4,372	10.7
2000	5,091	16.4
2010	5,190	1.9
2011	5,230	0.8
2012	5,200	-0.6
2013	5,191	-0.2
2014	5,233	0.8
2015	5,193	-0.8
2016	5,158	-0.7

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population 1900-2010 and Annual Estimates of Residential Population, 2017.*



### Population Projections

Population projections through the year 2040 indicate that Craig County will fluctuate, rising to 5,215 in 2030 then dropping to 5,173 by 2040. The following table presents population projections from 2020 to 2040.

Table 7  
Population Projections

Year	Population	Change
2020	5,184	-
2030	5,215	0.6
2040	5,173	-0.8

Source: *Total Population Projections for Virginia and Its Localities*, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2017.

## Migration and Natural Increase

This table provides geographical mobility for persons relative to their residence at the time they were surveyed. The characteristics crossed by geographical mobility reflect the current survey year of 2017. According to information provided by the Census Bureau, 137 persons moved to Craig County in 2015. In addition, 175 residents of Craig County moved from one home to another within the county in 2015.

Table 8  
Migration in the Past Year (2015)

Category	Population
Same House 1 Year Ago	4,848
Moved within the Same County	175
Moved from Different County Within the Same State	137
Moved from Different State	0
Moved from Abroad	0

Source: *Geographic Mobility in the Past Year, American Community Survey, 2015.*

Natural increase is a measure of the population change based on the number of births and deaths that have occurred in a locality over a period of time. The natural increase in Craig County has been negative since 2004.

Table 9  
Natural Population Increase, 1999-2015

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
1999	54	38	16
2000	58	40	18
2001	61	41	20
2002	49	63	-14
2003	55	51	4
2004	43	52	-11
2005	46	52	-6
2006	48	49	-1
2007	40	48	-8
2008	38	44	-6
2009	50	57	-7
2010	33	44	-11
2011	41	54	-13
2012	36	61	-25
2013	55	47	-8
2014	37	NA	NA
2015	44	55	-11

Source: *Virginia Vital Statistics Annual Reports, Virginia Department of Health, 1999-2015.*

## Age Distribution

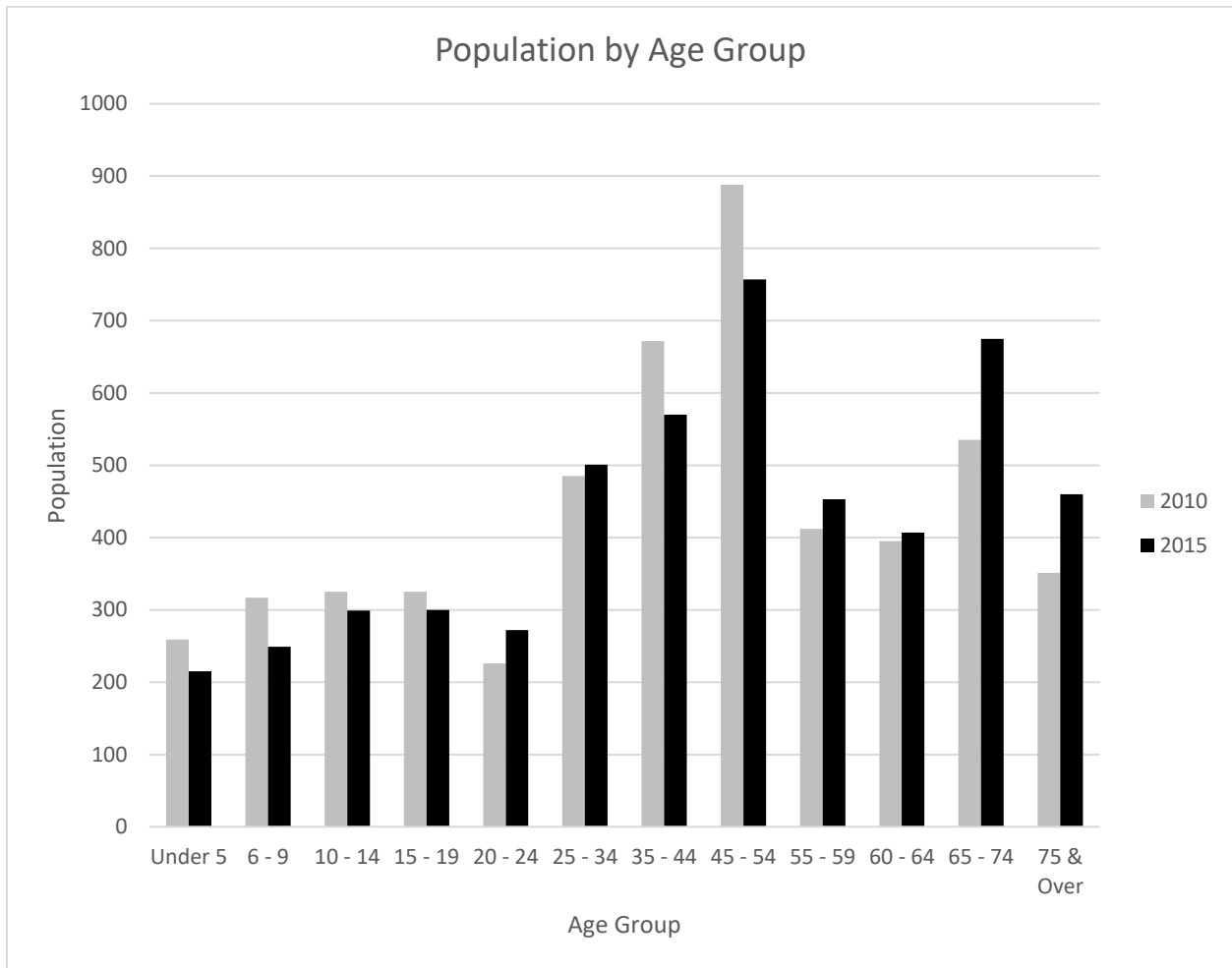
The age composition of the of the County remained relatively stable from 2010 to 2015. The percentage of population between the ages of 0 and 19 decreased by 13 percent from 1,226 to 1,063. The number of older citizens, age 65 and over, increased during that same period by 28 percent. The workforce population between the ages of 20 and 64 remained steady, decreasing only 3.8 percent.

It should be noted that the median age in Craig County has been increasing over the last few decades, with a decreasing youth population. The median age statistics illustrate this point. In 1980 the median age was 33.1 years, in 2010 the figure was 44.8, and in 2015 it was 47.1 years.

Table 10  
Population Distribution by Age

Age Group	2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	259	5.0	215	4.2
5 - 9	317	6.1	249	4.8
10 - 14	325	6.3	299	5.8
15 - 19	325	6.3	300	5.8
20 - 24	226	4.4	272	5.3
25 - 34	485	9.3	501	9.7
35 - 44	672	12.9	570	11.1
45 - 54	888	17.1	757	14.7
55 - 59	412	7.9	453	8.8
60 - 64	395	7.6	407	7.9
65 - 74	535	10.3	675	13.1
75 & Over	351	6.8	460	8.9
Total	5,190	100.0	5,154	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 2010 and American Community Survey, 2015.



### Household Characteristics

The number of households in Craig County increased by 1.4 percent from 2010 to 2015. Although there are more households, the average household size has decreased slightly. This decline has taken place over the last few decades with a 32.8% decrease in the average household size from 3.5 persons in 1960 to 2.35 persons in 2015.

Table 11  
Household Characteristics

Category	2010	2015	Change
Total Households	2,183	2,214	1.4%
Average Household Size	2.37	2.35	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census, Census of Population, 2010 and American Community Survey, 2015.

## Income

The median household income in Craig County decreased by almost 14% from 2010 to 2015. This amount was equal to only 68% of the state median household income in 2015. A disparity can be seen in the income levels of residents of Craig County and statewide income figures. Family median income was also only 86.3% of the state median family income. Per capita income in the County was approximately 66% of the state median per capita income.

Table 12  
Median Income Change

Category	2010	2015	Change
Household	\$51,291	\$44,330	-13.6
Family	\$63,134	\$67,679	7.2
Per Capita	\$23,461	\$22,456	-4.3

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2015.

Table 13  
Median Income Comparison

Category	Craig County	Virginia
Household	\$44,330	\$65,015
Family	\$67,679	\$78,390
Per Capita	\$22,456	\$34,152

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2015.

## Per Capita Income

In 2015, Craig County had a per capita income of \$22,456. This was 65.8% of the state figure, \$34,152. The per capita income in Craig County decreased over the past 5 years by 4.3 percent while the state's increased 6.2 percent.

Table 14  
Per Capita Income Trend

Year	Craig County	Virginia
2010	\$23,461	\$32,145
2011	\$25,046	\$33,040
2012	\$21,826	\$33,326
2013	\$21,498	\$33,493
2014	\$22,435	\$33,958
2015	\$22,456	\$34,152

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2010 to 2015.

## Poverty Statistics

Craig County experienced an increase in the percentage of persons below the poverty level between 2010 and 2015. The percentage of persons age 65 and over, families, and persons under age 18 below the poverty level all increased.

Table 15  
Percent of Persons Below Poverty Level

Category	2010	2015
Persons	7.2%	11.8%
Persons Age 65 and Over	9.3%	10.0%
Families	6.3%	6.3%
Persons Under Age 18	9.7%	15.3%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2015.

## Chapter 4 Housing

### Housing Units

There was a 5.2 percent increase in the number of housing units in Craig County for the period 2010 to 2015. The number of vacant housing units increased by 18.4 percent during the same period. Vacant housing units include cottages and cabins used on a seasonal basis.

Table 16  
Housing Units

Housing Occupancy	2010	2015
Total housing units	2,809	2,955
Occupied housing units	2,183	2,214
Vacant housing units	626	741
For rent	38	32
Rented, not occupied	5	8
For sale only	30	0
Sold, not occupied	9	19
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	364	381
For Migrant Workers	180	0
Homeowner vacancy rate	1.6	0.0
Rental vacancy rate	6.1	7.0

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and American Community Survey 2015.*

### Occupied Units

The percentage of owner-occupied housing remained steady from 2010 to 2015. The number of owner-occupied units has increased by 90 units from 2000 to 2010. The number of renter occupied units increased by 135 units during the 5-year period.

Table 17  
Occupied Units by Type

Category	2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-Occupied	1745	79.9	1,794	81.0
Renter-Occupied	438	20.1	420	19.0

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and American Community Survey 2015.*



## Housing Type

Single-family units remain the dominant type of housing in Craig County. The number of mobile homes has increased by 49 percent according to data from the Census Bureau.

Table 18  
Housing Unit by Type

Type	2010		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single-Family	2016	78.1	2,152	72.8
Multi-Family	89	3.4	178	6.0
Mobile homes	477	18.5	625	21.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and American Community Survey 2015.

## General Housing Characteristics

The median house value increased by almost 7.7 percent from 2010 to 2015. The median rent increased 10.1 percent. The amount of housing stock constructed prior to 1990 decreased to 64.1 percent.

The census figures which best reflect the condition of housing units in the County are percent of occupied units with more than 1.01 persons per room and percent of occupied units lacking complete plumbing for exclusive use. There were no units in 2015 that were overcrowded units or lacking complete plumbing.

Table 19  
Housing Characteristics

Characteristic	2010	2015
Median Value	\$147,500	\$153,000
Median Contract Rent	\$497	\$547
Percent of Housing built prior to 1990	56.2	64.1
Percent of Occupied Units with More than 1.01 Persons / Room (overcrowded)	2.8	0
Percent of Occupied Units Lacking Complete Plumbing for Exclusive Use	6.5	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and American Community Survey 2015.

Table 20  
Housing Units by Year Structure Built

Time Period	Number	Percent
Built 2010 to 2013	22	0.7
Built 2000 to 2009	441	14.9
Built 1990 to 1999	597	20.2
Built 1980 to 1989	407	13.8
Built 1970 to 1979	187	6.3
Built 1960 to 1969	300	10.2
Built 1950 to 1959	281	9.5
Built 1940 to 1949	214	7.2
Built 1939 or earlier	506	17.1

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2015.

### Residential Building Permits

Based on data provided by the Center for Public Service, the number building permits authorized has averaged approximately 14.7 units per year since 2008. The information excludes permits issued for mobile homes, garages and other out-buildings, additions and renovations, and commercial construction. The Census Bureau used to collect data on commercial construction, demolitions, and mobile homes. They have discontinued these surveys and these data are no longer available.

Table 21  
Residential Building Permits

Year	Units
2008	23
2009	17
2010	19
2011	12
2012	11
2013	11
2014	18
2015	13
2016	12
2017	11
Average	14.7

Source: Cooper Center for Public Service, 2010 and Craig County, 2018.

## Affordable Housing

The Code of Virginia, Sec. 15.2-2223, under the scope and purpose of the comprehensive plan, states that “The plan shall include: the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.” Housing affordability should be monitored by local governments to ensure that all citizens are capable of meeting this basic need.

The Code of Virginia, Sec. 15.2-2201, defines "Affordable housing" as housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below the area median income, provided that the occupant pays no more than thirty percent of his gross income for gross housing costs, including utilities.

### Summary of Affordable Housing Needs

The Census Bureau’s Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy database definition of housing problems includes the following criteria “any occupied units lacking a complete kitchen, lacking complete plumbing, having more than 1.01 persons per room, or costing more than 30 percent of the occupant households (monthly) income.”

Table 22  
Craig County Housing Deficiencies

Criteria	2010	2015
Units Lacking Complete Kitchen	0.6	0
Units Lacking Complete Plumbing	1.1	0
Units With More Than 1.01 Persons Per Room	0.0	0
Renters Paying More Than 30% of the Occupant Households Income	28	81
Owners with Mortgage Paying More Than 30% of the Occupant Households Income	203	316
Owners without Mortgage Paying More Than 30% of the Occupant Households Income	39	46

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2015.

A standard measure of affordability for both owner and renter is the percentage of income being applied toward housing costs. This cost includes rent or mortgage, utilities, maintenance and taxes. An acceptable rate is 30 percent of the household’s income.

In 2015, 362 home owners with a mortgage in Craig County were applying more than thirty percent or more of their income toward housing costs and 81 renters were applying 30 percent or more of their income toward housing costs.

In 2015 the Craig County median rent was 49 percent of the statewide median rent. Approximately 39% of renters in Craig County were paying less than \$500 per month. Only 7.5% of renters were paying above \$1,000 per month compared to 58% of renters statewide.

Table 23  
Gross Rent, 2015

Category	Craig County	Virginia
Median Gross Rent	\$547	\$1,116
Percent of Renters with Rent Below \$500	39.0%	9.4%
Percent of Renters with rent of \$1,000 or More	7.5%	58.0%

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2015.

Craig County median owner costs with a mortgage were 76.8 percent of the statewide median while median owner costs without a mortgage were 78.7 percent of the state median. The lower monthly mortgages may be attributed to lower house values, yet similar costs for utilities, maintenance and taxes.

Table 24  
Median Owner Costs, 2015

	Craig County	Virginia
Median Costs with a Mortgage	\$1,315	\$1,711
Median Costs without a Mortgage	\$341	\$433

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2015.

### Resources and Strategies

Local housing programs can help residents access safe affordable housing by addressing the needs of specific clients, improving existing housing and assisting in financing. In addition, programs for the elderly and handicapped, energy efficiency and weatherization, water and sewer system programs and local regulations such as the building code and zoning, all play a role in providing affordable housing.

Additional housing resources are available from the following agencies for financial and technical assistance: Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Division of Community Development, Virginia Housing Development Authority, USDA Rural Development, and Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project.

## Chapter 5 Economy

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the labor force, occupations, major employers, trade sectors, and agricultural production in order to identify important changes and trends in the Craig County economy.

### Labor Force Characteristics

The number of persons in the Craig County labor force has declined by approximately 189 persons over the past 10 years. The annual number of unemployed persons fluctuated during that same period from a low of 102 in 2017 and 2008 to a high of 194 in 2010.

Table 25  
Annual Labor Force Characteristics

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2008	2,552	2,450	102	4.0
2009	2,443	2,263	180	7.4
2010	2,441	2,247	194	7.9
2011	2,481	2,294	187	7.5
2012	2,465	2,292	173	7.0
2013	2,456	2,283	173	7.0
2014	2,458	2,302	156	6.3
2015	2,380	2,249	131	5.5
2016	2,347	2,234	113	4.8
2017	2,336	2,234	102	4.4

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

Table 26  
Annual Unemployment Rate

Year	Craig County	Virginia
2008	4.0	4.9
2009	7.4	7.2
2010	7.9	6.7
2011	7.5	6.2
2012	7.0	5.6
2013	7.0	5.1
2014	6.3	4.6
2015	5.5	3.9
2016	4.8	3.8
2017	4.4	3.3

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

The unemployment rate ranged from a peak of 5.4% in January 2016 to a low of 3.7% in December.

Table 27  
Monthly Labor Force Characteristics, 2017

Period	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate (%)
January	2,330	2,205	125	5.4
February	2,336	2,223	113	4.8
March	2,347	2,242	105	4.5
April	2,338	2,247	91	3.9
May	2,343	2,246	97	4.1
June	2,346	2,243	103	4.4
July	2,355	2,247	108	4.6
August	2,329	2,225	104	4.5
September	2,351	2,247	104	4.4
October	2,322	2,232	90	3.9
November	2,322	2,226	96	4.1
December	2,309	2,223	86	3.7

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

### Employment and Wages

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program derives its data from quarterly tax reports submitted to State Employment Security Agencies by employers that are subject to State unemployment insurance laws and from Federal agencies subject to the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees program. This includes 99.7% of all wage and salary civilian employment. These reports provide information on the number of people employed and the wages paid to the employees each quarter.

Covered employers in most States report total compensation paid during the calendar quarter, regardless of when the services were performed. Under most State laws or regulations, wages include bonuses, stock options, profit distributions, the cash value of meals and lodging, tips and other gratuities, and, in some States, employer contributions to certain deferred compensation plans such as 401(k) plans. Data for Craig County is shown below.

Table 28  
Employment and Wages

Year	Average Number of Establishments	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
2007	77	646	\$503
2008	89	658	\$547
2009	88	636	\$539
2010	83	670	\$547
2011	79	650	\$565
2012	75	645	\$573
2013	74	658	\$622
2014	75	666	\$649
2015	90	667	\$655
2016	102	692	\$660
2017	113	708	\$662

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

Table 29  
Average Weekly Wage

Year	Craig County	Virginia
2007	\$503	\$885
2008	\$547	\$908
2009	\$539	\$928
2010	\$547	\$955
2011	\$565	\$974
2012	4573	\$993
2013	\$622	\$998
2014	\$649	\$1,018
2015	\$655	\$1,044
2016	\$660	\$1,055
2017	\$662	\$1,087

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

## Household Earnings

Wage and salary income reflect Craig County’s income disparity with the statewide figures. The wage and salary mean income level in Craig County was 67% of the state figure. Mean social security income was higher than the state figure. Retirement income is 58% of the state figure and mean public assistance income was 17% of the state figure.

Table 30  
Mean Household Earnings by Type

Category	Craig County	Virginia
Wage and Salary Income	\$60,833	\$90,999
Social Security Income	\$15,960	\$18,341
Supplemental Security Income	\$9,401	\$9,240
Public Assistance Income	\$500	\$2,860
Retirement Income	\$17,450	\$29,972

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016.

## Occupation of Employed Persons

Occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job. The data is used to formulate policy and programs for employment, career development and training; to provide information on the occupational skills of the labor force in a given area to analyze career trends; and to measure compliance with antidiscrimination policies. Companies also use this data to assist in deciding where to locate new plants, stores, or offices based on the implied skills of the existing labor force.

Table 31  
Occupation of Employed Persons

Occupation Category	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,988	100.0
Management, professional, and related occupations	491	24.7
Service occupations	275	13.8
Sales and office occupations	503	25.3
Natural resources, Construction, and maintenance occupations	292	14.7
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	427	21.5

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016.



## Industry of Employed Persons

Industry data describe the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization. The data provides industry classifications that group establishments into industries based on the activities in which they are primarily engaged. The industry categories do not necessarily reflect the occupation/job of residents. For example, people employed in agriculture include truck drivers and bookkeepers; people employed in the transportation industry include mechanics, freight handlers, and payroll clerks; and people employed in the health care profession include nurses, janitors, security guards, and secretaries.

Table 32  
Industry of Employed Persons

Industry Category	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1988	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	52	2.6
Construction	252	12.7
Manufacturing	307	15.4
Wholesale trade	0	0.0
Retail trade	88	4.4
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	133	6.7
Information	48	2.4
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	142	7.1
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	97	4.9
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	563	28.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	64	3.2
Other services, except public administration	127	6.4
Public administration	115	5.8

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016.

## Major Employers

The following table shows major employers for Craig County in 2018 provided by the Virginia Employment Commission. Major employers represent several sectors including industrial, retail, medical and government.

Table 33  
Major Employers

1. Craig County Public School Board	26. U.S. Department of Agriculture
2. County of Craig	27. Allman Stone Masonry
3. Food Country USA	28. Family Dollar Store
4. Innovative Community Solutions	29. Industrial Cleaning Services Inc
5. Craig Botetourt Electric Co-operative, Inc.	30. Strauch Fiber Equipment Co
6. Otsuka American Pharmaceuticals	31. Thorvin, Inc.
7. RWC Enterprises Inc	32. VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
8. Phyle Inventory Control	33. Craig New Castle Public Services
9. Monroe County Health Cent	34. Forever Green Lawn Care LLC
10. Paint Bank General Store	35. VDOT
11. Craig County Child Care Center	36. Wolf and Associates
12. The Farmer's and Merchant's Bank	37. Zimmerman's Equipment
13. The Virginia Baptist Children's Home	38. Blue Hill Plaza
14. Bibos Pizzeria	39. Browns Excavation Inc
15. Market Street Pharmacy Inc	40. Craig County Automotive
16. Wilderness Adventure at Eagle Landing	41. Supreme Court of Virginia Combined
17. Hollow Hill Farm Inc	42. Advanced Simulation Technology Inc
18. IGA Express	43. Ashley Dunbar
19. Craig County Department of	44. Assigned Counsel
20. 81 South Corporation	45. Brico Services
21. US Postal Service	46. Carolyn Paitzel Via
22. Virginia Department of State Police	47. Crawford Oil Company
23. Carter Bank & Trust	48. Easter Seals Inc
24. Precision Tool & Grind Inc	49. Craig County Veterinary Service
25. Western Auto Association Store	50. Guthrie Insurance Agency

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, *Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 1st Quarter (January, February, March) 2018.*

## Taxable Sales

The taxable sales figures presented below are based on Virginia sales tax revenues deposited rather than the actual taxable sales figures as reported on a dealer's return. The amount of annual taxable sales by locality in odd numbered years is among the elements used to calculate the Composite Index of Ability to Pay used by the Department of Education to allocate school-aid money.

The figures should be viewed as approximations of the actual taxable sales for the period. The accuracy depends on a variety of factors such as correct filing of returns, mailing and processing conditions, and the number of filing days in a month. Trends in taxable sales partly represent changes in sales tax collections and so may differ from changes in actual retail sales. The number of registered dealers for each business classification code accounts for multiple locality dealers. This figure is determined by counting each separate place of business once. The report contains only those items that are subject to the sales and vending tax. Many sales are excluded such as certain motor vehicles, mobile homes, travel trailers, and certain motor vehicle fuels.

The total number of establishments increased by 23 from 2012 to 2017. The total taxable sales however remained flat with only a 1.3% increase.

Table 34  
Annual Taxable Sales

Year	Establishments	Taxable Sales
2012	74	\$12,706,970
2013	79	\$13,017,480
2014	98	\$13,064,814
2015	98	\$12,891,098
2016	94	\$12,736,487
2017	97	\$12,876,065

Source: *Taxable Sales in Virginia Counties and Cities, Annual Report, Virginia Department of Taxation, 2012-2017.*

Table 35  
Taxable Sales by Classification 2017

Classification	Number of Dealers	Amount
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	6	13,332,605
General Merchandise Stores	5	2,682,346
Nonstore Retailers	17	187,045
Telecommunications	5	809,123
Repair and Maintenance	5	501,141
Sub Total	38	5,512,260
Miscellaneous and Unidentifiable Total:	59	7,363,805
Total:	97	12,876,065

Source: *Taxable Sales in Virginia Counties and Cities, Virginia Department of Taxation, 2017*

## Agriculture

The total number of farms in Craig County increased from 2007 to 2012 as did the total amount of land in farms. Total cropland decreased while harvested cropland increased during the period. The average value per farm and average value per acre decreased during the time period according to the Census of Agriculture. Value of livestock and poultry decreased in value by almost 29 percent. The total market value of crops increased from \$481,000 in 2007 to \$1,299,000 in 2012. Craig County agriculture figures for Average Value per Farm, Average Value Per Acre, and Average Value of Products per Farm compare favorably to Virginia figures.

Table 36  
Farm Characteristics

Characteristic	2007		2012	
	Craig County	Virginia	Craig County	Virginia
Number of Farms	193	47,383	207	46,030
Land in Farms (acres)	41,630	8,103,925	46,625	8,302,444
Avg. Farm Size (acres)	216	171	225	180
Avg. Value <sup>1</sup> Per Farm	\$765,895	\$720,538	\$714,005	\$776,719
Avg. Value <sup>1</sup> Per Acre	\$3,551	\$4,213	\$3,170	\$4,306
Total Cropland (acres)	11,081	3,274,137	9,947	2,990,561
Harvested Cropland (acres)	7,669	2,544,997	8,636	2,618,291

1. Includes land and buildings.

Source: Census of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007 and 2012.

Table 37  
Value of Agricultural Products

Category	2007		2012	
	Craig County	Virginia	Craig County	Virginia
Market Value of all Agricultural Products Sold <sup>1</sup>	\$5,506	\$2,906,188	\$4,886	\$3,753,287
Avg. Per Farm	\$28,530	\$61,334	\$23,606	\$81,540
Market Value of Crops <sup>1</sup>	\$481	\$858,301	\$1,299	\$1,360,146
Market Value of Livestock, and Poultry <sup>1</sup>	\$5,025	\$2,047,887	\$3,587	\$2,393,141

1. Value in thousands of dollars.

Source: Census of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007 and 2012.

## **Chapter 6 Recreation and Tourism**

Craig County offers a rich historical heritage, a small-town country atmosphere, and rolling mountain vistas. With over 150,000 acres of National Forest land, recreational opportunities include hunting, birding, fishing, primitive camping, horse-back riding, and world-class hiking. Outdoor Recreation Resources are illustrated on Map 4.

### **Craig County Tourism Commission**

The Craig County Tourism Commission currently has ten members appointed by the Craig County Board of Supervisors. The mission statement of the commission is: *To maximize economic development by promoting tourism, and to enhance quality of life, while retaining the culture and natural beauty of the area.*

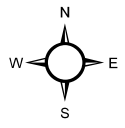
### **Regional Tourism Marketing**

Craig County is an active member in the following regional tourism organizations: Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Fish Virginia First, Virginia's Western Highlands and the Artisans Center of Virginia. The County is working with Virginia's Western Highlands on multiple brochures and a web site to market the areas opportunities for hiking, birding, wildflowers, and driving tours.

### **Virginia's Western Highlands Artisan Trail**

In 2012 the Artisans Center of Virginia, in partnership with the Virginia's Western Highlands Tourism Council, announced the initiation of the development of the Artisan Trail Network program in the region of the Virginia's Western Highlands (Alleghany Highlands, Bath County, Craig County and Highland County, VA). Virginia's Western Highlands Artisan Trail links the member localities together using sites highlighting artists, crafters and agri-businesses. The first Craig County members signed up to participate in the program in April 2012. There are 9 members of the Artisan Trail in Craig County. They are: Depot Lodge, Joe's Trees - Next Generation Farm, Joes Trees Artisan Store, Art by Momet, Old Brick Hotel, Swinging Bridge Restaurant, Tingler's Mill, Wilderness Adventure at Eagle Landing, and the Craig County Public Library & Visitor's Center.

The Artisans Center of Virginia (ACV) develops and implements systems and strategies to improve economic outcomes for Virginia artisans and their communities while assisting them in promoting their local artisan culture. The ACV, a state-designated nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the economic opportunities of small business artisans and the communities in which they reside, is implementing a defined plan of strategic initiatives to quantify the artisan industry's economic impact, strengthen rural economies through regional network marketing, enhance statewide tourism marketing initiatives, develop small businesses, create jobs, and open and expand markets for Virginia exports.



# Map 4 Outdoor Recreation Resources



### Legend

- \* Overlook
- \* Wayside
- P AT Parking
- Ⓔ AT Shelter
- Appalachian Trail
- AT Property
- 🦋 Birding & Wildlife Trail Sites
- Field of Dreams
- 🐟 DGIF Fish Hatchery
- Craig Co Greenway
- 🦋 USFS Sites
- Birding & Wildlife Trail Loops
- Trout Streams
- US Forest Service Trails
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

## Tourism's Economic Impact

While tourism and recreation provide quality of life benefits to residents and visitors, consideration must also be given to the economic impact of these activities. The latest data available from the Virginia Division of Tourism is for 2015.

Table 38  
Craig County Tourism Impact

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Expenditures	3,823,818	3,947,467	3,969,993	4,100,752	4,121,154
Payroll	755,801	775,633	798,725	821,571	845,771
Employment	46	46	46	47	47
State Tax Receipts	154,410	158,443	159,411	166,473	173,302
Local Tax Receipts	132,001	134,644	137,385	139,346	144,650
Lodging Excise Tax Collected	12,487	14,618	13,089	17,313	15,733
Food Service Excise Tax Collected	68,565	73,813	68,445	69,536	79,856
Admissions Excise Tax Collected	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2017.

Tourism Expenditures in Table 23 represent the direct spending by domestic travelers including meals, lodging, public transportation, auto transportation, shopping, admissions and entertainment. Payroll represents the direct wages, salaries and tips corresponding to the direct travel-related employment. Employment represents the estimates of direct travel-related employment in the locality. State Tax Receipts represents the estimates of direct travel-related state taxes generated within the locality. These taxes would include the state sales-and-use tax, gasoline excise taxes, corporate income tax and the personal income tax.

Local Travel Receipts represents the estimates of direct travel-related local taxes generated within the locality. These taxes would include the local sales-and-use tax, local excise taxes and property taxes. Lodging Excise Tax Collected, Food Service Excise Tax Collected, and Admissions Excise Tax Collected represent the local excise tax collections for lodging, meals and admissions, respectively, if applicable in the locality. Incorporated towns within a county may also impose a separate excise tax. Excise tax collections from incorporated towns are included in this data. Localities imposing a local lodging excise tax may impose the tax on any or all classes of lodging such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, cabins, and campgrounds.

## Festivals

### Craig County Fall Festival

The Fall Festival is held on the second Saturday in October. For 35 years it has been sponsored by the Craig County Historical Society as their major fundraiser and provides fundraising opportunities for the entire community. The festival with its estimated 8,000 attendees, includes a street fair, antique car show, live entertainment and horse rides. Demonstrations and exhibits showcase the history of Craig County at the Old Brick Hotel and three restored cabins.

### Prepper Festival

The Prepper Festival began in 2014 and is organized by the Craig County Business Association. The Craig County Business Association is a privately funded organization devoted to the expansion and teamwork of small businesses within Craig County. The festival has over 50 vendors for local artisans, canned goods, clothing, garden supplies, and survival gear. The festival also provides workshops and classes for its 5,000 attendees interested in cooking, concealed carry classes, food preservation, wilderness survival, gardening, homesteading, and community preparedness.

### Joe's Trees Fall Festival

Joe's Trees has been in business since 1962. They sell Christmas trees and wreaths, operate a Christmas shop, and host a Fall Festival in October. A Pumpkin Patch was added to the farm festivities in 2010. They also offer school tours.

### Blue Ridge Soaring Society Region 4 South Contest

Blue Ridge Soaring Society has hosted the RS4 for since 1970. The week-long event, sanctioned by the Soaring Society of America, gives pilots from all over the nation an opportunity fly over the Blue Ridge Mountains and participate in contests that take them over 4 states. BRSS also welcomes visitors anytime and has long weekends with various meals scheduled over Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day.

### Mountains of Misery Bike Race

Mountains of Misery is a challenging bike ride for dedicated road cyclists through the heart of southwest Virginia in May that is organized by the New River Bicycle Association. The annual timed event features century (100+ mi) and double-metric century (200 km/124+ mi) options—both ending in a tough, four-mile 12%–16% graded climb to the finish. The routes, with designated rest areas and course marshals, typically utilize Routes 18, 42, 311, 611, 615 and 617 in Craig County.

### Wilderness Adventure Festival

Hosted by Wilderness Adventure at Eagle Landing, a 3-day music and adventure festival in September that includes a farm to table dinner, mountain biking, zip line, camping and other outdoor activities.

## **Historic Landmarks**

The following land marks are listed in the *Virginia Landmarks Register* and *National Register of Historic Places*.

### New Castle Historic District

The New Castle Historic District encompasses nearly 70 acres of the downtown commercial center and adjacent residential areas. The historic district formed around the Craig County Courthouse and the tavern which is now the core of the Old Brick Hotel. From the 1890s through the 1920s the Bank Square subdivision lots along Main Street were sold and developed as commercial property. Building types represented in the district include a courthouse, a sheriff's



office/jail, a hotel, boarding houses, single-family dwellings, a church, stores, service stations, domestic and agricultural outbuildings, artisan workshops, and offices. Architectural classifications within the district include variations of the Greek Revival, Italiante, Beaux Arts, Eastlake, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival Styles.

Since 1983, the Craig County Historical Society has restored and maintained the Old Brick Hotel in New Castle. In 2012 an addition was added to the back of the building to provide a ground level facility for the Genealogy Library. Past boarders include lawyers and judges, hot springs visitors, and maybe Jesse James. The three-story brick building was built in three stages beginning in 1840. Right across the street from the Craig County Courthouse, it was the center of town through the boom times of the early 1900's.

The Hotel now showcases local antiques, a genealogy library and a lot of history. The dining room can be rented for meetings and dinners. The Hawkins cabin is adjacent to the hotel and the two-story Keffer log house is next door to the Craig County Health Center. The hotel is open every Friday afternoon April through November, or visitors may call for an appointment to view the facility.

Three log homes are in the historic district. The Keffer Log House was rebuilt during the summer of 1999 by Roger Davis of Montana and Robert Echols of Happy Hollow. The lot on which this cabin is located was the horse corral used by men coming to court in New Castle. The adjacent property has a clause in its deed stating, "there shall always be a path to the creek to water the horses." The path and John's Creek are behind the cabin. The Hawkins-Brizendine Cabin was built in 2000 of logs from the funeral home given by Buddy Boitnott and from the Hawkins homeplace on Rt. 614 given by Ashby & Flo Eakin. The Holstein Cabin dates from late 1700's and the families of Henry, Henry Jr. and Stephen Holstein. In 1989, family who had inherited the farm gave the cabin to Explore Park, who cataloged and moved the materials to a warehouse in Roanoke County. In Feb. 2017, Craig County was notified that Explore Park wished to return the cabin to Craig County. The Craig County Historical Society moved the materials to a storage site in Craig, found sufficient land on Court Street in New Castle, and enlisted Roger Davis, cabin builder. It is expected that the reconstruction will be completed in time for the Fall Festival in October 2018. Fundraisers are underway to pay expenses. The cabin, owned and maintained by Craig County Historical Society, will be a feature of all upcoming Craig County Fall Festivals and will be open to the public every Friday afternoon, spring thru fall, and by appointments.

### Craig Healing Springs

Craig Healing Springs is significant as a collection of nearly thirty well-preserved early Twentieth Century resort buildings. Developed as a resort between 1909 and 1920 by the Craig Healing Springs Company, the resort flourished with the advent of automobile travel in the years between the two world wars but declined with changes in vacation and travel patterns of the 1950s. The Christian Church in Virginia purchased the property and has adapted the site for use as a conference center, carefully maintaining the original grounds and buildings as well as many of the furnishings.

### Huffman House

The Huffman House site, also known as Huffman Farm, features an early nineteenth-century barn, a 1835 farmhouse, a corn crib, a wash house, a garage, and an early twentieth-century store. Located along Route 42, the complex developed over time and has had many commercial and travel related uses in addition to its primary purpose as a family farm.

## **Lodging**

### Big Pine Trout Farm

Big Pine Trout Farm located in historic New Castle has a farmhouse and a cottage. The farmhouse is a comfortable and upscale contemporary 3-bedroom house. The cottage sleeps 5 to 6 people and has a full kitchen. The site has amenities such as a private spring fed trout stream, beautiful views of the Virginia mountains, nature trails, blackberry picking (June-August), fully furnished. Running through Big Pine is Meadow Creek, a well-managed stream with rainbow trout. A limited number of anglers are permitted on the stream at a time, therefore, reservations are required.

### The Depot Lodge

The Depot Lodge is located in Paint Bank. The Lodge is part of a major economic investment which includes the renovation of Tingle's Mill to include a craft shop, the expansion of Paint Bank General Store to include the Swinging Bridge Restaurant and shop, Hollow Hill Buffalo Farm and Potts Mountain Outfitters. The train depot dates back to 1909, when Paint Bank was the final stop of the Potts Valley Branch line of the Norfolk & Western Railway. The depot and other historic buildings have been renovated and converted into charming lodging, while maintaining much of the original architecture. The main section of the depot lodge features 4 rooms upstairs, each with private bath, a gas fireplace, and the soothing sounds of flowing water from nearby Potts Creek. The lodge also offers a master suite with private bath, living room, and a deck overlooking the water. Choose from a variety of accommodations including an actual restored train caboose, one of many lodge rooms, one of two cottages, or a private cabin by Pott's Creek.

### Craig Springs Camp and Retreat Center

Craig Springs Camp and Retreat Center is a Christian camp for youth providing an opportunity to be in nature, escape from technology, create life-long friendships, and grow closer to God. Craig Springs also has inexpensive cabins, lodges, and cottages available for rent from May-October for small group or large group getaways, family reunions, organization retreats, or church group retreats.

### Wilderness Adventure

Wilderness Adventures at Eagle Landing offers its Main Lodge (11 rooms) and Sly Lodge (11 rooms) along with its Sneaky Cabin (1 bedroom) as accommodations for guests. The Main Lodge was built as an attachment to the original 1800's farmhouse and is the centerpiece of Base Camp. Providing a rustic atmosphere with all the modern comforts of home coupled with a large community-style bathhouse, the Main Lodge provides eight showers, four toilets and four sinks for each gender, with all linens provided for guests. The Sly Lodge, nestled in the woods, is 2,400 square feet and offers comfortable lodging for groups of between 8 and 33. Sneaky Cabin, with a private bedroom downstairs and an open upstairs loft, is perfect for groups of up to 8 looking for a private escape in the mountains.

## **Campgrounds**

### The Pines Campground

The Pines Campground is a U.S. Forest Service managed recreation area located next to Barbour's Creek with 1 picnic site, 7 campsites, a horse corral and trails, water and bathroom facilities.

### Steel Bridge Campground

Steel Bridge Campground is a U.S. Forest Service managed recreation area adjacent to Potts Creek and near the community of Paint Bank, has 3 campsites, and restroom facilities.

### Country Campground

Country Campground has primitive camping on Craig Creek south of New Castle. The campground has several pull-through sites. An enclosed pavilion is available for small fee. The family-operated campground has 20 campsites with electric and water hookups and 30 with no hook-ups.

## **USFS Recreation Resources**

Craig County is served by the New Castle Ranger District and Blacksburg Ranger District of the Jefferson and George Washington National Forest. The United States Forest Service (USFS) manages approximately 154,170 acres of land in Craig County as well as several recreation facilities and 200 miles of roads and trails. The USFS works in cooperation with the Virginia Division of Game and Inland Fisheries to manage the wildlife habitat in the County. The lands of the USFS provide residents and tourists with many opportunities for fishing, camping, hiking, hunting and nature study.

### Fenwick Mines Recreational Area

Fenwick Mines Recreational Area is a day use facility offering recreation opportunities for the naturalist, historian, and angler. The facility is managed and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. The created wetlands, boasting an accessible boardwalk interpretive trail, are the remnants of a late nineteenth century iron mining and manufacturing center that once was the location of a community of over 200 individuals. The site is ADA accessible. The Fenwick Mining Complex, consisting of 3,000 acres, was operated primarily between 1899 and 1924. Eight mines in the proximity of the wetlands produced high grade ore which was shipped by the C&O Railroad to furnace locations for smelting. The reclaimed area now boasts waterfowl habitat, native wetland flora habitat, a warm water fishing area, casual sports openings, a picnic shelter, and group and family picnic sites. The site is a popular horseback riding area and has hosted groups such as the Back Country Horsemen and Salem Lions Club rides. Adjacent trails offer waterfalls, hunting, upland hardwood and mixed pine forests, and a glimpse into the history of the iron industry.

### Potts Slope Shooting Range

This range is for rifle and pistol practice only. The lanes are sheltered from the sun and each one has a shooting bench that accommodates left and right-handed shooters. This range is designed

for firing at stationary targets at 25, 50 & 100 yards. Shooters must bring their own paper targets. The range is handicapped-accessible. Parking and a restroom are available at the site.

## **Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trails**

Within Virginia's 43,000 square miles of diverse natural habitat, can be found some 400 species of birds, 250 species of fish, 150 species of terrestrial and marine mammals, 150 species of amphibians and reptiles, and a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. The Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail celebrates this diversity. In fact, it is the first statewide program of its kind in the United States.

Craig County is part of the Iron Ore Loop Trail in the state's Mountain Trail area. It includes the following six Birding and Wildlife Trails located within the county:

- Fenwick Mines
- Lions Club Park
- Hall Road Raptor Viewing Area
- Paint Bank Trout Hatchery
- Paint Bank General Store/Depot Lodge/Hollow Hill Farm
- Sweet Road (FDR-350)

## **Scenic Byways**

Three roads in Craig County have been designated Scenic Byways by the State of Virginia: Route 311, Route 42 and Route 615. Each of these driving routes was selected based on scenes of natural beauty and places of historical and social significance. In addition, the Virginia Outdoors Plan recommended the inclusion of Route 606 from Fincastle to its intersection with 612 in Craig County in the list of scenic byways. The U.S. Forest Service is working with the states of Virginia and West Virginia to develop the "Whistle Stop Byway" (Rt. 600) which will extend from Glen Alton, in Giles County, Virginia to Paint Bank. Portions of routes 311, 42, 600, and 18 (the road passing Steel Bridge Day Use Area and Steel Bridge Campground) are part of the Iron Ore Loop of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.

## **Overlooks and Waysides**

Driving through Craig County, one would be hard pressed not to notice the magnificent views from Pott's and Peter's Mountains. First developed in the 1930s as Civilian Conservation Corps projects, the waysides and overlooks in Craig County potentially could become a tourism destination. Existing waysides include: Broad Run/Craig Creek Wayside (Route 311); Craig Creek Valley Overlook (Route 42); John's Creek Wayside (Route 311); Pott's Mountain East CCC Era Overlook (Route 311); Pott's Mountain West CCC Era Overlook (Route 311); and Peter's Mountain West CCC Era Overlook (Route 311).

## **Trails and Greenways**

### Craig County Greenway

The Craig County Greenway was designed to be constructed in three sections and will connect Downtown New Castle, the Craig County Public Schools campus, and the Field of Dreams recreation complex. Section one will connect Downtown New Castle to the trailhead at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street via a pedestrian bridge across Johns Creek. The central, or second section, of the greenway was completed in 2012 and connects the Craig County schools campus to a trailhead near the Virginia Department of Transportation garage at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The third and final section of the greenway will connect the Craig County school campus to the recreation facilities at the Field of Dreams. Potential funding sources for this trail include Virginia Department of Transportation Enhancement Program, VDOT Safe Routes to School Program and the Virginia Recreational Trails program.

### Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail passes through the southern corner of Craig County with several access points, shelters and camping facilities and is an important recreation and tourism resource for the region. Almost 30 miles of the famed Maine-to-Georgia trail is located in Craig County with several shelters and camping facilities along the way.

### Dragon's Tooth Trail

Dragon's Tooth Trail, located on Cove Mountain at the Craig County / Roanoke County line, is a popular hiking trail for residents and tourists. Dragon's Tooth provides hikers with views of nearby and distant mountain peaks. The trailhead located on Route 311 has parking and restroom facilities.

### Ferrier and Lick Branch Trail

The Ferrier and Lick Branch Trails located just south of New Castle off of Route 690 provide good views of Craig Creek Valley and Potts Mountain. The trails eventually connect to the Price Mountain trails in Botetourt County. There are no water or restroom facilities. Limited trailhead parking is available on US Forest Service road 5026.

### Fenwick Mines Trail

Two short hiking trails are available at the Fenwick Mines Day Use Area in Jefferson National Forest. The recreation area is located on the former site of Fenwick, a prosperous mining town which played an important role in early Craig County history. In addition to hiking trails, there are picnic tables, horse shoe pits and a fine fishing hole. Fenwick Wetlands Trail is an easy one-mile hike through a hardwood forest and an Appalachian swamp, and ends at a picnic area. Fenwick Nature Trail, also one mile long, passes through forest, crosses Mill Creek, and ends at the overlook of a waterfall. Both trails are wheelchair accessible. Restroom facilities are available.

### Hanging Rock Trail

Hanging Rock Trail is located in Shawvers Run Wilderness Area on Forest Road 177.1. The approximately half mile trail leads to an expansive view of Hanging Rock Valley and into West Virginia. The trail has limited parking and no restroom facilities.

### Lipes Branch Trail

The Lipes Branch Trail is a 2.5-mile trail that passes through the Barbours Creek Wilderness Area. The trail is located near the Pines Campground on Route 617.

### North Mountain Trail

The North Mountain Trail System includes a 13.2-mile trail system on the ridge top of North Mountain plus three 1½-mile trails that climb the north face of the mountain to the ridge. Trails are rocky, steep and difficult, making them popular with mountain bikers. Hikers and bikers can combine any of the three ascending trails with Wildlife Road and North Mountain Trail to create different sized loops to suit their abilities. The trail system is well-signed and blazed. Located along the crest of North Mountain, this trail offers good views into both Catawba and Craig Creek Valleys. McAfee Knob and Tinker Cliffs which are located along the AT are also visible. There are no facilities on the North Mountain Trail system.

### Sevenmile Trail

Sevenmile Trail covers 5 miles going over Sevenmile Mountain. Parking is located Route 658 and limited parking on Route 632. No facilities are available.

### Sulphur Springs Ridge and Price Mountain Trail

The Sulphur Springs and Price Mountain Trails for a five-mile loop trail that ties into the Patterson Mountain Trail system in Botetourt County and combine for a 5-mile loop. A trailhead is located along Route 606 near the Botetourt County line.

## **Hunting**

Craig County's abundant forestlands make it a prime location for hunters during specified seasons. A hunting license is required. U.S. Forest Service land is open to the public for hunting and requires a National Forest stamp. The area provides good hunting opportunities for bear, deer, grouse, rabbit, raccoon, squirrel and turkey.

## **Fishing**

Stocked Trout Streams in Craig County are Barbours Creek, Potts Creek and the Montgomery County section of Craig Creek. Meadow Creek and portions of Barbour's Creek are considered to be Wild Trout Streams by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Paint Bank Trout Hatchery is located on Route 311 near Paint Bank. The Fisheries Division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries operates nine fish cultural stations around the state. The Paint Bank Trout Hatchery is another station that was taken over from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It hatches and rears all three species of trout for stocking in Virginia waters, and it is a participating hatchery in the National Broodstock Program. Paint Bank fish are stocked throughout the region, from Craig to Henry counties. A fishing license is required.

## **Public Water Access**

Craig County does not have any publicly owned water access site for boaters. The use of Johns Creek and Craig Creek have been contested in the courts for many years based on property ownership of the creeks (based on 1700s royal land grant) and the waterbodies classification as “navigable” changing multiple times. The most recent lawsuit challenging a state decision to declare Johns Creek a public waterway was withdrawn in March 2017 with a motion of non-suit allowing plaintiffs to refile within 6 months.

Currently the only legal access sites not on private property are the Route 311 bridge that crosses Johns Creek and a site owned by the American Whitewater organization that is located approximately 5 miles downstream just north of New Castle. Because of the sensitivity of Johns Creek access, paddlers should stay in their boats if reasonably safe and at all possible, and not utilize the private shores for any purpose.

The Virginia Outdoors Plan recommends development of public water access sites on Johns Creek upstream from New Castle and on Craig Creek between New Castle and Strom. Specific sites for access points were not identified in the Outdoors Plan. In the past, a majority of public access has been informal, consisting of right of ways at bridge crossings and from private land. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries works with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and Department of Transportation to determine appropriate locations for constructing public access points. Public access sites provided by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries could provide residents and tourists with well designed, legal, and maintained public water access.

## **Private and Non-Profit Recreation Facilities**

### Craig County Fairgrounds

Craig County Fairgrounds is a 7-acre site south of New Castle that has been developed and maintained by community volunteers. The property is owned by the Craig County IDA and leased to the Fairgrounds Association who donate profits to the Field of Dreams project. The site has horse rings, a demolition derby pit, a ball diamond, concession stands and a small performance stage with concrete pad. The facility can be rented from the Fairground Association for events.

### Field of Dreams

The Field of Dreams recreation facility is an 18-acre site approximately one mile east of the Craig County Schools Campus. The property was originally purchased by the Craig County Youth and Community Services Board, a private nonprofit along with its branch group Craig County Recreation and Conservation Association through private donations from the community. The site, currently under construction, will be developed into a recreational complex with facilities for baseball, softball, football, soccer, ADA accessible trails, picnics, and passive recreation.

### Mountain Shepherd Wilderness Survival School

Mountain Shepherd Wilderness Survival School is an internationally known facility that provides training in outdoor and survival skills. Mountain Shepherd offers professional instruction in wilderness survival, wilderness first aid, map & compass navigation, escape & evasion, wilderness leadership & teambuilding, girls summer camp, and survival & empowering for women.

The school has opportunities for individual instruction as well as larger corporate group events for private, business and government sectors.

#### Wilderness Adventure at Eagle Landing

Since 1990, Col. Gene Norvo has offered a unique 500-acre outdoor adventure facility with two lodges and a cabin. Today it offers summer youth camps, corporate retreats, weddings, mountain bike racing, paddling, ropes course, hiking trails and a wide variety of recreational opportunities to clients from all over the world. Through primitive camping and outdoor adventure activities, programs offer challenges and opportunities that people seldom experience. The wilderness experience and the adventure activities help participants build confidence, character, self-esteem, and leadership while developing skills.

#### Craig Springs Camp and Retreat Center

Craig Springs Camp and Retreat Center is a Christian camp for youth providing an opportunity to be in nature, escape from technology, create life-long friendships, and grow closer to God. Craig Springs also has inexpensive cabins, lodges, and cottages available for rent from May-October for small group or large group getaways, family reunions, organization retreats, or church group retreats.

The facility offers summer volunteer opportunities to work with campers as a counselor, nurse, musician, or craft director. The camp has spring and fall work weekends each year where volunteers can work with other Craig Springs lovers and give back to the place that has given so much to our youth. Work weekends are free events.

Craig Springs' summer camping program has multiple week-long camps offered for different ages and interests. Each summer, campers enjoy worship, music, swimming, hiking, small group sessions, a camp dance, talent show, games, team - building activities, and making memories with friends. Family Retreat is a fun long weekend experience for people of all ages. Our Men's and Women's Retreats are great for adults who are looking for a Godly social weekend, with key note speakers and interesting conversation.

#### HopeTree Family Services WOODS Program

HopeTree Family Services offers a wide range of ministries for at-risk children and youth and their families across Virginia. The mission of the WOODS program is to provide at-risk youth long term residential care through a non-traditional educational environment. The Wilderness Outdoor Opportunity Discovery School (WOODS) cares for up to 15 boys who need more structure and discipline than our Residential Care program provides. WOODS is interdepartmentally licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia and accredited through Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Educational Facilities.

Located at Bickers Camp on Craig in Craig County, WOODS enables each resident to find stability and make healthier life choices through education, counseling, regular chores, and wilderness experiences. Once they have completed the program, WOODS residents graduate to Residential Care, Treatment Foster Care, or return home.



### Camp Easter Seals

Camp Easter Seals UCP is an overnight camp for children and adults with disabilities. The facility offers weekend, summer, and family camps. Camp Easter Seals UCP is accredited by the American Camp Association.

There are eight cabins that sleep 14-20 people comfortably. In addition, a guest cottage that accommodates 10 people is also available. The dorm building accommodates up to 40 people and offers a full kitchen, laundry and additional meeting space. All lodging facilities at Camp Easter Seals UCP have electricity, indoor plumbing and fire places, and most are heated. Camp Easter Seals is able to provide meal service if needed.

The facility is available during off season to corporations, churches, retreats, youth groups, family reunions, fraternities or sororities, services clubs, scout groups and others.

### Blue Ridge Soaring Society

The Blue Ridge Soaring Society (BRSS) is a 501(c)(3) that supports the sport of soaring through public outreach, training, and racing. BRSS is located on Route 311 south of New Castle. The mountain ridges running through the area provide great ridge flights for long cross-country flights. When weather conditions permit, wave flights are also possible.

The Blue Ridge Soaring Society has long welcomed visitors to its field and has hosted the Region 4 South Contest since 1970. BRSS frequently provides orientation flights to groups such as the Roanoke Aviation Magnet School, Virginia Tech's ROTC and AIAA, and the Virginia Aviation Conference. They are also able to give "walk on" visitors orientation flights on a space available basis. BRSS provides tows and flight instruction only to members of the BRSS. Guest memberships are available to allow a guest member to begin flight instruction (prior to full membership) or take occasional tows in privately owned sailplanes, subject to club approval.

## **Chapter 7 Community Facilities**

### **Water and Sewer Systems**

Water supply and sewage treatment are provided by the Craig-New Castle Public Service Authority (PSA). The PSA service area is comprised of the Town of New Castle and the area immediately adjacent to the town. The remainder of the county is dependent on private wells, springs and septic systems.

### **Solid Waste Management and Recycling**

The localities of Craig County and the Town of New Castle adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan in 1991. The plan, entitled Solid Waste Management Plan for Craig County and the Town of New Castle focused on two main objectives: 1) effectively managing solid waste through the 6-step waste management hierarchy; and 2) implementation of a recycling program to reduce the solid waste stream by 10% by 1991, 15% by 1993 and 25% by 1995. The waste management plan was a response to legislation adopted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1989 which required every city, county and town to develop a solid waste management plan for submission to the Virginia Department of Waste Management by July 1, 1991. The Plan also addressed the anticipated closure of the county's landfill, waste collection options, and transferring waste to a landfill outside the county.

In 2006 the General Assembly revised the Code of Virginia to provide for a two-tiered recycling mandate for the Commonwealth's solid waste planning units. All units must meet the minimum recycling rate of 25% unless their population density is less than 100 persons per square mile or if their civilian unemployment rate is 50% above the statewide average. Those units meeting these criteria must meet a minimum recycling rate of 15%. Craig County qualified for the 15% rate based on population density. Craig County's most recently reported recycling rate for the 2012 reporting year was 19.85 percent.

The Craig County Board of Supervisors adopted an updated plan in 2011. The plan addresses all requirements of the Regulations for the Development of Solid Waste Management Plans. The Plan is designed serve as a guidance document for Craig County and the Town of New Castle as they continue to strive to provide the most economical, safe, environmentally responsible waste management system for their citizens. The plan contains a detailed description of the solid waste collection, disposal, and recycling operations within Craig County.

In 2018, the county plans to install a compactor at the convenience center on Route 42. Based on initial estimates, the compactor will reduce the transfer costs for solid waste.

### **Law Enforcement**

The Craig County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services for the county. Personnel include the Sheriff, eight full time Deputy Sheriff positions with two of these positions having dual rolls to include E911 coordinator and Animal Control. We currently have one Vacant Deputy Sheriff position to fill, which when filled will give us nine Deputy Sheriff positions. The Sheriff's department has five full time dispatcher positions and five part time dispatchers. The department has three unmarked patrol vehicles and seven marked patrol vehicles. The department has three spare four-wheel drive vehicles with one marked and two unmarked. Craig

County is a participating member of the Alleghany Highland Drug and gang Task Force. Additional law enforcement is provided by four Virginia State Troopers assigned to the area and one US Forest Service law enforcement officer.

## **Emergency Services**

Two rescue squads serve the County: Craig County Rescue Squad - EMS Inc and Paint Bank Volunteer Rescue Squad. There is one paid EMS department: Craig County Emergency Services.

There are five volunteer fire departments that serve Craig County: New Castle VFD, Johns Creek VFD, Paint Bank VFD, Simmonsville VFD, and Upper Craig Creek VFD.

Craig County employs a fulltime Emergency Services Coordinator/ Emergency Management Coordinator that works with the volunteer fire and rescue squads as well as the Sheriff's Office, State Police, FEMA and U.S. Forest Service to manage emergencies in the county. The Craig County Emergency Operations Center is located at the 321 Salem Ave. Craig County operates a centralized emergency dispatch system utilizing an Enhanced 911 system.

## **Health Care Facilities**

### Craig County Health Department

The Craig County Health Department is part of the Virginia Health Department's Alleghany Health District. The office provides health care services to County residents. The departments staff consists of an office manager, environmental specialist, clerical support and a public health nurse. Clinic services are provided based on family income and a sliding fee scale and/or at no cost to customers. Programs offered by the health department include Family Planning, Pregnancy Testing, Pediatric and Adult Immunization, Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing, WIC/Nutrition, Resource Mothers, BabyCare, Car Seat Program, Vital Statistics, and Environmental Health.

### Craig County Health Center

The Craig County Health Center is operated as a satellite office of the Monroe Health Center. The center has one full-time family practitioner, a physician's assistant, registered nurses, and administrative staff. The center provides a sliding fee schedule for all patients who are deemed financially eligible (who fall at or below the 200% poverty level). The mission of Monroe Health Center is to increase access to comprehensive primary, preventative, public health services, eliminate health disparities, and to improve the healthcare status of underserved and vulnerable populations.

The Health Center offers the following services:

- Routine Physical Examinations from Birth through the Adult Years
- Laboratory Services
- Radiology Services
- EKG Examinations
- Mental Health Services
- Specialty Referral and Follow-up
- Home Health Care Referrals

- Acute Care
- Osteopathic Manipulative Therapy
- Hearing and Vision Screening
- Allergy Treatment
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening
- Minor Office Procedures
- Home Visits
- Environmental Health
- Screening and Treatment of TB and Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Family Planning
- Immunizations
- Discounted Fee Scale
- Medication Assistance Program
- School Wellness Centers
- Preventative and Restorative Dentistry

The Monroe Health Center services include family dentistry at the Craig County Dental Center. Professional staff consists of a full-time board-certified dentist, a full-time dental hygienist, and two full-time dental assistants.

#### School Wellness Program

Craig County Public Schools operates a school wellness program in cooperation with the Craig County Health Center. The Wellness Center gives students a convenient opportunity to be seen by a licensed health care provider. In addition to examinations and routine medical care, the Wellness Center can also provide vaccinations and counseling. Parents must give prior written consent before services are provided to their children. There is no cost for services for families without medical insurance.

#### Private Dental and Medical Services

There is one private part-time dentist with an office in the Town of New Castle. There are no private doctor offices in Craig County.

#### **Craig County Public Library**

The Craig County Public Library, located in downtown New Castle, was established in 2003. The current library facility opened in 2004. The library is organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, Craig County Public Library, Inc. and is dependent on donations, grants and Craig County for funding.

Craig County Public Library has a small collection that focuses on popular materials of interest to readers of all ages. The library's collection includes books for adults, young adults, and children, large print books, audiobooks, videos for adults and children, local history materials, magazines and newspapers, and more. The library has an interlibrary loan program to allow patrons to use materials from other libraries. Residents with a Craig County Library card may also utilize the libraries in Roanoke County, and the cities of Roanoke and Salem.

The library has three Public Access Computers available on a first-come, first-served basis, plus two Public Access Laptops that can be reserved in advance for use by adults. One computer that functions as an Express Internet (15-minute limit) and OPAC (Online Public Access Catalog) station. Wireless access is available in the library for personal laptops. In addition to online resources (including the Find It Virginia databases), the library has a full suite of Microsoft Office productivity software on all public access computers.

In the children's area, there is an Early Literacy Computer that is loaded with fun and educational software for younger patrons. Children under 10 must be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the library. With the help of dedicated volunteers, the library provides Storytimes for Preschoolers and participates in special reading programs for children, including the annual Summer Reading Program (for all ages) and the Winter Reading Program (for ages two through five).

## **Electric Utilities**

### Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative

Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative distributes electricity to portions of the county and is headquartered in New Castle, Virginia. The Cooperative was formed in 1936 and serves approximately 6,000 customers in portions of seven counties in southwest Virginia and West Virginia. The Cooperative employs 23 employees full time.

### American Electric Power

American Electric Power serves portions of Craig County and other areas in southwestern Virginia. Existing transmission capabilities include a 138-kV line and the ability to upgrade for industries locating in the area.

## **Communication Services**

TDS Telecommunications provides local residential and business communications services to Craig County. Services include: VoIP & Voice, Internet, security, digital TV, managed business services, data networking and phone systems.

Pembroke Telephone Cooperative, commonly known as PemTel, provides communications service on the western portion of the county including phone, internet and digital cable television.

Cellular service is provided in portions of the county by nTelos Wireless, ATT, US Cellular and Verizon Wireless. There are cell towers throughout the county.

## **Broadband**

New fiber optic line was installed in 2013 by Mid-Atlantic Broadband Cooperative (MBC) as part of a project with Virginia Tech to connect existing fiber lines in Bedford to Blacksburg. The line extends from Bedford to Botetourt County, then enters Craig County along Caldwell Mountain Road, then travels along Route 615 to New Castle and west on Route 42 to Giles County before connecting to the Virginia Tech campus via Route 460. MBC operates the line as an extension of their network. The network will allow wholesale open access to all providers. The only access to the fiber in Craig is in New Castle. The fiber that runs along the right of way on Route 42 in Craig County was not designed for local access.

A recently completed broadband study – Broadband Strategies: Alleghany Highlands Region – was completed with funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. The grant was used to identify gaps in current and future broadband needs, develop productive public/private partnerships with broadband providers, and identify ways to use broadband to improve medical services, create jobs, attract and retain businesses, and improve the quality of life. The overall goal was to develop a comprehensive set of strategies that could be used to improve broadband connectivity for businesses, residents, and institutions. The survey conducted as part of the study showed that 89% of residential respondents and 91% of business respondents needed better internet service. The plan includes specific goals and strategies for improving broadband service in Craig County including a pilot project for the Town of New Castle that would install a 0.8-mile dark fiber network configured to reach several downtown blocks. Approximately 50 buildings are reached in the pilot. Additional segments could be added in the future to expand the network.

## **Chapter 8 Education**

### **Craig County Public Schools**

The Craig County School Division consists of McCleary Elementary School and Craig County High School. The elementary school, Prekindergarten through Fifth grade, serves approximately 250 students. The high school, grades Sixth through Twelfth, serves approximately 300 students. Both schools share a school nurse, cafeteria, two gymnasiums, and auditorium facilities. The schools are housed on one campus, located on Route 615, Craigs Creek Road, two miles northeast of New Castle.

McCleary Elementary School was constructed in 1969. There have been two additions added since the original construction and the cafeteria/multi-purpose area has been repurposed to serve as the library and three small spaces that are used by the special education department and the School Resource Officer. The former school kitchen serves as the Art Room for students in grades K-8. McCleary Elementary School was the recipient of the 2012 Virginia Department of Education Competence to Excellence Award. In addition to a rigorous academic program, students receive instruction in art, music, guidance and physical education.

McCleary Elementary School is a Title I School and provides assistance to identified students in the area of reading. There is a Title I Reading teacher that provides direct instruction to small groups of students. In addition, there is a Title I Instructional Assistant to assist as needed in the classrooms with remediation. The primary focus of the Title I Program is to strive for all students to be reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

The Craig County High School wing (Grades 9-12) was built in 1989 and the middle school wing (Grades 6-8) opened in 2003. There is one principal and a middle school coordinator.

Middle school students are offered a six period daily schedule with year-long classes in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. Daily Physical Education and exploratory classes in Art, Music, Computer Science and Agriculture are offered. Eighth grade students can enroll in Spanish 1, Agriculture and/or Algebra 1 classes to earn high school credits. Middle school students can participate in Middle School Sports or Junior Varsity sports in eighth grade.

High school students are also on a six period day. There are over 70 core and elective classes offered on a cyclical basis. Online classes in Advanced Placement and other subjects are offered through Virtual Virginia (the Virginia Department of Education's online learning management system) or Apex Learning. For high school students who qualify academically, students may submit an application to participate in the Roanoke Valley Governor's School.

Career and Technical Education courses are offered on the Craig County High School campus in the areas of Business and Agriculture. The school division has a partnership with Botetourt County Public Schools and students can attend the Botetourt Technical Education Center and enroll in the following programs: Auto Service, Auto Body, Building and Trades, Welding, Drafting, Criminal Justice, Cosmetology, and Nursing.

Craig County High School is a Group A member of the Virginia High School League and competes in the Pioneer District. The following sports programs are offered to students in grades eight through twelve: Cheerleading, Football, Volleyball, Track, Cross Country, boys and girls

Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Soccer and Scholastic Bowl. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the following clubs: FFA (Future Farmers of America), FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America).

### Public School Statistics

Public school statistics for Craig County are compared in Tables 39, 40, and 41 for school years 2010-11 and 2016-17. Total end of year membership decreased by 14.6% during the period. Pupil/Teacher ratios decreased in grades K-7 and increased in grades 8-12. Statewide, the pupil teacher ratio for grades K-7 was 13.08 and the grade 8-12 ratio was 12.31 in 2016-17. Total number of dropouts in Craig County decreased from 5 in 2010-11 to 2 in 2016-17. The total number of graduates in Craig County decreased by 23.6 percent. The percent of graduates continuing their education is shown in Table 40.

Table 39  
Public School Statistics

Category	2010-11	2016-17	Change
End of Year Membership	712	608	-14.6
Pupil/Teacher Ratio K-7	14.48	10.96	-24.3
Pupil/Teacher Ratio 8-12	9.16	11.74	28.2
Dropouts	5	2	-60.0
Total Graduates	55	42	-23.6

Source: Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education, 2010-11 and 2016-17

Table 40  
Students Continuing Education, 2016-17

Type of Institution	Craig County	Virginia
2 Year College	40.48	28.73
4 Year College	30.95	49.40
Employment	14.29	11.37
Military	4.76	3.79
Other	0.0	3.99
No Plans	9.52	2.72

Source: Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education, 2016-17.

Total school expenditures per student for Craig County increased by 24% from \$9,231 in 2010-11 to \$11,446 in 2016-17 compared to the statewide average of \$12,171 in 2016-17. Annual average salaries for Principals and Assistant Principals, Teachers, Instructional Positions and Teacher Aides are lower than the statewide averages.



Table 41  
Principals and Assistant Principals, Teachers,  
Instructional Positions and Teacher Aides Average Annual Salaries 2016-17

Position	Craig County	Virginia Average
Principal	\$68,613	\$99,727
Assistant Principal	\$38,606	\$81,942
Teaching Positions	\$42,702	\$56,349
Instructional Positions	\$43,502	\$57,766

*Source: Superintendent's Annual Report for Virginia, Virginia Department of Education, 2016-17.*

### Child Care

The Craig County Child Care Center in New Castle is a licensed childcare center providing weekday early learning instruction for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years 11 months. It has a maximum capacity of 100 children. The childcare center has annual fire, health and Department of Social Services licensing inspections. Craig County Child Care Board purchased the property from Craig County in 2018.

The Craig County Child Care Center is an Early Head Start and Head Start partnering agency. The center also accepts DSS childcare subsidies and participates in the USDA food program. The center serves breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. This allows all families to receive a preschool experience. All children are evaluated quarterly using Creative Curriculum and PAL's both are nationally recognized high quality early childhood educational evaluation tools. The staff work with parents to ensure that children are meeting developmental milestones and will be well equipped to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Resources and additional services are available for children that are identified as developmentally, physically, mentally or emotionally delayed most often this is at no cost to parents.

The Craig County Child Care Center voluntarily participates in VA Quality Rating. The center is an active member in Roanoke Valley Smart Beginnings. All staff either have or are working toward receiving a credential in Early Childhood Education. All staff are CPR, First Aid, and MAT (medication Administration Training) certified. As well all staff receive a minimum of 16 hours of continuing education training annually.

New Castle Christian Church is a Religious Exempt Child Day Center in New Castle. It has maximum capacity of 18 children. The center accepts children ages of 4 years to 5 years 11 months.

## Chapter 9 Transportation

The predominant mode of transportation in Craig County is the automobile. The County maintains a close working relationship with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) on all road and vehicular related issues. The State of Virginia owns, constructs and maintains all public roads, both primary and secondary systems, in the County.

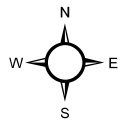
### Highway Network

Route 311 is the main north-south transportation route and connects the county to the Roanoke Valley and Interstate 81. Virginia Route 42 is the main westward route leading to the Town of Newport in Giles County. Route 621 connects Route 311 to U.S. Route 460 in Montgomery County. Virginia Route 18 in the northern part of the county connects Paint Bank to Interstate 64 in the City of Covington and Alleghany County. Secondary Routes 615 and 606 serve as the main connections to Route 220 in Botetourt County. The highway network is made up of both Virginia Primary and Secondary System routes (see Map 5 Highway Network).

Table 42  
Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes

Highway	From	To	2010	2016
Rt. 18	Rt. 311 Paint Bank	Alleghany Co Line	150	230
Rt. 42	Giles Co Line	629 Lugar Hill Rd	900	1,100
Rt. 42	629 Lugar Hill Road	626 Bethel Church Road	370	390
Rt. 42	626 Bethel Church Road	645 Looney School Road	410	450
Rt. 42	645 Looney School Road	New Castle Town Limit	700	700
Rt. 42	New Castle Town Limit	Rt 311	700	700
Rt. 311	Roanoke County Line	New Castle Town Limit	3,900	3,900
Rt. 311	New Castle Town Limit	Rt. 42	3,900	3,900
Rt. 311	Rt. 42	New Castle Town Limit	1,600	1,700
Rt. 311	New Castle Town Limit	Rt. 658 Johns Creek Road	1,600	1,700
Rt. 311	Rt. 658 Johns Creek Road	602 Back Valley Road	310	290
Rt. 311	602 Back Valley Road	Rt. 18 Potts Creek Road	350	350
Rt. 311	Rt. 18 Potts Creek Road	West Virginia State Line	210	200
Rt. 42/615	New Castle Town Limit	Rt. 638 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	4,300	4,500
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 638 6 <sup>th</sup> Street	Rt. 653 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	3,700	3,900
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 653 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	Rt. 649 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	3,100	3,400
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 649 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Rt. 689 Camp Mitchell Road	3,000	3,200
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 689 Camp Mitchell Road	Rt. 686 Alleghany Circle	2,600	2,900
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 686 Alleghany Circle	Rt. 609 Sand Plant Road	2,100	1,900
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 609 Sand Plant Road	Rt. 614 Hawkins Lane	1,000	970
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 614 Hawkins Lane	Rt. 610 Crossroads Boulevard	620	680
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 610 Crossroads Boulevard	Rt. 606 Caldwell Mountain Road	570	600
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 606 Caldwell Mountain Road	Rt. 643 Howard Hannah Road	320	290
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 643 Howard Hannah Road	Rt. 612 Scenic View Lane	150	150
Rt. 42/615	Rt. 612 Scenic View Lane	Botetourt County Line	140	120

Source: *Average Daily Traffic Volumes 2016, Virginia Department of Transportation, 2010 and 2016.*



# Map 5 Highway Network



### Legend

- Other
- Secondary System
- Virginia Primary
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

## Federal Functional Classification

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Most travel involves movement throughout the network of roadways. It is necessary to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner.

Functional classification began with the passage of the Federal Aid Act of 1921. The Act established a federal aid primary system. The absence of road design uniformity among states hindered federal efforts to determine national needs. In order to address this issue, Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973, which mandated the realignment of federal aid roads based in a standardized functional classification system. This process remains in effect today.

VDOT uses functional classification for the purposes of, funding, design, determining the urban network to identify the thoroughfare system, determining statewide network for the State Highway Needs Assessment Study, and to help establish construction priorities. Functional class most often affects the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP). Functional class affects several factors in VDOT operations including:

- Design Horizon Year (how long the road is designed to last)
- Geometric Design Standards
- Allocation of Transportation Funding (based on classification)
- Maintenance Payments (amount and type of funding)
- Development and Maintenance of Local Roads (non-Federal funding and maintenance)
- Access Management (intersections, driveways, interchanges)
- Traffic Calming (eligibility for traffic calming)
- Data Recording, Reporting and Documentation

VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD) is responsible for maintaining the Commonwealth's official Federal Functional Classification System. TMPD determines the functional classification of the road by type of trips, expected volume, what systems the roadway connects and whether the proposed functional classification falls within the mileage percentage thresholds established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

New guidelines from FHWA in 2014 changed the way roadways are classified. The new guideline bases functional class primarily on the function of the road, not the road's location in regard to the urban and rural boundary. The most recently approved (2014) functional classes for the highway network in Craig County are shown on Map 6.

Craig County has three functional road classifications in addition to the local road network: minor arterials, major collectors, and minor collectors.

*Minor Arterials* provide service for trips of moderate length. In rural areas, Minor Arterials link cities and large towns, along with other major traffic generators, and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. The design in rural areas typically provides for relatively high overall speeds, with minimum interference to the through movement.

*Major Collector* routes are longer in length; have lower connecting driveway densities; have higher speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors may. In rural areas, Major Collectors

provide service to any county seat not on an arterial system, to larger towns not directly served by higher systems. Major Collectors also link these places to nearby larger towns and cities or with arterial routes and serve the most important intra-county travel corridor.

*Minor Collectors* in rural areas are spaced at intervals, consistent with population density. Minor Collectors collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road. Minor Collector facilities provide service to the remaining smaller communities and link local traffic generators with their rural hinterland.

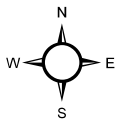
*Local Roads* serve primarily to provide direct access to adjacent land. Local Roads provide service to travel over relatively short distance as compared to collectors or other higher systems. All facilities not classified on one of the higher systems in rural areas are classified as Local Roads.

### **Virginia Scenic Byways**

Virginia has approximately 3,500 miles of special roads that offer something for everyone. Many of these are officially designated as Virginia Byways, such as Route 311, or national scenic parkways, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway. Craig County has three roads that have been designated as Virginia Byways by the Commonwealth Transportation Board – Route 311, Route 42 and Route 615.

To help attract visitors and support economic development through tourism, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Commonwealth Transportation Board, encourage local governments to nominate roads for Virginia Byway designation. The program identifies road corridors containing aesthetic or cultural value near areas of historical, natural or recreational significance.

By designating certain roads as Virginia Byways, widely distributing "A Map of Scenic Roads in Virginia," and promoting the Virginia Scenic Roads web site, the program encourages travel to interesting local destinations and away from high-traffic corridors. Byways also stimulate local economies by attracting visitors to lesser-known destinations. Once designated, a byway becomes part of the coordinated promotional strategy for Virginia tourism.



# Map 6 Highway Functional Class



## Legend

- Interstate
- Other Freeway or Expressway
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Interstate Ramp
- Other Freeway or Expressway Ramp
- Other Principal Arterial Ramp
- Minor Arterial Ramp
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

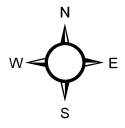
## 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan

The Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan is one piece of VDOT's 2035 Surface Transportation Plan. The transportation system within the rural areas for each region was evaluated, and a range of transportation improvements - roadway, rail, transit, air, bicycle, and pedestrian - are recommended that can best satisfy existing and future needs. Each rural regional plan has a horizon year of 2035 and addresses the anticipated impacts of population and employment changes upon the transportation system. Each rural plan was developed as a vision plan, addressing all needs of the transportation system studied regardless of anticipated funding availability. It is envisioned that each regional plan will be used as a basis to identify transportation funding priorities. Each Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan will be reviewed every five years.

Listed below are projects from the Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan that are in Craig County. Project numbers correspond to those in the Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan and item shown on Map 7.

### Recommendations

1. VA 311 (Salem Avenue)/VA 42/VA 615 (Main Street)  
Mid-term improve pedestrian access and monitor for signal warrants or the need for turn lanes; long-term add curb and gutter access management.
2. VA 615/VA 609  
Short-term install stop sign on VA 609; long-term install turn lanes and reconfigure intersection to address geometric issues.
3. VA 42/VA 645  
Short-term improve pavement markings.
4. VA 311 from Roanoke County Line to VA 621  
Long-term upgrade lane and shoulder widths to current VDOT design standards.
5. VA 311 from VA 621 to VA 678 near New Castle own limit  
Long-term upgrade to current VDOT standards to address safety and geometric issues.
6. VA 42 from 0.38 miles West of VA 658 to VA 667  
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
7. VA 18 from VA 311 to 1.92 miles South of Alleghany County Line  
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
8. VA 18 from 1.26 miles South of Alleghany County line to the Alleghany County Line  
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (including full-width lanes and shoulders).
9. VA 606 from VA 614 to the Botetourt County Line  
Long-term reconstruct road to address geometric deficiencies (11-foot lanes).



# Map 7 VDOT Rural Long Range Transportation Plan Projects



## Legend

### VDOT Rural Long Range Plan Segment Deficiency

- Geometric
- Safety

### Intersection Deficiency

- Safety

- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.



## **Virginia Six-Year Improvement Program**

The Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP) is the Commonwealth Transportation Board's (CTB) program for allocating funding for rail, public transportation, commuter assistance, bicycle, pedestrian, interstate and primary highway transportation projects over the next six years.

The program is updated annually. Typically, the CTB conducts hearings in the fall of each year to gather public and local government input on priorities for transportation funding. These meetings provide local governments with an opportunity to have input on priorities for the Interstate and Primary systems.

The CTB and VDOT make a concerted effort to assemble projects in the SYIP so they can move through the development process in an orderly fashion. As projects are being developed, many issues arise that must be addressed, such as citizen concerns, project development, or environmental issues. Projects must also be fully funded to move to construction. Most projects require multiple years of funding. Projects are removed from the SYIP once they are completed. Projects are also taken out of the SYIP if there is not enough funding to finance them or if preliminary engineering determines that the project is not feasible.

Craig County has one project listed in the FY18 SYIP:

- UPC 18717: Route 620 – Approaches & New Infrastructure Over Trout Creek

## **Secondary Six Year Plan**

The VDOT Six Year Secondary Construction Program is based on the County's Priority List and is reflective of available State road funding allocated to the County as shown in Table 30.

The Secondary System programming process is coordinated between the local Board of Supervisors and VDOT's Residency Administrator. The Residency Administrator works with the Board of Supervisors to establish or reconfirm their priorities for the Secondary Six-Year Plan. Each year the VDOT Residency Administrator attends a meeting of the Board of Supervisors for the purpose of preparing a budget for the expenditure of secondary road improvement funds for the next fiscal year.

**Table 43**

**Secondary System Construction Program**

Road Name Project Description From To Length	Estimated Cost Ad Date	Previous Funding	Additional Funding Required	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Balance to Complete
Rt 620 – Approaches & New Structure over Trout Creek From 0.13 Mile South Rt 621 To 0.33 Mile South Rt 621 Length 0.2	PE \$111,083 RW \$10,000 CON \$826,346 Total \$947,429 12/13/2022	\$666,122 \$10,909 \$677,031	\$270,398	\$77,215 \$0 \$77,215	\$74,883 \$0 \$74,883	\$81,435 \$0 \$81,435	\$19,575 \$0 \$19,575	\$17,290 \$0 \$17,290	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0
Old Railroad Ave Rt 696 Hard Surface Non-Hard Surfaced Roadway From Intersection of Rt 615 To End of State Maintenance Length 0.3	PE \$0 RW \$0 CON \$200,000 Total \$200,000 7/7/2023	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$200,000	\$3,313 \$0 \$3,313	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$16,720 \$0 \$16,720	\$53,792 \$0 \$53,792	\$75,343 \$0 \$75,343	\$50,832 \$0 \$50,832	\$0
Salem District Secondary System Balance Entry	PE \$0 ROW \$0 CON \$0 Total \$0	\$0 \$628,352 \$628,352	(\$628,352)	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$24,511 \$4 \$24,515	(\$652,867)
Countywide Engineering & Survey Various Locations in County	PE \$0 RW \$0 CON \$250,000 Total \$250,000 3/1/2011	\$48,638 \$0 \$48,638	\$201,362	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$17,290 \$0 \$17,290	\$184,072
Countywide Fertilization & Seeding Various Locations in County	PE \$0 RW \$0 CON \$250,000 Total \$250,000 3/1/2011	\$2,136 \$0 \$2,136	\$247,864	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$247,864
Countywide Right of Way Engr Various Locations in County	PE \$0 RW \$0 CON \$250,000 Total \$250,000 1/30/2011	\$4,619 \$0 \$4,619	\$245,381	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$0 \$0 \$0	\$245,381

## Rural Rustic Funds

The Rural Rustic Road concept, first enacted by the 2002 Session of the General Assembly of Virginia, is a practical approach to paving Virginia's low volume unpaved roads. The Rural Rustic Road concept is the paving of an existing unpaved road with a compacted or impervious surface and reestablishment of existing associated ditches and shoulders, and usually the new hard-surfaced road is on the same horizontal and vertical alignment as the prior gravel impervious area. A focal point of the program is on leaving trees, vegetation, side slopes, and open drainage abutting the roadway, undisturbed to the maximum extent possible.

In Craig County, a 1.2-mile project on Route 629 was completed in 2013 as part of the Rural Rustic Roads program. The project was estimated to cost \$900,000, however through the program it cost \$519,698, a savings of \$380,302.

The ideal Rural Rustic Road project usually involves reshaping of the roadbed, cleaning ditches and applying a hard surface within existing right of way. In most cases, it is assumed there are no actual construction plans and therefore, few occasions when a Rural Rustic Road project would require an engineered solution.

The following criteria are those by which a candidate road is evaluated to determine its eligibility for hard-surfacing under the Rural Rustic Road Program. The road:

- Must be an unpaved road already within the State Secondary System.
- Must carry no more than 1,500 VPD.
- Must be a priority (line item) in the locality's approved Secondary Six-Year Plan (SSYP) if the funding source is from secondary system allocations. If secondary system allocations are not used, the project is not required to be in the SSYP. However, the applicable provisions for public involvement must be met.
- Must be used predominately for local traffic. The local nature of the road means that most motorists using the road have traveled it before and are familiar with its features.
- Must have minimal anticipated traffic growth. The County Board of Supervisors will endeavor to limit growth on roads improved under the Rural Rustic Road Program and cooperate with VDOT through its comprehensive planning process to develop adjacent lands consistent with rural rustic road concepts.

In addition, the Board of Supervisors, by resolution, must designate the road as a Rural Rustic Road.

All Primary System roads (59.94 miles) are paved in Craig County. The Secondary System roads include 147.48 of hard surfaced, 32.53 of untreated all-weather surface, 0.92 of untreated light surface, and zero miles of unsurfaced.

The Board of Supervisors works with the VDOT Residency Administrator to evaluate proposed unpaved road projects. If the road is eligible, the Board of Supervisors designates the road as a Rural Rustic Road. The Residency Administrator then conducts a scoping meeting, as appropriate, and completes the Rural Rustic Road Program Project Scoping Report. Detailed information on the project scoping and construction process can be found in the VDOT Rural Rustic Road Program Manual.

## VTrans 2040

VTrans is the long-range, statewide multimodal policy plan that lays out overarching Vision and Goals for transportation in the Commonwealth. It identifies transportation Investment Priorities and provides direction to transportation agencies on strategies and programs to be incorporated into their plans and programs. VTrans is a policy document. It is not, in and of itself, a transportation plan or funding program. The process of achieving VTrans Goals, advancing Investment Priorities, and implementing the performance-based planning framework will require a collaborative effort by a wide variety of partners including local governments.

The VTrans2025 Report was completed in 2004, and the VTrans2035 Report was accepted by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in December 2009. The interim update of VTrans2035 did not establish a new horizon year, nor did it include a fully updated analysis of anticipated long-range transportation needs. Rather, it focused on transforming the existing components of VTrans2035 into a new framework for linking system-wide performance evaluations to planning, policy development, and funding decisions. Using this “performance-based planning” framework, transportation agencies and decision-makers can use information about projected transportation needs with assessments of current system performance to develop cost-effective strategies that simultaneously address existing transportation needs and anticipated future conditions. The VTrans 2035 Update was approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board in February 2013.

One of the most influential items that came out of the VTrans 2035 Plan were the corridors of statewide significance (CoSS). The CoSS serve an important role in statewide multimodal planning in that they signify the highest priority routes from a statewide perspective. The CoSS were originally developed under VTrans2025 and validated during the VTrans2035 Update process. Corridors identified as CoSS demonstrate all of the following characteristics:

- Multiple modes and/or an extended freight corridor,
- Connection among regions, states and/or major activity centers,
- High volume of travel, and
- Unique statewide function and/or fulfillment of statewide goal

As codified by law (HB 2019/SB 1398, 2009), the CoSS are designated by the CTB. The CTB also is charged with developing criteria for prioritizing the CoSS and conducting studies of the corridors. Legislation mandates that localities discuss local segments of the CoSS in comprehensive plan updates. There were 12 corridors designated. VDOT will develop a Master Corridor Plan for each of these in the coming years. Currently, Craig County does not have any Corridors of Statewide Significance.

Moving forward, there will be two methods for adding, modifying or deleting CoSS from the current list. During the VTrans2040 process and future updates, individuals and agencies can request changes during a VTrans update to the CoSS. This request can be made by anyone, but the application requires a letter of support from a CTB member, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or a local government body. The required request form includes a series of questions that require the applicant to define the proposed change, such as adding a new corridor, according to the CoSS criteria, and to clearly show how the proposed change meets CoSS requirements and relates to the VTrans Goals. The application will be reviewed by OIPI staff and the Multimodal Working Group, after which it will be submitted to the CTB for a final decision.

The most recent iteration of VTrans, VTrans2040, is currently underway and has three different parts which are being developed in steps:

1. The VTrans2040 Vision was adopted by the CTB in December 2015. It lays out Virginia's Guiding Principles, Vision, Goals, and Objectives in a policy framework to guide partner agency investment decisions over the next 25 years.
2. The VTrans2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan Needs Synthesis and Recommendations will summarize and prioritize the VMTP 2025 Needs Assessment according to the importance of the needs and relevance to VTrans goals based off of feedback from stakeholders. Multimodal investment and policy recommendations and a targeted set of programmable projects will be developed in this phase of VTrans work.
3. The VTrans2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan (VMTP) Needs Assessment will advance the recommendations created during the previous step by setting performance targets, priorities, and projects that can help advance the VTrans2040 Vision. The foundation for this phase of VTrans will be the policies established in the Vision document and a multimodal needs analysis that rethinks how we measure and establish multimodal solutions. The VTrans2040 Multimodal Plan will replace the 2035 Virginia Surface Transportation Plan (VSTP) and will serve as a guiding document for modal agency business plans and statewide transportation funding programs. The planning process will include dialogue with stakeholders and the general public to clarify transportation needs and consider alternative scenarios in which statewide multimodal investments can address accessibility needs while aligning with the VTrans Vision and Goals.

## **SMART SCALE**

Virginia's SMART SCALE (§33.2-214.1) is about picking the right transportation projects for funding and ensuring the best use of limited tax dollars. It is the method of scoring planned projects included in VTrans that are funded by HB 1887. Transportation projects are scored based on an objective, outcome-based process that is transparent to the public and allows decision-makers to be held accountable to taxpayers. Once projects are scored and prioritized, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) has the best information possible to select the right projects for funding.

Funding for project prioritization comes from two main pathways - the construction District Grants Program (DGP) and the High-Priority Projects Program (HPPP) - both established in 2015 under the Code of Virginia §33.2-358. The DGP is open only to localities. Projects applying for the DGP funds compete with other projects from the same construction district.

Projects applying for HPP funds compete with projects from across the Commonwealth. A project sponsor may request funding under both programs. For each SMART SCALE cycle, projects Pre-Applications must be submitted by June 1. Full Applications must be submitted by August 1. Prior to submittal, all entities are encouraged to coordinate with their local VDOT and DRPT representatives. Once all projects have been submitted, evaluation teams work through December to screen and score all projects and provide project rankings to the CTB in January. To ensure sufficient funding will be available, the SMART SCALE cycle will transition to a bi-annual process beginning in 2017.

A project application for funds from the HPPP or the DGP must meet an identified need in the Commonwealth's long-range transportation plan – VTrans2040. This plan evaluates the

Commonwealth's needs at four scales focused on key travel markets and safety needs. Submitted projects must meet a need identified under one or more of the following categories:

1. Corridors of Statewide Significance – Key multimodal travel corridors that move people and goods within and through Virginia, serving primarily long-distance /inter-regional travel markets
2. Regional Networks – Multimodal networks that facilitate travel within urbanized areas/intra-regional travel markets
3. Urban Development Areas – Areas where jurisdictions intend to concentrate future population growth and development consistent with the UDA section within the Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-2223.1); local activity center markets
4. Safety Needs – Statewide safety needs which are updated for each application cycle to identify top intersections and segments with Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) within each VDOT District.

After the data has been collected for each project sufficient to evaluate each factor, factor scores are calculated and weighted according to the area type where the project is located. After factor scores have been weighted and summed, the Final Score is determined by dividing the total factor score by the SMART SCALE cost. Projects are then ranked and provided to the CTB for funding consideration.

The project application submission period for FY 2018 closed on Oct. 3, 2016. In accordance with the 2016 SMART SCALE Technical Guide, the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Rail and Public Transportation have validated, screened, and scored all SMART SCALE applications.

The final Fiscal Year 2018 SMART SCALE projects have been approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. There were 147 projects selected for SMART SCALE funding in Fiscal Year 2018.

The first round of projects was submitted in 2015 and programmed projects in the FY 2017 SYIP; the second-round projects were submitted in 2016 (when the program name became SMART SCALE) and programmed projects in the FY 2018 SYIP; and the third round of applications submitted this year will program projects in the FY 2020 SYIP. Craig County was eligible in all three rounds but did not submit. Craig County was eligible to submit a project in the FY 2018 round of competition but did not apply. Highway, transit, rail, road, operational improvements and transportation demand management projects and strategies will be considered as shown in Table 36 Transportation Priority Projects. However, projects must meet a need identified in VTrans 2040 for a Corridor of Statewide Significance, Regional Network, safety needs, or Urban Development Area to be considered. For more information on project eligibility, please see Section 2 of the Smart Scale Policy Guide, Project Eligibility and Application Process.

The 2018 round of Smart Scale pre-applications are due June 1, 2018 and full applications are due on August 1, 2018. Funding for projects selected out of the 2018 applications will be available in FY24-25.

## Public Transit

Craig County does not have any public transit service. In order to address this need, the *Craig County Transit Service Study* was completed in 2012. The study was funded by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and completed by a consultant.

The initial steps in the study included interviewing local stakeholders and conducting a peer review to determine the appropriate type of transit services for the county.

Four rural peer examples were studied and documented in detail by the consultants. Topics reviewed were transit service type, schedules, characteristics (ridership, revenue miles, etc.), operating budgets, funding sources, and operators (public or private).

The stakeholder interviews identified access to medical facilities, community services, healthcare, grocery stores and pharmacies as unmet transportation needs, especially for the elderly and disabled. Stakeholders also provided a list of destinations for consideration in the study.

Three types of service were proposed in the study to meet the needs of Craig County residents:

1. Out-of-County service to Salem and Roanoke
2. Intra-County, zone-based limited demand response service for trips within the county
3. Enhanced Ridesharing service (carpooling and vanpooling)

The study takes into account the need for local guidance and transit expertise in establishing and maintaining a successful transit system. To address these needs, the study also proposed:

1. A volunteer Transportation Commission for the County; and
2. A Mobility Manager serving Craig County and other rural areas.

The Out-of-County service was proposed to provide access to medical, shopping and other destinations in Salem and Roanoke. The bus service as proposed would operate once a week in the beginning, with the option, if financially feasible, for additional days of service.

The need for an Intra-County service was also identified in the study. Transportation to the Town of New Castle for shopping, medical services and business services is a need. A zone-based intra-county service was proposed to operate three days per week with each of the three proposed zones served on one specific day of the week.

Ridesharing (carpooling and vanpooling) can provide an economical mode of transportation for residents traveling to the same destination point. The enhanced ridesharing recommendation in the study recommends that Craig County work more closely with the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission's RIDE Solutions staff to provide more information and opportunities for carpooling and vanpooling between Craig County and other parts of the region. Increased carpooling and awareness of the transportation option could result in a new regional public vanpool program. Increasing Ridesharing in Craig County would require establishing new park and ride locations since it currently does not have any designated park and rides within its boundaries.

The study recommends creation of an all-volunteer Craig County Transportation Commission that would be comprised of a variety of community stakeholders, elected officials, local organizations

and citizen representatives who would receive periodic information on the performance of the transit service, work with the transit provider to improve service, and help disseminate information about the service.

The study also proposes the hiring of a Mobility Manager that would serve as the local point of contact for individuals needing assistance, as well as oversee and manage day-to-day transit operations. This person would work closely with the Transportation Commission and have a strong presence in the community. The study recommends that the Mobility Manager be housed at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission and provide service to other rural counties, in addition to Craig.

The study provides alternatives for implementing the transit program as well as funding strategies. Detailed costs and steps for implementation can be found in the study.

Implementing the proposed transit service will be a multi-step process that will require an investment of the time and expertise of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Craig County staff, Regional Commission staff, and Craig elected officials and residents if it is to be successful.

### **Rural Bikeway Plan**

The Rural Bikeway Plan (2006) is an update to the Rural Bikeway Plan for the Fifth Planning District Commission, completed in 1997. The Rural Bikeway Plan covers the rural portions of the Regional Commission's service area. The purpose of the Rural Bikeway Plan is to provide information and guidance on the planning and provision of bicycle accommodations at the local and regional level, which enhance and encourage bicycling, thereby better enabling citizens to enjoy the transportation, health, and economic benefits of a bicycle-friendly environment. Consideration is given to both utilitarian (i.e., bike commuting, running errands) and recreational uses of the transportation infrastructure. An update to the Rural Bikeway Plan is expected in 2019.

Craig County is the most rural and less-densely populated locality in the study area. There are numerous roadways in Craig County that are popular with cyclists. Moreover, there are miles of biking and hiking trails in the Jefferson and George Washington National Forest and other outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the county.

The list of roadways for bicycle accommodation was developed based on review of demographic and spatial data, fieldwork, and local staff and citizen input. Accessibility and connectivity between activity centers and tourism/outdoor recreation opportunities were also considered in developing these tables. The 2004 VDOT Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations improved the ability of a locality to use its secondary roads allocation to plan, design, and construct bicycle facilities. This policy eliminates the past VDOT policy requiring that a roadway be included in an adopted bikeway plan in order for bicycle accommodations to be considered as part of roadway improvements using Federal and State funding.

It should be noted that all VDOT maintained roads, in addition to the recommended corridors, are covered by the *VDOT Policy for Integrating Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations*. As such, Table 31 presents a listing of corridors the Rural Bikeway Plan recommends be considered for bicycle accommodation.



Detailed planning would be required, at the local and regional levels, to develop and implement a bicycling network and realize the benefits of bicycling.

Table 44  
Rural Bikeway Plan Recommendations

Roadway	From	To
Route 18	Route 311	Alleghany County CL
Route 42	Route 311	Giles County CL
Route 311	Roanoke County CL	West Virginia State Line
Route 615/Market Street	Route 311	Botetourt County CL
Route 621	Route 311	Montgomery County CL
Route 632	North Route 658	South Route 658 at Maggie
Route 658	Route 311	Route 632
Route 658	Route 632	Route 42

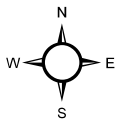
Source: *Rural Bikeway Plan, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2006.*

### Greenways

Craig County completed the first phase of the Craig County Greenway in 2012. The project was funded by a special allocation in the Federal transportation budget. The greenway is constructed on a former C&O railroad right of way. The 1.2-mile greenway begins at Third Street just outside of New Castle and connects to the Craig County school campus. The trailhead at Third Street has a shelter designed to look like train depot along with interpretive signage about the history of the C&O railroad, a picnic table and parking. Parking is also available at the school campus trailhead.

Planning is underway to connect the greenway to downtown New Castle and to the new Field of Dreams recreation area. The connection to downtown would create additional opportunities for residents and tourists to use the greenway. Extending the greenway into downtown will require the construction of a pedestrian/cyclist bridge across Johns Creek. It is recommended that the bridge be designed to fit in with the rural character of the county. The bridge could be a swinging bridge similar to the ones still in use around the county or constructed with a timber frame and wood decking.

Completion of the greenway to the Field of Dreams site would create a connection to the school campus and to downtown New Castle. Possible sources of funding for the project include Transportation Alternatives, Safe Routes to School, or Revenue Sharing programs administered by VDOT; or the DCR Virginia Recreational Trails Program. The greenway project would also be eligible for SMART SCALE funding because the project area is partially inside the proposed UDA (Village Area) and provides access into the UDA.



# Map 8 Rural Bikeway Plan



- Legend**
- Bicycle Routes (proposed)
  - US Forest Service

## Commuting Patterns

According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, almost 97% of workers living in the Craig County drove to their place of employment. Only 18.2% carpooled to work. Less than 1 percent walked or commuted to work by public transit, bicycle or other means. The percentage of those that worked at home was 1.3 percent. Almost 77% of workers are employed outside of Craig County. Over 75% of commuters had a travel time to work of more than 30 minutes.

Table 45  
Means of Transportation to Work, Craig County Residents

Subject	
Workers 16 years and over	2,062
Car, truck, or van	96.7
Drove alone	78.5
Carpooled	18.2
In 2-person carpool	16.3
In 3-person carpool	1.8
In 4-or-more person carpool	0
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0
Walked	0.4
Bicycle	0
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.7
Worked at home	1.3

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015.

Table 46  
Place of Work, Craig County Residents

Place	Percentage
Worked in state of residence	97.4
Worked in county of residence	20.8
Worked outside county of residence	76.6
Worked outside state of residence	2.6

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015.

Table 47  
Travel Time to Work, Craig County Residents

Time	Percentage
Less than 10 minutes	7.6
10 to 14 minutes	7.0
15 to 19 minutes	2.8
20 to 24 minutes	3.3
25 to 29 minutes	3.5
30 to 34 minutes	16.6
35 to 44 minutes	17.4
45 to 59 minutes	29.2
60 or more minutes	12.6
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	37.4

*Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015.*

### **Rail Service**

Craig County does not have any active railroad service. The nearest Amtrak passenger service is in Clifton Forge and downtown Roanoke.

### **Private Bus Service**

There are no national commercial bus service stops in Craig County. The nearest Greyhound bus terminal is in Roanoke.

### **Air Service**

The Roanoke Regional Airport is served by four commercial carriers - Allegiant Air, American, Delta, and United Airlines - which offer direct service to eight domestic hubs. Commuter air services are also offered at the Roanoke Regional Airport. Air freight providers include: Air Freight Air Cargo Carriers, American, Delta Connection Carriers, Federal Express, Quest Diagnostics, United Express, and UPS.

## Urban Development Areas (Village Areas)

Section 15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, provides for local establishment of Urban Development Areas (UDA), in which growth is permitted, incentivized, or otherwise directed. A locality may establish a UDA by amending their comprehensive plan to establish and graphically identify the UDA on their Future Land Use Map.

The UDA is an area that is appropriate for higher density development due to its proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public water and sewer system, or a developed area, to be used for redevelopment or infill development. A UDA is required to contain land appropriate for development of residential densities of four or more single family dwelling units per acre, six townhouses per acre, or 12 apartments or condominiums per acre and commercial floor area ratios of 0.4 or greater.

The UDA should meet projected residential and commercial growth in the locality for the next 10 to 20 years. Population projections through the year 2040 indicate that Craig County will fluctuate, rising then dropping slightly by 2040.

Table 48  
Growth Trends

Year	Population	Population Change	Households	Households Change
2015	5,193	-	2,214	-
2020	5,184	-9	2,210	4
2030	5,215	31	2,223	13
2040	5,173	-42	2,205	-18

*Source: Total Population Projections for Virginia and Its Localities, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2017 and U.S. Census, Census of Population, 2010 and American Community Survey, 2015*

Coinciding with the five-year review of a locality's comprehensive plan and according to the most recent population estimates and projections, each UDA shall be reexamined and revised (if deemed necessary).

UDAs, when established, must include principles of traditional neighborhood design, some of which include but are not limited to:

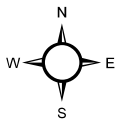
- Pedestrian-friendly road design;
- Interconnection of new local streets with existing street network;
- Connectivity of road and pedestrian networks;
- Preservation of open space and natural areas;
- Mixed-use neighborhoods, with a range of housing types, and affordable housing to meet the projected family income distributions of future residential growth;
- Reduction of front and side yard setbacks; and
- Reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

The comprehensive plan shall describe any financial and other incentives for development in the urban development areas.

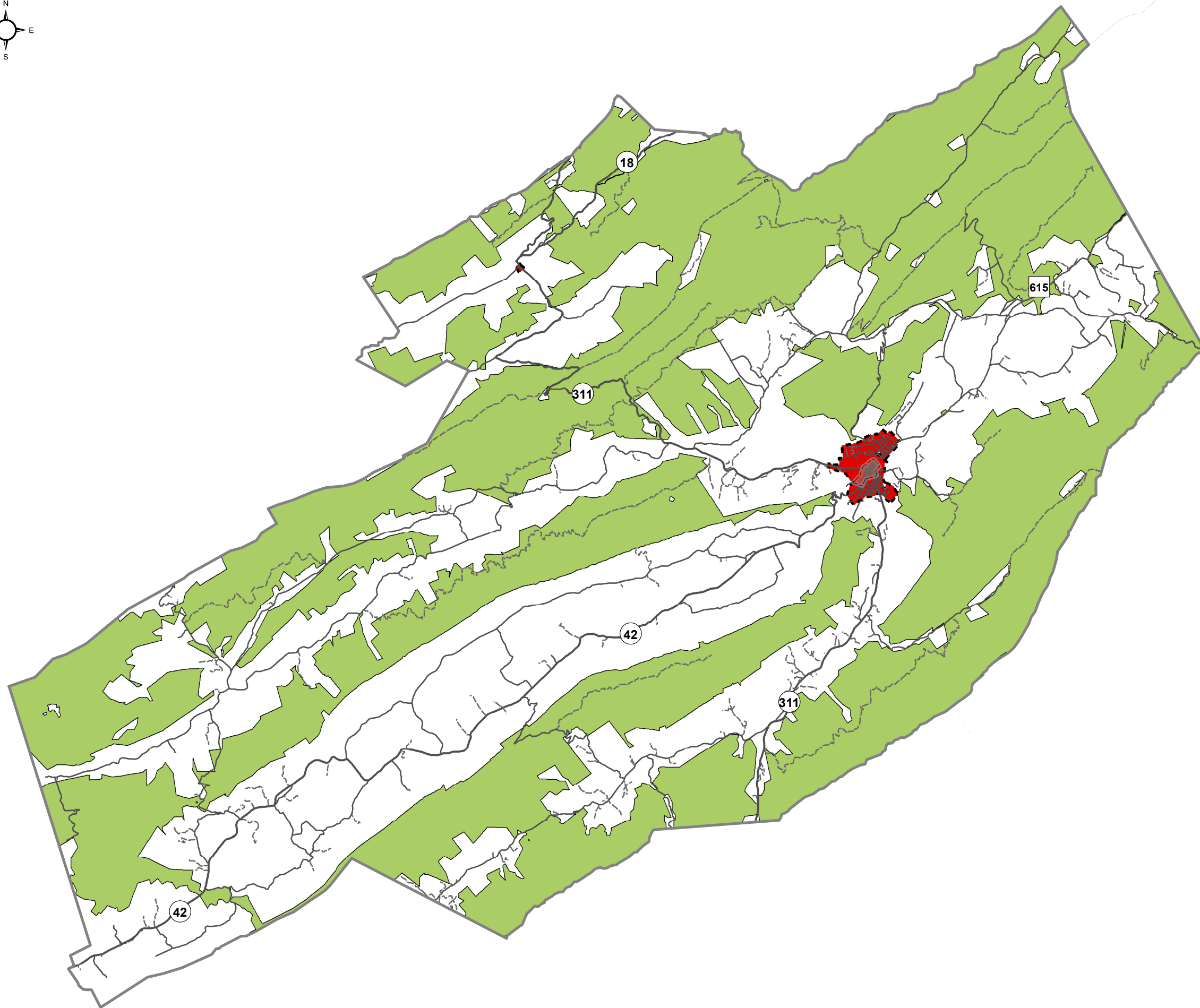
The 2013 Comprehensive Plan identified two “Village” areas which were used as the basis for delineating the UDAs. UDA Locations were proposed by the Planning Commission after consideration of existing development patterns, the transportation network, and available infrastructure. These two UDA’s have been selected to take advantage of existing facilities and infrastructure and designated on the Future Land Use Map. The UDA boundaries will be periodically reviewed and updated as needed through a public process. The two UDA’s are:

1. New Castle Village Area
2. Paint Bank Village Area



The Craig County UDAs meet the intent of the Code of Virginia, Section §15.2-2223.1.



# Map 9 Urban Development Areas



### Legend

-  UDA (July 2018)
-  US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

## Future Transportation Needs

Craig County is a rural locality with low density residential and agricultural development. The County's topography of steep slopes, streams and National Forest land has determined where past development could occur and will impact the location of future development. The County is not anticipating any substantial new growth for the 5-year planning period that would impact the highway system.

The overall transportation priorities discussed in this chapter were selected following review of existing planning documents and gathering of public input. Existing VDOT plans (Six Year Improvement Plan, 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan) were used as the basis for development of the priority listing. Local plans including the Craig County Transit Study and the Craig County Greenway Plan were taken into consideration.

Projects were initially reviewed by the Craig County Planning Commission and County staff. Projects were further reviewed with VDOT staff during meetings and a field trip before creating the priority project list. All projects were reviewed based on need, impact on the transportation network, construction time required and cost.

## Transportation Project Priorities

The overall transportation priorities discussed in this chapter were selected following review of existing planning documents and gathering of public input. Existing VDOT plans (Six Year Improvement Plan, 2035 Rural Long-Range Transportation) were used as the basis for development of the priority listing.

Projects were initially reviewed by the Craig County staff and Planning Commission. Projects were further reviewed with VDOT staff before creating the priority project list. All projects were reviewed based on need, impact on the transportation network, construction time required and cost.

Table 49  
Transportation Project Priorities

Priority	Project Description	Estimated Cost
1	VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) from Roanoke County Line to VA 621 (Upper Craig Creek Road)	
2	VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) curve near Maple Lane	
3	Rt. 681 (Camp Easter Seal Road) drainage improvements	



**Priority 1** - VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) from Roanoke County Line to VA 621 (Upper Craig Creek Road)

Reference:

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan, page 12, #4 VA 311 (Catawba Valley Dr.)/Roanoke Co. Line to VA 621 – Long-term upgrade lane and shoulder widths to current VDOT design standards.

Project Description:

In this section of VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive), there are several driveways. Vehicles turning from the driveways onto VA 311 are presented with sight distance challenges. Likewise, through vehicles often need to slow down to allow vehicles to turn into the driveways. There is a bus stop at Carroll Lane. Overall, this road could be improved significantly by adding shoulders on both sides of the road.

Recommendations:

- Add shoulders on both sides of the road.

**Priority 2** - VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) curve near Maple Lane

Reference:

This project is not in the Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Project Description:

This particular curve along VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) near Maple Lane has been the location of several vehicles running off the road due to excess vehicle speed. The curve is near Mountain View Church and it is 5.4 miles south of New Castle. Guardrail is needed along the side of the road. Rumble strips on the shoulder as well as on the road may be considered to warn vehicles to slow down.

Recommendations:

- Add shoulders on both sides of the road.
- Add guardrail on the east side.
- Consider other preventive measures to help people reduce speed through the curve.

**Priority 3** – Route 681 (Camp Easter Seal Road)

Reference:

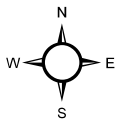
This project is not in the Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Project Description:

Route 681 currently has sections that flood during periods of heavy rain.

Recommendations:

Based on review of the flooding issues by VDOT and the county, it was recommended that the sections of road that flood be elevated.



## Map 10 Priority Transportation Projects

1. VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) from Roanoke County Line to VA 621 (Upper Craig Creek Road).
2. VA 311 (Catawba Valley Drive) curve near Maple Lane.
3. Rt. 681 (Camp Easter Seal Road) drainage improvements.

## Chapter 10 Existing Land Use

During the 2000s and early 2010s, land use patterns in the County changed very little. Forested and agricultural land remains the dominant land use, with small areas in the County devoted to residential commercial and industrial activities.

Acreage estimates in the following table is based on calculations from the Craig County Zoning Map.

Table 50  
Existing Land Use

	Acres	Percent
Agricultural, Limited A-1	83,985.16	39.71
Rural Residential RR	8,420.53	3.98
Residential R-1	647.38	0.31
Residential R-2	5.9	0.00
Residential RM	13.29	0.01
Business, B-1	52.13	0.02
Industrial, M-1	374.67	0.18
US Forest Service	117,902.00	55.74
Town of New Castle	105.55	0.05
Total	211,506.61	100.00

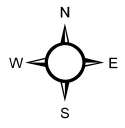
*Sources: US Forest Service and Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.*

Beginning in the mid-1990s Craig County began seeing an increase in the amount of agricultural and rural land subdivisions for residential housing. The rural aesthetic character of the County's agricultural land is a very important resource that should be conserved and maintained for future generations. Past Comprehensive Plans stressed the importance of preserving agricultural land and goals/objectives were formulated in a manner that would help preserve farmland. Unfortunately, previous efforts have not been succeeding. The mass residential exodus from the urban areas to rural communities like Craig County has consumed much productive acreage and residents are beginning to awaken to the loss of prime farmland. It will be important for the County to find ways of assisting farmers to retain their farmland and resist development pressures.

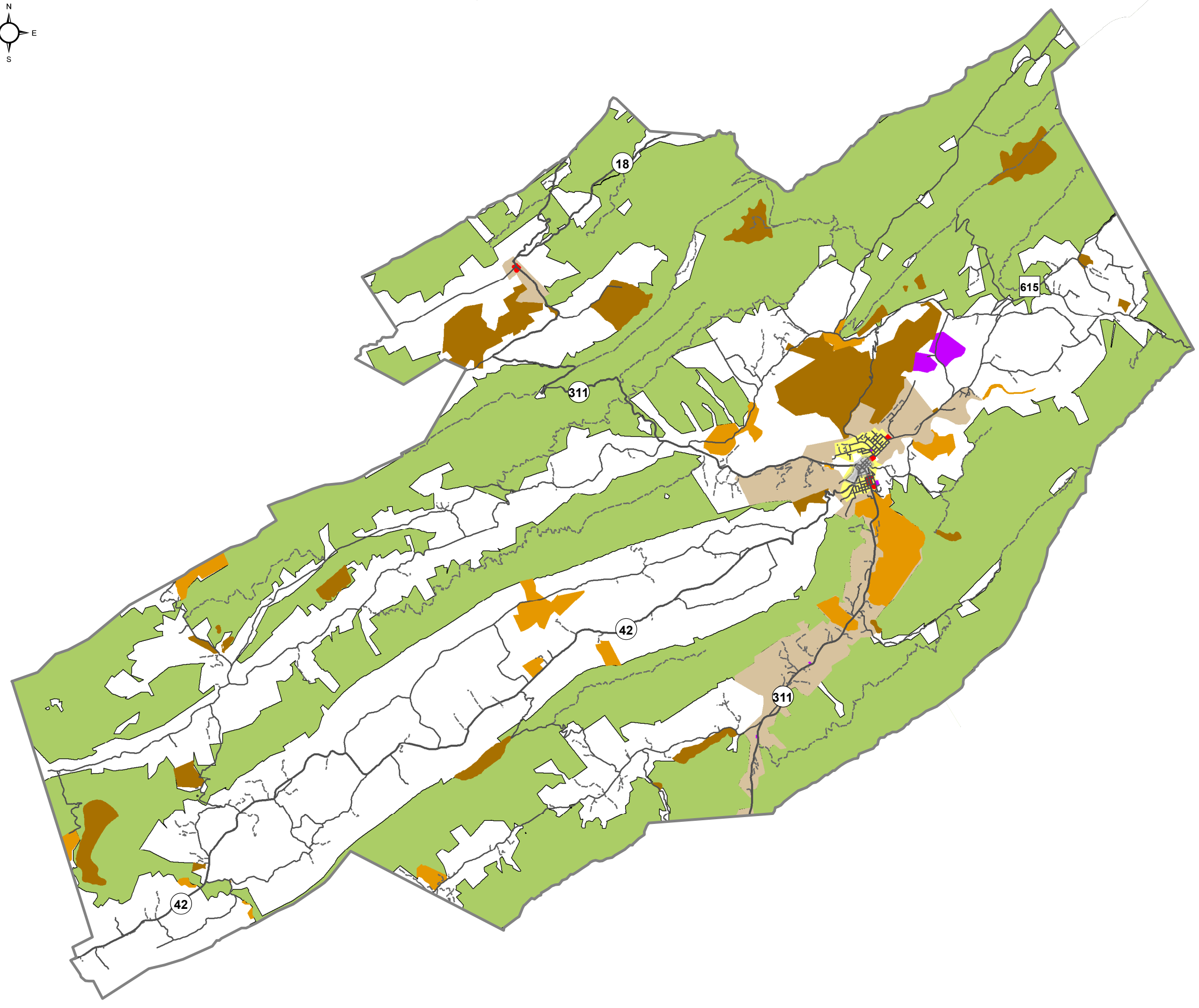
Recent information on land development within the County indicates that residential construction accounts for the largest percentage of new construction. The County has averaged 14.7 new building permits per year for the period 2008-2017.

New Castle continues to be the commercial center of the County with most commercial activities concentrated along Route 311 and Main Street. The Route 311 Corridor from the Roanoke County line to Paint Bank has seen a great deal of development in recent years. Not only have a large number of large residential subdivisions been developed, but low-impact business is also beginning to develop along the corridor. Existing businesses located on the Route 311 Corridor include a machine shop, natural gas filling station, an excavation company, an auto repair station, restaurants, a lodge and a number of gas station and convenience stores which have been in operation for years.

Although lack of public water and sewer along Route 311, as well as existing traffic concerns, do not support the development of the corridor for intensive industrial uses, the corridor does offer the potential for commercial and light industrial development. It is important too that caution be taken to guarantee protection of the Route 311 Corridor from intensive uses which could contaminate the creeks and floodplain areas along the corridor.



# Map 11 Existing Land Use



### Legend

- A-1 Agriculture, Limited
- B-1 Business
- R-1 Residential
- R-2 Residential
- RM Residential
- RR Rural Residential
- M-1 Industrial
- Conservation Lands
- Private Easement
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.

## **Chapter 11 Future Land Use**

The Future Land Use Map is intended to serve as a guide for future development to promote orderly growth within the County. The map is to be used in conjunction with local zoning and subdivision ordinances in guiding future growth to desired areas. The land use plan is composed of a map and written elements. The map shows proposed future land uses for Craig County but it does not supersede the existing zoning ordinance. It is intended as a general guide for future changes to the zoning ordinance and other related land use ordinances. The essential features of the map are discussed below.

### Agricultural and Rural

Agricultural and rural areas of the County include farmlands, private forestlands, open space and low-density residential development. Encouraging good stewardship of these areas will serve various purposes. First, it will ensure that agriculture remains a viable element in the County's economic structure. Agriculture is an important part of the County's heritage and way of life. Second, it will help preserve important watersheds. Third, it will help maintain low density settlement of these areas. Fourth, it will preserve open land to accommodate future county needs.

Strip development along highways in areas designated as agricultural and rural on the Future Land Use map should be discouraged. The County should also encourage the development of low impact agri-business operations as a means of preserving farmland and open space, while at the same time expanding the local tax base and creating job opportunities.

### Industrial

Industrial areas on the Future Land Use map are comprised of existing and former industrial sites. There are several specific areas near New Castle which would be appropriate sites for future industry. These areas, because of the existing uses at the sites, make them candidates for future industrial prospects. These sites include but are not limited to the area around Castle Sands plant, the former fairground site, and the area around the old sawmill/sand plant site on Route 311 south of New Castle.

Current industrial zoned areas within Craig County include the Castle Sands property, the old sawmill sand plant site (5 acres) on Route 311 south of New Castle, 108 acres owned by the Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative in the Scratch Ankle area of the County, an approximately 17-acre site owned by William J Oliver in the Scratch Ankle area, the former Abbott Lumber site on Route 615, the former Crown building, the former Halmode building, and the former Craig Printing site on Route 311.

### Multipurpose

The New Castle area and Route 311 corridor from the Roanoke County line to New Castle are the prime site for future residential, commercial and light industrial activities in the county. It has the greatest potential to accommodate future growth. The timing and location of water and sewer lines, and other public services, will affect the orderly development of this area.

Development in and around New Castle will provide for an efficient, high density community that will help to reduce local government expenditures for public services and utilities and generate the necessary market and labor force for future commercial and light industrial development. Since growth will be channeled to this area, protection will be provided to agricultural and rural conservation areas. By encouraging the clustering of housing and commercial activities in the multi-purpose growth area, the potential for strip development along rural highways can be better controlled.

There are several good sites within the New Castle growth area that have potential for commercial and light industrial development. However, this development must not infringe upon the quality of waterways and floodplain areas, or the historic site potential of the Town of New Castle. Instead, commercial and light industrial development should be designed and located in such a way as to compliment the historic character of the area.

### US Forest Service

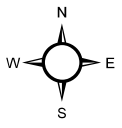
The US forest Service owned land in Craig County is not regulated by the local government. USFS lands play a major role in the Craig County economy by providing opportunities for the timber and tourism sectors. The County should work closely with the USFS to maximize local benefits from the National Forest while also preserving the land for future generations.

### Village

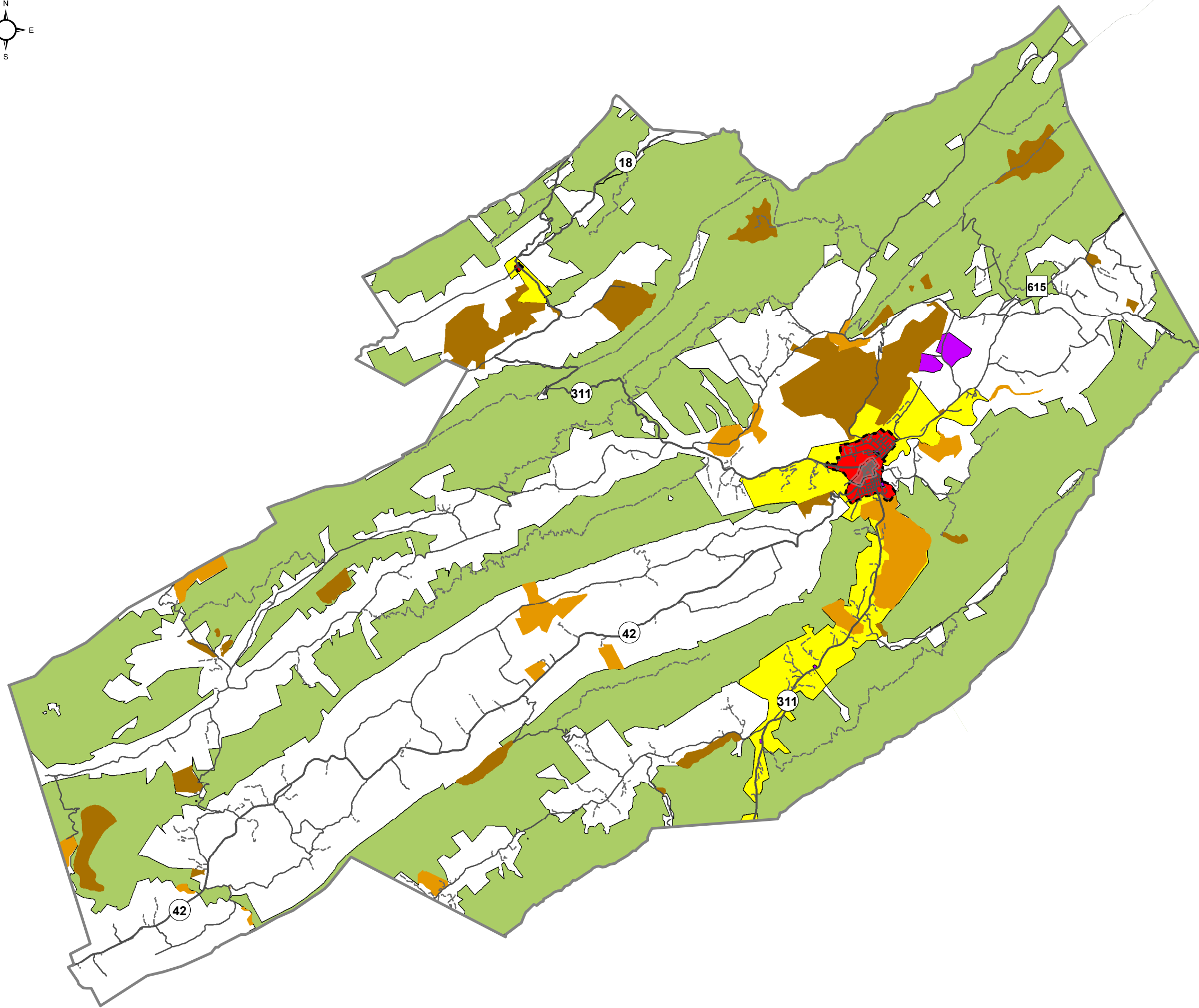
Village classification is designed to serve as an area for medium-density commercial and residential development that is not appropriate for the rural areas of the County. It can be thought of as typical rural small-town development. Only two village areas are shown on the Future Land Use map.

The first is in the commercially developed area of Paint Bank. This area takes in the Paint Bank General Store, Swinging Bridge Restaurant, the Depot Inn, the Paint Bank Post Office and Paint Bank Volunteer Fire Department. The village designation for Paint Bank serves two purposes. The first is to allow the existing commercial and service-oriented uses to continue into the future. The second is to allow for development of future compatible uses in the community such as an outdoors outfitter, craft shop, or other tourism related business.

The second village area includes the Town of New Castle and areas adjacent to town that are served by the Craig-New Castle Public Service Authority. The village designation will preserve the small-town character of New Castle while allowing for appropriate commercial, residential and service related uses. Commercial and small lot residential development should be directed to this area in order to provide adequate water and sewer service for these uses.



# Map 12 Future Land Use



### Legend

- UDA (July 2018)
- Agriculture / Rural
- Industrial
- Multipurpose
- Village
- Private Easement
- Conservation Lands
- US Forest Service

Scale 1:150,000

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2018.



## **Chapter 12 Goals and Objectives**

Craig County values its unique and irreplaceable status as a rural community with clean air and water, an uncluttered environment, attractive views, clean and safe industry and economic assets, and an excellent quality of life. Our overall goal is to be a county that is environmentally responsible and economically sustainable with a size and density that encourages interaction, involvement and vitality among our people. It is also of the utmost importance that we obtain and develop a balanced harmony between the economic needs and fiscal capabilities of the County.

### **Housing**

Goal: Craig County desires for its citizens to have opportunities for safe convenient and market rate housing, in such a way as to preserve the rural amenities that are the County's hallmark.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The County should encourage the development of additional facilities for housing the elderly to include working with private or non-profit organizations in the development of a combination assisted living/nursing home facility. The County should consider the cost impact of such a facility. These facilities often require additional services and unanticipated costs. Therefore, the option to grant possible tax breaks to such facilities should be weighed carefully.
2. The County should pursue the option of working with developers in creating market rate housing projects.
3. The County should encourage low-density residential development along the Route 311 corridor between the Roanoke County line and New Castle, around New Castle and any areas served by public water and sewer.
4. The County should consider allowing private communities well systems in subdivisions that are large enough for the system to be economically feasible and that have soils suitable for individual septic systems. Private community well systems could allow for enhanced aquifer protection by reducing the number of aquifer punctures.
5. The County should encourage high quality mobile home parks as described in the *Zoning Ordinance of the County of Craig, Virginia*.

## **Economy**

Goal: Craig County wishes to promote a healthy and diverse economic base which balances the need for increased economic opportunities with the need to protect and preserve the County's quality of life and environment.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The County, working with the Craig County Industrial Development Authority and an economic development consultant, should identify lands appropriate for commercial development and study the feasibility of developing a small commercial park.
2. Recreation and Tourism represents a significant economic development potential for the County. Facilities to accommodate dispersed recreation and tourism activities should be encouraged to locate at appropriate sites within the County.
3. The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County.
4. Development of overnight or weekly accommodations should be encouraged throughout the County in the form of bed & breakfasts, inns, hotels/motels, lodges, and cabins/cottages. Without more overnight accommodations it will be difficult to effectively tap the tourism market.
5. The County should encourage forms of economic development which do not rely heavily on public infrastructure. These include but are not limited to agriculture, agri-business, tourism, internet based business, and biotechnology.
6. The County should take advantage of the fiber optic infrastructure installed through Craig County and recruit businesses that require high speed internet. There is need for a provider to install "last mile" service to homes and businesses.
8. The County should market the advantages of the rural area and natural beauty.

## **Human Services**

Goal: The strength and success of a community begins with the welfare of its children, families and senior adults. It is the goal of the County to empower families to care for their children, as well as the elderly and to involve faith-based organizations, community groups and government to help make this happen.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The County should work with developers and non-profit organizations toward the development of a combination assisted living/nursing home facility, a facility for short-term care and for entry level assisted living.
2. County Fire and EMS organizations should continue to provide basic first aid and fire protection/prevention training at the schools and for community groups to help increase interest in volunteering and for the general welfare of County residents.

3. Craig County should continue to support the public library. Craig County should pursue funding of a resource center to provide services including a library, visitor center, meeting space, and employment training.
4. The County should continue to support the missions of the Craig County Child Care Center and the New Castle Commons.
5. The County should encourage the development of programs for youth and seniors.

## **Natural Resources**

Goal: Preservation and protection of the County's natural resources is vital to the County's high quality of life and efforts toward such preservation and protection are of primary importance.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. Groundwater and surface water quality and quantity in Craig County are currently very good. The County should consider allowing private communities well systems in subdivisions that are large enough for the system to be economically feasible and that have soils suitable for individual septic systems. Private community well systems could allow for enhanced aquifer protection by reducing the number of aquifer punctures.
2. The County should discourage development in the 100-year flood hazard.
3. The County should continue working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to update countywide soil mapping.
4. The County should utilize its natural resource base to create jobs through low-impact nature based tourism development.
5. The County should encourage the U.S. Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to study the feasibility of developing recreational opportunities in Craig County.
6. The County should review the U.S. Forest Service slow but steady increase in ownership of the County's total acreage. In 1985 the Forest Service owned 53.3% of the acreage. Today that figure is approximately 55 percent. Therefore, the County has less land in its tax base.

## **Agriculture**

Goal: As an important part of Craig County's heritage and current way of life, in addition to the economic benefit it represents, agriculture in the County should remain an important element in its future.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. In order to maintain the rural character of the County, the current five-acre minimum lot size for selected agricultural areas should be maintained.

2. Preservation of agricultural lands is an important objective. Alternative methods of ensuring this preservation may be investigated, such as new agricultural techniques for smaller farms, development of agri-business and special method farming, which may include biotechnology.
3. The County should study development of a Farmer's Market as an economic resource for local farmers and artisans.
4. The County should explore an Agricultural & Forestal District Ordinance or Land Use Assessment Ordinance as a means of assisting farmers to stay in business. State and Federal land use programs and easements should also be studied. County and district-wide land use and easement programs for preservation of farm and forest land should be studied along with the possibility of including state and federal acreage as means for the county to generate revenue from public lands.
5. In conjunction with the school system, and other interested parties, students should be given the opportunity to explore opportunities for agriculture as a vocation through classwork and organizations such as 4-H and Future Farmers of America.
6. Work with VA Tech to place a full-time Extension Agent in the county and with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to place a fulltime Farm Service Agency employee in the county.

## **Recreation and Tourism**

Goal: To improve the economy of Craig County, provide local job opportunities, and improve the quality of life in Craig County through tourism development and use of our recreational resources.

### Objectives and Recommendations:

1. Encourage better marketing and servicing of established recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing to improve the income of local businesses and the County government. One option is to use the Craig Electronic Village as a resource in marketing the County.
2. The County should explore the possibility of having some coordinate recreation, tourism, and event-development activities and solicit grant funding for tourism/recreation projects.
3. The County needs more annual or semi-annual events to draw visitors, increase community spirit, and boost retail sales.
4. The County, working with the Craig County Tourism Committee, state and federal agencies should explore expanded development of the old C&O railbed from New Castle to Eagle Rock into a multi-use trail facility.
5. The County should continue its participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia's Scenic Byway Program in order to attract tourism traffic and spending to the County.
6. Development of overnight or weekly accommodations should be encouraged throughout the County in the form of bed & breakfasts, inns, hotels/motels, lodges, and cabins/cottages. Without more overnight accommodations it will be difficult to effectively tap the tourism market.

7. Promote recreation related businesses such as pick your own crops and fishing ponds. Provide liaison with companies and agencies to obtain financing and encourage operation of schools and activities with Craig such as the Orvis Company Fishing and Hunting Schools and Virginia Game Commission's hunting safety schools, bicycling tours, mountain bike races, and corporate sponsored bikes and retreats.
8. The County should study development of an Open-Air Market as an economic resource for local farmers and artisans.
9. The County should continue to support the development of Camp Mitchell through civic group, government, and business cooperation.
10. The County should work with other organizations such as the Craig County Recreation and Conservation Association in locating or developing age appropriate leisure activities for our youth and development of the Field of Dreams.
11. Development of visitor center with restroom facilities and community bulletin board should be pursued by local organizations to include the County.

## **Built Resources**

Goal: To provide a quality and stable infrastructure base upon which to build Craig County.

### Objectives and Recommendations

1. The Craig-New Castle Public Service Authority should continue implementing its plan to upgrade existing sewer infrastructure to decrease the inflow and infiltration problems and increase the amount of usable capacity at the wastewater plant.
2. Development of a staffed solid waste compactor at the Route 42 convenience center.
3. Explore solid waste transfer options that could be more efficient and cost less.
4. The County should complete the necessary repairs to the courthouse.
5. The County should upgrade the broadband service to its administrative offices.

## **Transportation**

Goal: The Transportation System in Craig County should provide safe, efficient and convenient modes of transportation. Improvements to the transportation system should be sensitive to the County's environmental, social, land use and economic resources and concerns.

Objectives and Recommendations:

1. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) should make substantial improvements to Route 311 from the Roanoke County line to New Castle by straightening the severe curves, providing more areas to pass, providing more turn-offs for slow moving vehicles and school buses, and providing more shoulder area where possible.
2. Pursue development of an in-county transit system utilizing VDOT grants and volunteers.
3. Route 681 Camp Easter Seal Road should be upgraded to eliminate flooding and drainage improvements.