



# Recreation Study Report

Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project  
(FERC No. 2514)

November 17, 2021

Prepared by:



Prepared for:

Appalachian Power Company



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## Contents

1	Project Introduction and Background .....	1
2	Study Goals and Objectives .....	2
3	Study Area .....	2
4	Background and Existing Information .....	4
5	Methodology .....	5
5.1	Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment .....	6
5.2	Site Visit with Stakeholders to Discuss Existing and Future Recreational Opportunities .....	7
5.3	Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey .....	7
5.4	Recreational Use Documentation .....	9
6	Study Results .....	10
6.1	Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment .....	10
6.1.1	Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch (Project Facility) .....	10
6.1.2	VDWR Fishing Site (Project Facility) .....	11
6.1.3	Byllesby Canoe Portage (Project Facility) .....	11
6.1.4	New River Canoe Launch (Project Facility) .....	11
6.1.5	New River Trail Picnic Area (Non-Project Facility) .....	11
6.1.6	Buck Dam Picnic Area (Non-Project Facility) .....	12
6.1.7	Buck Dam Canoe Portage (Non-Project Facility) .....	12
6.2	Site Visit with Stakeholders to Discuss Existing and Future Recreational Opportunities .....	12
6.3	Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey .....	13
6.4	Recreational Use Documentation .....	15
6.4.1	Project Facilities Trail Camera Assessment .....	16
6.4.2	Non-Project Facilities Trail Camera Assessment .....	16
6.4.3	Daily Counts .....	17
6.4.4	Capacity .....	19
7	Summary and Discussion .....	20
8	Variances from FERC-Approved Study Plan .....	21
9	Germane Correspondence and Consultation .....	21
10	References .....	21

## Tables

Table 4-1. Existing Recreation Facilities at Byllesby-Buck Project.....	4
Table 5-1. Project and Non-Project Recreation Facilities Studied.....	6
Table 5-2. Locations of Trail Cameras.....	9
Table 6-1. Online Survey Summary for Primary Recreation Activities at Project and Non-Project Facilities.....	14
Table 6-2. Trail Camera Primary Recreation and Usage Counts .....	18

## Figures

Figure 3-1. Recreational Facilities within the Project Boundary .....	3
Figure 5-1. Recreation Use and Needs Survey Sign.....	9
Figure 6-1. Monthly Recreation Activity for Project and Non-Project Facilities.....	14
Figure 6-2. Online Survey Summary for Overall Rating on All Visits at Project and Non-Project Facilities.....	15
Figure 6-3. Optimal Weather Weekend – Parking Capacity at Byllesby Canoe Portage .....	19

## Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Recreation Facility Inventory and Conditions Report
- Attachment 2 – Stakeholder Recreation Meeting Notes
- Attachment 3 – Visitor Online Survey Results
- Attachment 4 – Trail Camera Representative Photographs



## Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AEP	American Electric Power
Appalachian or Licensee	Appalachian Power Company
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FERC or Commission	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Ft	foot
HDR	HDR Engineering, Inc.
ILP	Integrated Licensing Process
ISR	Initial Study Report
LPDA	Land Planning Design Associates
MOU	Memorandum of Agreement
NOI	Notice of Intent
PAD	Pre-Application Document
PM&E	protection, mitigation, and enhancement
PSP	Proposed Study Plan
Project	Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project
RM	river miles
RSP	Revised Study Plan
SPD	Study Plan Determination
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VDEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
VDWR	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
VDCR	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

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# 1 Project Introduction and Background

Appalachian Power Company (Appalachian or Licensee), a unit of American Electric Power (AEP), is the Licensee, owner, and operator of the two-development Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (Project) (Project No. 2514), located on the upper New River in Carroll County, Virginia. The Byllesby Development is located about 9 miles north of the city of Galax, and the Buck Development is located approximately 3 river miles (RM) downstream of Byllesby and 43.5 RM upstream of Claytor Dam.

The Project is currently licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission). The Project underwent relicensing in the early 1990s, including conversion to run-of-river operations and incorporating additional protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PM&E) measures. The current operating license for the Project expires on February 29, 2024. Accordingly, Appalachian is pursuing a subsequent license for the Project pursuant to the Commission's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), as described at 18 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 5. In accordance with FERC's regulations at 18 CFR §16.9(b), the licensee must file its final application for a new license with FERC no later than February 28, 2022.

In accordance with 18 CFR §5.11, Appalachian developed a Revised Study Plan (RSP) for the Project that was filed with the Commission and made available to stakeholders on October 18, 2019. On November 18, 2019 FERC issued the Study Plan Determination (SPD). On December 18, 2019, Appalachian filed a request for rehearing of the SPD. The SPD was subsequently modified by FERC by an Order on Rehearing dated February 20, 2020.

On July 27, 2020, Appalachian filed an updated ILP study schedule and a request for extension of time to file the Initial Study Report (ISR) to account for Project delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The request was approved by FERC on August 10, 2020, and the filing deadline for the ISR for the Project was extended from November 17, 2020 to January 18, 2021. Appalachian conducted a virtual ISR Meeting on January 28, 2021 and filed the ISR Meeting summary with the Commission on February 12, 2021. Stakeholders provided written comments in response to Appalachian's filing of the ISR meeting summary, which are addressed in this Updated Study Report (USR) along with study methods and results.

Appalachian has conducted studies in accordance with 18 CFR §5.15, as provided in the RSP and as subsequently modified by FERC. This USR describes the methods and results of the Recreation Study conducted in support of preparing an application for new license for the Project.

## 2 Study Goals and Objectives

The goals of this study are to determine the need for enhancement to existing recreation facilities, or to provide additional recreational facilities, and to support the current and future demand for public recreation in the Project area. The objectives of this study are to:

- Gather information on the condition of the six Project-related public recreation facilities and identify any need for improvement;
- Characterize current recreational use of the study area;
- Estimate future demand for public recreation at the Project;
- Solicit comments from stakeholders on potential enhancements or new facilities; and
- Analyze effects of continued Project operation on Project-related recreation facilities.

## 3 Study Area

The five Project-related recreational facilities within and adjacent to the Project boundary are shown on Figure 3-1. The study area encompasses the Project boundary and at the request of stakeholders during the study planning phase of the ILP, was extended to include the shoreline and river reach upstream of the Buck reservoir, the previous U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Thompson campground, and the Loafer's Rest access area downstream of Buck Dam. The study area is appropriate as it includes lands and recreation facilities managed by Appalachian under the existing license and other recreational opportunities that may potentially be affected by Project operations.

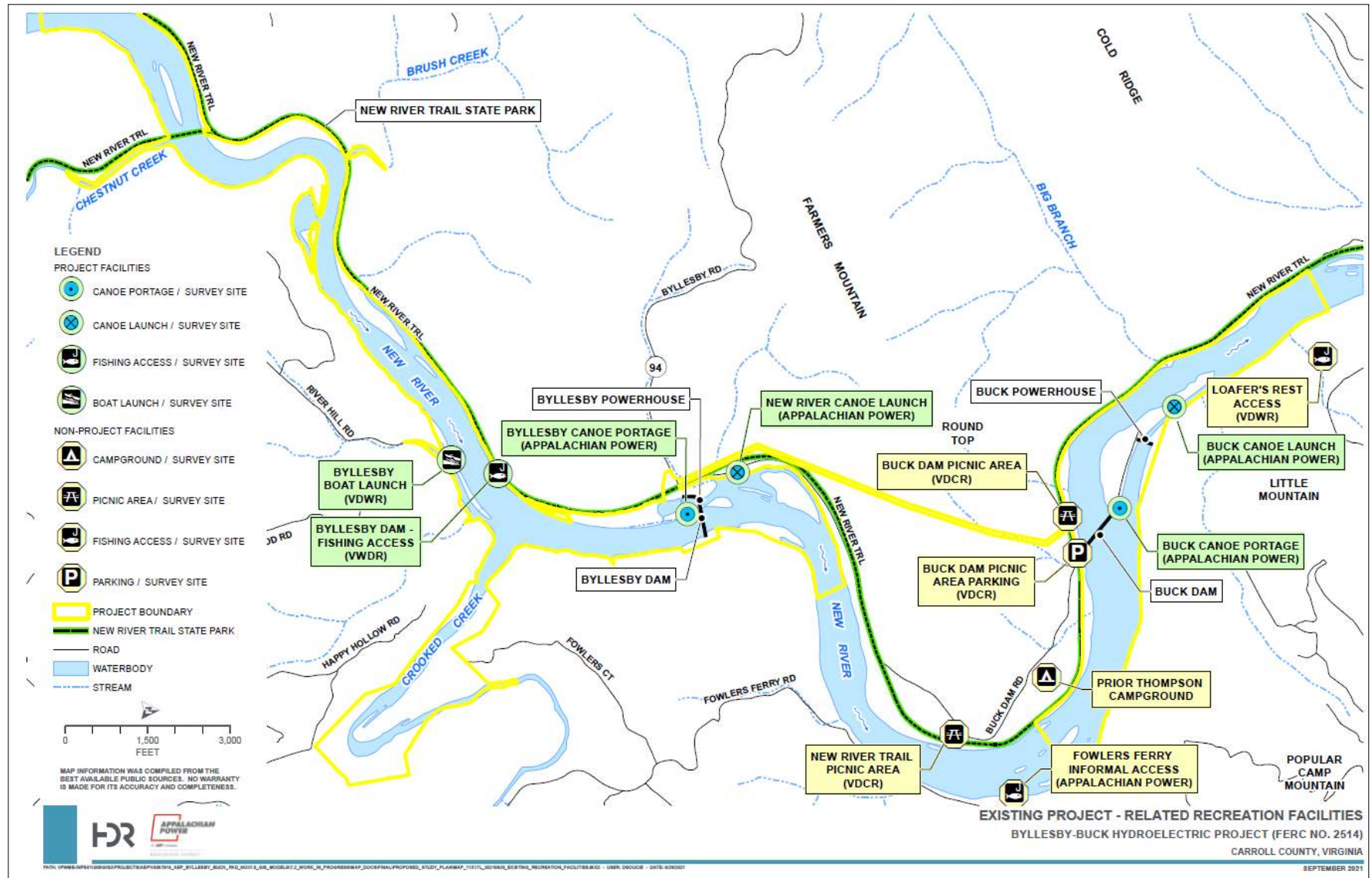


Figure 3-1. Recreational Facilities within the Project Boundary

## 4 Background and Existing Information

The Project is accessible by a remote secondary road and is located in a rural setting. The lands on both sides of the Project are steep, but there are some flat parcels along the river suitable for recreation. The former Norfolk & Western Railroad right-of-way extends along the western shore of the Project and has been converted to the New River Trail State Park, which is typically used for hiking, walking, biking and horseback riding. Most of the land to the west of the Project is owned by the USFS and consists of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. Recreation activities at the Project mostly consist of fishing, biking, hiking, and small craft boating. Section 5.8 of the Pre-Application Document (PAD) describes additional existing information about recreation facilities and opportunities in the study area.

In association with the previous relicensing effort, Appalachian, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on June 7, 1994 to provide public recreational access to various points along the New River (Appalachian 1994a). As documented in the Recreation Plan (Appalachian 1994b) required by Article 411 of the existing license, the Project supports five FERC-approved (“Project”) public recreation facilities owned by Appalachian (Table 4-1). Two of these Project-related recreation facilities are solely operated by Appalachian and the remaining three sites are operated by VDCR or VDWR under the MOU and Revised Recreation Plan.

Additional (“Non-Project”) public recreation facilities or informal access areas exist within the study area. Project and Non-Project recreation facilities and access areas within the study area that were identified as areas of interest by relicensing participants during the study planning phase of the ILP are listed and described in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1. Existing Recreation Facilities at Byllesby-Buck Project**

Recreation Facility	Project or Non-Project Facility	Owner/Operator	Amenities	Relationship to Project Boundary
<b>Byllesby Development</b>				
Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch	Project Facility	Leased to and Operated by VDWR	Provides single-lane boat concrete boat launch with gravel parking area.	Within
Byllesby Canoe Portage	Project Facility	Owned and operated by Appalachian	Provides approximate 1,500-foot (ft) portage trail. Site consists of a hand-carry canoe take-out and an information trailhead kiosk for the New River Trail State Park.	Within
New River Canoe Launch	Project Facility	Leased to and Operated by VDCR	Provides small, gravel parking area with short trail leading to a hand-carry boat launch (also serves as put-in for the Byllesby Canoe Portage).	Adjacent to

Recreation Facility	Project or Non-Project Facility	Owner/Operator	Amenities	Relationship to Project Boundary
VDWR Fishing Site	Project Facility	Leased to and Operated by VDWR	Provides a stone embankment cleared for bank fishing and reservoir viewing. Approximately ¾ mile upstream of the Byllesby dam on the western shore.	Adjacent to
<b>Buck Development</b>				
Buck Dam Canoe Portage	Project Facility	Owned and operated by Appalachian	Provides crushed stone hand-carry take out and a hand-carry put in.	Within
Buck Dam Picnic Area	Non-Project Facility	Owned and operated by VDCR	Provides gravel parking for vehicles, information kiosk, and access to New River Trail. Also provides a picnic area with picnic table, trash can, portable restroom facility, and a hitching post for equestrian trail users.	Adjacent to
New River Trail Picnic Area	Non-Project Facility	Owned and operated by VDCR	Provides upper and lower recreation areas that include benches, picnic tables, bike rack, trash can, grill, and informal angling access to the Buck reservoir.	Adjacent to
Loafer's Rest	Non-Project Facility	Leased to and Operated by VDWR	Provides a parking area and walking trail to access the New River. Stakeholders are interested in angler access from the Loafer's Rest recreation area to the tailrace of Buck Dam.	Adjacent to
<b>Other</b>				
Fowlers Ferry	Non-Project Facility	Land is owned by Appalachian	No formal recreation activities. Informal activities include picnicking, camping, ATV, fishing, wading, and canoe/kayaking	Outside of

## 5 Methodology

In support of the FERC-approved Recreation Study, Appalachian and their consultants implemented a range of data collection techniques, including a Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment, a virtual meeting and in-person site visit with stakeholders, a recreation visitor use online survey, and trail camera installations. Data gathered from these methods collectively illustrate general trends of the Project.

The prevailing conditions from the COVID-19 pandemic throughout most of the study period and during the primary recreation season resulted in variations in recreation usage and ranged from periods of lockdown and relatively little non-essential travel to more typical summer recreation usage. Therefore, the recreation usage patterns of 2020 may be different from past years at the



Project. Based on Appalachian's direct observations and anecdotal observations of recreation stakeholders in meetings, Appalachian believes that the 2020 study season represented high usage of the recreation facilities, as many nearby residents sought out recreation opportunities provided by the Project.

Table 5-1 provides an overview of the Project and Non-Project Recreation facilities studied in accordance with the FERC-approved Recreation Study plan.

**Table 5-1. Project and Non-Project Recreation Facilities Studied**

Recreation Facility	Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment	Site Visit with Stakeholders	Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey	Recreational Use Documentation - Trail Camera
<b>Byllesby Development</b>				
Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch	X	X	X	X
Byllesby Canoe Portage	X	X	X	X
New River Canoe Launch	X	X	X	X
VDWR Fishing Site	X			
<b>Buck Development</b>				
Buck Dam Picnic Area	X	X	X	X
New River Trail Picnic Area	X	X	X	X (Upper and Lower)
Buck Dam Canoe Portage	X	X	X	X
Loafer's Rest			X <sup>1</sup>	X (Buck tailrace)

## 5.1 Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment

Appalachian's sub-consultant (Land Planning Design Associates [LPDA]), conducted a Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment of seven sites, five of which are FERC-approved Project facilities (Table 4-1). LPDA staff conducted the site assessments on November 13, 2019 in association with a team Appalachian's consultant (HDR Engineering, Inc. [HDR]). LPDA recorded the following information for each recreational facility including:

- A description of the type and location of existing recreation facilities;
- The type of recreation provided (boat access, angler access, picnicking, etc.);
- Length and footing materials of any trails;

<sup>1</sup> While Loafer's rest was not specifically identified in the list of recreation sites in the online survey, many stakeholder comments included discussion of this area; therefore, it was studied as part of the Visitor Use Online Survey.



- Existing facilities, signage, and sanitation;
- The type of vehicular access and parking (if any);
- Suitability of facilities to provide recreational opportunities and access for persons with disabilities (i.e., compliance with current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for accessible design); and
- Photographic documentation of recreation facilities and GPS location.

Additionally, a qualitative assessment of the condition of the recreation facilities was performed using a Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment Form. Using the Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment Form, the recreation amenities available at each facility were rated using the following criteria: (N) Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional); (R) Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair); (M) Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning); and (G) Good condition (functional and well-maintained). If a facility is given a rating of “N”, “R”, or “M”, an explanation for the rating was provided.

## 5.2 Site Visit with Stakeholders to Discuss Existing and Future Recreational Opportunities

Appalachian convened a site visit with key relicensing stakeholders to discuss existing and future recreational opportunities at the Project on October 28, 2020. Prior to the site visit, Appalachian held a virtual meeting on October 21, 2020 with involved stakeholders to share preliminary recreation data.

Since the filing of the ISR, Appalachian conducted additional consultation with VDWR to evaluate potential Project and Non-Project recreation facility improvements to be included as part of Appalachian’s licensing proposal, as follows:

- Site visit to the VDWR Loafer’s Rest recreation facility with VDWR, Appalachian, and Appalachian’s consultants on March 24, 2021.
- Conference call with VDWR, Appalachian, and Appalachian’s consultants for the Recreation Study on June 29, 2021 to discuss priorities for potential Project and Non-Project recreation facility improvements and to introduce preliminary concepts for development of the VDWR Loafer’s Rest recreation facility.

## 5.3 Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey

HDR developed an online survey drawing from general concepts and guidance from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Handbook (USFS 2007) as well as from other FERC-approved relicensing studies for recreation visitor use surveys. The online survey was administered through the Project’s relicensing website and offered respondents the opportunity to provide survey responses electronically from April through November 2020. Appalachian extended the online survey through the end of November 2020 (originally scheduled to end in October), at the request of stakeholders during the October 21, 2020 virtual meeting, to allow stakeholders additional time to respond. Stakeholders were able to provide a final distribution to remind users of the availability of the survey and the close of the survey period.

Appalachian posted signs at the Project and Non-Project recreation facilities (except the Byllesby VDWL Boat Launch) providing a brief description of the purpose and intent of the survey and the website address (Figure 5-1). This allowed respondents to complete a survey onsite, or later upon returning home from their visit, or without visiting the Project if the link was identified through other (electronic) communications. Appalachian also contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), VDCR, VDWL, New River Conservancy, and Carroll County stakeholders at the beginning and end of the survey window to support distribution of the survey. Additionally, Appalachian notified relicensing participants that the online survey was available through the quarterly ILP study progress report. Notice of the survey was also posted on the Project's relicensing website and on a relevant social media outlet (ex: Claytor Lake Facebook page) maintained by Appalachian.

The online questionnaire was designed to collect information about:

- General user information;
- Resident/visitor;
- Purpose and duration of visit;
- Distance traveled;
- Day use/overnight lodging;
- History of visiting the site or area;
- Types of recreational activities respondents participated in during their visit, including primary and secondary recreation activities;
- Other recreational sites that respondents visited during their trip;
- General satisfaction with recreational opportunities, facilities, and the respondents overall visit and/or areas that need improvement;
- Effects of Project operations on recreation use and access; and
- Accessibility of facilities.



Figure 5-1. Recreation Use and Needs Survey Sign

## 5.4 Recreational Use Documentation

Appalachian documented usage of the recreational areas of interest through the installation of trail cameras. HDR deployed eight Browning Strike Force 2015 Edition HD Sub Micro Trail Game Cameras on October 15 and 16, 2019 at the locations listed in Table 5-2. The cameras were removed on November 5, 2020.

Table 5-2. Locations of Trail Cameras

Recreation Facility	Project or Non-Project Facility	Purpose	Number of Cameras
Bylesby VDWR Boat Launch (Camera 1)	Project Facility	Collect data on vehicles entering and exiting the parking area	1
Bylesby Canoe Portage (Camera 2)	Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing New River Trail parking area and canoe portages	1
New River Canoe Launch (Camera 3)	Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing canoe portage	1
Buck Dam Picnic Area (Camera 6)	Non-Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing the picnic area, bike rack, and hitching post	1
New River Trail Picnic Area (Cameras 4 and 5)	Non-Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing the picnic area, grill, informal angler location, and addition recreation features	2
Buck Dam Canoe Portage (Camera 8)	Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing portage and tailrace	1

Recreation Facility	Project or Non-Project Facility	Purpose	Number of Cameras
Buck Tailrace – Fishing Access (Camera 7)	Non-Project Facility	Collect data on visitors utilizing Buck tailrace area for fishing; camera faces river-right to capture all types of recreation (of specific interest is fishing from Loafer's Rest)	1

The cameras were installed to collect site visitor data and document use patterns. When installed, the trail cameras were set to take photos when activated by motion. Before taking a second photo, the camera was set to wait a full minute, again requiring activation from motion. After the first trail camera data download in mid-November 2019, the settings of Camera 7 facing the Buck tailrace – Fishing Access (Loafer's Rest area of interest) were adjusted. This adjustment was necessary because discharge from the sluice adjacent to the powerhouse intakes repeatedly activated the motion sensor, potentially preventing the camera from capturing motion across the tailrace. The photo collection methodology for Camera 7 was thus revised to a video time lapse in which a photo was captured every 30 minutes; a daily video of the photos was created from compiling the lapsed images. Camera 7 also continued to be motion activated as well, although this did not occur often (and only from high waters) due to the lack of activity. All cameras recorded time, temperature, date, and vehicle usage.

## 6 Study Results

### 6.1 Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment

As stated in Section 5.1, LPDA performed a Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment to document usage conditions at seven existing Project and Non-Project related public recreation facilities (Table 4-1 and Table 5-1).

LPDA observed several common themes among the recreation facilities including lack of ADA accessibility, aging though functional furnishings, informally developed amenities, incomplete signage, and deferred maintenance. LPDA noted that the Project is set in scenic, natural surroundings and the historic dams provide cultural interest. LPDA recommended there is a high potential for increasing recreation value of the sites, both by improving the existing conditions and by developing related amenities.

The existing amenities and conditions for the recreation facilities assessed is summarized below. The Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment Report and corresponding maps are included in Attachment 1.

#### 6.1.1 Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch (Project Facility)

Existing recreation amenities of the Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch include a 16-ft wide concrete boat ramp with a gentle slope, concrete walkway, crushed gravel parking area, 5-wheel stops, and signage. The boat ramp and other amenities are in good condition,

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Update and replace signage.

### 6.1.2 VDWR Fishing Site (Project Facility)

The VDWR Fishing Site was not included in the RSP but was evaluated since it is a Project facility as identified in the Recreation Plan (Article 411) (Appalachian 1994b).

Existing recreation amenities of the VDWR Fishing Site include a fire pit and grill, bench, lantern hook, and trash can. Access to the water is difficult with a very steep slope (too steep to launch a canoe). The trash can, bench, fire ring, lantern hook and grill are aged and there are no signs or maps at this facility. Parking for the fishing site is provided by the Byllesby Canoe Portage parking lot. The fishing site is accessed by the New River Trail and is 3,100 ft (0.59 miles) from the parking lot.

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Maintenance or replacement of amenities.
- Addition of signage.

### 6.1.3 Byllesby Canoe Portage (Project Facility)

Existing recreation amenities of the Byllesby Canoe Portage include a 1,235-ft-long (0.23 miles) portage path, a 12-space gravel parking area, large wetland area, and multiple signs. The portage take-out is poorly defined with limited amenities. The trash can is older but is being serviced and is lined. Signage is faded.

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Update and replace signage.

### 6.1.4 New River Canoe Launch (Project Facility)

Existing recreation amenities of the New River Canoe Launch include a 10-space gravel parking area, portage/no-fishing signs, a gate (dam maintenance access road) and a canoe portage in a relatively flat, sandy area where the water is shallow. A 125-ft-long portage trail connects the parking lot to the canoe portage. and the put-in location is 1,175 ft (0.22 miles) from the portage take-out above Byllesby dam. The signage at this facility is in good condition with adequate directional information.

No potential enhancements were identified for this site.

### 6.1.5 New River Trail Picnic Area (Non-Project Facility)

The New River Trail Picnic Area has an upper area that includes a picnic table shelter, bike rack (up to four bikes), and hitching trail. The site primarily serves trail users, though there is an informal car pull-off and trail accessing the picnic area. The informal dirt trail is narrow and could be widened and surfaced, as could the informal parking area. The shelter is in good condition and is ADA accessible. The bike rack and hitching rail are in good condition.

The New River Trail Picnic Area also has a lower area which includes existing recreation amenities such as a trash can, barbeque grill, picnic table, bird nesting box, two lantern hooks, two fire rings, and three benches. The trash can is in good condition and is regularly serviced. One bench is missing a slat and the lantern hook is older but usable. The barbeque grill is severely corroded.

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Widen and surface informal dirt trail and informal parking area.
- Maintain or replace amenities.

### 6.1.6 Buck Dam Picnic Area (Non-Project Facility)

Existing recreation amenities at the Buck Dam Picnic Area include a parking area with a trash can, kiosk with regulation signs and old machinery. The trash can is dented and aged, though usable and regularly serviced. From the parking area, there is a 650-ft-long crushed stone trail, a section of the New River Trail with No Trespassing Signs along the bank edge to a separate area that includes a picnic table shelter, bike rack, an accessible Porta Potty, and hitching rail. The picnic shelter is in good condition while the table is older but usable. Paint on the hitching rail and bike rack is chipped but the amenities are usable.

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Improve signage for educational and safety purposes.

### 6.1.7 Buck Dam Canoe Portage (Non-Project Facility)

Existing recreation amenities of the Buck Dam Canoe Portage includes a take-out above and a put-in below Buck Dam. The portage route between the take-out and put-in is via an asphalt maintenance road, gravel access road, and a gravel walking trail. The road surface is approximately 10 ft wide. The asphalt portion of the maintenance road is 820 ft long, the gravel portion is 570 ft long, and the walking trail is 50 ft long. The total portage route is 1,440 ft long (0.27 miles). The gravel surface is rough and uneven, and the walking trail has not been graded or surfaced. There is an unlined trash can at the put-in. The signage is in good condition.

Potential enhancements identified for this site were as follows:

- Improve safety and regulatory signage.

## 6.2 Site Visit with Stakeholders to Discuss Existing and Future Recreational Opportunities

Meeting notes documenting both the virtual meeting on October 21, 2020 and site visit on October 28, 2020 are included in Attachment 2. During the site visit, the Project and Non-Project recreation facilities visited by Appalachian, their consultants, and the stakeholders are noted in Table 5-1.

Since the filing of the ISR, Appalachian conducted additional consultation with VDWR to evaluate potential Project and Non-Project recreation facility improvements to be included as part of Appalachian's licensing proposal, as follows:

- Site visit to the VDWR Loafer's Rest recreation facility with VDWR, Appalachian, and Appalachian's consultants on March 24, 2021.
- Conference call with VDWR, Appalachian, and Appalachian's consultants for the Recreation Study on June 29, 2021 to discuss priorities for potential Project and Non-Project recreation facility improvements and to introduce preliminary concepts for development of the VDWR Loafer's Rest recreation facility.

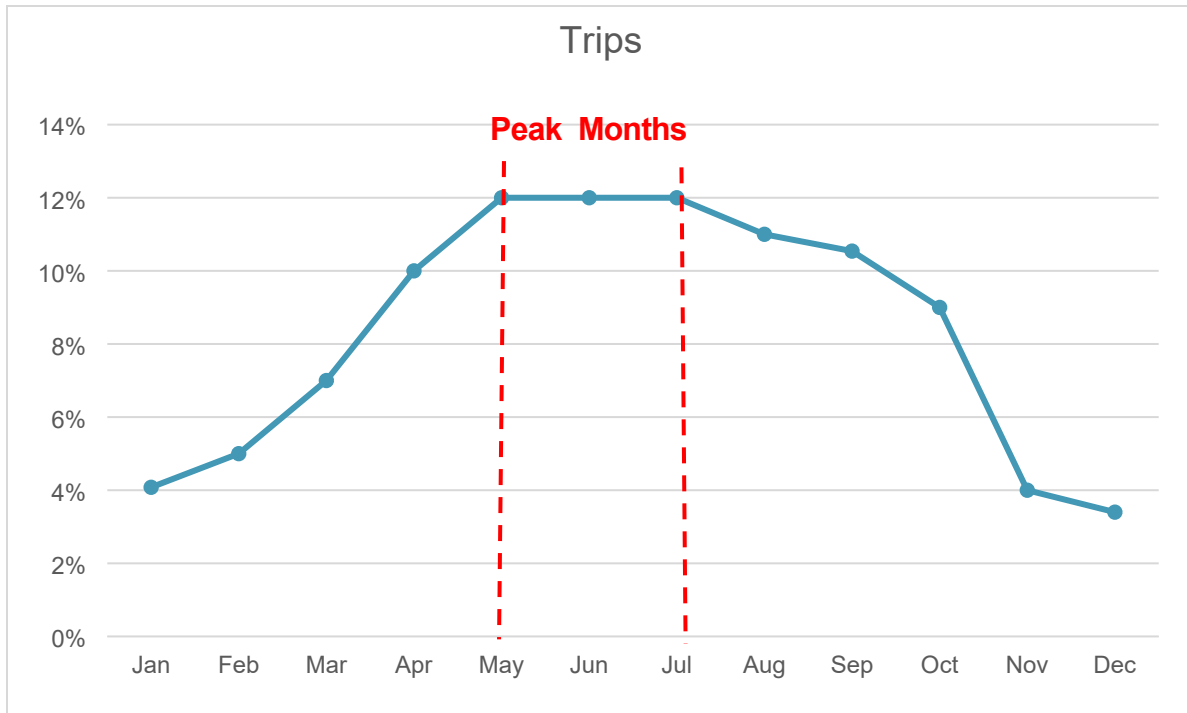
During these two meetings, an informal area known locally as Fowler's Ferry was identified as an area that agencies are potentially interested in developing for future recreational usage. Fowler's Ferry is located on river-right, upstream of Buck Dam (see Figure 3-1), off of Fowlers Ferry Road and provides informal recreation access for picnicking, camping, ATV, fishing, wading, and canoe/kayaking. This area was not specifically studied under other tasks for the Recreation Study. There are no formal recreation facilities at this site, but the VDWR has expressed interest in developing this area and controlling access from unauthorized users. Land in this area is owned by Appalachian but is not formally maintained. Buck Dam Canoe Portage has also been discussed as a site where stakeholders have interest in potential recreation facility improvements.

## 6.3 Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey

The online survey provided a method for existing and potential recreation visitors to the study area to respond and provide feedback on recreation opportunities and [Project and Non-Project facilities] at the Project. From April 21, 2020 to December 1, 2020, Appalachian received 142 responses to the online survey. A high-level summary of all the recreation facility user responses is provided below:

- Eighty-four percent of the responses came from four recreation facilities: Byllesby Boat Launch (VDWR), Buck Dam Canoe Portage, New River Canoe Launch, and New River Trail Picnic Area, indicating these sites were the most frequently utilized by online survey participants.
- Forty-two percent of the survey respondents traveled from three nearby zip code areas, with 92 percent considering themselves to be regular visitors to the recreation facility (considered at least 3 or more times a year) and staying at the Project an average length of 5 hours per trip. Eighty-three percent of respondents did not stay overnight at the Project.
- Males made up 74 percent of the respondents, 49 percent were in their thirties and forties.
- Facility usage followed traditional seasonal recreation patterns with May, June, and July being the peak months (Figure 6-1).
- As shown in Table 6-1, fishing and canoe/kayaking were the most popular activities at the Project documented in the online survey.
- Visitors rated recreational facilities on the following metrics: accessibility, parking, crowding, safety, condition, availability, and overall experience. The sliding scale rating system indicated that visitors generally found the individual metrics and general overall experience "acceptable" (Figure 6-2). The only metric that was not rated highest in the acceptable category was the available facilities, which was rated neutral.



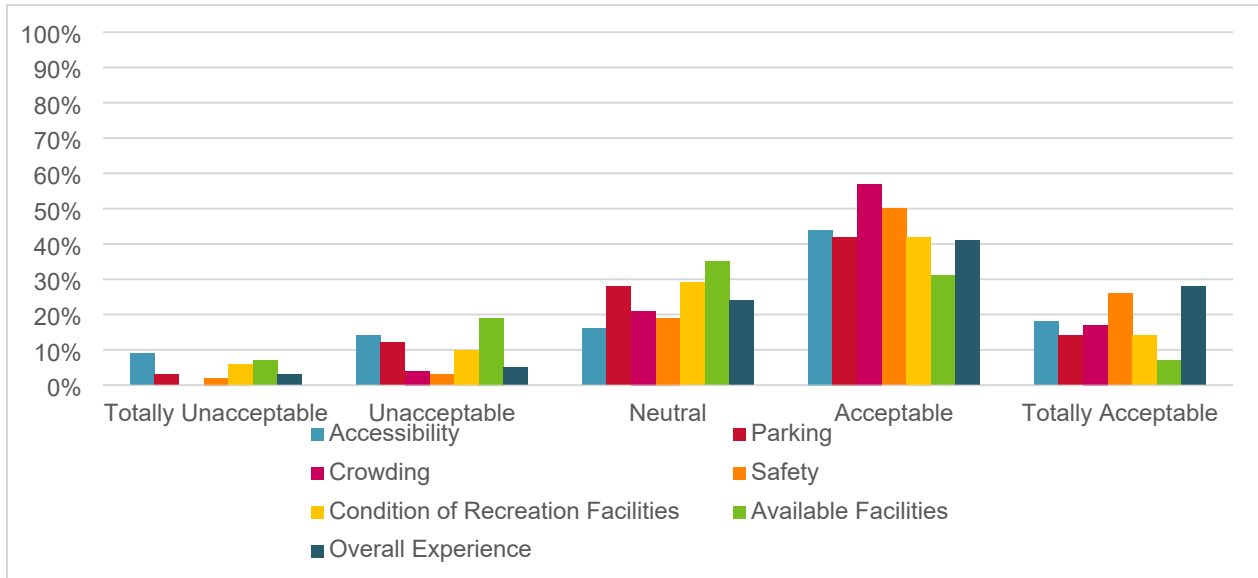


**Figure 6-1. Monthly Recreation Activity for Project and Non-Project Facilities**

**Table 6-1. Online Survey Summary for Primary Recreation Activities at Project and Non-Project Facilities**

Primary Activity	Use (%)
Fishing	48
Canoeing/kayaking	20
Sight-seeing	11
Biking	9
Picnicking	4
Hiking	2
Hunting	2
Wildlife Viewing	2
Swimming	1





**Figure 6-2. Online Survey Summary for Overall Rating on All Visits at Project and Non-Project Facilities**

Facility-specific summaries and verbatim user comments from the online survey are included in Attachment 3.

The Thompson Campground located between Byllesby and Buck dams was mentioned in the online survey comments frequently, however the VDCR explained during the recreation site visit that previous efforts (1990s and as recently as two years ago with an attempt to reach terms of a 99-year lease) by the VDCR to acquire the land from USFS were unsuccessful, reportedly due to unresolvable USFS interests pertaining to liability and insurance. This area is the most suitable area for a campground near the Project and has existing picnic areas, horse facilities, and general campground infrastructure. While there is still widespread interest in this development, the Project currently lacks an advocate at the federal level (legislative or agency). This area remains of interest to the VDCR and online survey users.

## 6.4 Recreational Use Documentation

As discussed in 5.4, HDR documented and reviewed over a full year of Project and Non-Project recreation facility usage with motion-activation trail cameras. Eight trail cameras were installed on October 15 and 16, 2019 and were removed on November 5, 2020<sup>2</sup>. During the trail camera component of the study, HDR downloaded data from the cameras on eight different occasions, capturing thousands of photos.

Review of the trail camera data indicates that the study area is well-used during the spring to fall months, which is attributed largely to the easy access along the entire left bank via the New River

<sup>2</sup> Camera 1 and 8 did not collect data from July 28 through November 9, 2020 (equipment malfunction). Camera 5 did not collect data from May 27 through July 28 (theft). Camera 6 did not collect data from May 18 through July 28 (fallen tree).

Trail. While some of the recreation facilities were used for their intended use, some were used differently than predicted, as further discussed below.

#### 6.4.1 Project Facilities Trail Camera Assessment

The Project facilities most frequented by users are the Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch and the Byllesby Canoe Portage parking lot. These two Project facilities provide a range of recreation opportunities including boating, canoeing, fishing, walking, biking, and hiking. The Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch has the easiest boat access to the New River within the study area. Fishing is also popular along the shoreline at this facility.

As a note of clarification, the Byllesby Canoe Portage trail camera faced the associated parking lot and not the canoe take-out. HDR expected the parking lot would be used to transport canoes or kayaks after portaging, however this was not observed. The Byllesby Canoe Portage parking lot was largely used to access the New River Trail (including biking, hiking, and walking and dog walking).

The New River Canoe Launch is also a Project facility and was used as intended (canoe/kayak put-in), but more frequently used for bank fishing or relaxing along the sandy shore. This facility was not as popular as the Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch and the Byllesby Canoe Portage but generally had a consistent amount of foot traffic, especially during the warmer days.

The final Project facility assessed by the trail camera was the Buck Dam Canoe Put-In. This facility was seldomly used but when it was, it was used as a put-in or for bank fishing. Stakeholders noted during the October 28, 2020 site visit that users cross the Buck bypass to Mountain Island<sup>3</sup> to gain angler access further downstream. It is possible that use around this area is higher than observed on the trail cameras, but the Buck Dam Canoe Put-In itself was generally not used and the trail camera did not capture a high use. On approximately three occasions, the camera captured motorboats accessing the tailrace to fish.

#### 6.4.2 Non-Project Facilities Trail Camera Assessment

Just upstream of the Buck Dam Canoe Put-In, HDR used a time lapse camera to record activity on the right bank of the tailrace. This area is referred to as Buck Dam – Fishing Access which is accessed from the VDWR's Loafer's Rest Non-Project facility. The general area of the Buck Dam – Fishing Access was understood by Appalachian to be of interest to the stakeholders during the development of the RSP; however the camera in this area recorded approximately two users during the entire survey window. At the October 28, 2020 site visit with the stakeholders, the VDWR noted that there is a No Trespassing sign (public access is prohibited proximate to the powerhouses and dams due to public safety and security concerns) and users are aware of this and avoid the area. Prior to the installation of the No Trespassing sign, this site was suggested to be popular for angler access.

The New River Trail Picnic Area is a Non-Project facility maintained and operated by the VDCR. The upper and lower access provides a wide range of recreational opportunities including picnicking, horseback riding, biking, walking (and dog walking), relaxing, grilling, fishing, observing wildlife and

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<sup>3</sup> The Buck Dam Canoe Put-In is located on Mountain Island which is an island between the Buck powerhouse and the bypass (Figure 3-1).

more. This area is accessed directly from the New River Trail and recorded consistent usage throughout the survey window, especially from spring to fall.

The final Non-Project recreation facility assessed with the trail cameras was the Buck Dam Picnic Area. This facility is just downstream of the New River Trail Picnic Area and is also on the New River Trail, therefore, the use was very similar and generally included picnicking, hiking, biking, horseback riding and walking (and dog-walking). This area has direct access from the New River Trail and saw consistent usage throughout the survey window especially from spring to fall.

### 6.4.3 Daily Counts

As a metric to provide specific user counts per day, HDR has chosen three representative spring, summer, and fall days over the weekend (Friday through Sunday), when recreation levels are typically higher<sup>4</sup>. FERC defines a recreation day as each visit by a person to a facility for recreational purposes during any portion of a 24-hour period. Table 6-2 provides a count of the number of vehicles or people observed on a given day (from dawn until dusk) as a method to quantify a recreation day through the three highest usage seasons.

At Cameras 1 and 2, the viewpoint of the camera showed mostly vehicles, and vehicles were counted in these instances as one count. For these two cameras, it is likely the recreation usage per person is higher than what is provided in Table 6-3. For the rest of the cameras (3 through 8), individual people were counted as one count. Table 6-2 also summarizes the primary activity(s) observed over the study period at each facility.

Attachment D provides a representative photo from each trail camera for each day denoted below. The date, time, and temperature are also provided in the information block at the bottom of each picture for each day.

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<sup>4</sup> The authors of this report acknowledge that a holiday is typically also included for this type of analysis, but due to the loss of data explained in footnote 2, the dates selected here provide a more holistic summary of the usage.



**Table 6-2. Trail Camera Primary Recreation and Usage Counts**

Recreation Facility	Project or Non-Project Facility	Primary Recreation Activity(s) Observed	Representative Spring Count Sunday, May 10, 2020	Representative Summer Count Friday, July 24, 2020	Representative Fall Count Saturday, October 24, 2020	Additional Notes
Camera 1: Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch	Project Facility	Bank Fishing and Boating.	14 vehicles	16 vehicles	12 vehicles	Highest recreational usage noted at this facility over the trail camera study period.
Camera 2: Byllesby Canoe Portage	Project Facility	Parking lot used to walk, bike, or hike.	9 vehicles	6 vehicles	15 vehicles	No canoe portaging from the parking area was observed.
Camera 3: New River Canoe Launch	Project Facility	Bank Fishing.	10 people	2 people	4 people	Bank fishing was commonly seen, whereas the portage was seldom used.
Camera 4: New River Trail Picnic Area (Upper)	Non-Project Facility	Facilities (picnicking, bike rack, informal walking trail, and hitching post) enjoyed by New River trail users.	5 people	13 people	23 people	Usage Counts was calculated based on individual's using the recreation facilities, not only the New River Trail.
Camera 5: New River Trail Picnic Area (Lower)	Non-Project Facility	Bank Fishing and Observing/Relaxing.	6 people	7 people <sup>1</sup>	18 people	Frequently used to appreciate the New River from the New River Trail.
Camera 6: Buck Dam Picnic Area	Non-Project Facility	Facilities (picnicking, bike rack and hitching post) enjoyed by New River trail users.	6 people	7 people <sup>1</sup>	22 people	Usage Counts was calculated based on individual's using the recreation facilities, not only the New River Trail.
Camera 7: Buck Dam – Fishing Access (informal recreation facility)	Non-Project Facility	Bank Fishing and Canoe/Kayaking.	0 people	0 people	0 people	Two observed uses (fishing and observing) during the study, but overall, no primary recreation noted. High water from the trash gate restricts access to this area often.
Camera 8: Buck Dam Canoe Portage (Put-In)	Project Facility	None	0 people	0 people	0 people	Low overall usage of the recreation site.

#### 6.4.4 Capacity

FERC defines peak weekend use as weekends when recreational use is at its peak for the season (i.e. July 4 weekend and other holiday weekends). On these instances, recreational use may exceed the capacity of the area to handle such use.

The Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch and the parking lot at the Byllesby Canoe Portage had the highest overall usage of the recreation facilities during the trail camera analysis. As provided in the Assessment Report (Attachment 1) the Byllesby VDWR boat launch has 18 parking spaces and 7 spaces for boat trailers. The Byllesby Canoe Portage parking area has 12 spaces. At these two facilities, there were approximately ten to fifteen days during peak weekends (e.g., holidays) or when weekend weather was optimal where the parking lot appeared to reach capacity. An example of Byllesby Canoe Portage parking area reaching the parking lot capacity is shown in Figure 6-3.

However, on non-peak weekends or a typical recreation day (i.e. non-holiday weekends or weekend's when weather was not optimal) these two facilities did not appear to reach parking capacity. The New River Canoe Launch also has a parking area; however, the viewpoint of the camera did not capture parking capacity, but instead the canoe put-in. Based on the generally lower recreational use of the canoe put-in, it is assumed the parking lot did not reach or exceed capacity. Lastly, the Buck Dam Picnic Area also has a parking lot; however, the viewpoint of the camera did not capture parking capacity, but instead the picnic area. Based on the remote location of the parking area and assumed access of the picnic area via the New River Trail it is also assumed that the parking lot generally did not reach or exceed capacity. The other facilities assessed by the trail cameras (i.e. the New River Trail Picnic Area, Buck Dam Fishing Access, and Buck Dam Canoe Portage Put-In) did not have an associated parking area but are accessed via the New River Trail or boat.

Based on the capacity assessed through the trail camera study the parking areas at the Project are sufficient to meet the current demand during a typical and peak recreation day.



Figure 6-3. Optimal Weather Weekend – Parking Capacity at Byllesby Canoe Portage



## 7 Summary and Discussion

The Recreation Study captured consistent recreation usage at most of the Project and Non-Project facilities, with usage peaking on the weekends, holidays, and warmer months, as anticipated. In general, the recreation facilities experienced similar types of recreational activities and consistent recreational usage over the study period, especially from May through October. The New River Trail provides a unique opportunity to access most of the recreation facilities in otherwise remote locations. The trail camera and online survey results indicated that fishing (and fishing via boating) and canoe/kayaking were the primary recreation activities at Project and Non-Project facilities. The Buck Dam Canoe Portage was the only Project recreation facility that saw very little recreation usage, likely because it is inaccessible except by canoe/kayak. The tailrace at Loafer's Rest is of interest to anglers but is often flooded by the trash gate; that camera station observed approximately two recreational users over the course of the trail camera study. The online survey resulted in positive feedback along with requests for more access and use of Loafer's Rest for fishing. Respondents also requested the reopening of the Thompson campground. The online survey respondents also reported a local interest in maintaining and improving the recreation facilities at the Project for the local economy.

Preliminary agency interests and recommendations to date are summarized in the meeting summaries in Attachment 2. At the October 28, 2020 site visit, improvements to the facilities were discussed. Global comments and recommendations were made for improved signage regarding intended use, restricted access areas (e.g. tailrace areas, dams), safety, and consistent FERC, regulatory, and identification signage. Upgrades and improvements at recreation facilities upstream of the Byllesby dam are limited due to localized flooding (Byllesby Boat Launch) and wetland impacts (Byllesby Canoe Portage). The stretch from Byllesby dam to Buck dam has more potential for facility improvements (New River Canoe Launch, New River Trail Picnic Area, and Buck Dam Picnic Area), and while these facilities do not have the highest usage (compared to the Byllesby Boat Launch and Byllesby Canoe Portage), they do have generally consistent usage due to access along the New River trail. The study results summarized in Section 6.0 do not directly support improvements to areas below Buck Dam to the Buck Dam Canoe Portage. HDR preliminarily evaluated alternative portage locations for the Byllesby Canoe Portage (take-out above the dam) and concluded it was not feasible to shorten the length of the portage or relocate the take-out further upstream, due to the presence of a large wetland area. HDR and their consultant continue to evaluate improvements at the Buck Dam Canoe Portage put-in below the tailrace, to enhance ease of launch and public safety.

At the October site visit and ISR meeting, agencies did provide additional information about and interest in the downstream Loafer's Rest Non-Project facility, which could provide improved angler access to the area below the Buck Dam. Based on stakeholder interest at the Loafer's Rest site, Appalachian, HDR, LPDA, and VDWR conducted a site visit on March 24, 2021 to better understand the site and existing features, stakeholder interests, and potential improvements. As a follow up to the site visit, Appalachian, HDR, LPDA, and VDWR participated in a conference call on June 29, 2021 to discuss priorities for potential Project and Non-Project recreation facility improvements and to introduce preliminary concepts for development of the VDWR Loafer's Rest recreation facility.

Appalachian is presently developing a draft Recreation Management Plan which will provide documentation of the existing Project facilities, agreements with agencies for operation and

maintenance of facilities within the Project boundary (if and as applicable), and proposed enhancement measures for the new license term. Enhancements are anticipated to include improvements to signage throughout the Project boundary, upgrades to the Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch and improvements to the Buck Canoe Portage. Appalachian is also proposing to construct new facilities at VDWR's Loafer's Rest area, to be maintained by VDWR in accordance with the lease from Appalachian for this land.

Appalachian expects to distribute the draft Recreation Management Plan to VDWR, VDCR, and other relicensing study participants for comments after the USR meeting so that a draft Recreation Management Plan can be filed with the FLA.

## 8 Variances from FERC-Approved Study Plan

The Recreation Study was conducted in full conformance with the Commission's SPD.

## 9 Germane Correspondence and Consultation

Attachment 2 includes a list of correspondence between Appalachian, HDR and stakeholders (USFWS, VDWR, VDCR, Carroll County, and the New River Conservancy) with documentation from these key meetings:

- Recreation Study Update and Planning for Facilities Site Visit (October 2, 2020)
- Byllesby-Buck Recreation Study Update - Meeting Notes and Presentation (October 23, 2020)
- Byllesby-Buck Recreation Site Visit Meeting Summary (November 18, 2020)
- Recreation Stakeholder Meeting and Site Visit to Loafer's Rest recreational facility (VDWR) (March 24, 2021)
- Potential Recreation Improvements Discussion with DWR (Virtual Meeting) (June 29, 2021)

## 10 References

Appalachian Power Company. 1994a. Revised Recreation Plan – Memorandum of Understanding. Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 2514-003, Virginia. June 7, 1994.

Appalachian Power Company. 1994b. Revised Recreation Plan, Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project, FERC No. 2514-003, Virginia. August 30, 1994.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS). 2007. National Visitor Use Monitoring Handbook. National Visitor Use Monitoring Program, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, D.C

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# Attachment 1

Attachment 1 – Recreation  
Facility Inventory and  
Conditions Report

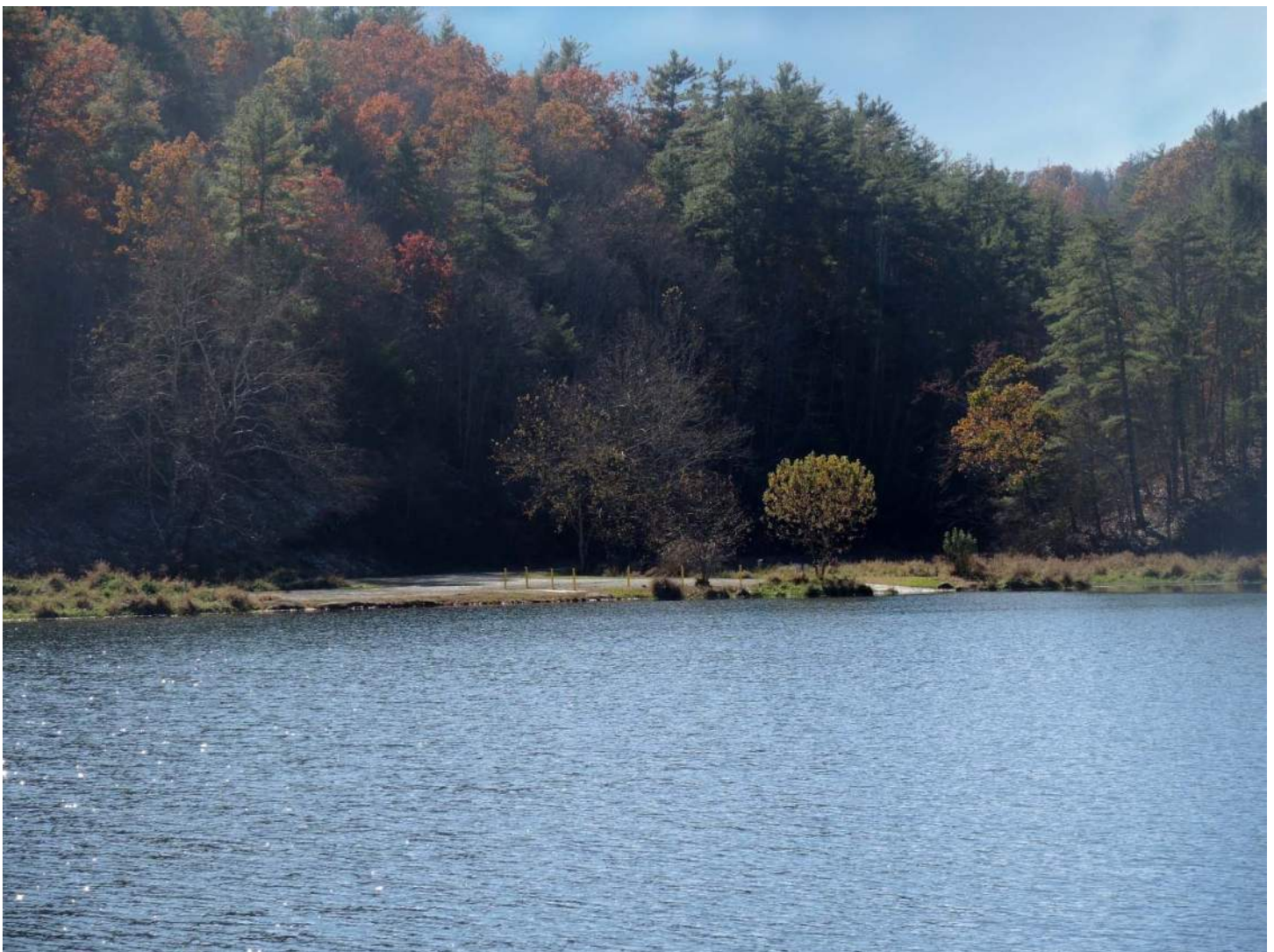
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# Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project

*Carroll County, VA*

Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment

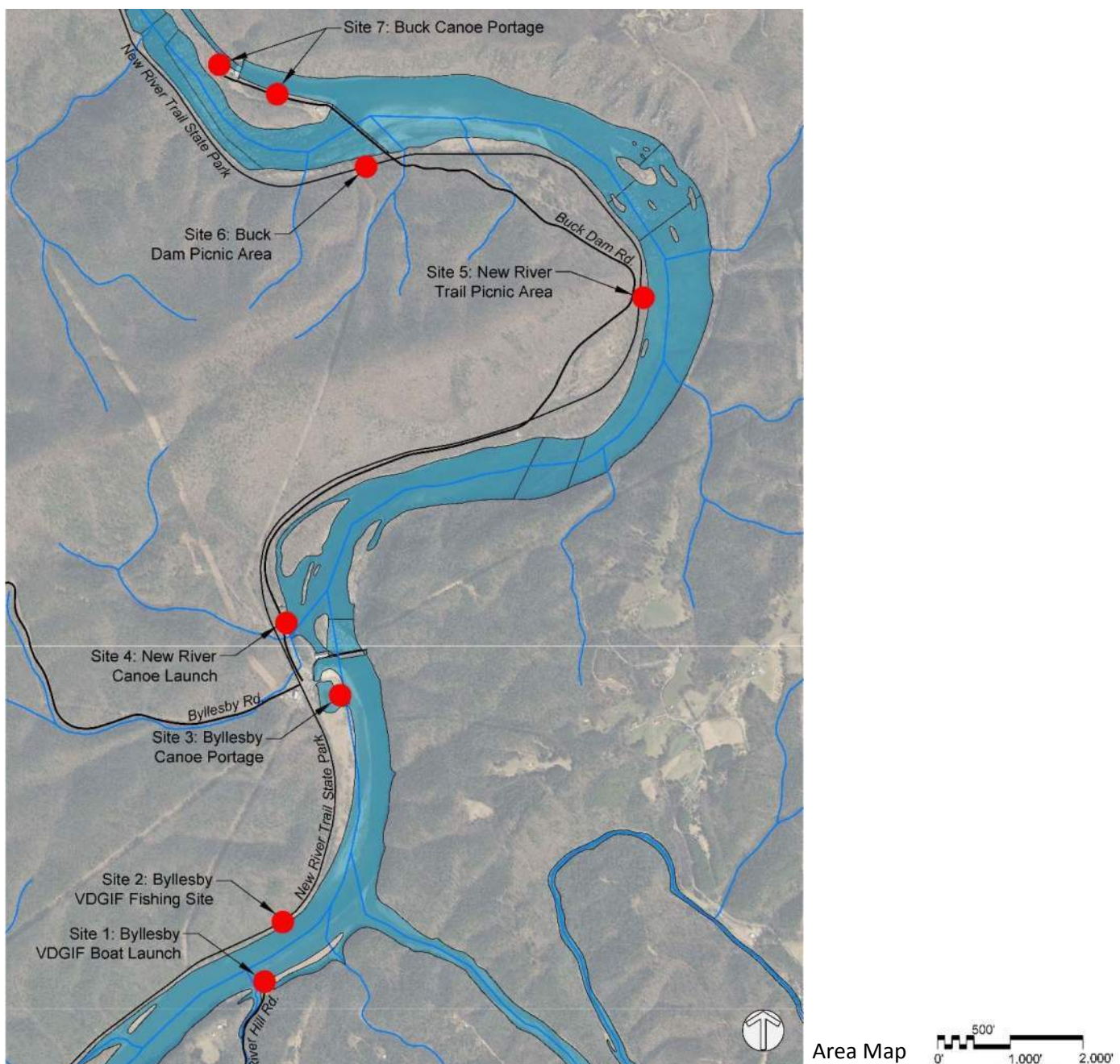
Performed on November 13, 2019



## Summary:

LPDA conducted a recreation facility inventory and condition assessment of existing recreation facilities associated with the Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514-186) in support of the project's relicensing process. Condition assessment reports and maps for each site are included in this report.

LPDA observed several common themes between the sites. They include lack of ADA accessibility, aging though functional furnishings, informally developed amenities, incomplete and/or scattered signage, and deferred maintenance. The area is set in beautiful natural surroundings and the historic dams provide cultural interest. There is high potential for increasing the recreational value of the sites, both by improving the existing conditions and by developing related amenities like trails, boardwalks, fishing piers, and interpretive signage.







## **Methodology**

LPDA conducted a recreation site inventory and conditions assessment of seven sites total, six related to the Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric project: the Byllesby VDGIF Boat Launch, Byllesby Canoe Portage, New River Canoe Launch, New River Trail Picnic Area, Buck Dam Picnic Area, and Buck Canoe Portage. LPDA evaluated an additional recreation site in the vicinity of the Byllesby Canoe Portage, the Byllesby VDGIF Fishing Site. LPDA staff conducted the site assessments on November 13, 2019 in association with a team from HDR. LPDA evaluated the type and condition of all amenities at each site, including parking, furnishings, access, and signage. LPDA also evaluated the suitability of facilities to provide recreational opportunities and access for persons with disabilities. Where appropriate, LPDA noted opportunities for improvements to existing facilities and opportunities to develop new amenities. LPDA evaluated the inventory and condition of amenities at each site using conditions evaluation forms, photo-documentation, and noted amenity location on GIS developed field maps. LPDA cross referenced the gathered data with georeferenced aerial imagery to develop a conditions assessment report and site layout map for each of the seven sites. The maps are sufficient for site inventory and planning. The sites will need to be surveyed in advance of developing construction plans for site improvement and development.

## **Site Conditions Assessments**

The following are the assessment reports for the seven recreational sites.



**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 1: Byllesby VDGIF Boat Launch</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 8:00 am</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheet 1</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	1	no	N / R / M / <u>G</u>	16-ft wide concrete ramp with gentle slope. Can be used by canoe and kayak as well as boats.
Portage (put-in/take-out)	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	0		N / R / M / G	
Picnic Table	0		N / R / M / G	
Trash Receptacles	0		N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	

<b>PARKING</b>	Total Spaces: <u>18</u> Standard: <u>11</u> ADA: <u>0</u> Double (trailer): <u>7</u> Other: _____					<b>Condition</b>
	Surface Type: Asphalt Concrete <u>Gravel</u> Other: _____ Edges are soft. Additional wheel stops are needed.					N / R / <u>M</u> / G
<b>Signs</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Regulations	4	36"x18" (2) 18"x12" (2)	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / <u>R</u> / M / G	A facility I.D. sign should be placed on the site. The red and the brown regulations signs and the no vehicles sign are damaged. All signs should be collected into a kiosk.	
Directional	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	The only wayfinding sign directing visitors to the site is one sign at the intersection of Hebron Road and Glendale Road. Need more wayfinding signs along Hebron Road directing visitors to the site.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

With birds, beavers and wildlife habitat next to the site, there is opportunity to include a walking trail with interpretive signage. Opportunity exists for an ADA accessible fishing pier as well. Recommend adding a picnic table and several trash receptacles, provided that the trash will be serviced regularly. If trash will not be serviced, it should not be added as receptacles will overflow, and signs instructing users to pack out their trash should be placed instead.

Site Photos:



Photo 1-1: Entrance into parking lot



Photo 1-2: Boat Ramp





Photo 1-3: Parking along entrance into the site. There are currently five wheel stops; one more should be added. Possible trailhead access for interpretive trail.



Photo 1-4: Soft dirt edge along parking lot





Photo 1-5: Damaged Sign



Photo 1-6: Damaged Sign



Photo 1-7: Damaged Sign



**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 2: Byllesby VDGIF Fishing Site</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 11:15 am</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheet 2</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage (put in/take out) Water Access	1	no	N / <u>R</u> / M / G	Appears to be an informal fishing area. The riverbank to access the water is very steep – too steep to launch a canoe.
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	0		N / R / M / G	
Picnic Table	0		N / R / M / G	
Trash Receptacles	1	no	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Trash can is old and dented, but has a liner and is being serviced.
Bench	1		N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Old, rough hand-built wood bench without a back.
Fire ring with grill	1		N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Fire ring and grill are old and outdated.
Lantern hook	1		N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Lantern hook is old and has chipped, peeling paint.

PARKING	Total Spaces: <u>n/a</u> Standard: _____ ADA: _____ Double (trailer): _____ Other: _____ Parking served by Byllesby trailhead					Condition
	Surface Type: <u>Asphalt</u> Concrete Gravel Other: _____					N / R / M / G
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	A sign identifying the fishing site is needed.	
Regulations	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	A sign with fishing and general site use regulations should be posted on the site.	
Directional	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
 R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
 M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
 G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
 If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

The site is accessed by walking upriver on the NR Trail and is approximately half a mile from the Byllesby parking lot. There is no signage or maps at the trailhead informing users of the site's existence.  
 Note: The Fishing Trail was not part of the relicensing Recreation Study Plan, but was evaluated due to its proximity to other recreation sites and the potential to develop the site as a recreational amenity.



Site Photos:



Photo 2-1: Fishing site with fire ring/grill, bench and lantern hook.



Photo 2-2: Looking across the river to Byllesby boat launch.





Photo 2-3: Trash can across the trail from the fishing site. Can has a dent at the bottom.



Photo 2-4: Rough wood bench and lantern hook with chipping paint.





**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 3: Byllesby Canoe Portage</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 10:00 am</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheet 3</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage (put-in/ <del>take-out</del> )	1	no	N / <u>(R)</u> / M / G	Portage take-out site is poorly defined with limited amenities
<del>Portage Trail</del> /Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	1	no	N / <u>(R)</u> / M / G	The trail to the portage/river access is gravel and fades out with vegetation growing over it for the last section leading to the river. Trail is in poor condition and there is limited signage. Trail length from the river access gate to the portage is 775 ft. It is 460 ft from the parking lot to the river access gate.
Picnic Table	0		N / R / M / G	
Trash Receptacles	1	no	N / <u>(R)</u> / M / G	Trash can is old and has holes in it, but has a liner and is being serviced.
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	

PARKING	Total Spaces: 12 Standard: 12 ADA: 0 Double (trailer): 0 Other: _____					Condition
	Surface Type:	Asphalt	Concrete	Gravel	Other: Edges could be graveled. Bollards are aging but in decent condition.	N / R / (M) / G
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	1	24"x36"	wood / metal / other	N / R / (M) / G	FERC sign is at portage gate.	
Facility ID	3	18"x24" 12"x18"	wood metal / other	N / R / (M) / G	The free-standing red and white Byllesby Reservoir sign is very dirty and should be cleaned or replaced. At the portage gate is a sign for the hydroelectric plant. There is a facility I.D. sign on the water for boats as well.	
Regulations	3	18"x24" (3)	wood / metal / other	N / R / (M) / G		
Directional	5	12"x18" 18"x24" 24"x24" (2) 48"x48"	wood metal / other	N / R / (M) / G	The portage sign at the gate is very small and cracked/peeling and the dam ahead sign is faded. The portage directional sign along the trail and river is very small and attached to the bottom of a large post. Additional and larger directional/wayfinding signs are needed.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Other	2	30"x30" 18"x24"	wood / metal / other	(N) R / M / G	At the parking lot there is a wood kiosk containing a sign for New River Trail State Park and several small informational posts. There is a sign along the trail and river bank the reads "Danger – Dam Ahead." The sign is orientated toward the water to warn boats that they are approaching the dam. The sign is very faded and should be replaced.	

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.

There is nice wetland area along the river, making a good opportunity for a boardwalk with interpretive signage.

Site Photos:



Photo 3-1: Parking Lot and portage sign



Photo 3-2: Kiosk with New River Trail State Park sign and informational posts. The Byllesby Reservoir sign is very dirty.





Photo 3-3: Dirty sign



Photo 3-4: Trash can with holes and old wood post



Photo 3-5: Gate to canoe portage with FERC, regulatory, and directional signage.





Photo 3-6: Portage sign on gate is very small and cracking/peeling



Photo 3-7: Portage sign along trail and river is small, does not fit posts and needs replaced



Photo 3-8: Trail leading from gate toward the river and portage





Photo 3-9: Trail following the river leading to the portage



Photo 3-10: Looking back toward Byllesby Dam. The dam ahead warning sign is very faded and the trail has grass growing in the center.





Photo 3-11: Section of trail near the portage take-out is grown over with vegetation and needs to be resurfaced to provide sufficient walking surface and to clarify trail route.



Photo 3-12: Canoe portage/river access and sign for the portage path. Portage take-out has no supporting infrastructure and the site is poorly maintained.





**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 4: New River Canoe Launch</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 2:30 pm</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheet 4</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage (put-in/take-out)	1	no	N / R / (M) / G	Portage is a relatively flat, sandy area. Water is shallow. Put-in has no improvements.
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	1	no	N / R / M / (G)	Short gravel road leads from the parking area down the hill to the portage. It is 125 ft. from the gate at the dam maintenance road. It is 1,175 ft from the portage take-out gate to the portage put-in gate.
Picnic Table	0		N / R / M / G	
Trash Receptacles	0		N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	

PARKING	Total Spaces: 10   Standard: 10   ADA: 0   Double (trailer): 0   Other: No marked parking spaces					Condition
	<u>Surface Type:</u> Asphalt      Concrete      Gravel      Other: There is a flat area adjoining the parking area along the road that could potentially be surfaced and used for additional parking.					N / R / (M) / G
-						
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	1	24"x48"	wood / metal / other	N / R / M / (G)	Portage sign at the parking area with arrow pointing down the gravel road to the portage. (also serves as a directional sign to the portage)	
Regulations	2	10"x12" (2)	wood / metal / other	N / R / M / (G)	No Fishing and No Trespassing signs nailed to tree.	
Directional	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	The portage sign at the parking lot has an arrow pointing down the gravel road to the portage.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

Portage put-in is informal, but functional. Proximity of parking to the put-in and arrangement of put-in site makes this portage site comfortable to use.



Site Photos:



Photo 4-1: Parking lot and portage sign



Photo 4-2: Flat area adjacent to road and parking lot that could potentially be graveled and used for additional parking





Photo 4-3: Canoe portage put-in and maintenance road accessing it from the parking area



Photo 4-4: Canoe portage put-in





**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



Location: Site 5: New River Trail Picnic Area	
Date: 11/13/2019, 2:00 pm	Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland
Photo Number(s):	Map Sheet 5

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage (put-in/take-out)	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	1	no	N / (R) / M / G	Narrow dirt path leads from the road down to the picnic area. The path should be widened and surfaced to make it more defined and walkable. Ideally reroute the path so it is ADA accessible.
Picnic Table	2	1	N / R / (M) / G	The upper picnic table is under a small shelter. The shelter is in good condition; the table is ADA accessible and has chipped paint on the metal legs but is otherwise fine. The lower table has some wear but is still usable.
Trash Receptacles	1		N / (R) / M / G	Old metal trash can in good condition except for several holes in the side. Has a liner and is being serviced.
Bike Rack	1		N / R / M / (G)	Parks four bikes and recently painted.
Hitching Rail	1		N / R / M / (G)	Recently painted
Benches	3		N / R / (M) / G	One bench has a missing slat
Lantern Hooks	2		N / R / (M) / G	Old with chipping paint, but usable
Fire ring with grill	2		N / R / M / (G)	
BBQ Grill	1		(N) / R / M / G	Grill bottom is rusted out. Grill is unusable and needs to be replaced.

PARKING	Total Spaces: 0 Standard: 0 ADA: 0 Double (trailer): 0 Other: Can park two cars in informal pull-off along road					Condition
	Surface Type:	Asphalt	Concrete	Gravel	Other:	N / R / M / G
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	A sign should be placed along the road at the pull-off area identifying the picnic area below.	
Regulations	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	A sign with fishing regulations and general site use rules should be posted within the picnic site.	
Directional	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	The picnic area I.D. sign should point to the path the leads down to the picnic area.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Other	3	6"x6" 3"x4" 8"x10"	wood / (metal) (other)	N / R / M / (G)	There is an emergency contact sign and a dedication plaque attached to the picnic shelter post and a bear warning sign on the picnic table under the shelter.	

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

Lower picnic area has cleared bank for fishing access and a shallow slope with shallow water. Could possibly be used for wading.  
There is a bird nesting box near the riverbank at the edge of the lower picnic area.



Site Photos:



Photo 5-1: Informal parking pull-off and path leading down to picnic area



Photo 5-2: Picnic shelter, bike rack and hitching rail





Photo 5-3: Path from picnic shelter down to lower picnic area and river



Photo 5-4: Lower picnic area





Photo 5-5: Benches, fire rings and lantern hooks along the riverbank.



Photo 5-6: BBQ grill with rusted out bottom



Photo 5-7: Trash can with holes in the side



Photo 5-8: Bird nesting box





Photo 5-9: Bench with missing slat



Photo 5-10: Steep path leading from picnic area back up to road





**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 6: Buck Dam Picnic Area</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 1:15 pm</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheet 6</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Boat Launch Ramp/Lane	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage (put-in/take-out)	0		N / R / M / G	
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	1	yes	N / R / M / <u>G</u>	New River Trail State Park leads from the parking area to the porta toilet and picnic shelter. Distance is 650 ft and the surface is crushed stone.
Picnic Table	1	no	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Picnic table under a small shelter. The shelter is in good condition. The table is old but usable.
Trash Receptacles	1		N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Old metal trash can with minor dents in the side and chipped/faded paint on the lid. Has a liner and is being serviced.
Porta Potty	1	yes	N / R / <u>M</u> / <u>G</u>	Located along the gravel road by the picnic shelter. Has a screening panel.
Hitching Rail	1		N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Has faded paint and a chipped post, but is usable.
Bike Rack	1		N / R / M / G	Old rack with chipped paint, but it usable. Parks four bikes.

PARKING	Total Spaces: 5 Standard: 5 ADA: 0 Double (trailer): 0 Other:					Condition
	Surface Type: Asphalt Concrete <u>Gravel</u> Other:					N / R / <u>M</u> / G
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	1	18"x24"	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / R / M / <u>G</u>	Sign identifies the Byllesby/Buck Hydroelectric Plant but not the picnic area. There should be a sign at the parking lot identifying and directing visitors to the picnic area and another identification sign at the picnic area as well.	
Regulations	5	24"x24" 18"x24" (2) 12"x18" (2)	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	<u>N</u> <u>R</u> / M / <u>G</u>	The no trespassing sign is very faded and unreadable. The "do not block gate" sign is faded and chipped and the "park at your own risk" sign has small dents. All other signs are in good condition.	
Directional	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	A sign at the parking area is needed directing visitors to the picnic area down the trail and stating how far it is.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G	Interpretive signage could be added for the dam, river, and the metal machinery piece.	
Other	4	30"x30" 12"x18" 10"x8" 6"x6"	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / R / M / <u>G</u>	Kiosk at parking area with a sign for New River Trail State Park, a bear warning sign, and several informational posts. There is a bear warning sign on the picnic table and an emergency contact sign and dedication plaque on the picnic shelter.	

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

Site Photos:



Photo 6-1: Parking lot at the dam



Photo 6-2: Dam gate with regulatory signs





Photo 6-3: Kiosk at parking area displays New River Trail State Park map and posted regulations



Photo 6-4: Old piece of machinery





Photo 6-5: Trash can at parking lot with dents and faded lid



Photo 6-6: Faded regulations sign



Photo 6-7: New River Trail State Park leading from parking area to picnic shelter





Photo 6-8: Picnic shelter with bike rack and hitching post



Photo 6-9: Portable toilet near picnic shelter



Photo 6-10: Hitching rail with chipped post and faded paint





**RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT**  
**Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514)**



<b>Location: Site 7: Buck Canoe Portage</b>	
<b>Date: 11/13/2019, 11:45 am</b>	<b>Surveyor: Tristan Cleveland</b>
<b>Photo Number(s):</b>	<b>Map Sheets 7, 8, 9</b>

Type of Amenity	#	ADA	Condition	Notes
Upper Portage (take out)	1	no	N / R / M <u>G</u>	Takeout has been improved recently with new sign, graded access, and aggregate surfacing.
Lower Portage (put-in)	1	no	N / <u>R</u> / M / G	Steep and rocky with limited access, water is deep.
Portage Trail/Walking Trail (include length and footing materials)	1	no	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	The portage route between the take-out and put-in sites is via an asphalt maintenance road, gravel access road, and an informal gravel walking trail. The road surface is approximately 10 ft wide. The route on asphalt is 820 ft, the route on the gravel road is 570 ft, and the walking trail is 50'. The total portage route is 1,440 ft. (0.27 miles). The gravel surface is rough and uneven, and the walking trail has not been graded or surfaced.
Picnic Table	0		N / R / M / G	
Trash Receptacles	1		N / <u>R</u> / M / G	Trash can at the lower portage put in is an old rusted 55-gallon drum tied to a tree. There is a lid but no liner. Trash can is used; unsure if it is being serviced.
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	
Other			N / R / M / G	

PARKING	Total Spaces: 0 Standard: 0 ADA: 0 Double (trailer): 0 Other: Public vehicular access is not available at this portage.					Condition
	Surface Type:	Asphalt	Concrete	Gravel	Other:	N / R / M / G
Signs	#	Size	Material	Condition	Comments	
FERC Project	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Facility ID	1	24"x48"	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	Sign at the upper portage has some minor dents but is otherwise in good condition. There needs to be a sign identifying the lower portage put-in point.	
Regulations	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Directional	3	20"x20" 48"x48" (2)	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	20"x20" portage 500 ft sign has peeling lettering and the length is wrong (620 ft, not 500 ft). There is a 48"x48" sign just past the powerhouse directing users to the lower portage path and another 48"x48" sign across the river that says "Portage left bank" directing boats to the portage downriver.	
Interpretive	0		wood / metal / other	N / R / M / G		
Other	1	18"x24"	wood / <u>metal</u> / other	N / R / <u>M</u> / G	There is an ID sign on the gate at the powerhouse for Byllesby/Buck Hydroelectric Plant. The sign is in good condition except the emergency phone number is faded/covered up and unreadable.	

N - Needs replacement (broken or missing components, or non-functional)  
R - Needs repair (structural damage or otherwise in obvious disrepair)  
M - Needs maintenance (ongoing maintenance issue, primarily cleaning)  
G - Good condition (functional and well-maintained)  
If a facility is given a rating of "N", "R", or "M", provide specific details.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/NOTES:** *Note the age of the facilities (if known) as well as any signs of overuse.*

Portage is open to the public by water access only. No public parking is available, which limits the usability of the facility. Note that water elevation was low during site visit.

Site Photos:



Photo 7-1: Upper canoe portage take-out. Note that water elevation was low when picture was taken, so the put-out length is not usually this long.



Photo 7-2: Upper canoe portage take-out/water access





Photo 7-3: Sign at upper portage take-out has minor dents



Photo 7-4: Directional sign for lower portage has peeling letters and advertises incorrect distance



Photo 7-5: Non-readable phone number





Photo 7-6: Gravel road/trail leading to the lower portage put-in



Photo 7-7: Arriving at the lower portage area





Photo 7-8: Lower portage put-in, facing upstream



Photo 7-9: Water access at put-in location facing downstream. Note the steep access, deep water, and narrow land strip.



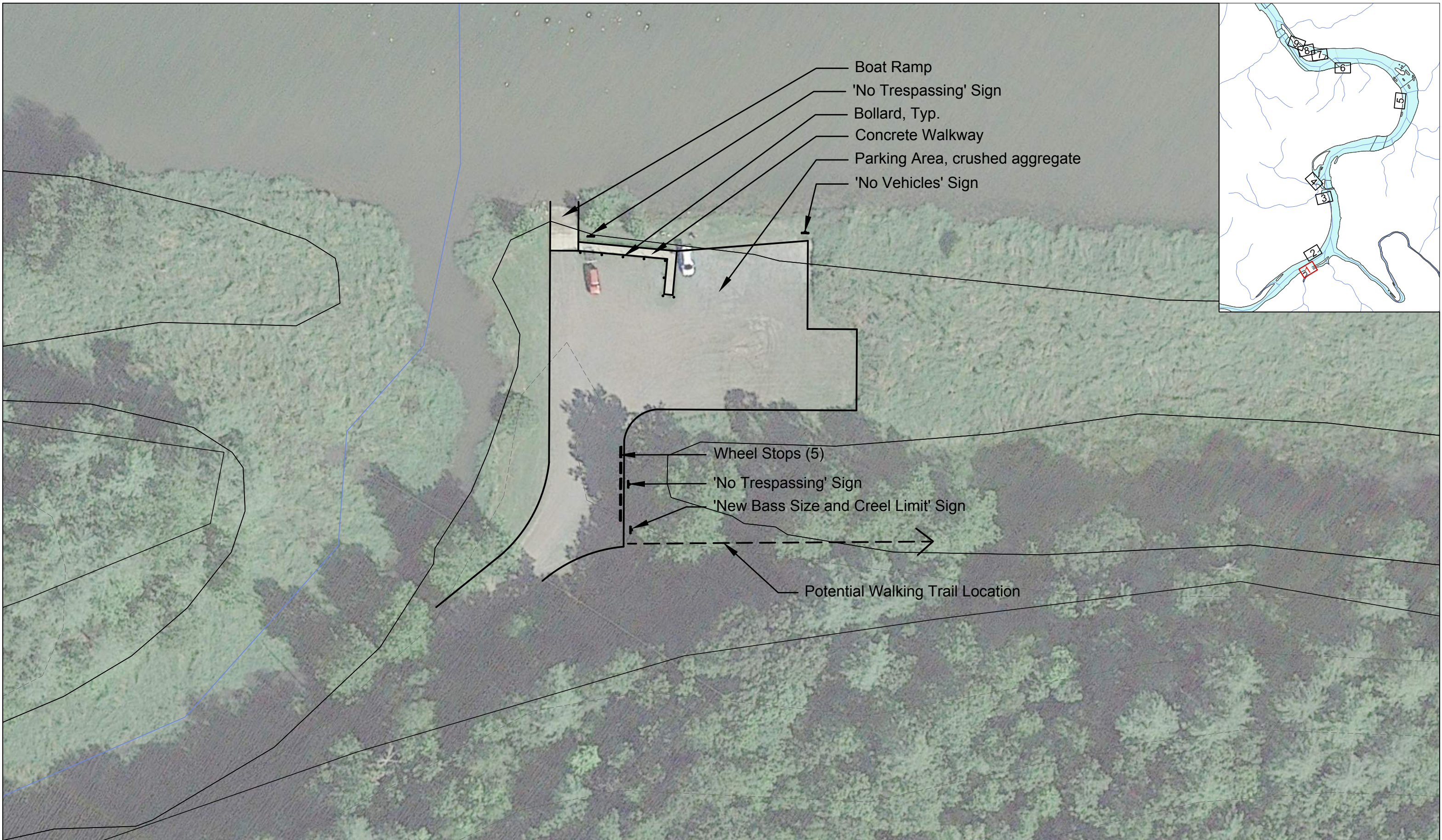


Photo 7-10: Trash can at lower portage (put-in).

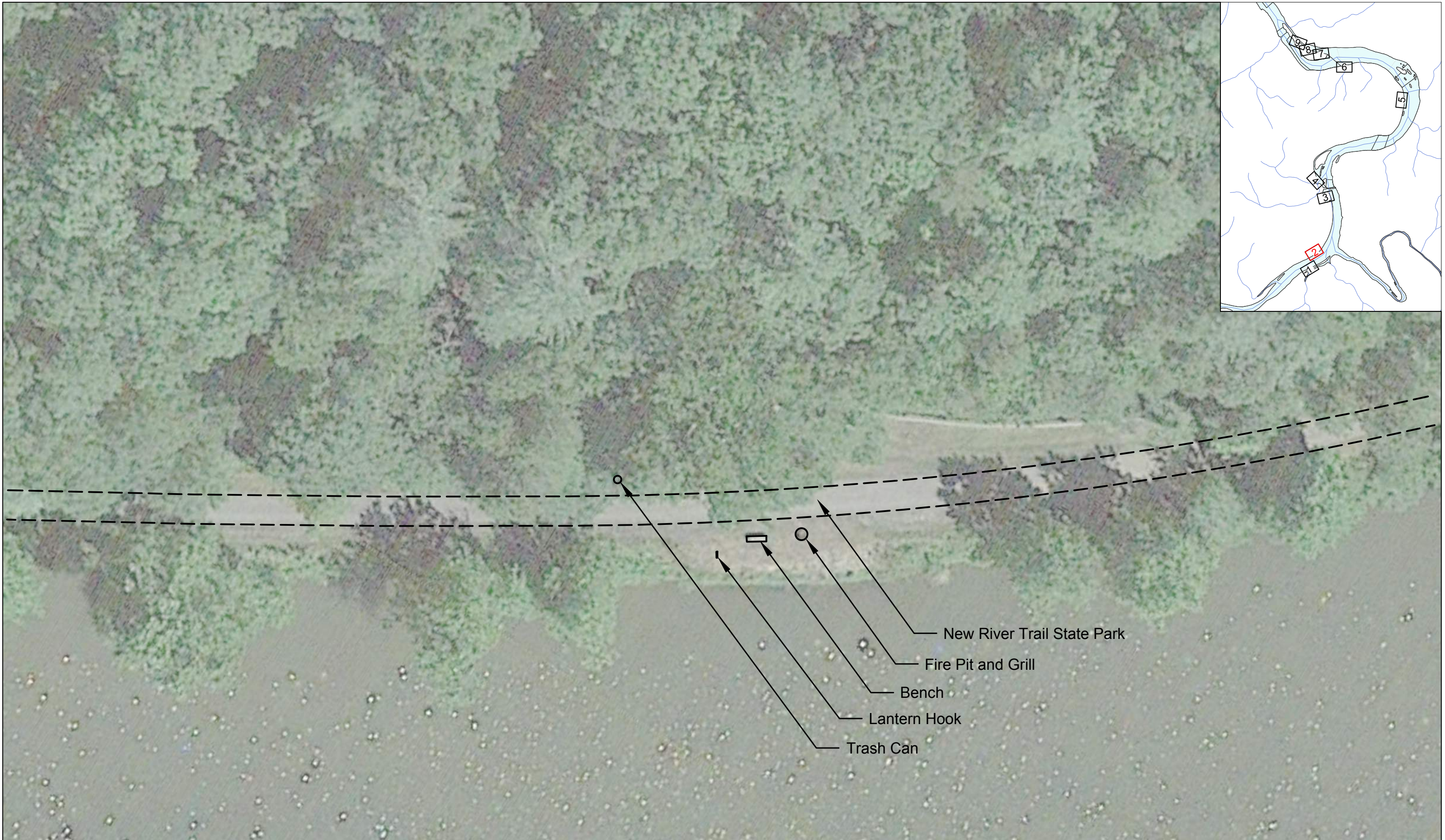


Photo 7-11: Directional sign to portage across the river from the road and portages





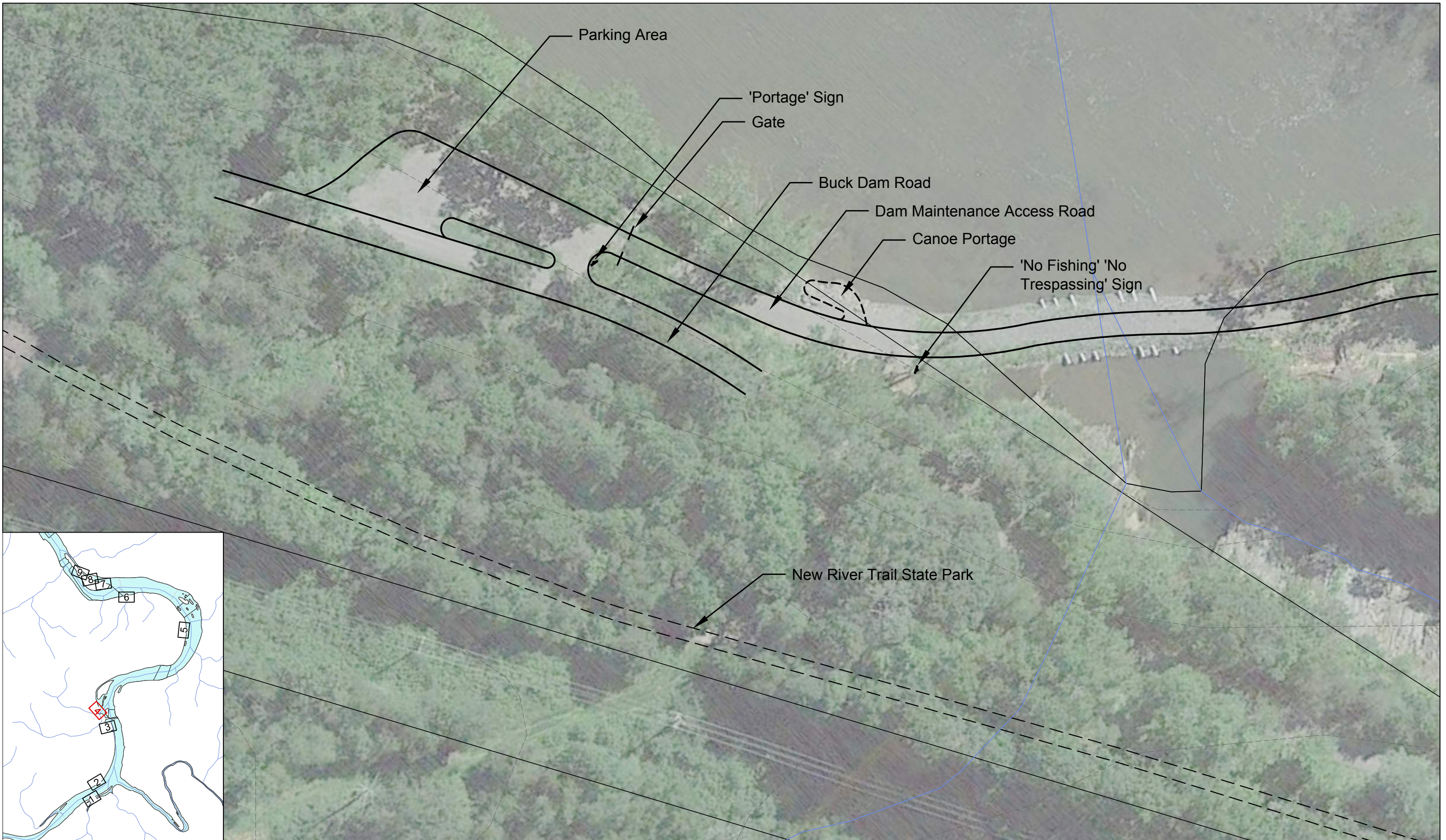




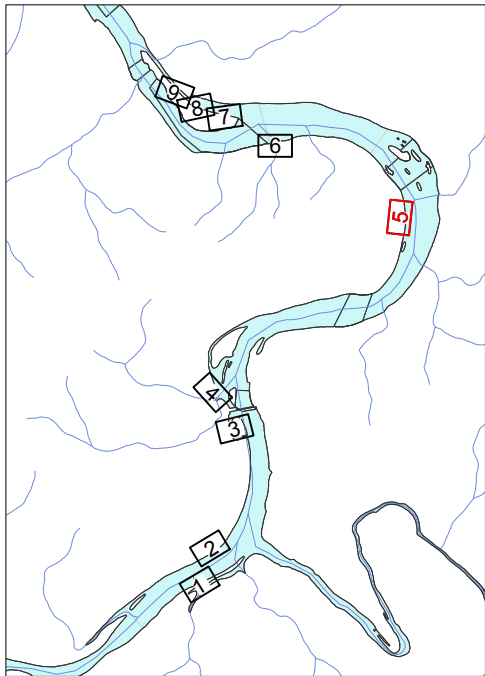




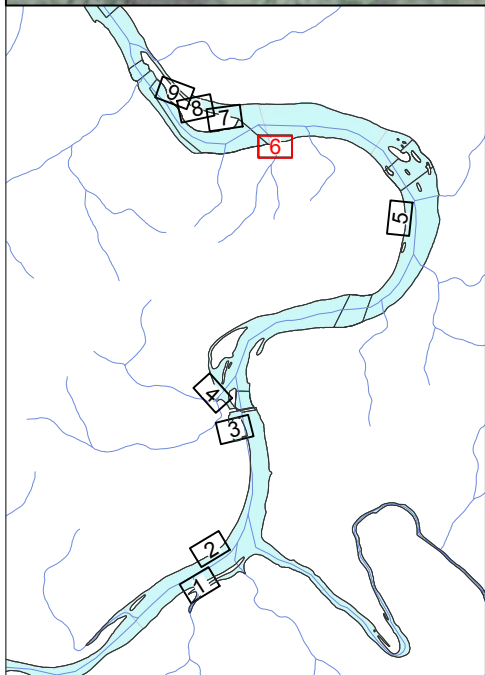
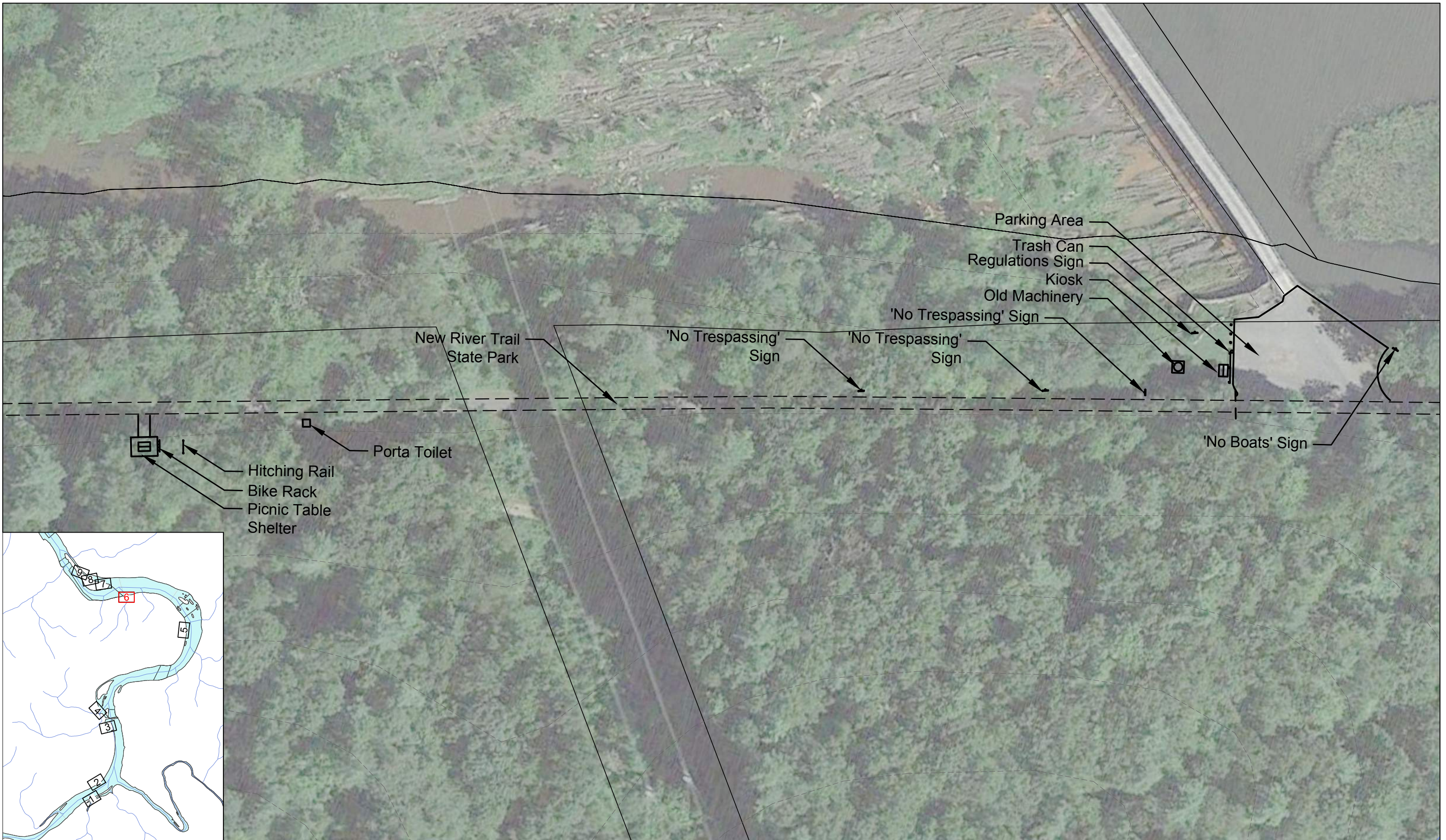




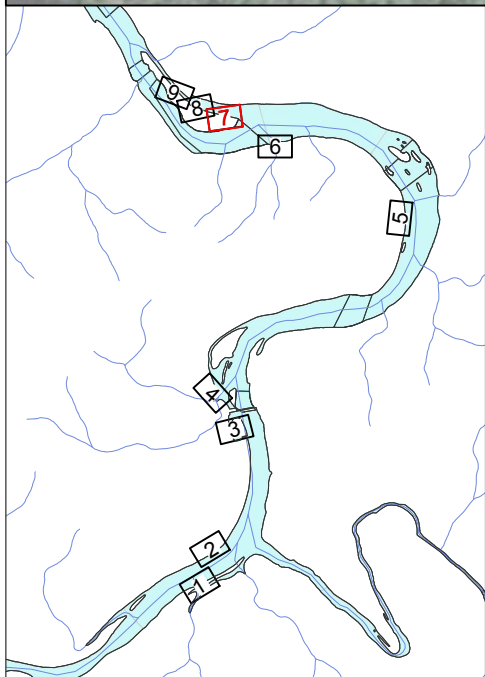




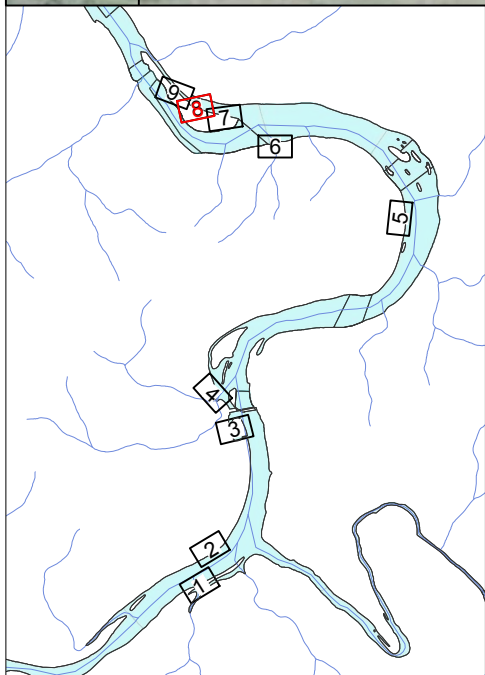
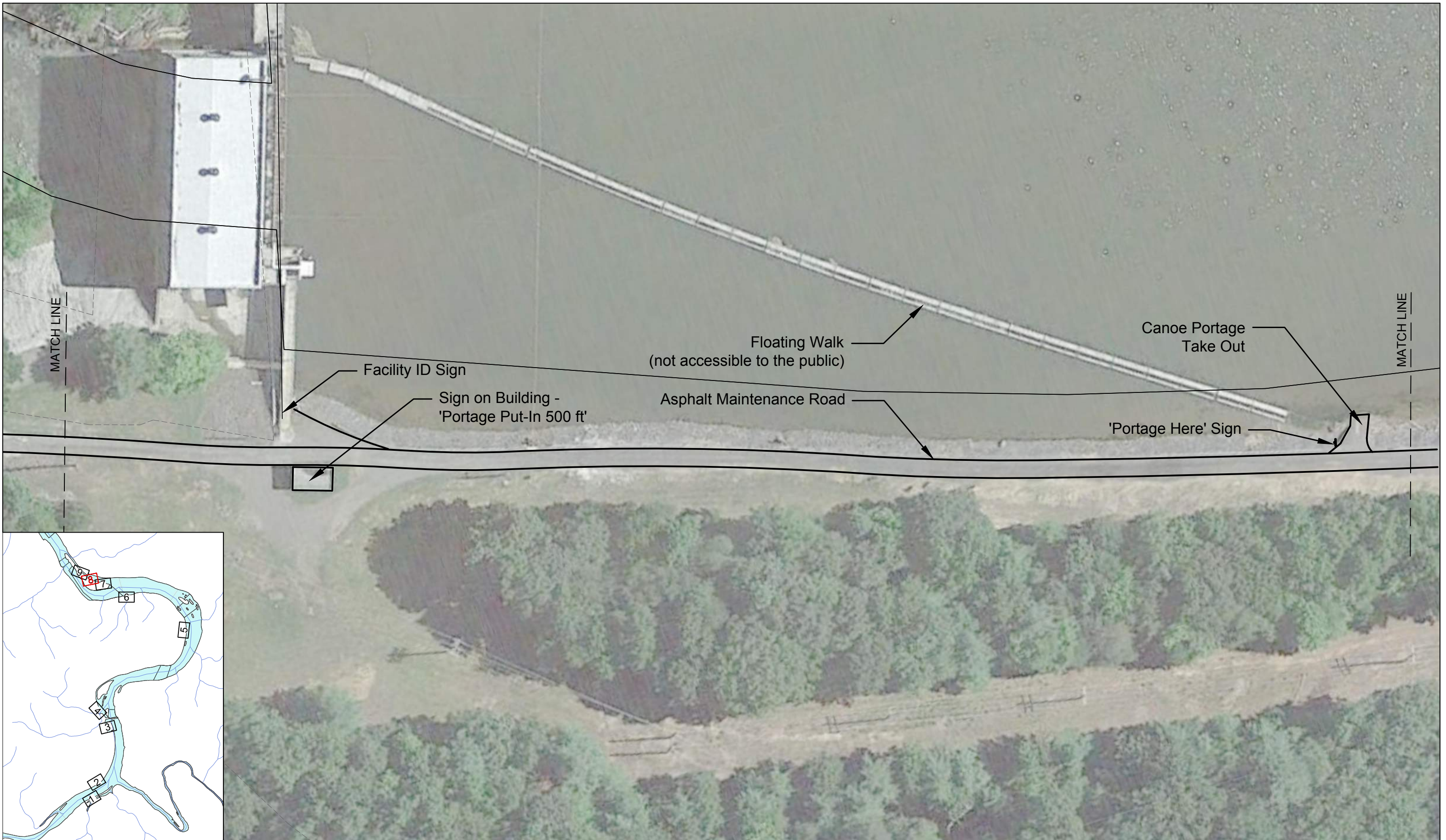


















A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping rectangles. A large red rectangle is on the left. A grey rectangle is at the top right. A light grey rectangle is at the bottom left. A black rectangle is at the bottom right. The text is positioned to the right of the red rectangle.

# Attachment 2

Attachment 2 – Stakeholder  
Recreation Meeting Notes

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**Subject:** FW: AEP Byllesby-Buck Relicensing: Recreation Study Update and Planning for Facilities Site Visit

**From:** Elizabeth B Parcell <ebparcell@aep.com>

**Sent:** Friday, October 2, 2020 2:51 PM

**To:** joseph.grist@deq.virginia.gov; sharon.ewing@dc.virginia.gov; claytorlakegirl@gmail.com; janet\_norman@fws.gov; rex.hill@carrollcountyva.gov; james.elliott@dc.virginia.gov; Bill.Kittrell@dgif.virginia.gov; John.Copeland@dgif.virginia.gov; SAM.SWEENEY@DCR.VIRGINIA.GOV

**Cc:** Jonathan M Magalski <jmmagalski@aep.com>; Yayac, Maggie <Maggie.Yayac@hdrinc.com>; Kulpa, Sarah <Sarah.Kulpa@hdrinc.com>

**Subject:** AEP Byllesby-Buck Relicensing: Recreation Study Update and Planning for Facilities Site Visit

**CAUTION: [EXTERNAL]** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Happy October!

As you may recall from this past spring, the recreational site visit planned under the Byllesby-Buck Project's Revised Study Plan had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Appalachian Power Company would still like to convene a 2020 site visit with interested relicensing participants to discuss existing and potential recreation facilities and enhancements at the Project.

Prior to meeting at the site, we would like to convene a conference call (Webex) with this group. We can use the call to coordinate logistics and safety planning for the site visit, and we will also plan to provide a Recreation Study update, including preliminary trail camera and online survey results. We are looking to block out 2 hours on folks' calendars for this meeting. Please let me know if you have availability at 9-11 a.m. or 2-4 p.m. **Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>** for this call; if this day doesn't work for most we'll find an alternative time.

The site visit will allow time to visit each recreation facility. We propose to begin the day at the VDGIF Boat Launch on river-right at 9 a.m. We will continue to the Byllesby dam and work our way towards the Buck dam to view all six recreation facilities. We are presently targeting **Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>** to complete the site visit, weather permitting. Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are interested in/available to participate or have any questions, or if you would like to suggest additional potential participants.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns, and thanks in advance for your participation in this process.

Liz



**ELIZABETH B PARCELL | PROCESS SUPV**  
[EBPARCELL@AEP.COM](mailto:EBPARCELL@AEP.COM) | D:540.985.2441 | C:540.529.4191  
40 FRANKLIN ROAD SW, ROANOKE, VA 24011

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**Subject:** FW: Byllesby-Buck Recreation Study Update - Meeting Notes and Presentation  
**Attachments:** AEP Byllesby-Buck Recreation Stakeholder Virtual Mtg\_10212020.docx; AEP Recreation Stakeholder Presentation.pdf

**From:** Yayac, Maggie

**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2020 12:35 PM

**To:** ben.boyette@dwr.virginia.gov; Kittrell, Bill (DGIF <bill.kittrell@dwr.virginia.gov>; Hampton, Tom (DGIF <tom.hampton@dwr.virginia.gov>; John Copeland <john.copeland@dwr.virginia.gov>; sam.sweeney@dcr.virginia.gov; joseph.grist@deq.virginia.gov; claytorlakegirl@gmail.com; janet\_norman@fws.gov; rex.hill@carrollcountyyva.gov; james.elliott@dcr.virginia.gov

**Cc:** David Keene <david.keene@dwr.virginia.gov>; sharon.ewing@dcr.virginia.gov; Kulpa, Sarah <sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com>; Elizabeth B Parcell <ebparcell@aep.com>; Jonathan M Magalski <jmmagalski@aep.com>; Tristan Cleveland <tristan@lpda.net>

**Subject:** Byllesby-Buck Recreation Study Update - Meeting Notes and Presentation

Good afternoon,

Thank you to those of you who joined us on the conference call on Wednesday. Attached are the meeting notes from the call, please let us know if you have any comments. Additionally, the presentation is included as an attachment for those of you who were unable to make it.

We look forward to seeing some of you next Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup> for the site visit. If you have not RSVP'd to the meeting invitation please do so at your earliest convenience.

Have a great weekend!

**Maggie Yayac**  
*Regulatory Specialist*

**HDR**  
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D 704.248.3666 M 610.299.0959  
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# Meeting Summary

Project: Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514) - Relicensing

Subject: Byllesby-Buck Recreation Study Update and Site Visit Planning

Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Location: WebEx

Attendees:	Laura Walters (New River Conservancy)	Jon Magalski (AEP)
	Janet Norman (USFWS)	Liz Parcell (AEP)
	Bill Kittrell (VDWR)	Tristan Cleveland (LPDA)
	Ben Boyette (VDWR)	Sarah Kulpa (HDR)
	Tom Hampton (VDWR)	Maggie Yayac (HDR)
	John Copeland (VDWR)	
	Sam Sweeney (New River Trail State Park)	
	Joe Grist (VDEQ)	

- **Introductions/welcome/meeting purpose**
- **Recreation Study Plan** – Maggie (HDR) provided overview of the Recreation Study Plan as described in the Revised Study Plan (Tasks 1 through 4).

Throughout the meeting general questions about the Recreation Study methods were discussed and are summarized below:

- **Quantifying recreational use:** Discussion of the relationship between number of respondents and number of users. Appalachian/HDR are unable to develop any statistical relationship to compare to similar comparable studies, but there does appear to be a relationship and themes that have emerged (i.e., Byllesby Boat Ramp had highest number of visitors and survey respondents).
- **Online Survey:** The Online Survey was advertised primarily via signage at the Project recreation facilities (QR Code not included; only full link). This is a potential limitation of this study, though Appalachian/HDR expect that sufficient input was captured from motivated visitors and visitors who frequent the area. Demographic information about survey respondents (age and gender) was collected in the Online Survey and will include additional information in the study report.
- **Trail cameras:** Trail cameras provide better information than the online survey about the number of users during representative periods. The number of photos is related to the how often a site is visited, but not a direct indication of how many people visited (because multiple images may be captured of the same user or other motions can activate the camera). The intent of the study was not to inventory and count recreation users over a continuous period, but rather to characterize usage levels, identify recreation patterns, and develop estimates for representative periods. Maggie (HDR) explained that the trail cameras are motion activated and set to record a next motion after 5 minutes (default setting). The cameras are

not recording every 5 minutes if no motion is detected. Data was from trail cameras collected from November 2019 through present, unless otherwise noted as there are minor data gaps at specific locations due to issues with individual trail cameras. The methodology, data gaps, and results will be presented in the study report.

- **Review of Recreation Facilities** – Maggie (HDR) provided an overview of the Recreation Study Area and the formal recreation facilities it encompasses. Sarah (HDR) noted the Study Area encompasses the full reach of the river between Byllesby and Buck Dams, although the FERC Project boundary does not encompass the entire contiguous area. Additional informal facilities, as well as facilities associated with the New River Trail State Park, may occur in or near the FERC Project boundary.

John Copeland (VDWR) raised question about Loafer's Rest area and noted that it may not be encompassed by the online survey. Land on the right bank of the Buck tailrace is leased by VDWR from Appalachian Power Company (lease extends through 2023). VDWR noted that in the past many anglers did access the Buck tailrace, but security and public safety concerns now prohibit and discourage access in that area. There is a no trespassing sign currently posted and this likely discourages tailrace fishing. Maggie (HDR) explained this was consistent with the results of the trail camera data facing the Buck tailrace, as there were only two instances of recreational activity at this location. No trail cameras or other monitoring have focused on Loafer's Rest (downstream of Buck tailrace), but this site can be added to the facility inventory and discussed during the site visit as requested.

- **Overview of Preliminary Study Results by Location** – Maggie (HDR) and Tristan (LPDA) reviewed results and findings of the Recreation Study tasks (Recreation Facilities Inventory and Condition Assessment, Online Survey, Trail Camera Monitoring) to date, for each facility. Refer to attached PowerPoint presentation for additional information and details.

- **Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch** – Based on the online survey and trail camera monitoring, this site receives high volume of use relative to the other facilities, primarily from local residents/regional visitors. Individuals who completed the survey provided generally favorable feedback about this facility.

Boating appears to be dominant use from trail camera, while online survey respondents indicated fishing as the primary activity. Bill (VDWR) noted that he expect the primary use is fishing, and boating is the means of doing so.

- **Byllesby Canoe Portage** - This site was anomalous in that only one online survey response was received. Trail camera monitoring indicates that portage of canoe/kayak is not common, though the parking area is busy and provides access to the New River Trail, particularly for biking.
- Janet (USFWS) asked whether trashed fishing lines are a concern at any of the sites and whether there is a need to consider signage and disposal facilities. Janet noted USFWS has good signage to encourage responsible disposal, if helpful.
- **New River Canoe Launch** - Visitors to this site are primarily from local area and considered themselves regular visitors. Fishing and canoeing/kayaking were



reported as the primary activities in the online survey, which the trail camera data confirmed, however fishing was more likely to be observed than use of the portage.

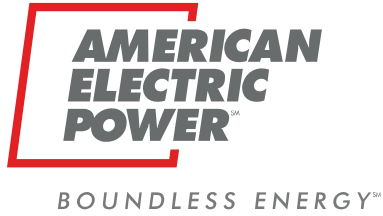
- **New River Trail Picnic Area** – Recreation site has two parts, an upper and lower, so there are two trail cameras at this location. The upper is consistently used for biking and picnicking and the lower for fishing.
  - Ben (VDWR) noted he was surprised only one camera was stolen and explained the cameras generated a lot of curiosity and questions from the public.
  - Ben (VDWR) asked whether any formal or informal usage monitoring had been focused on the area on the opposite bank of the river and Maggie (HDR) confirmed none to date. Sam Sweeney (New River Trail State Park) noted that the area Ben mentioned is relatively popular for fishing and camping. Group discussed that this area does attract a different user base than the other recreation facilities and they see a higher percentage of illegal activities. This area (Laurel/Woodlawn) is informally referred to as Fowlers Ferry, and Fowlers Ferry Road provides access.
  - **Buck Dam Picnic Area (off the Buck bypass)** - VDWR noted surprised that online survey respondents indicated canoeing/kayaking and fishing as primary activities since banks are steep and access is limited. Maggie agreed as there are no formal canoeing/kayaking or fishing recreational access points at this recreational facility. It was assumed respondents may have been visitors to the broader Project area/downstream of recreation site.
  - **Buck Dam Canoe Portages** – Online survey responses were higher than expected for an area that is only accessed by canoe/kayak. This area had a higher percent of respondents who were not satisfied with the recreational facilities, likely attributed to a high interest in fishing but no formal angling facilities on Mountain Island. Trail camera observations and recreational use were low.
  - **Buck Dam Fishing Access (informal)** – A trail camera was added to this informal recreation spot as a result of agency request/interest in the area for fishing in the tailrace. A time-lapse video was used instead of motion-activated at this site only. Only two instances of bank fishing in this area were recorded.
- Ben (VDWR) noted this area has a high degree of interest by the public. Bill (VDWR) noted that primary access is at the end of the island and anglers are crossing from the other side of the island via wading or canoe/kayak or users access the area downstream of Buck and travel up in boat/canoe/kayak. If the camera had been pointed downriver, additional activity may have been captured. Safety is a concern to AEP in this area (high flows as units come on, access across bypass reach, deep water, and steep banks).
- **Site Visit Planning for Wednesday October 28<sup>th</sup>** – Maggie (HDR) reviewed plan and agenda for Wednesday's site visit, including meeting time by 9:30 a.m. at VDWR Bylesby Boat Ramp. If practical and individuals are comfortable doing so, it may be necessary to consolidate cars at points along the way due to limited parking on the New River Trail side.

Based on VDWR's suggestion and discussion by this group, we will plan to visit (drive by/hop out of vehicles to view site/take photos) the Fowlers Ferry area after the Byllesby Boat Ramp.

#### Action Items

Owner	Action Item	Target Date
HDR/AEP	Send copy (pdf) of the PowerPoint presentation to the group on this call or post to public relicensing website, in advance of the site visit.	10/26/2020
VDWR	Ben to send photographs of Fowlers Ferry area to (Maggie) for distribution to this group	10/26/2020
HDR	Send confirmation email day before site visit confirming site visit is a go (or providing alternative plan if bad weather is forecasted)	10/27/2020
All	Accept/decline meeting invite for next Wednesday 10/28 to provide HDR and AEP with an expected participant list and headcount	10/27/2020
HDR	Provide participants with summary of online survey respondents' comments on specific areas, during site visit	10/28/2020
HDR/AEP	Send reminder with link to Online Survey and notice of survey period close/deadline approaching to group on this call to share on Social Media or other outlets (and AEP post to Claytor Lake social media).	10/23/2020





# Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project Relicensing

## Recreation Study

Virtual Check-In: October 21, 2020

Site Visit: October 28, 2020



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# Project Overview

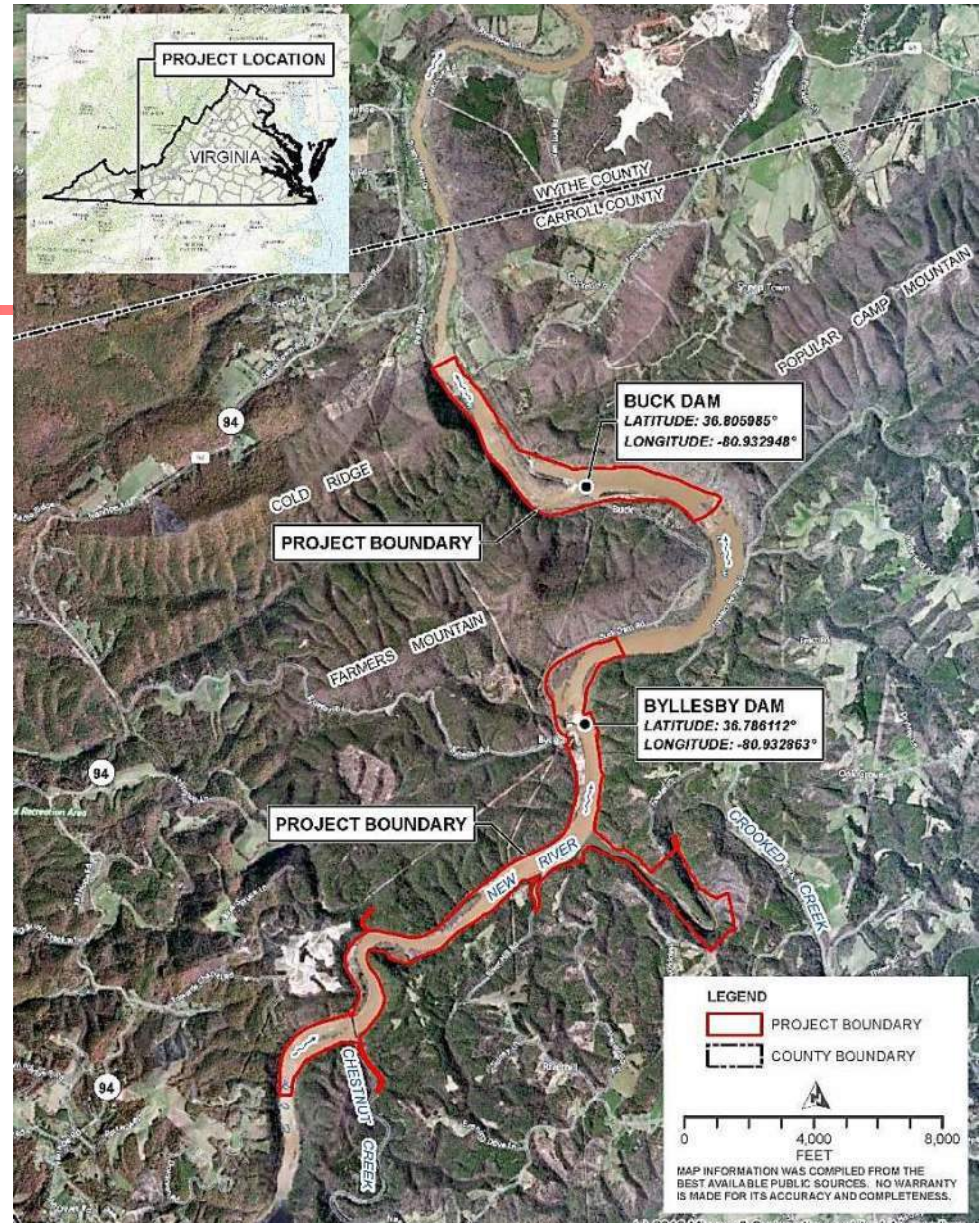
- Licensee is Appalachian, a unit of American Electric Power (AEP).
- The Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514) is a 30.1-MW, two-development Project on the upper New River in Carroll County, Virginia.
- Project constructed in 1912.
- Current FERC license expires February 29, 2024.
- Upcoming dates:
  - Appalachian to file Initial Study Report (ISR) on January 18, 2021
  - ISR Meeting by February 2, 2021





# Project Location

- The Byllesby dam is approximately 8 river miles downstream of the Fries dam.
- The Buck dam is approximately 3 river miles downstream of Byllesby and 43.5 river miles upstream of Claytor dam.



# Agenda

- Recreation Study Plan
- Review of Recreation Facilities
- Review Recreation Inventory, Online Survey, Trail Camera Results for the following:
  - Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch
  - Byllesby Canoe Portage
  - New River Canoe Launch
  - New River Trail Picnic Area
  - Buck Dam Picnic Area
  - Buck Dam Canoe Portages
  - Buck Dam Fishing Access (informal)
- Site Visit Planning for Wednesday October 28<sup>th</sup>



# Recreation Study Plan: Goals and Objectives

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- **Study Goal:** Determine the need for enhancement to existing recreation facilities, or additional recreational facilities, to support the current and future demand for public recreation in the Project area.
- **Specific Objectives:**
  - Gather information on the condition of six Project-related public recreation facilities and identify any need for improvement
  - Characterize current recreational use of the study area and estimate future demand
  - Solicit comments from stakeholders regarding potential enhancement opportunities
  - Analyze effects of continued Project operation on recreation facilities

# Formal Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Owner / Operator	Amenities	Relationship to Project Boundary
<b>Byllesby Development</b>			
Byllesby VDGIF Boat Launch	Leased and Operated VDGIF	Provides single-lane boat concrete boat launch with gravel parking area.	Within
Byllesby Canoe Portage	Owned and operated by Appalachian	Provides approximate 1,500-foot portage trail. Site consists of a hand-carry canoe take-out and an information trailhead kiosk for the New River Trail State Park.	Within
New River Canoe Launch	Owned and operated by VDCR	Provides small, gravel parking area with short trail leading to a hand-carry boat launch (also serves as put-in for the Byllesby Canoe Portage).	Adjacent to
<b>Buck Development</b>			
Buck Dam Picnic Area	Owned and operated by VDCR	Provides gravel parking for vehicles, information kiosk, and access to New River Trail. Also provides a picnic area with picnic table, trash can, portable restroom facility, and a hitching post for equestrian trail users.	Adjacent to
New River Trail Picnic Area	Owned and operated by VDCR	Provides upper and lower recreation areas that include benches, picnic tables, bike rack, trash can, grill, and informal angling access to the Buck reservoir.	Adjacent to
Buck Dam Canoe Portage	Owned and operated by Appalachian	Provides crushed stone hand-carry take out and a hand-carry put in.	Within





# Recreation Study: Task 1

Task 1	
Recreation Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment	Field inventory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation site type and location</li><li>• Length and type of trails</li><li>• Existing facilities, signage, and sanitation</li><li>• Type of vehicular access and parking (if any)</li><li>• Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act standards</li><li>• Photographic documentation</li></ul>
	Qualitative condition assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each recreation facility will be rated with condition criteria, and explanations provided</li></ul>

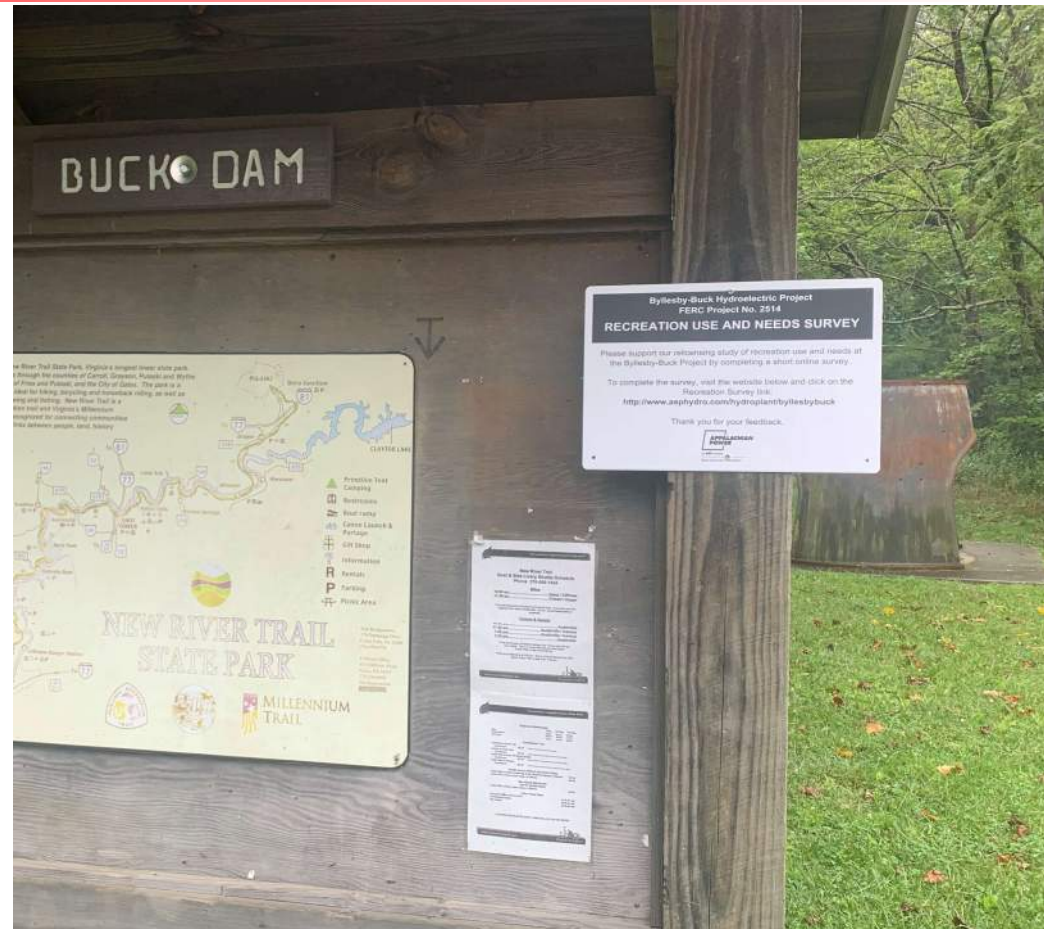


# Recreation Study: Task 2 and 3

Task 2	
Site Visit with Stakeholders to Discuss Existing and Future Recreational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appalachian and primary stakeholders will visit the existing Project-related recreation facilities</li><li>• Discuss potential conceptual-level enhancement and improvements</li></ul>
Task 3	
Recreation Visitor Use Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide online survey information to stakeholders as well as recreationists who do not frequent the Project regularly</li></ul>

# Online Survey

- Online survey notice posted at recreation facilities
- 73 visitors completed the survey, as of October 12, 2020
- Boating and bank fishing have been documented as the primary activities
- Survey live from April – October 2020





# Recreation Study: Task 4

Task 4	
Recreational Use Documentation	<i>Trail camera installation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eight cameras placed at the six Project-related public recreation facilities</li><li>• November 2019 – November 2020</li><li>• Motion activated, date and time stamped</li></ul>

# Recreation Study: Analysis and Reporting

An analysis of the current and future recreational facilities  
usage and needs

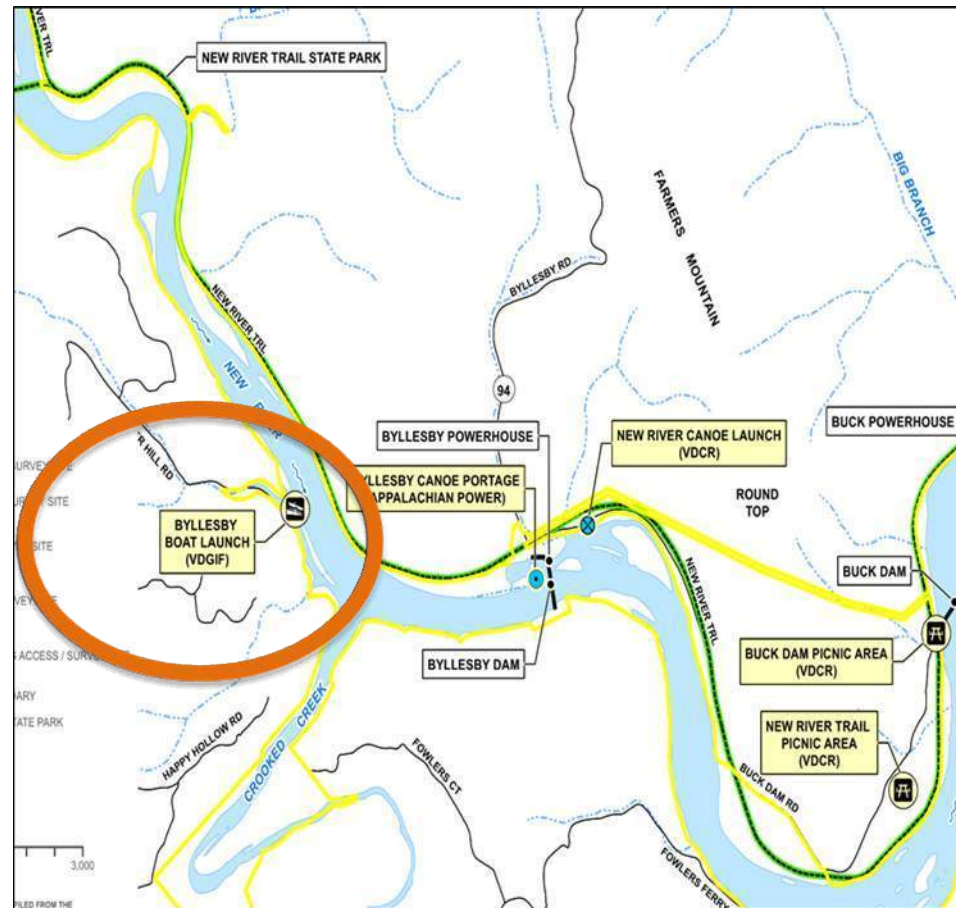


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# Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch

- Leased and Operated by VDGIF (now VDWR) and located within the Project Boundary
- Provides single-lane concrete boat launch with gravel parking area.



# Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch: Inventory Conditions Assessment

## Condition:

- Boat launch/ramp in good condition
- Site is clean
- Gravel parking surface
- Undefined parking
- No site furnishings (i.e. picnic tables, trash cans) or restroom facilities
- Varying site and directional signage.
- No ADA facilities

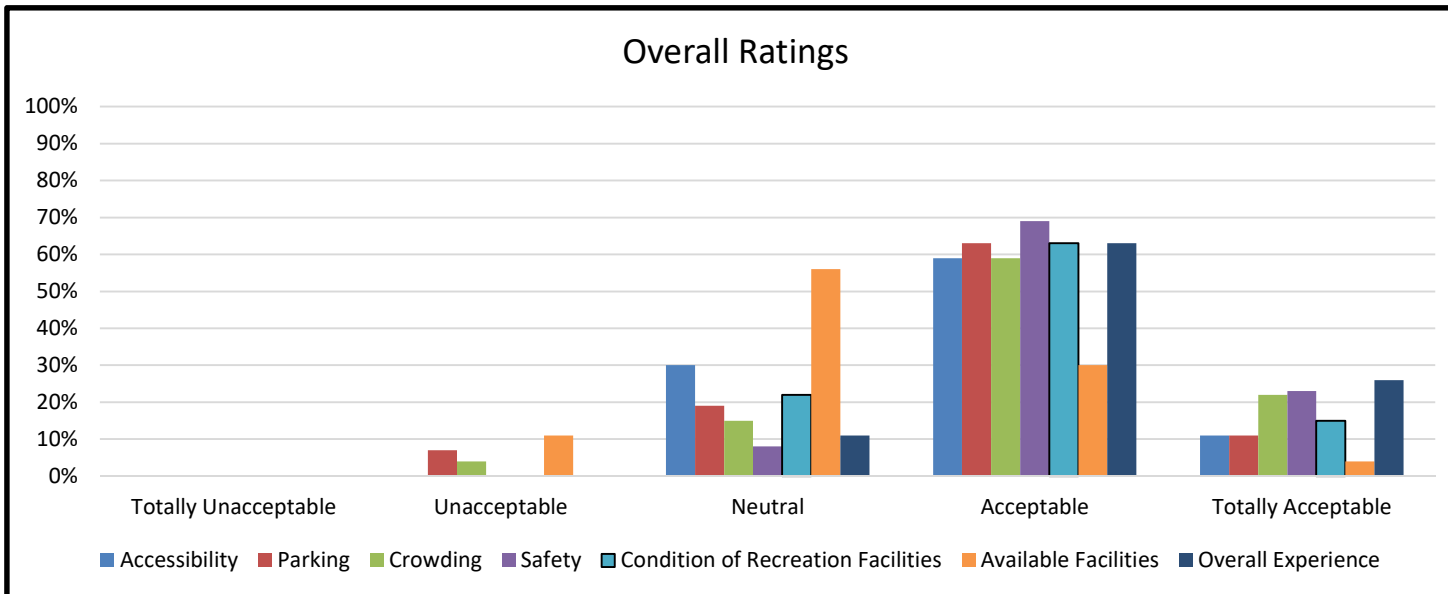




# Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there have been 37 visitors from Byllesby Boat Launch that responded to this survey.
- 22 miles is the average traveled by visitors as day trips (frequently from zipcodes 24330, 24333 & 24381).
- 93% of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 5 hours.

Primary Activity	Percent
Fishing	69%
Canoeing/Kayaking	23%
Boating	4%
Picnicking	4%



# Byllesby VDWR Boat Launch: Trail Camera Results

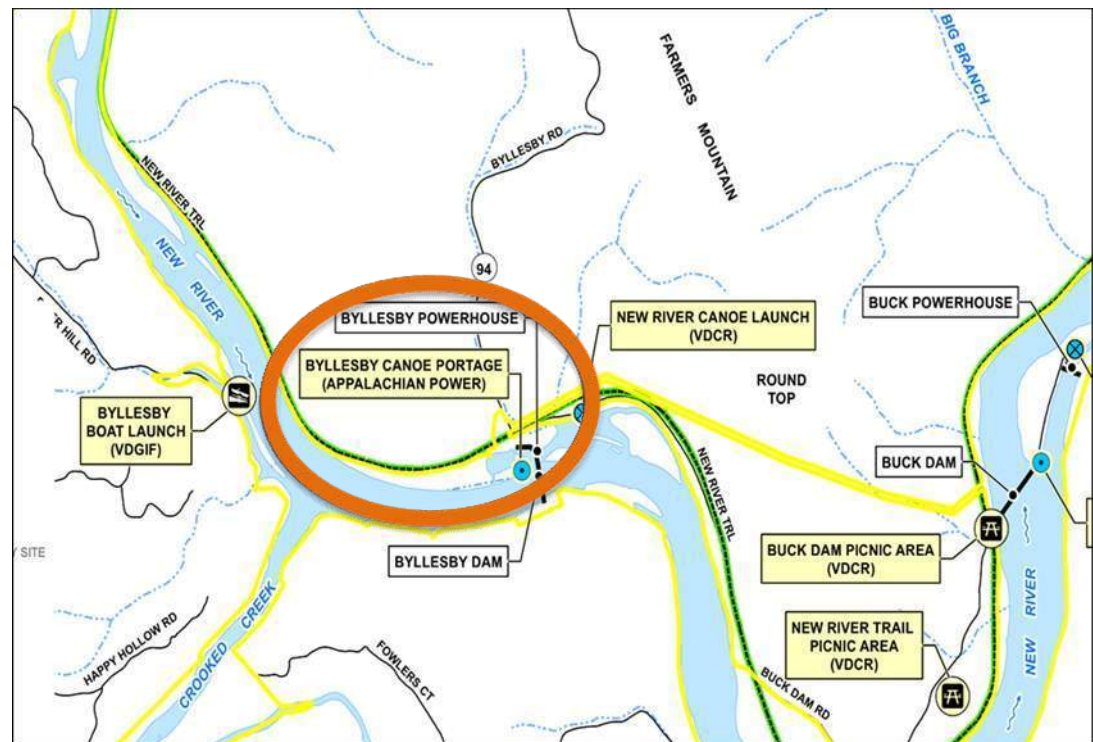
- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 10,000 photos.
- Significant uptick in recreation activities between the end of May and early August.
- Out of the recreation facilities this one sees the most traffic and generally consistent throughout the week (small uptick on weekends/holidays).
- Boating and bank fishing are the most popular recreational activities.





# Byllesby Canoe Portage

- Owned and operated by Appalachian within the Project Boundary
- Provides approximate 1,500-foot portage trail. Site consists of a hand-carry canoe take-out and an information trailhead kiosk for the New River Trail State Park by a gravel parking area.



# Byllesby Canoe Portage: Inventory Conditions Assessment

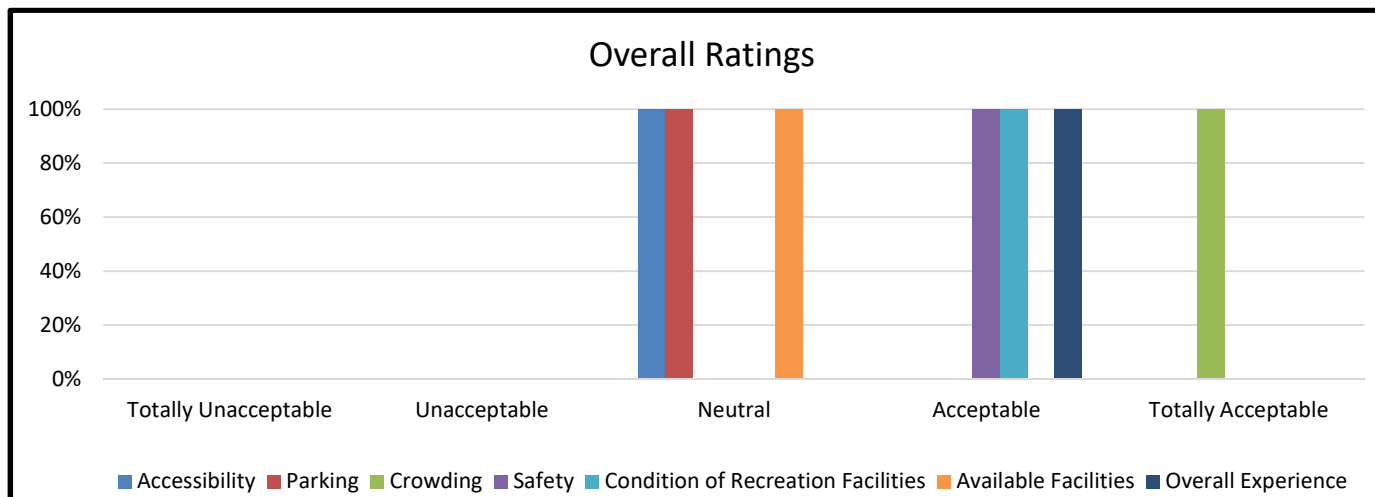
- Rustic portage take-out; large and level for easy transfer
- Portage is 775 ft from parking lot
- Trashcan at parking lot is aged but functional and is regularly serviced
- Varying site and directional signage
- No ADA amenities





# Byllesby Canoe Portage: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there has been 1 visitor from Byllesby Canoe Portage that responded to this survey.
- 200 miles is the estimated distance traveled by this visitor and as day trips.
- Considers himself to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 4 hours.
- The months visited are May, July, and August primarily to canoe.



# Byllesby Canoe Portage Trail Camera Results

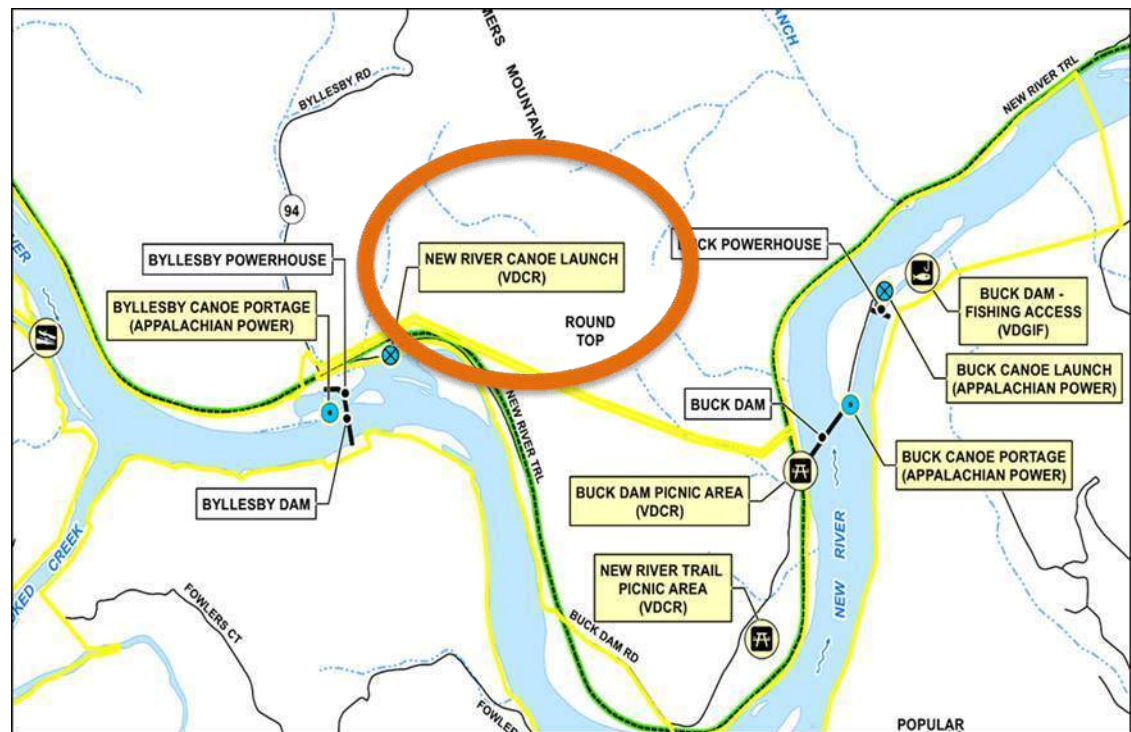
- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 10,000 photos.
- Parking at this location to bike, hike, or walk are the most popular recreational activities.





# New River Canoe Launch

- Owned and operated by VDCR adjacent to the Project Boundary
- Provides small, gravel parking area with short trail leading to a hand-carry boat launch (also serves as put-in for the Byllesby Canoe Portage).



## New River Canoe Launch: Inventory Conditions Assessment

- Rustic portage put-in is functional
- Large level sandy surface at portage makes transfer easy
- Gravel parking area for approximately 10 cars
- Canoe put-in is 125 ft from parking area and 1,175 ft (0.22 miles) from take-out
- Clear directional signage
- No site furnishings
- No ADA amenities

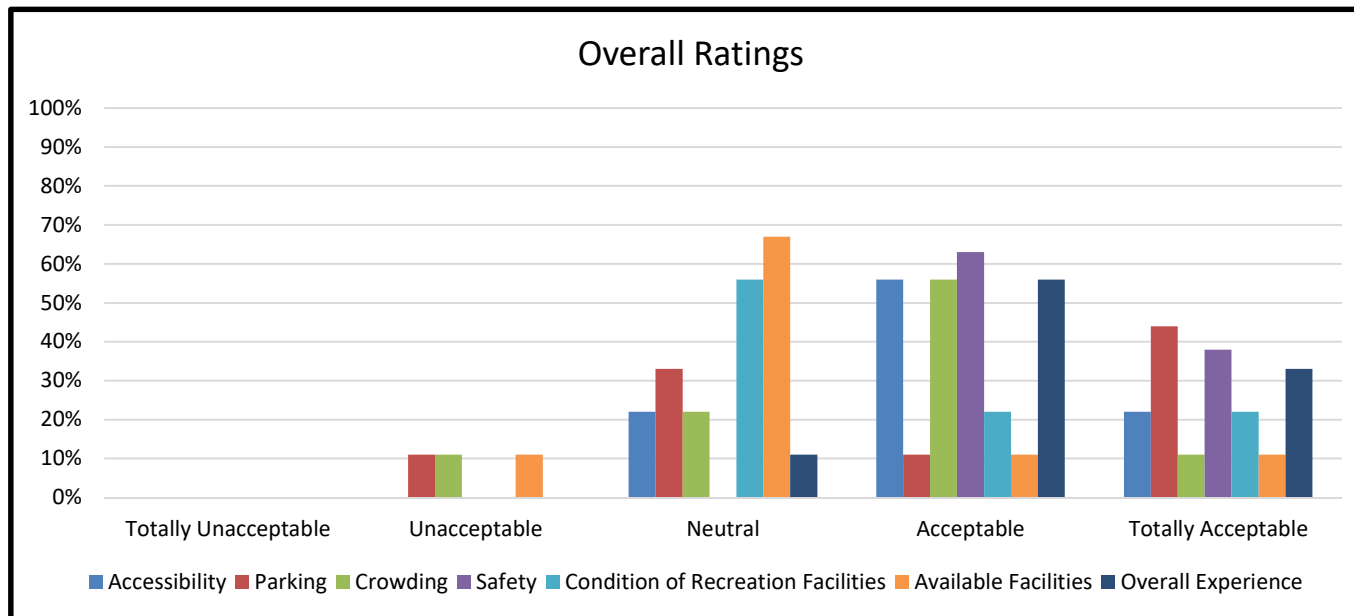




# New River Canoe Launch: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there have been 14 visitors from New River Canoe Launch that responded to this survey.
- 7.5 miles is the average traveled by visitors (frequently from zipcodes 24330 & 24333).
- 100% of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 4.5 hours.

Primary Activity	Percent
Fishing	67%
Canoeing/kayaking	22%
Sight-seeing	11%



# New River Canoe Launch: Trail Camera

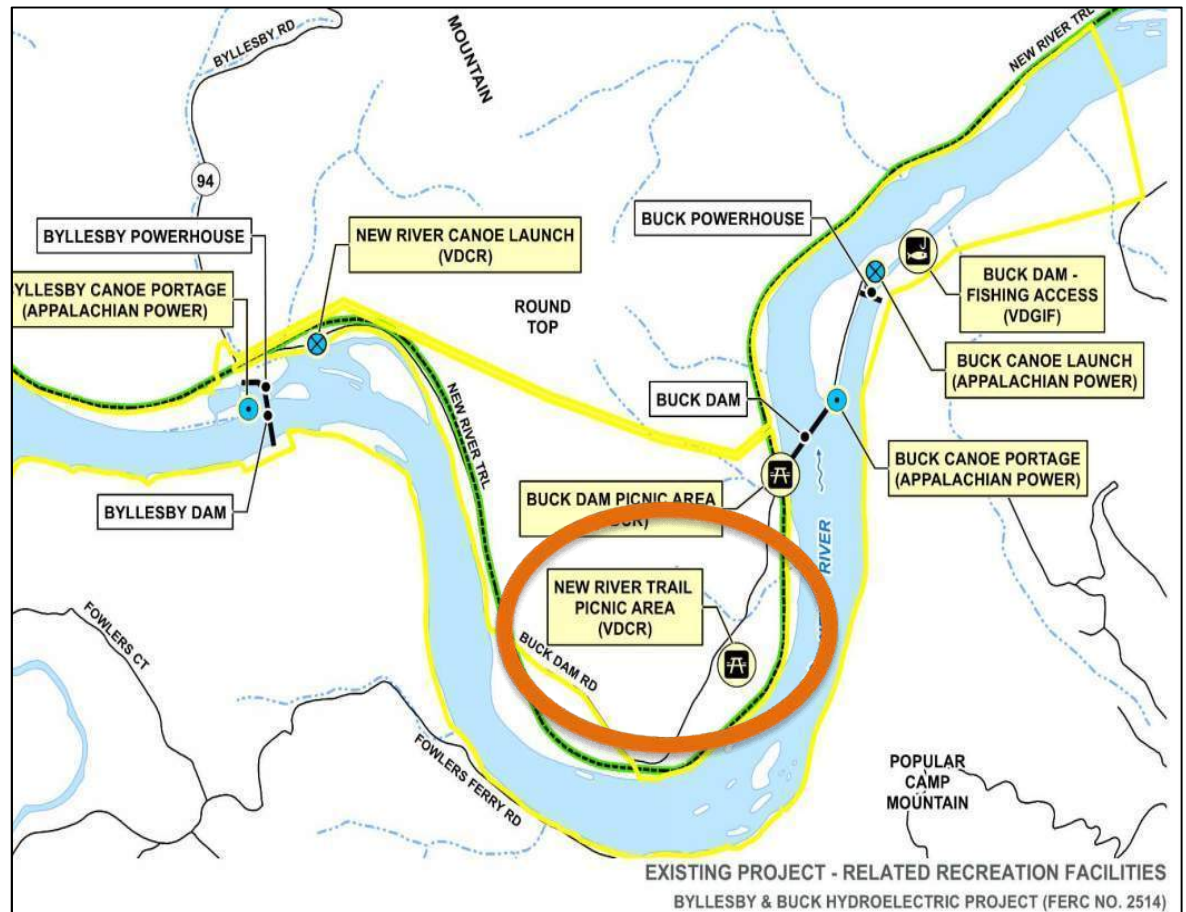
- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 2,800 photos.
- Bank fishing and relaxing (i.e. chairs, cooler, hanging out for the day) are the most common.





# New River Trail Picnic Area

- Owned and operated by VDCR adjacent to the Project Boundary
- Provides upper and lower recreation areas that include benches, picnic tables, bike rack, trash can, grill, and informal angling access to the Buck reservoir



## New River Trail Picnic Area: Inventory Conditions Assessment

- Informal parking on shoulder off of road.
- Informal unsigned path leads down hill to upper picnic area off New River trail.
- Upper picnic area amenities are in good/serviceable condition. Picnic table is ADA accessible.
- Lower picnic area furnishings (bench, trash can) require maintenance. Grill is older and could be replaced.
- Some degree of site and directional signage.

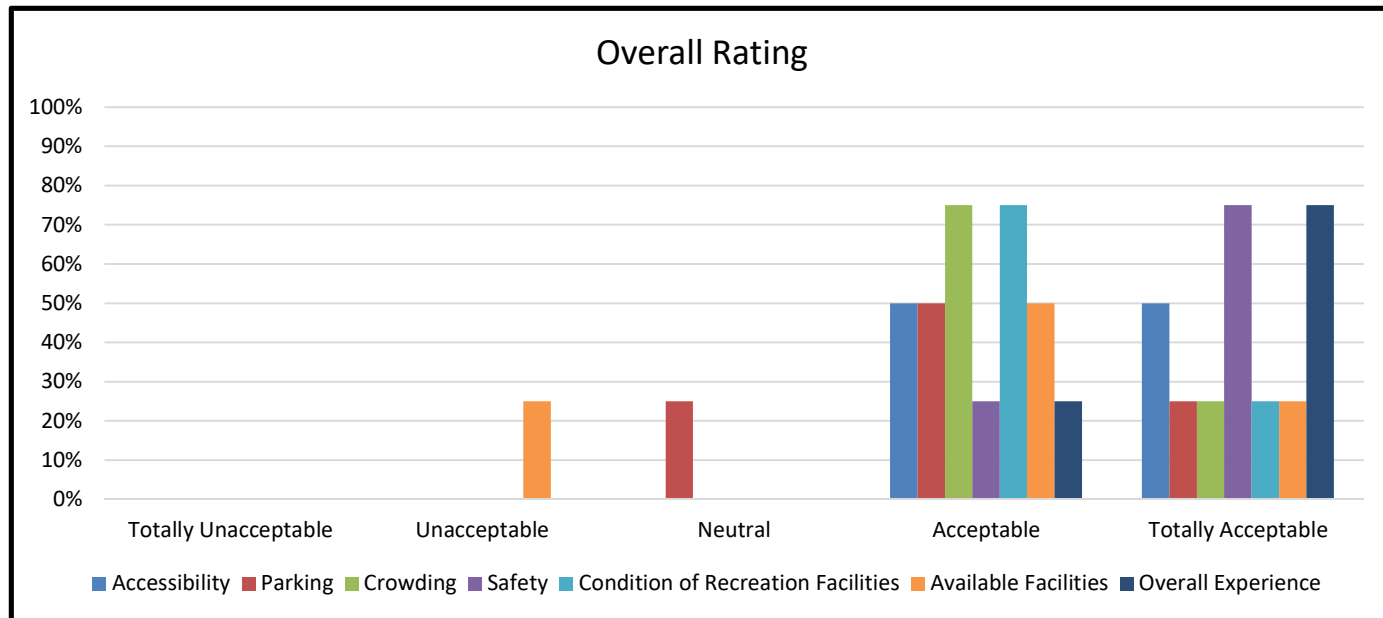




# New River Trail Picnic Area: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there have been 8 visitors from the New River Trail Picnic Area that responded to this survey.
- 12 miles is the average traveled by visitors (frequently from zipcodes 24330).
- 75% of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 3.5 hours.

Primary Activity	Percent
Biking	75%
Fishing	25%



## New River Trail Picnic Area: Trail Camera (Upper)

- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 5,930 photos.
- Consistent use of recreation features (picnic shelter, bike rack and hitching post).





## NR Trail Picnic Area (Upper)



## New River Trail Picnic Area: Trail Camera (Lower)

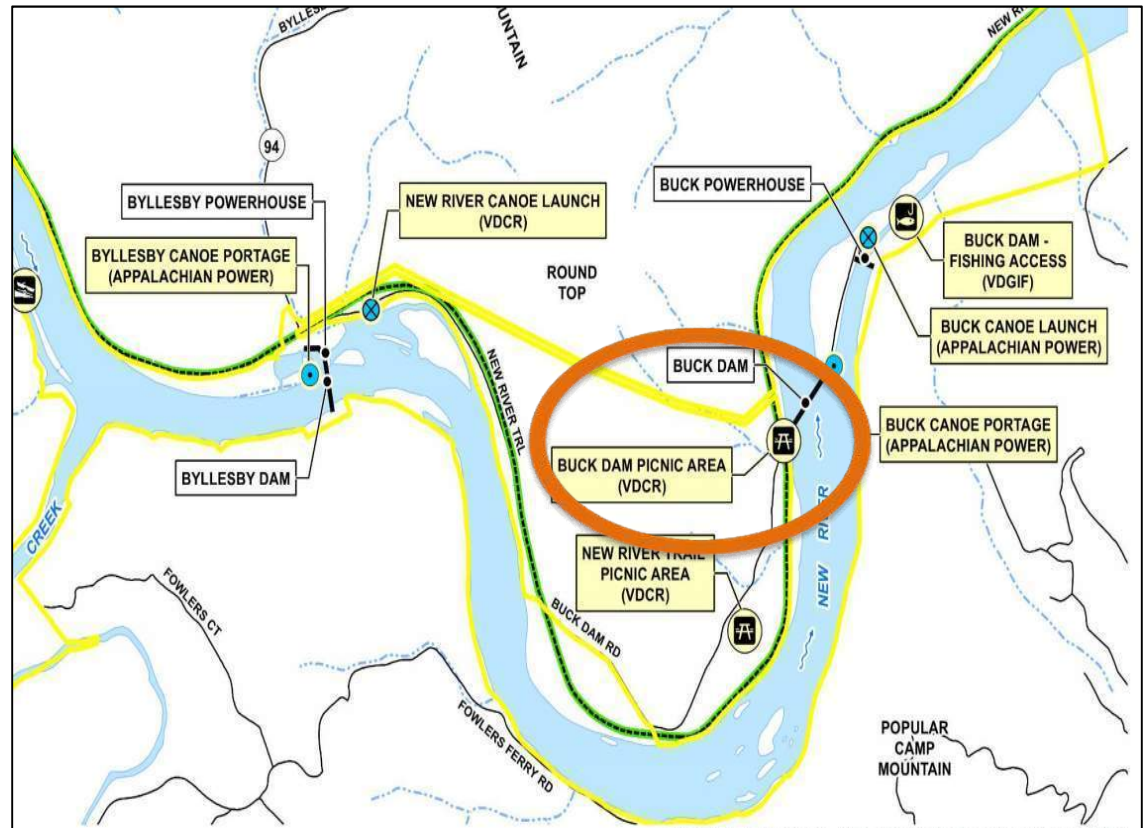
- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 3,220 photos.
- This trail camera was stolen and then replaced. Data was lost from May 27 – July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Bank fishing and relaxing (i.e. using picnic tables, setting up chairs/tents for the day) are also common.
- Recreational users also enjoy this as a stop off the New River trail for sight-seeing.





# Buck Dam Picnic Area

- Owned and operated by VDCR adjacent to the Project Boundary
- Provides gravel parking for vehicles, information kiosk, and access to New River Trail. Also provides a picnic area with picnic table, trash can, portable restroom facility, and a hitching post for equestrian trail users.



## Buck Dam Picnic Area: Inventory Conditions Assessment

- Picnic site along the New River Trail, approx. 650 ft from parking area.
- Gravel parking for approx. 5 cars, needs light maintenance.
- Portable restroom is ADA accessible.
- An industrial artifact is located by parking area.
- Some degree of site and directional signage, in varying conditions.

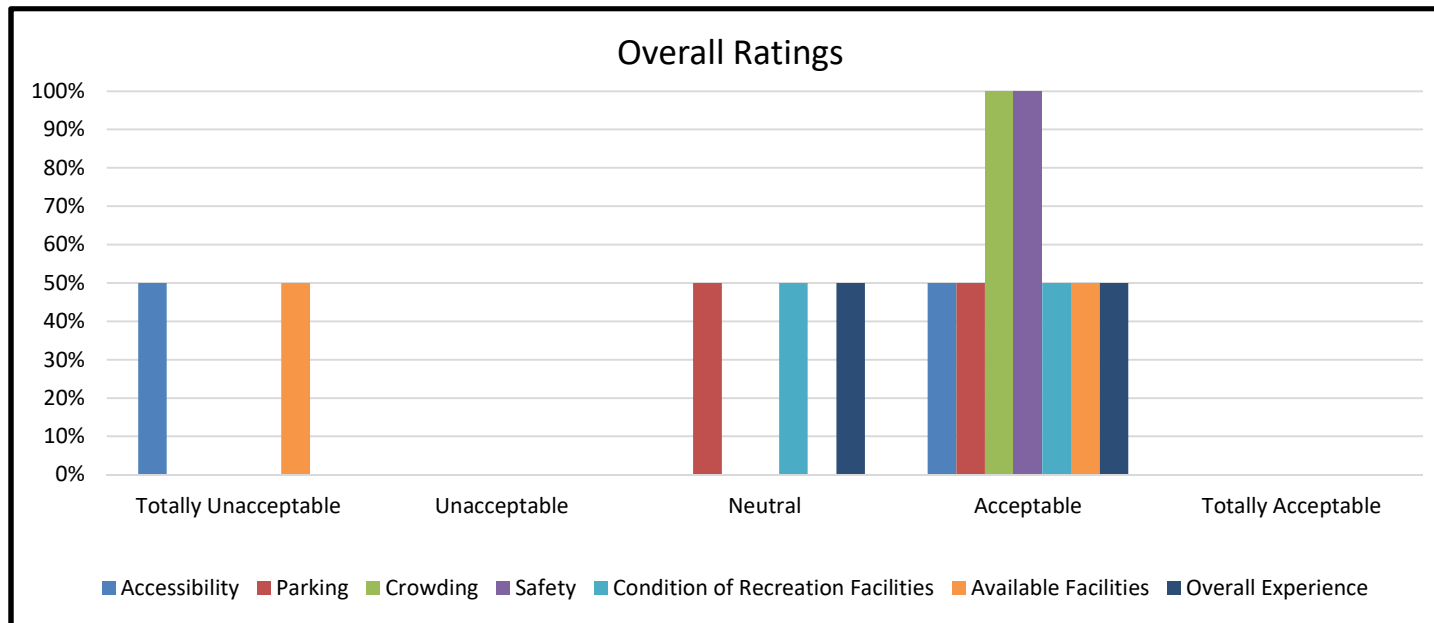




## Buck Dam Picnic Area: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there have been 4 visitors from the New River Trail Picnic Area that responded to this survey.
- 12.5 miles is the average traveled by visitors (frequently from zipcodes 24330).
- 100% of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 4 hours.

Primary Activity	Percent
Canoe/Kayaking	50%
Fishing	50%



## Buck Dam Picnic Area: Trail Camera Results

- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 3,120 photos.
- The tree this trail camera was located on fell down, but was re-installed in a similar location. Data was lost from May 18 – July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Consistent use of recreation features (picnic shelter, bike rack and hitching post).



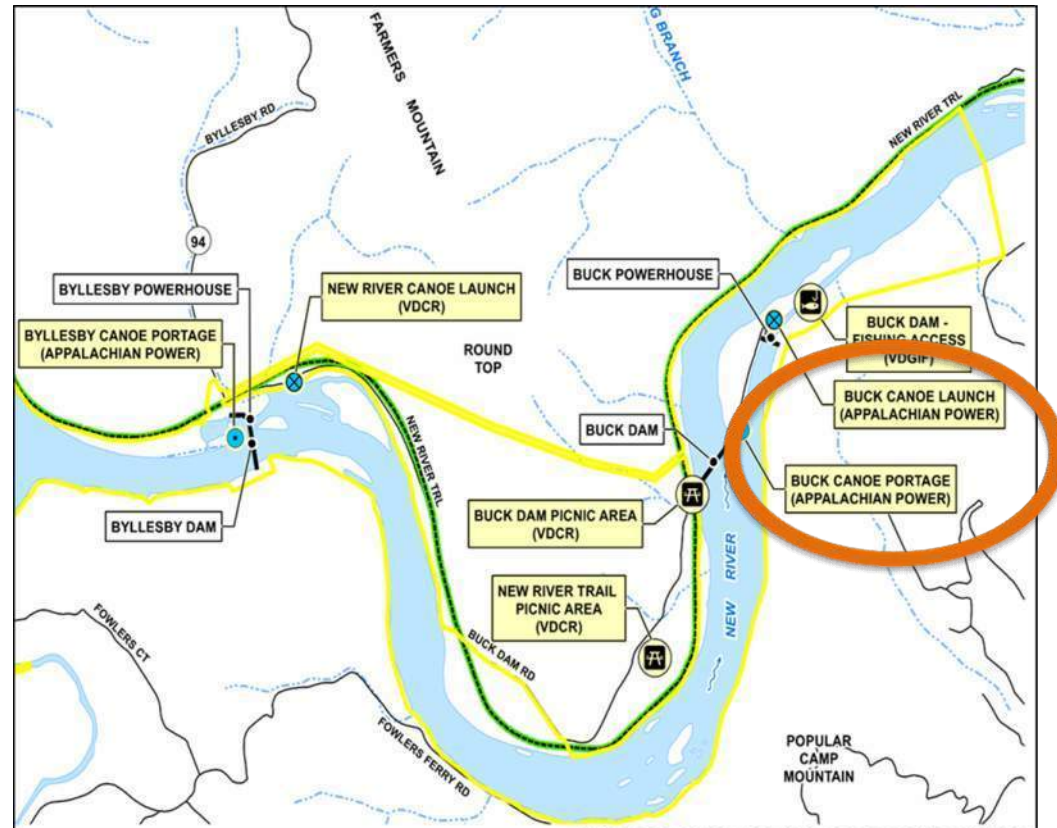




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# Buck Dam Canoe Portage and Launch

- Owned and operated by Appalachian within the Project Boundary.
- Provides crushed stone hand-carry take out and a hand-carry put in above and below the dam.



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## Buck Dam Canoe Portage and Launch: Inventory Conditions Assessment

- Sites accessible to public by water only.
- Crushed stone portage take-out, in good condition.
- Rustic put-in; small area with drop off to water surface.
- Portage route is 1,440 ft (0.27 miles). Surface type varies, some sections are eroded.
- Informal trash can.
- Some degree of site and directional signage, in varying conditions.
- No ADA amenities.

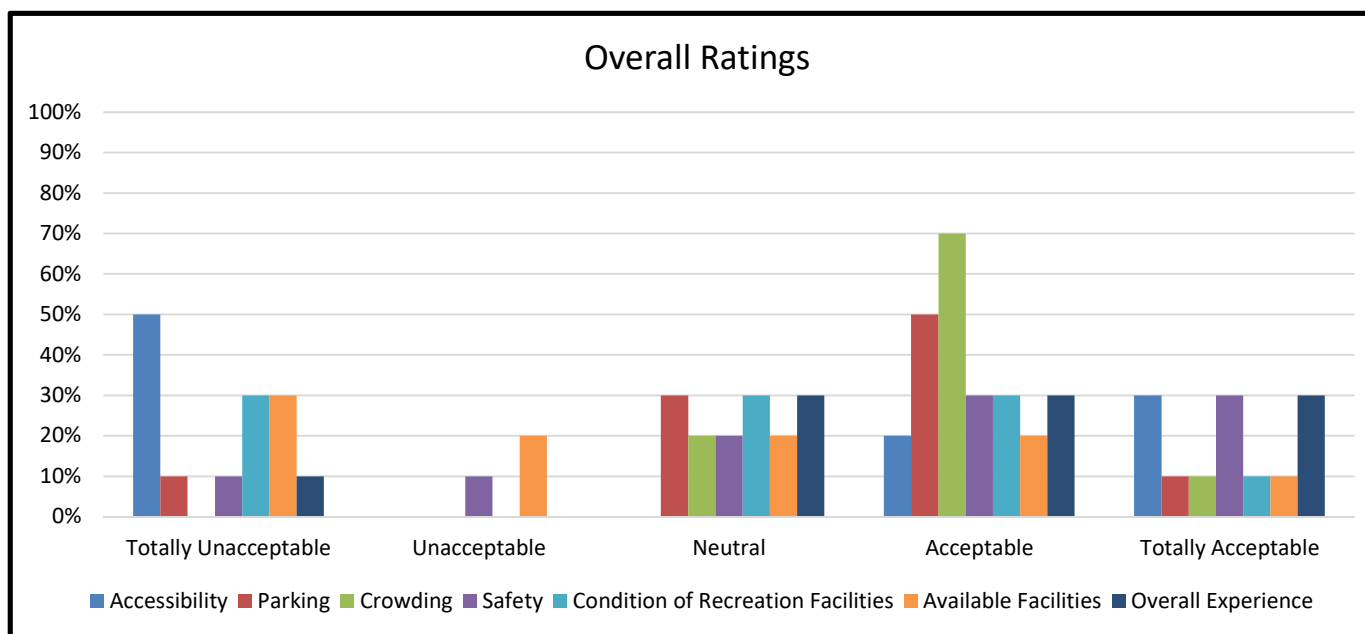




# Buck Dam Canoe Portage and Launch: Online Survey

- Between May 2020 to September 2020 there have been 13 visitors from Buck Dam Canoe Portage that responded to this survey.
- 42 miles is the average traveled by visitors with 40% noting they were staying overnight (frequently from zipcodes 24333, 24348 & 24350).
- 100% of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being 2.6 hours.

Primary Activity	Percent
Fishing	38%
Biking	25%
Canoeing/kayaking	25%
Kayak Fishing	13%



## Buck Dam Canoe Portage and Launch: Trail Camera Results

- As of September 9, 2020, Appalachian has gathered approximately 100 photos.
- Low recreational usage compared to other sites
- Bank fishing, canoe/kayaking, and motorized boat fishing into tailrace are the only activities observed.

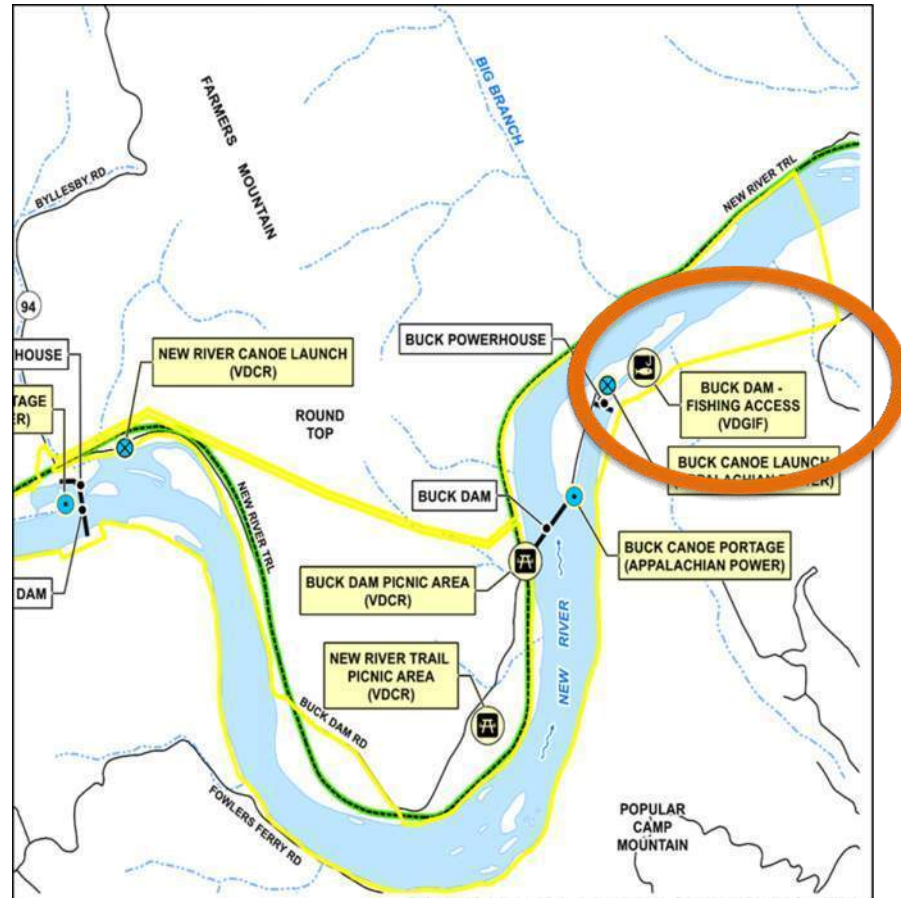




# Buck Dam – Fishing Access (informal recreation)

Trail Camera goal:

- Collect data on visitors utilizing tailrace area for fishing; camera faces river-right to capture all recreation



# Buck Dam – Fishing Access Trail Camera Results

- As requested by stakeholders during the preparation of the Revised Study Plan, Appalachian added a 7<sup>th</sup> location for the trail cameras to determine bank fishing at Loafer's Rest.
- Two occurrences of recreational activity.







# Site Visit Planning

Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>

9:30a.m. – 3:00 p.m

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A reminder that cell phone service is limited at these sites. My cell phone number is 610-299-0959. Please plan to be outside all day and dress accordingly.

Also, bring a face covering or mask, as these will be required throughout the site visit.

## Tentative agenda:

- 9:30am – 10:30am – Meet at VDWR Byllesby Boat Ramp on river-right for a safety briefing and to discuss the recreation site.
- 10:30am – 11:15am – Drive to Byllesby dam and meet in parking lot. Can follow HDR/Appalachian to Byllesby or directions provided.
- 11:30am-12:30pm – Drive to and discuss Buck Canoe Portage and Buck Canoe Launch/Fishing Access
- 12:30pm-1:30pm – Have lunch and discuss recreation site at the Buck Dam Picnic Area. We ask that you bring your own lunch, snacks, and water.
- 1:30pm-2:00pm – Drive to and discuss New River Trail Picnic Area
- 2:00pm-2:30pm – Drive to and discuss New River Canoe Launch
- 2:30pm-3:00pm – Drive to and discuss Byllesby Canoe Portage

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# Closing



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## Yayac, Maggie

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**Subject:** FW: Byllesby-Buck Recreation Site Visit Meeting Summary  
**Attachments:** AEP Byllesby-Buck Recreation Stakeholder Site Visit Summary\_10282020.pdf

**From:** Yayac, Maggie

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 18, 2020 9:20 AM

**To:** Kittrell, Bill (DGIF <bill.kittrell@dwr.virginia.gov>; John Copeland <john.copeland@dwr.virginia.gov>; sam.sweeney@dcr.virginia.gov; rex.hill@carrollcountyva.gov; Boyette, Benjamin <benjamin.boyette@dwr.virginia.gov>; toby.mcclanahan@dwr.virginia.gov; james.elliott@dcr.virginia.gov

**Cc:** David Keene <david.keene@dwr.virginia.gov>; Hampton, Tom (DGIF <tom.hampton@dwr.virginia.gov>; joseph.grist@deq.virginia.gov; sharon.ewing@dcr.virginia.gov; claytorlakegirl@gmail.com; Kulpa, Sarah <sarah.kulpa@hdrinc.com>; Elizabeth B Parcell <ebparcell@aep.com>; Tristan Cleveland <tristan@lpda.net>; Jonathan M Magalski <jmmagalski@aep.com>; Bill.Kittrell@dgif.virginia.gov; janet\_norman@fws.gov

**Subject:** Byllesby-Buck Recreation Site Visit Meeting Summary

Good morning,

Attached is the meeting summary documenting the recreation site visit at Byllesby-Buck. I've also cc'd the stakeholders that weren't able to make the trip so they would have the latest summary. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. I hope you all have enjoyable, safe holidays if we don't talk before!

Thanks,

**Maggie Yayac**  
*Regulatory Specialist*

**HDR**  
440 South Church Street, Suite 900  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
**D** 704.248.3666 **M** 610.299.0959  
Maggie.Yayac@hdrinc.com

[hdrinc.com/follow-us](https://hdrinc.com/follow-us)

# Meeting Summary

Project: Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514) - Relicensing

Subject: Byllesby-Buck Recreation Site Visit

Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Location: Byllesby-Buck

Attendees:	Bill Kittrell (VDWR)	Liz Parcell (AEP)
	Ben Boyette (VDWR)	Tristan Cleveland (LPDA)
	Toby McClanahan (VDWR)	Sarah Kulpa (HDR)
	John Copeland (VDWR)	Maggie Yayac (HDR)
	Sam Sweeney (New River Trail State Park - VDCR)	
	Jimmy Elliott (New River Trail State Park - VDCR)	
	Rex Hill (Carroll County)	

## General Comments:

- At each recreation facility, HDR reviewed the trail camera findings, online survey results and presented the recreation features that were studied in support of the Recreation Study Plan.
- Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) explained their recreation goals are to support fishing, hunting, boating, and wildlife viewing. VDWR does not promote primitive camping on its lands.
- Tom Hampton is the VDWR lead for the Memorandum of Agreement with Appalachian that governs the land lease and terms of the Byllesby Boat Launch.
- Thompson Campground site – Sam Sweeney explained that the New River Trail State Park is still very interested in acquiring, re-developing, maintaining, and operating the former Thompson Campground, located between Byllesby and Buck Dams. Previous efforts (1990s and as recently as two years ago with an attempt to reach terms of a 99-year lease) by the State Park to acquire the land from USFS were unsuccessful, reportedly due to unresolvable USFS interests pertaining to liability and insurance. This area is the most suitable area for a campground near the Project and has existing picnic areas, horse facilities, and general campground infrastructure. While there is still widespread interest in this development, the project currently lacks a champion at the federal level (legislative or agency).
- Primitive camping is not encouraged on State Park or VDWR lands but is known to occur. There is little to no posted signage about whether and where camping is allowed.
- Posting a 911 address at formal recreation sites could aid in emergency response. Lack of cell phone coverage is also a safety concern at nearly all of the recreation areas at the project.



- Global comments and recommendations for improved signage regarding intended use, restricted access areas (e.g. tailrace areas, dams), and consistent FERC, regulatory, and identification signage.
- Photos of each recreation facility discussed in this meeting summary are included.

### **Recreation Facilities (in order of visitation)**

- **Byllesby Boat Launch** – VDWR noted that the only approved use of this facility is for boating and fishing. The site is also used for duck hunting access in the winter months. All other use is technically considered trespass. Site is open at all hours for these recreation activities only.
  - VDWR performs site maintenance once a month at a minimum. VDWR contracts with a vendor for regular mowing and trash pickup.
  - The access road to the site is on the list (i.e., Carroll County 6-year plan) to be paved by Virginia Department of Transportation. VDWR noted that they do not control the fabrication or placement of the “trailblazer” signs on public roads.
  - The boat ramp is not usable when the reservoir is drawn down (e.g., for dam maintenance). Appalachian pointed out that the frequency of drawdowns has and is expected to continue to decrease due to operation of the inflatable crest gates preventing flashboard failure.
  - The facility is generally subject to flooding during periods of high inflow.
    - VDWR reported that the area appears to be subject to larger and more frequent flood events over recent years (due to precipitation events).
    - Because of flood siltation deposits, the parking area must be regularly scraped and new aggregate placed.
  - Concerns: Unauthorized uses (including nighttime parking not for fishing access), congestion along the bank (greatest fishing pressure is summer months), and flooding. Other resident comments to VDWR include request for lighting and restrooms. It was noted that any amenities such as lighting, restrooms, benches, etc. would be difficult to maintain due to the flooding. The existing paved walkway near the bank is sloped (shifted) to the extent that it may not conform to ADA requirements for grade.
    - VDWR noted it is common not to have restroom facilities at remote sites such as this.
    - The site may not have a 911 address (Rex Hill to confirm).
  - Potential improvements: concrete paving of parking lot (though significant cost) and/or paved accessible parking spot, extension of bank fishing (if feasible due to floodplain development and wetland impacts), solar-powered dusk to dawn light (near main sign), and facilities to promote wildlife viewing.

- **Fowlers Ferry (informal):** Appalachian owns the land on the river side of the road (confirmed on Carroll County GIS map). There are a few informal recreation spots along the river, but one larger area unseen from the road. Ben Boyette explained that known/observed uses include picnicking, primitive camping, ATV, fishing, wildlife viewing wading, and canoe/kayaking. A large informal road through the area creates a loop, and there are numerous informal road/trail spurs. Ben also confirmed that this area saw the highest usage of illegal activity within/adjacent to the Project Boundary. The site provides a unique viewing perspective and reservoir access for this side of the river. The County Sheriff Deputy patrols the area but relies heavily on VDWR Conservation Officers to do so.

- Concerns:

- Illegal uses, trash, unauthorized and uncontrolled vehicle access.
- Lack of signage regarding land ownership or authorized uses (if any).
- ATV use is not compatible with VDWR site uses but would be difficult to prevent.
- Large area that is largely out of sight from the road.

- Opportunities:

- The agencies would like to control (or at a minimum have grounds to enforce) usage and access.
- Bill mentioned that VDWR has a grant to lease land from private owners for long term fishing and boating access that may apply to a site such as this. VDWR has interest in acquiring the site from Appalachian.
- Potential to serve as (hand) launch area for canoes and kayaks (although not much river reach to paddle before Buck dam).
- Barriers could be placed to prevent vehicle access and a designated parking area established near the road.
- Potential to formalize foot path.

- **Buck Dam Picnic Area:** Users access the Buck bypass via the New River trail informally to bank fish around this facility. The State Park maintains the site and the restroom (portable toilet, not ADA accessible). The New River Trail State Park right of way is 40 ft from the center of the trail (in both directions). Agencies noted it is unclear how far away users are required to stay from the dam.

- Opportunities:

- Clear signage below the dam demarcating point at which access is prohibited (difficult for VDWR to enforce no access to the dam without this).



- Additional signage and audible alarm warning of dam operations and rising water levels.
- **Buck Dam Canoe Portage/Downstream Fishing Access:**
  - Canoe portage is not heavily used. Put-in to the tailrace below the dam and powerhouse is steep and the current is swift, making it hard to put a canoe in. Canoe take-out commonly accumulates debris and is also relatively steep. This portage is unlikely to be widely used because the user base/craft type is very different for the reservoir and the downstream river reach. Use would likely be to connect the reservoir and downstream reach for continuity by very motivated paddlers.
  - Agencies noted that access to the island across the bypass reach for fishing is by boat (traveling upstream) or wading (less often due to challenging terrain and flows).
  - VDWR noted that they have not issued as many tickets to trespassers near the Buck powerhouse/tailrace channel in recent years and No Trespassing signage has likely deterred users. Usage has gone down over the recent years, however from an angler perspective it is still a desirable fishing location because the tailrace channel attracts fish.
  - Discussion of origins of 200-yard setback from dam or powerhouse rule (Appalachian and VDWR to confirm this)<sup>1</sup>.
  - Opportunities:
    - Agencies suggest a more level portage or a step-down launch, though noted that installed at Foster Falls would likely receive much more use than this site.
    - Installation of clear usage signage below the dam and emergency contact signage should a user access the portage outside of station work hours and need help.
    - There is little signage on the island between the dam and powerhouse, including for trespassing or fishing setbacks making it difficult for VDWR to enforce use of the area.
  - HDR/LPDA investigated other portage opportunities on river-left in the bypass off the New River trail. Upstream of the dam is a large wetland blocking access and below the dam has geology unsuitable to canoeing or kayaking.
- **Loafer's Rest (informal area)** – Group did not visit Loafer's Rest, but discussed it from Buck Dam Put-In. Parcels of land in this area are presently leased from Appalachian to VDWR

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<sup>1</sup> Based on further review after the site visit, the 200-yard setback is not universal/state-wide but applicable only to Kerr Dam and Leesville Dam. 4VAC15-370-40. Vessels prohibited within certain areas below John H. Kerr Dam and Leesville Dam. Appalachian to evaluate appropriate public safety setback requirement(s) and implement related measures as appropriate.

under a separate agreement from 2000. VDWR noted that this area provides the best river access downstream of Buck Dam and supports a broad user base.

- Opportunity:
  - Formalize as a VDWR river access, improve unmaintained trail to Buck tailrace, install signage, locate parking area closer to river (especially to improve access for senior citizens).
- **New River Trail Picnic Area** – VDCR maintains the area and noted the amenities (grill, benches, picnic table, etc.) have likely been there for well over 10 years. There is a trash can at this location (trash pickup done by State Park). They do not maintain the trail from Buck Dam Rd or the informal parking area. Does not appear the parking area could be expanded immediately adjacent to the picnic area (currently space for 2 vehicles). The road and shoulder is U.S. Forest Service land.
  - Opportunities:
    - Additional identifying signage and posted rules for use
    - Repair/update existing amenities such as bench and fire pit.
- **New River Canoe Launch (downstream of Byllesby Dam)** – Discussion of the temporary access road Appalachian periodically replaces for vehicle/equipment access to the lower level of the powerhouse and whether it will become permanent in the future. Bill expressed concern that the temporary access road washes away and deposits culverts and other materials downstream and noted that if the road is to be made permanent a bottomless culvert may be necessary. No specific recreational improvements were noted or discussed at this site. There is clear signage denoted trespassing and fishing access boundaries along the bank, though no formal FERC recreation sign. There is also no boating/fishing boundary signage from the water. The group discussed that the area is used more for fishing/river access than canoe or kayak launch.
- **Byllesby Canoe Portage** - VDWR noted that the portage take-out used to be along the left bank close to the parking area. However, when the wetland was created following dredging in the late 90's, the portage was moved to the current location. VDWR is concerned that the linear distance to walk between the take-out and parking lot is far and creates a barrier to use. The group discussed the potential of cutting a channel through the wetland or adding a boardwalk, but these may not be feasible due to wetland impacts and the probability of the channel silting in during frequent flood events.
  - VDWR noted that in the past they've tried to use the portage for emergency boat access to Byllesby reservoir (significantly reduces travel time if don't have to drive to the opposite side of the river to launch), but they were only able to launch the boat near the buoy line since the portage was heavily silted and the water depth was nearly too shallow. VDWR inquired about the potential for an emergency-use only boat access in the Byllesby reservoir to allow them to gain access to the river faster.



- HDR/LPDA walked the New River trail upstream of the site to assess potential for portage take-out above the wetland, however the portage route would be even longer if that was implemented. Desktop estimates of trail length are provided:
  - Portage take-out to access gate: 775 feet
  - Access gate to parking lot: 460 feet
  - Top of wetland to parking lot: 2,400 feet
- **Closing** – Brief discussion/recap of major observations at each site. Appalachian/HDR to develop meeting summary and distribute to this group for review (copy others invited to meeting but who were unable to attend, for awareness). Meeting participants agreed that the trail camera monitoring had proven effective with only one camera lost to vandalism/theft and had captured data from a peak recreation season. The group supported removal of the trail cameras at the end of the month, in accordance with the schedule proposed in the approved Revised Study Plan.

**Photos of Recreation Facilities**

**Byllesby VWDR Boat Launch**



**Byllesby VWDR Boat Launch Parking Area**

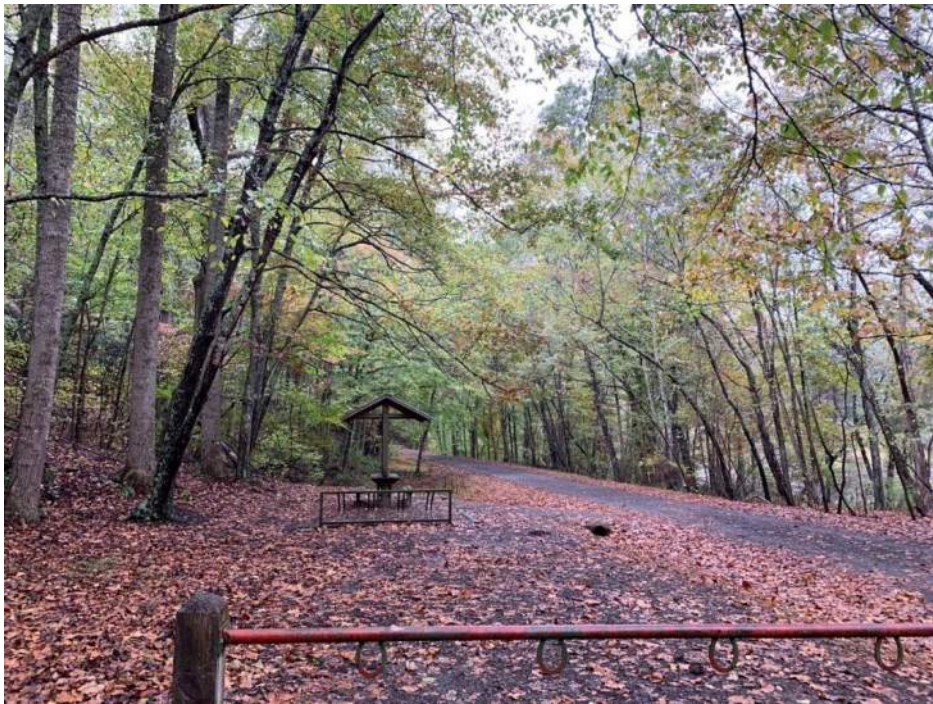




**Fowlers Ferry (informal)**



**Buck Dam Picnic Area**





### **Buck Dam Canoe Portage Take-Out**



### **Buck Dam Canoe Portage Put-In**





**Interested Buck Angler Access from Loafer's Rest**



**New River Trail Picnic Area Lower Area**





**New River Trail Picnic Area Upper Area**



**New River Canoe Launch**





**Byllesby Canoe Portage Take-Out**



**Byllesby Canoe Portage Parking Lot**



Thompson Campground site





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**Subject:** Loafer's Rest Access/Buck Dam Tailrace Site Visit

**Start:** Wed 3/24/2021 9:30 AM

**End:** Wed 3/24/2021 12:30 PM

**Recurrence:** (none)

**Meeting Status:** Accepted

**Organizer:** john.copeland@dwr.virginia.gov

**CAUTION:** [EXTERNAL] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

**This event has been changed.**

### Loafer's Rest Access/Buck Dam Tailrace Site Visit

**When** Wed Mar 24, 2021 9:30am – 12:30pm Eastern Time - New York

**Joining info** Join with Google Meet  
[meet.google.com/nxu-fphp-wgz](https://meet.google.com/nxu-fphp-wgz)

Join by phone  
(US) [+1 513-909-9897](tel:+15139099897) (PIN: 771320209)

[More phone numbers](#)

**Calendar** [maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com](mailto:maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com)

**Who**

- [john.copeland@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:john.copeland@dwr.virginia.gov) - organizer
- [tom.hampton@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:tom.hampton@dwr.virginia.gov)
- [ebparcel@aep.com](mailto:ebparcel@aep.com)
- [jeff.williams@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:jeff.williams@dwr.virginia.gov)
- Yayac, Maggie
- Tristan Cleveland
- [maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com](mailto:maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com) (Google Calendar) - optional

[more details »](#)

Going ([maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com](mailto:maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com))? [Yes](#) - [Maybe](#) - [No](#) [more options »](#)

Invitation from [Google Calendar](#)

You are receiving this courtesy email at the account [maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com](mailto:maggie.yayac@hdrinc.com) because you are an attendee of this event.

To stop receiving future updates for this event, decline this event. Alternatively you can sign up for a Google account at <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/> and control your notification settings for your entire calendar.

Forwarding this invitation could allow any recipient to send a response to the organizer and be added to the guest list, or invite others regardless of their own invitation status, or to modify your RSVP. [Learn More](#).

## Meeting Summary

Project:	Byllesby-Buck Relicensing	
Subject:	Potential Recreation Improvements	
Date:	Tuesday, June 29, 2021	
Location:	WebEx	
Attendees:	Elizabeth Parcell (AEP) Tom Hampton (VDWR) John Copeland (VDWR) Jeff Williams (VDWR)	Sarah Kulpa (HDR) Maggie Yayac (HDR) Kerry McCarney-Castle (HDR) Tristan Cleveland (LPDA)

## Opening Remarks

**S. Kulpa** opened the call and provided introductions, opening remarks, and objectives of call:

The Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (Project) Draft License Application (DLA) will be submitted by or on Oct 1, 2021 to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and relicensing participants. The objective of this call was to introduce the recreation enhancements Appalachian Power Company (Appalachian) is considering proposing in the DLA, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), and seek preliminary VDWR feedback.

## Loafers Rest

**M. Yayac** screen shared to display trail maps and design options developed by LPDA for potential Project recreation enhancements at Loafers Rest and talked about progress since the site visit in March 2021. **M. Yayac** noted that all potential enhancements are on property owned by Appalachian leased to the VDWR.

**T. Cleveland** explained the proposed fishing trail (majority follows an existing trail bed and farm track) and pointed out where new/updated signage would be required. The trail would require a newly constructed portion (0.09 miles) to join the upgraded existing trail to the proposed fishing access in the tailrace. Improvements are outside of current FERC Project Boundary. See Figure 1 (attached).

**J. Copeland** agreed the fishing trail location and layout makes sense and was in line with discussions in the field. On behalf of VDWR, J. Copeland expressed interest in enhancements at Loafers Rest beyond the trail access. HDR/LPDA confirmed there are no additional proposed enhancements for the fishing access and provided an overview of potential enhancements (based on field discussions) at Loafers Rest to facilitate water access.

**T. Cleveland** presented enhancement options as follows:

### Option A

In an effort to improve public access to water and carrying boats down to the water, a proposed 12-foot entry drive to connect to existing Farm Lane, bollard and cables would be constructed, leading to a proposed primary (gravel) parking area with 12 spaces with staging area for drop-



off/unloading boats and an improved 10-foot river access trail. Water access would be hardened and/or have canoe/kayak slide. Banks would be stabilized. Additionally, LPDA proposed new signage, loading bars (t bars) for kayaks and pullover spots for larger vehicles (trailers). See Figure 2 (attached).

Option B

Similar to Option A, however, lower costs associated with a smaller turnaround with only 4 parking spaces for loading and unloading and no additional parking spaces (same proposed entrance drive, improved surface conditions for put-in, water access, and kayak slide as Option A). See Figure 3 (attached).

**J. Copeland** stated he thought the options were appropriate and asked for T. Hampton's opinion.

**T. Hampton** stated he prefers Option A over Option B to facilitate parking and therefore usage for a broad range of recreation visitors, including older adults. He indicated that VDWR has moved away from kayak slides and requested a concrete hardened access. He explained with a hardened access, emergency response personnel could launch a boat (which they could not do on a kayak slide). He asked about the surface of the parking area and **T. Cleveland** responded that it would be gravel. **T. Hampton** said gravel would be advantageous for maintenance.

**T. Cleveland** asked for clarification regarding emergency/administrative access and if the conceptual design should include straightening out the curb of the parking area; this design change would result in increased construction cost including additional clearing.

**Action Item: LPDA to develop an "Option C" that would allow Emergency Vehicles to access and turn in the parking lot and revise kayak slide to hardened water access.**

**E. Parcell** asked if the Loafers Rest improvement could potentially benefit from funding through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or other grants. **T. Hampton** did not have definitive answer. **E. Parcell** suggested a follow-up with contact at VDWR to see if there is potential for funding. **E. Parcell** had dealt with James Adams at VDWR in the past; however, he is no longer with the agency and has not been replaced. **E. Parcell** asked if T. Hampton could track down the person to start a conversation regarding federal funding. T. Hampton noted they would not have the opportunity to get a proposed project in front of USFWS until December.

**Action Item: T. Hampton and E. Parcell to coordinate and reach out about funding assistance from the USFWS.**

**S. Kulpa** asked if the additions to Loafers Rest would continue to be maintained by VDWR. **T. Hampton** believed that they could get it added to their list to fall under VDWR maintenance and asked if Loafers Rest would be included in the license. Currently it is not part of the license either as a Project or Non-Project facility. **S. Kulpa** said it would be beneficial to include as a licensing proposal so that FERC can reference and recognize the Project's efforts for recreation enhancement and mitigation. Appalachian currently proposes to designate this as a Non-Project facility since it falls outside of the FERC Project Boundary. The benefit of keeping outside of the Project Boundary is the ease of process (i.e., not under FERC jurisdiction).

**J. Copeland** asked to clarify the fishing trail is only to provide public access to the Buck tailrace. **S. Kulpa** agreed. **T. Cleveland** noted a portion of the proposed fishing trail would be completely new trail, but the rest would not require much improvements (on existing trail bed). **E. Parcell** agreed and

noted that she revisited the site with a general contractor who confirmed that the existing base trail is in decent shape and wouldn't need much work. **J. Copeland** asked about the existing farm bridge along the trail. **E. Parcell** mentioned installing handrails could improve the bridge and culverts/bridge may be grandfathered in and not require a permit. However, replacing the bridge would increase the cost significantly due to the large culverts required.

**T. Hampton** mentioned there is an existing dove hunting field that is popular and asked if there a need to make notation that it's a recreation opportunity provided to the public. **E. Parcell** said continue to use as dove hunting area as-is. **T. Cleveland** said any improvements would not affect dove hunting field.

**T. Cleveland** referred back to the earlier discussion regarding the proposed parking area in Option A and asked about the size of the proposed parking lot and if 12 spaces would be adequate. **T. Hampton** said 12 spaces would be adequate and asked about the vegetated "islands" in the parking area – acknowledged they help prevent people from doing "donuts" with vehicles but was concerned about maintenance of green space on the islands. **T. Cleveland** said they could possibly make it gravel-topped instead of green, but ultimately group decided to leave as currently proposed and believed that since the site will already require mowing this should not be a significant maintenance issue.

## Fowler's Ferry

**S. Kulpa** asked if VDWR would be interested in leasing the area from Appalachian or had any more thoughts about this area. See Figure 4 (attached).

**T. Hampton** stated that if Bill Kittrell (VDWR) had started a conversation about leasing this property he did not hear about it, however, he reiterated that the grant program through NRCS is available to lease private land for public access. Therefore, VDWR would be interested in leasing this land from Appalachian and would be interested in continuing the conversation.

**S. Kulpa** asked if the grant would cover necessary improvements to the site. **T. Hampton** confirmed the grant would cover improvements and asked about next steps. **E. Parcell** said she would bring in somebody from AEP real estate to start that conversation.

**Action Item: E. Parcell to connect with AEP real estate and set-up call with VDWR regarding leasing the area associated with Fowler's Ferry.**

**S. Kulpa** mentioned the potential to keep leasing of this land/development of this area outside of the relicensing process since the location is completely outside of the FERC Project Boundary.

**J. Copeland** stated that, as background, the interest in this area came from their conservation officer and his difficulties in enforcing access and safety from a law enforcement standpoint.

**T. Cleveland** stated there is evidence of heavy use and trash, camping (informal), and the access road is rutted and undergoing erosion. Improvements to the site would address erosion and prevent vehicles from accessing the site (trail only would be provided). **T. Cleveland** pointed out where barriers would need to be placed along Fowler's Ferry Road to help enforcement and also would install usage signage. Additionally, parking and vehicular access would be provided along the road by slightly widening Fowler's Ferry road.



## Portages

**S. Kulpa** – The Buck take-out is upstream of the dam and forebay. Other than debris accumulation, it's a well-established trail to the put-in; however, some additional signage would be a useful enhancement. Perhaps improving the area of the put-in, which is currently very steep into the bottom of the tailrace channel would be beneficial. **VDWR** agreed being able to safely hand-launch there would be a useful improvement.

**T. Cleveland** noted that the step downs are by tree-roots, therefore, enhancement may include hardening up the banks and providing a wider spot or downstream location for people to access.

**S. Kulpa** confirmed the Buck put-in enhancement under discussion is the only portage location proposed for improvement as part of Appalachian's licensing proposal and asked VDWR if they had any suggestion regarding prioritization or any other portage locations, or any other improvements to note. **J. Copeland** acknowledged challenges (i.e., length) and constraints of the Byllesby take-out above the dam but lack of feasible alternatives and satisfactory conditions of the put-in below and confirmed nothing additional is being requested from them at this time.

## Byllesby Boat Launch

This improvement presently involves resurfacing the parking lot at the VDWR Byllesby boat launch. **E. Parcell** is waiting for a response from AEP contractor regarding resurfacing and costs.

**S. Kulpa** asked VDWR if they have other priorities regarding Byllesby Boat Launch. **J. Copeland** remarked he did not recall anything, but Toby and Ben (also VDWR) may have had concerns/suggestions during the last meeting. **M. Yayac** pulled up the previous site visit notes which indicated fishing extension and wildlife viewing enhancements.

**J. Copeland** stated bank fishing in this location occurs daily and stated perhaps some sort of extension of parking area (concrete) would facilitate shoreline use. **T. Hampton** mentioned that facilities to promote wildlife viewing would be beneficial to the area. **J. Copeland** mentioned the new Wildlife Viewing Plan was approved in early June and will share with E. Parcell.

### Action Item: VDWR will share Wildlife Viewing Plan with E. Parcell (Complete)

**S. Kulpa** confirmed the following three items are the correct priorities (and in the correct order) for the Project recreational improvements:

1. Loafers Rest
2. Buck Portage
3. Byllesby Boat launch

## Other Items

**J. Copeland** mentioned the campground near the area and stated the need to bring in Sam Sweeney with VDCR, to which **S. Kulpa** replied AEP understands there was very strong interest in Forest Service leasing land for campground, but there's really no nexus to the Project and this is out of Appalachian's control to improve. **T. Copeland** recommended involving Rex Hill regarding campground area.

**S. Kulpa** asked if VDWR would lead the effort for construction/modification to existing site with funding from Appalachian or is VDWR looking for Appalachian to handle capital improvements (all

sites). **T. Hampton** stated VDWR was happy to partner but thought it may be easier for modifications to be done outside of the state processes.

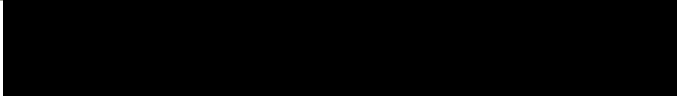
**S. Kulpa** asked if there were any other areas or interests to discuss. **T. Cleveland** mentioned consistent signage would be a useful improvement at all of the sites. **S. Kulpa** asked if there are VDWR signage guidelines. **T. Hampton** replied there are many kinds of signs with different color schemes, for different uses and will send a guidelines document. The group discussed potential benefits and feasibility of the addition of more interpretive signage at recreation areas.

**Action Item: VDWR to provide standard signage guidelines document and/or POC for standard guidelines (Complete)**





Figures



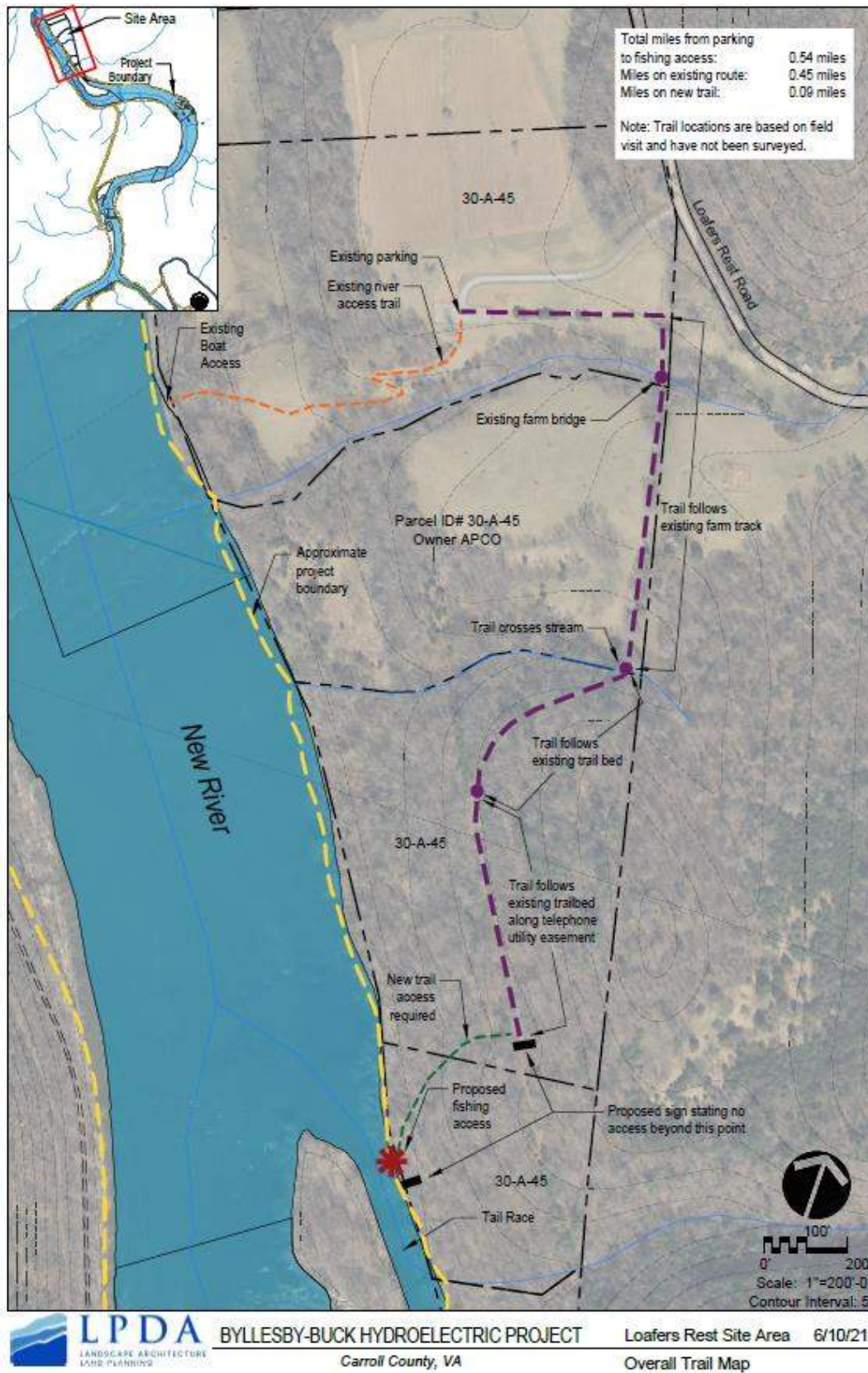
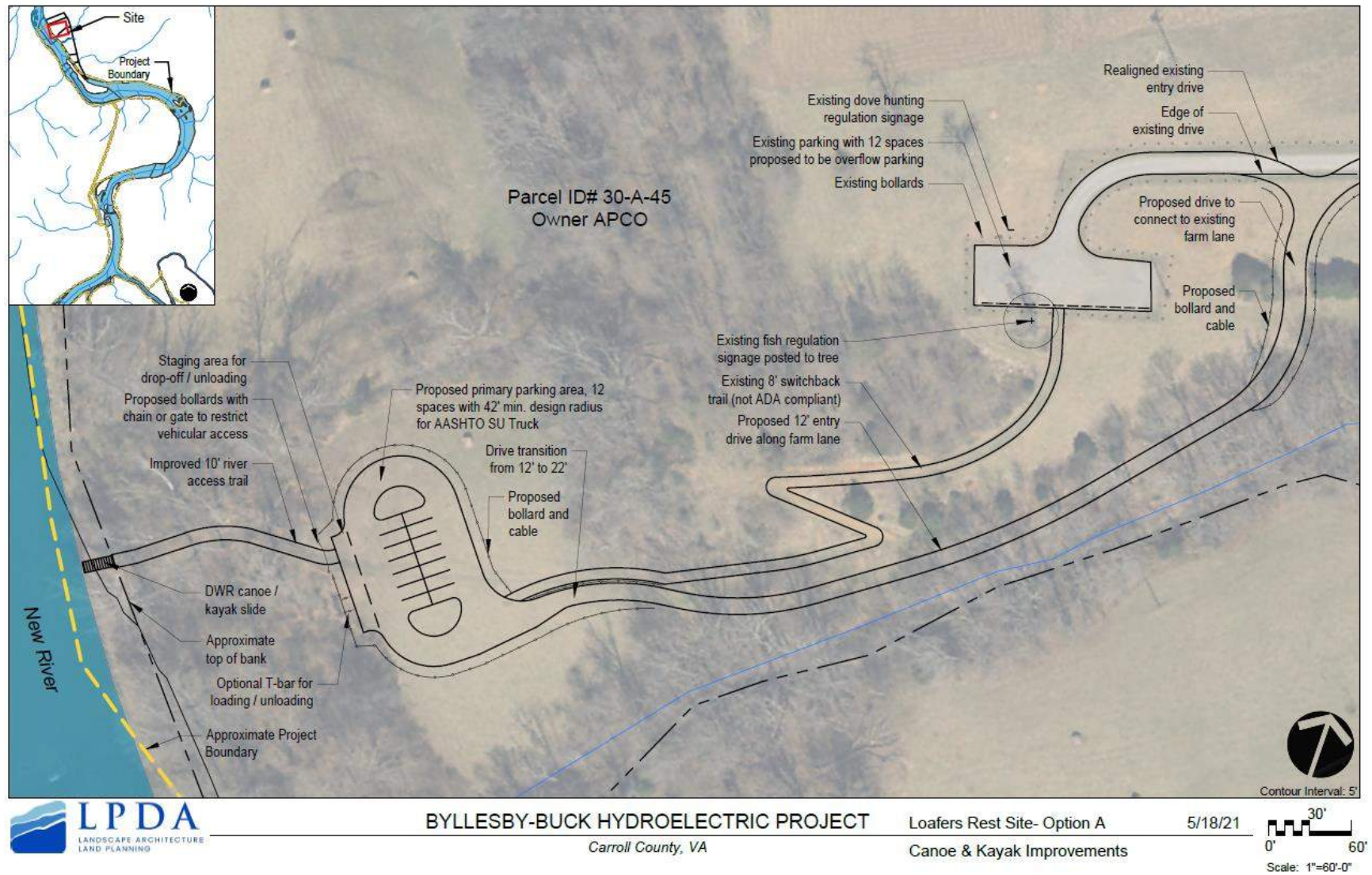


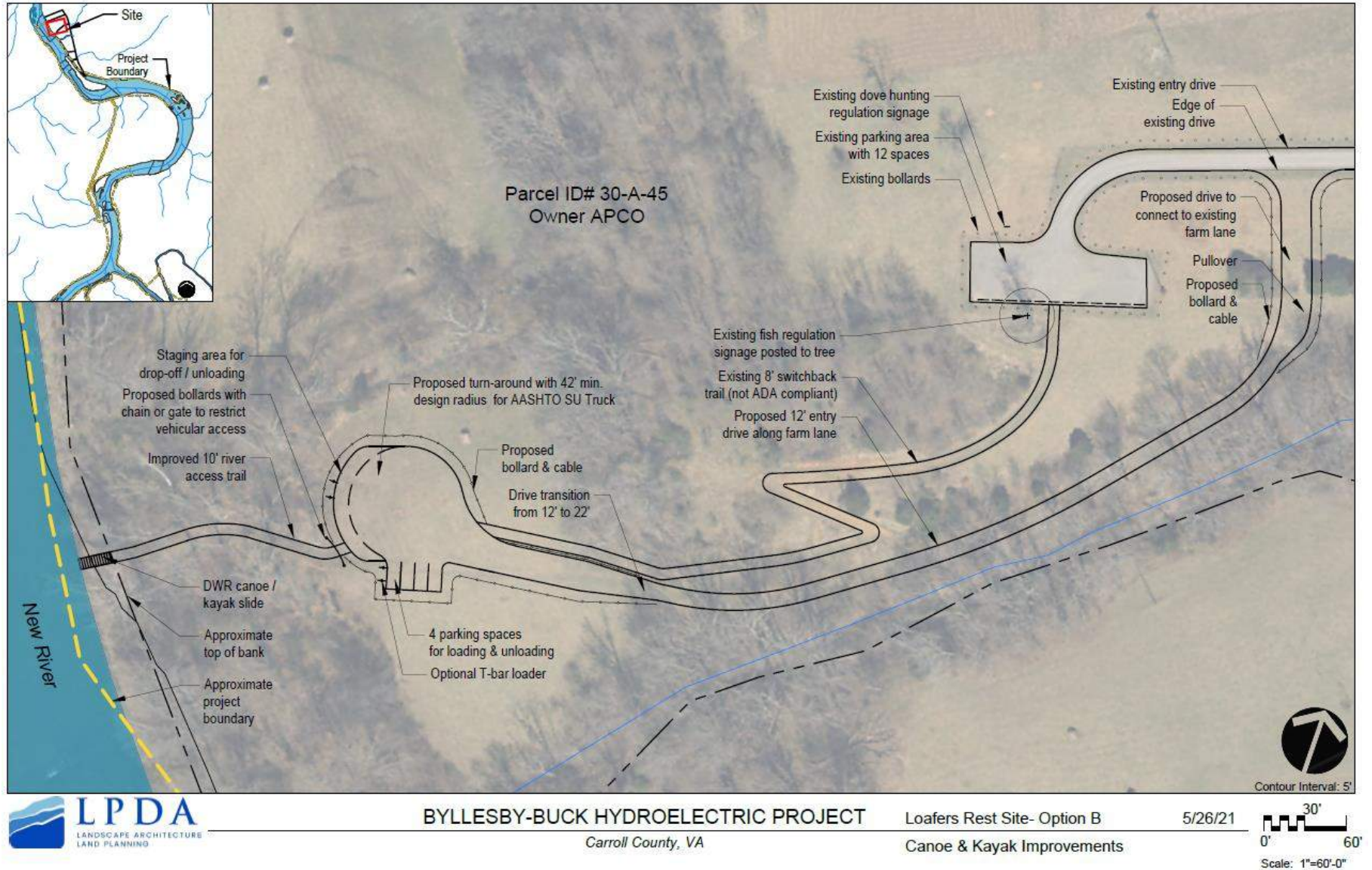
Figure 1. Preliminary Overall Trail Map at Loafers Rest





**Figure 2. Proposed Canoe & Kayak Improvements – Loafers Rest Site Option A**





**Figure 3. Proposed Canoe & Kayak Improvements – Loafers Rest Site Option B**



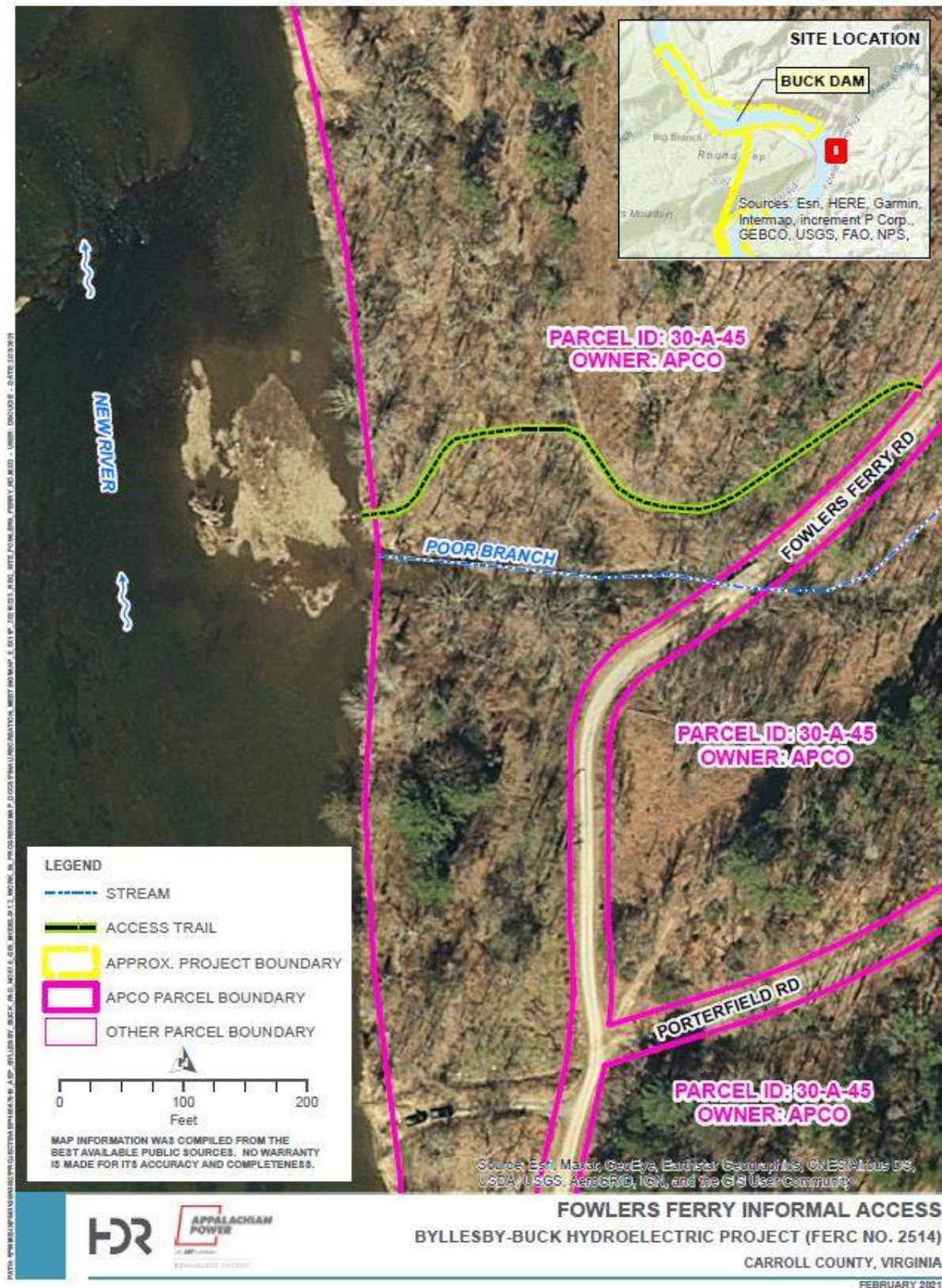


Figure 4. Fowlers Ferry Proposed Informal Access

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A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping rectangles. A large red rectangle is on the left. A grey rectangle is at the top right. A black rectangle is at the bottom right. A light grey rectangle is at the bottom left, partially overlapping the red one.

# Attachment 3

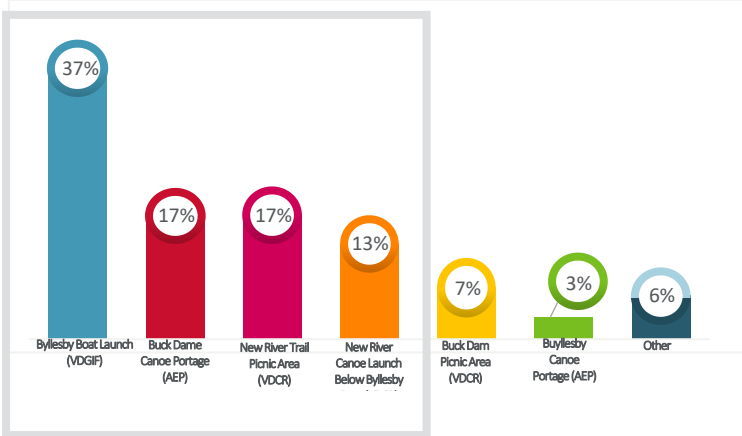
Attachment 3 – Visitor Online  
Survey Results

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# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Overall Summary Results

## Survey Locations:



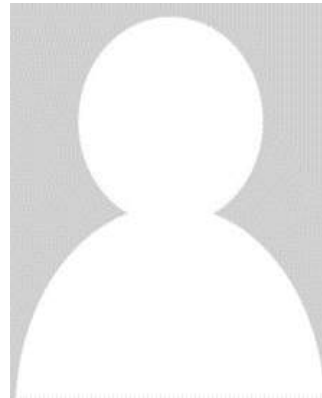
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **142** respondents at various locations within the Byllesby-Buck Recreation Project Area who completed this online survey. During this timeframe **84%** of the responses primarily came from four locations: Byllesby Boat Launch (VDWR), Buck Dam Canoe Portage, New River Trail Picnic Area, and New River Canoe Launch Below Byllesby Dam.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **42%** of the survey respondents come from three zip code locations, which are on average **18** miles away from Byllesby – Buck Recreation. **92%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **5** hours.

Males made up **74%** of the respondents, **49%** in their thirties and forties.

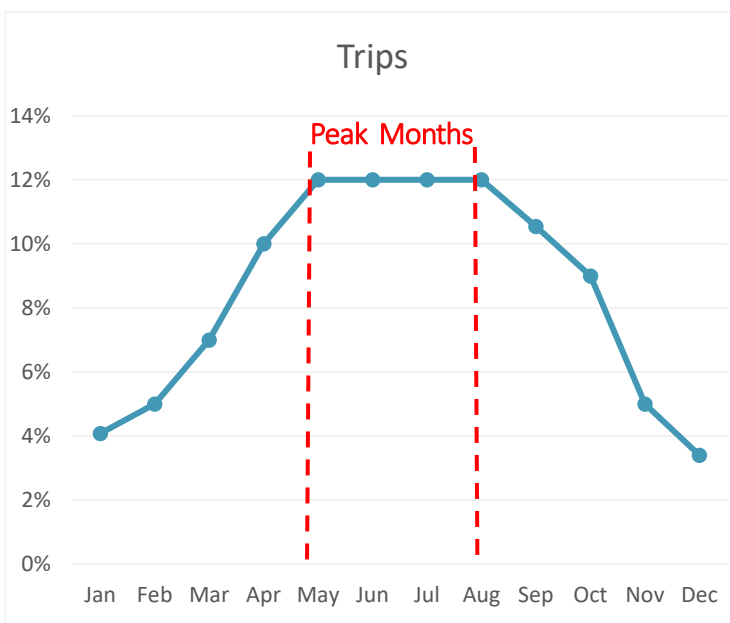
The most frequent months visited are from April to September, with May, June, July, and August being the peak months.



- Zip codes of most frequent visitors:  
**24330, 24333 & 24382**

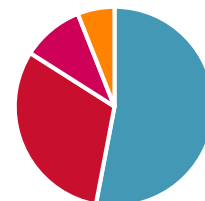
- Average # of visits per year are **18**

- Average miles traveled: **34**



**83%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. Of the **17%** that were staying overnight a breakdown of the accommodations used is shown:

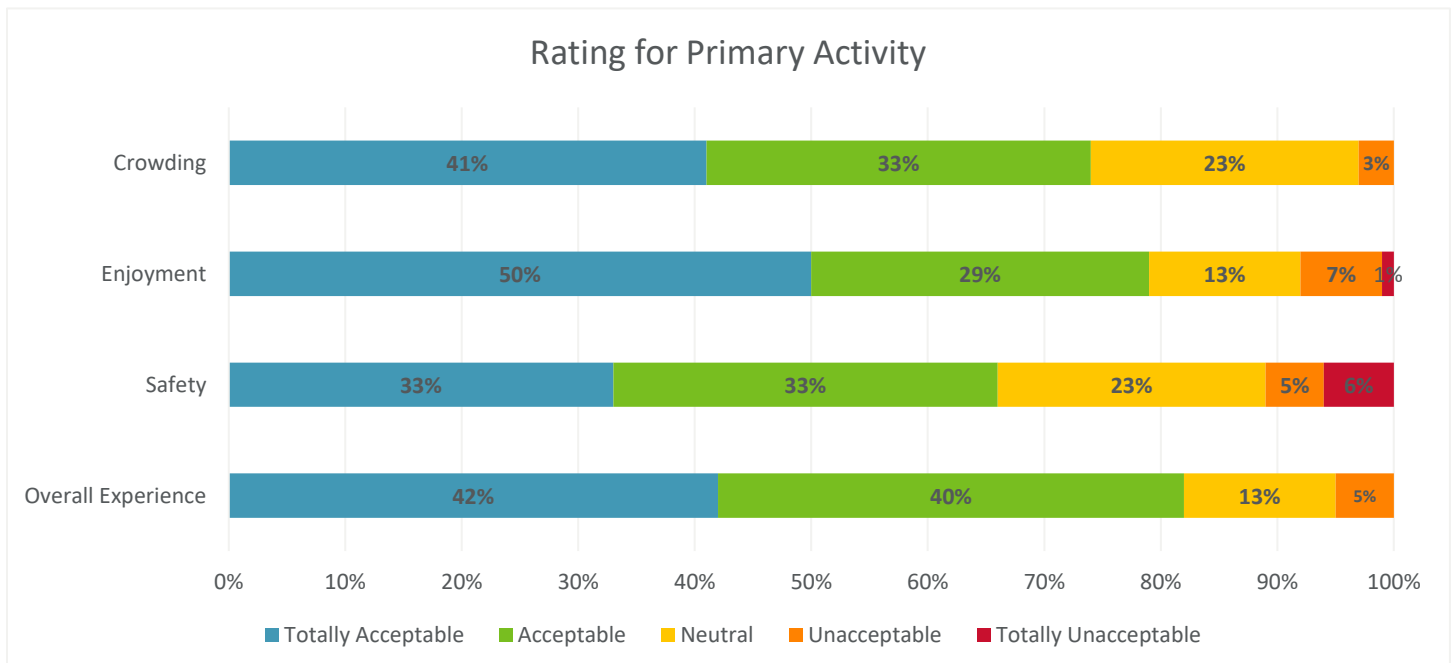
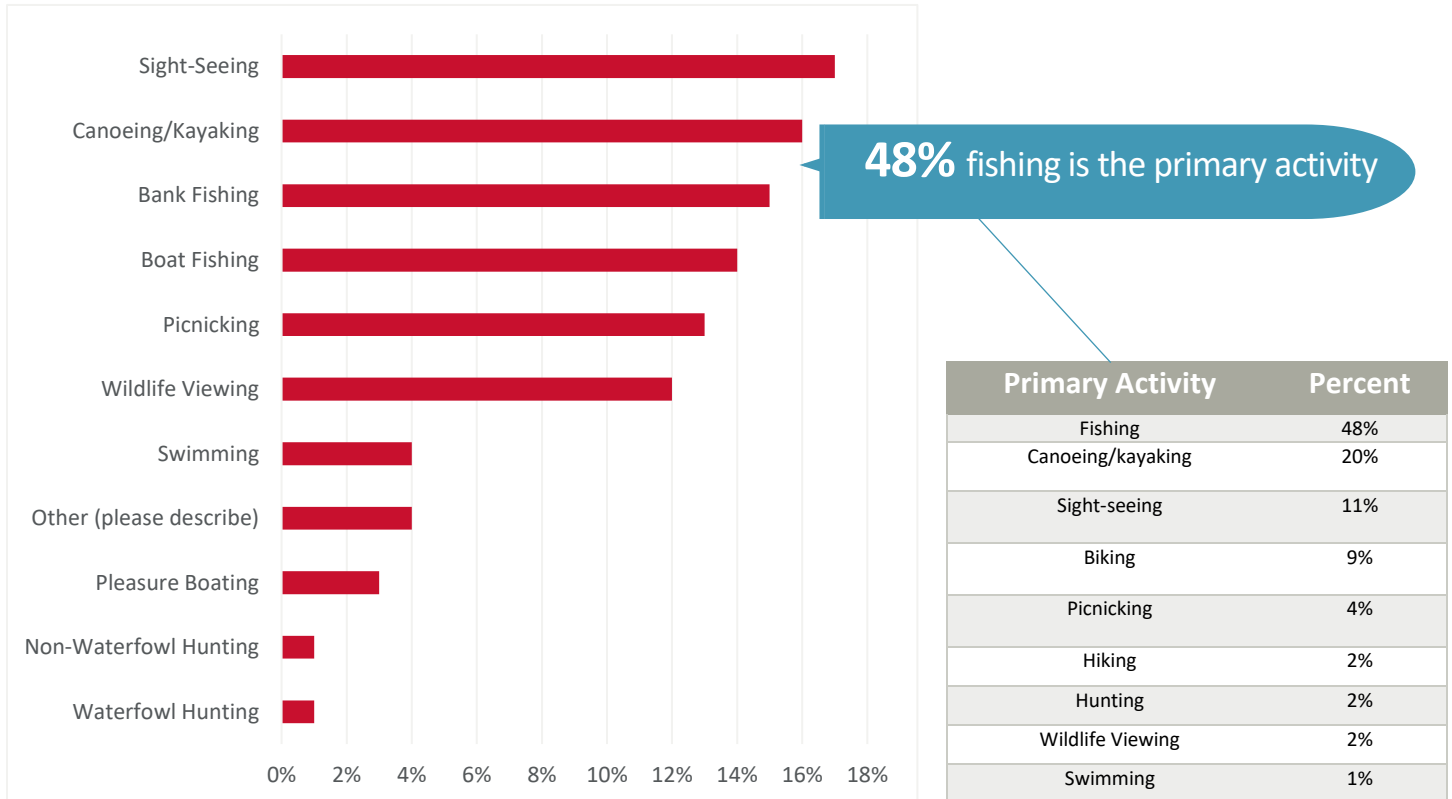
## Overnight Accommodations



■ RV/Auto/Tent Campground ■ Vacation / Rental Home  
■ Motel / Hotel ■ Other

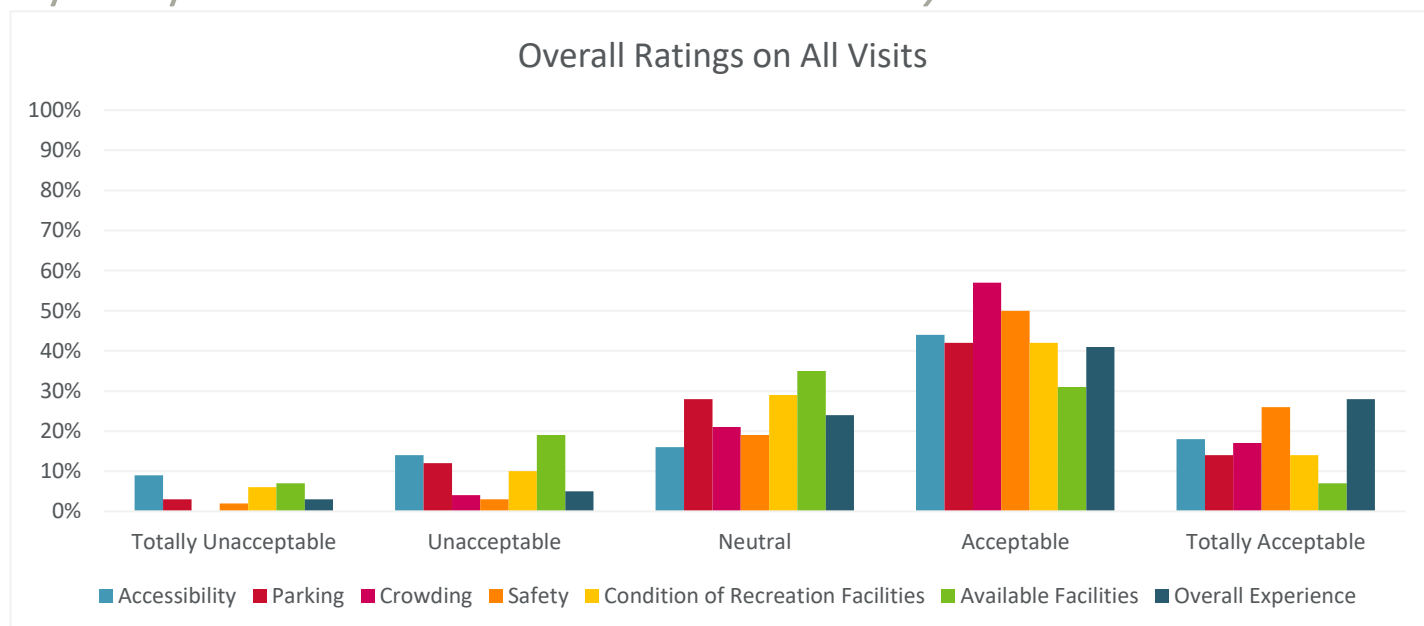
## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Overall Summary Results

### Activities Participated on Trip:





## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Overall Summary Results



Improvement Suggestions	Count
Improved or additional boat access	31
Restrooms	15
Maintain a full, stocked pond w/ Clear water	13
Better parking	8
Re-open campgrounds	8
Covered shelter	3
Drinking water available	3
Regular patrols / VDGIF presence	3
Better handicap accessibility / signage	2
Fishing piers	2
Light pole @ boat ramp	2
Wider access road	1

### Overall Comments

- Beautiful, unique place to visit
- Lacks management
- Difficult to portage at the dams
- Camping Again
- Dissappointed with people leaving trash
- Need some improvement to access road
- Stocking fish
- Want to see promotion of the area
- Remove 'no fishing' signs
- Water level too low above the dam due to work

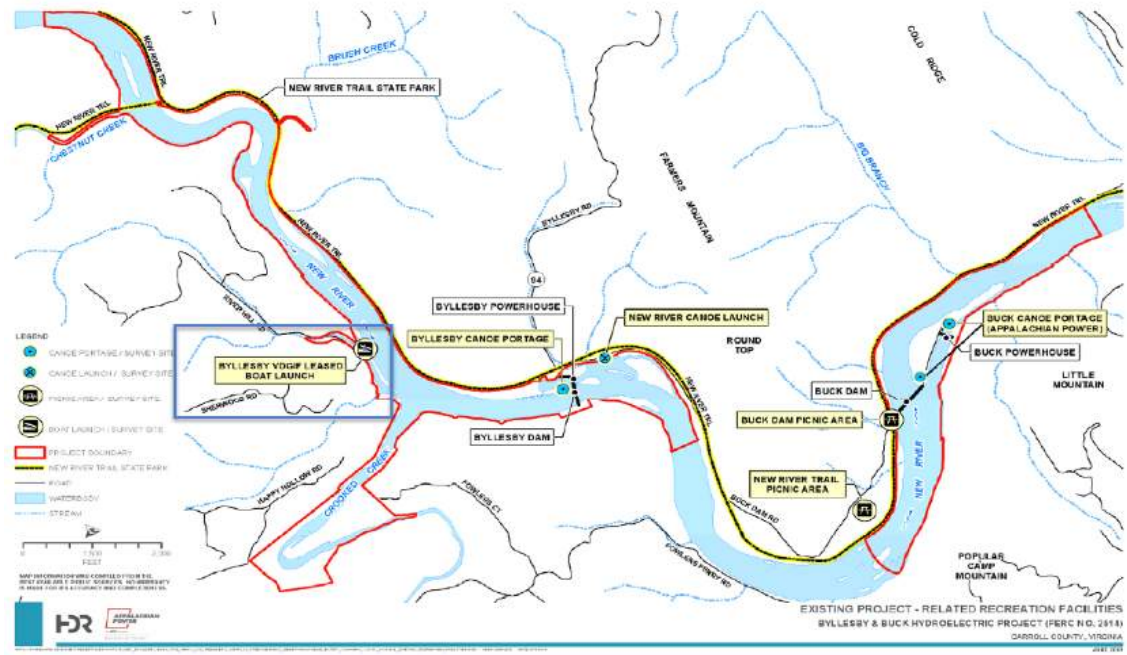


Overall the comments from the respondents show that nearly half view Byllesby-Buck as a beautiful & unique place to visit.

The top 3 suggestions for improvement include improve/ additional boat access, adding restrooms, have better parking available. The biggest impact would be improvement to portage at the dam.

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Byllesby Boat Launch

## Survey Locations:



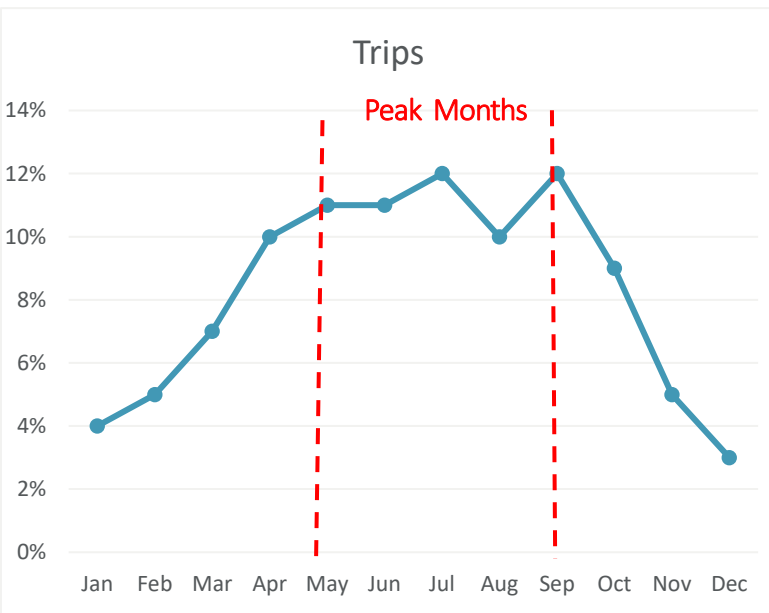
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **52** respondents from the **Byllesby Boat Launch**. Overall, **37%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **49%** of the survey respondents come from three zip code locations, which averages about **16** miles away from the Project. **93%** of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **4** hours.

Males made up **90%** of the respondents, **51%** in their thirties and forties.

The most frequent months visited are May through September with June and July being the highest visited months.



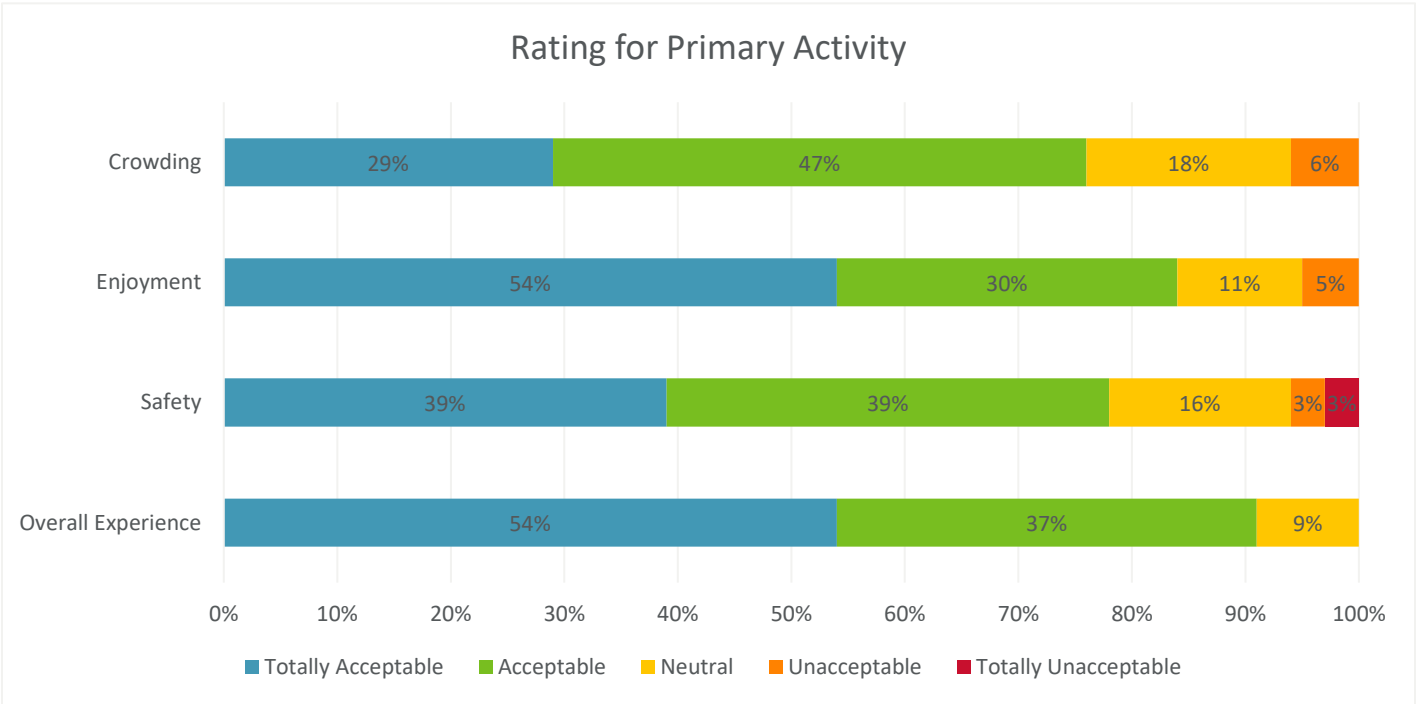
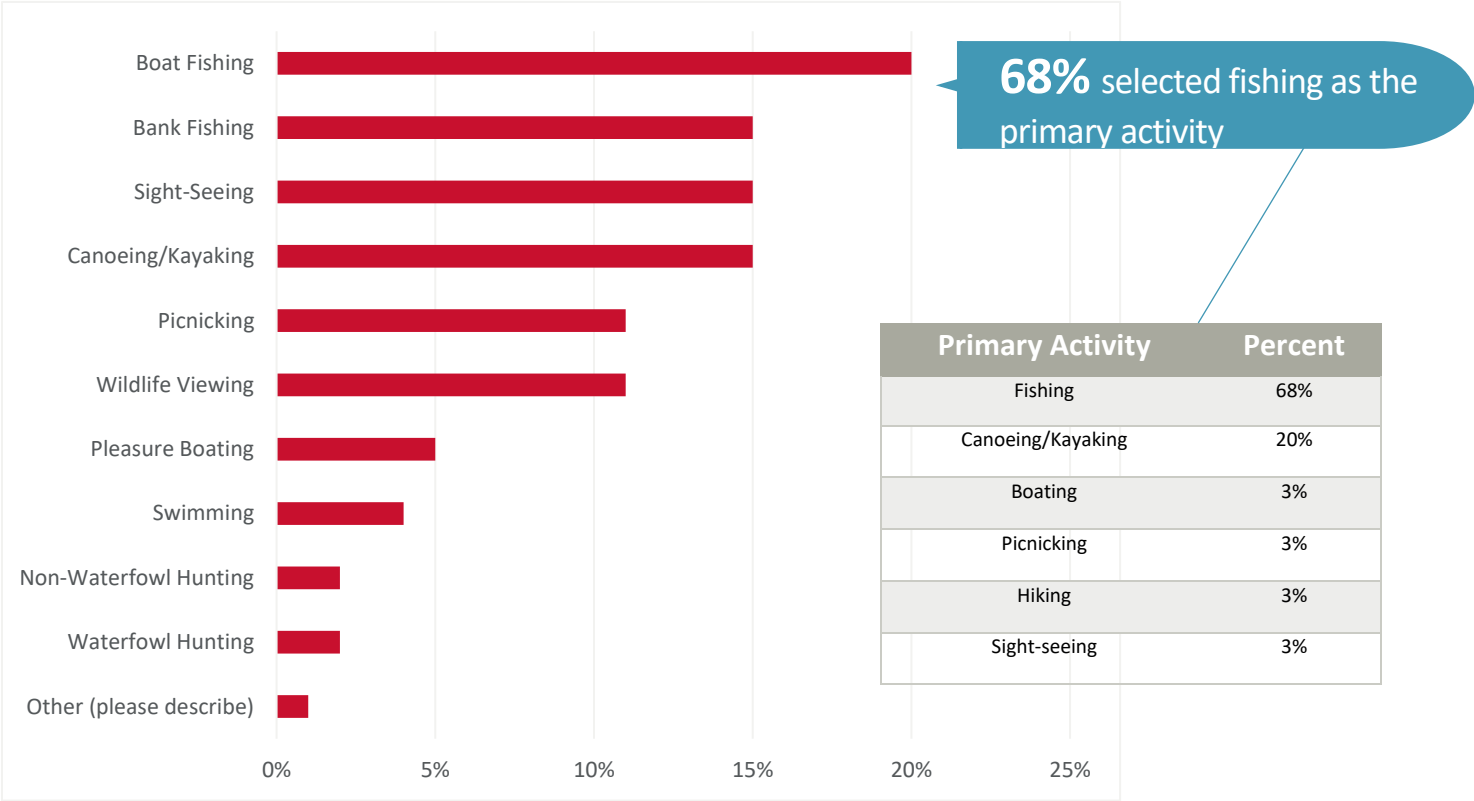
- Zip codes of most frequent visitors: **24330, 24333 & 24381**
- Average # of visits per year are **19**
- Average miles traveled: **23**

**88%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. Of the **12%** that were staying, accommodations were made up of: **40%** RV/tent camping and **60%** staying at a vacation/rental home.

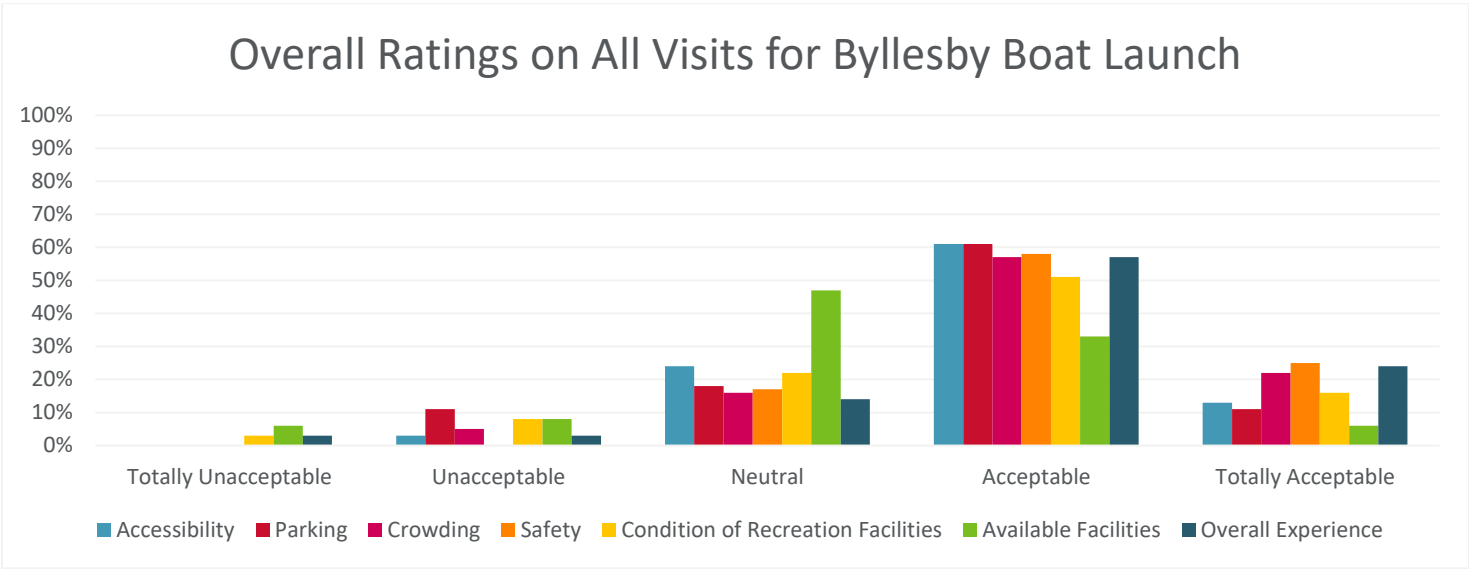


# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Byllesby Boat Launch

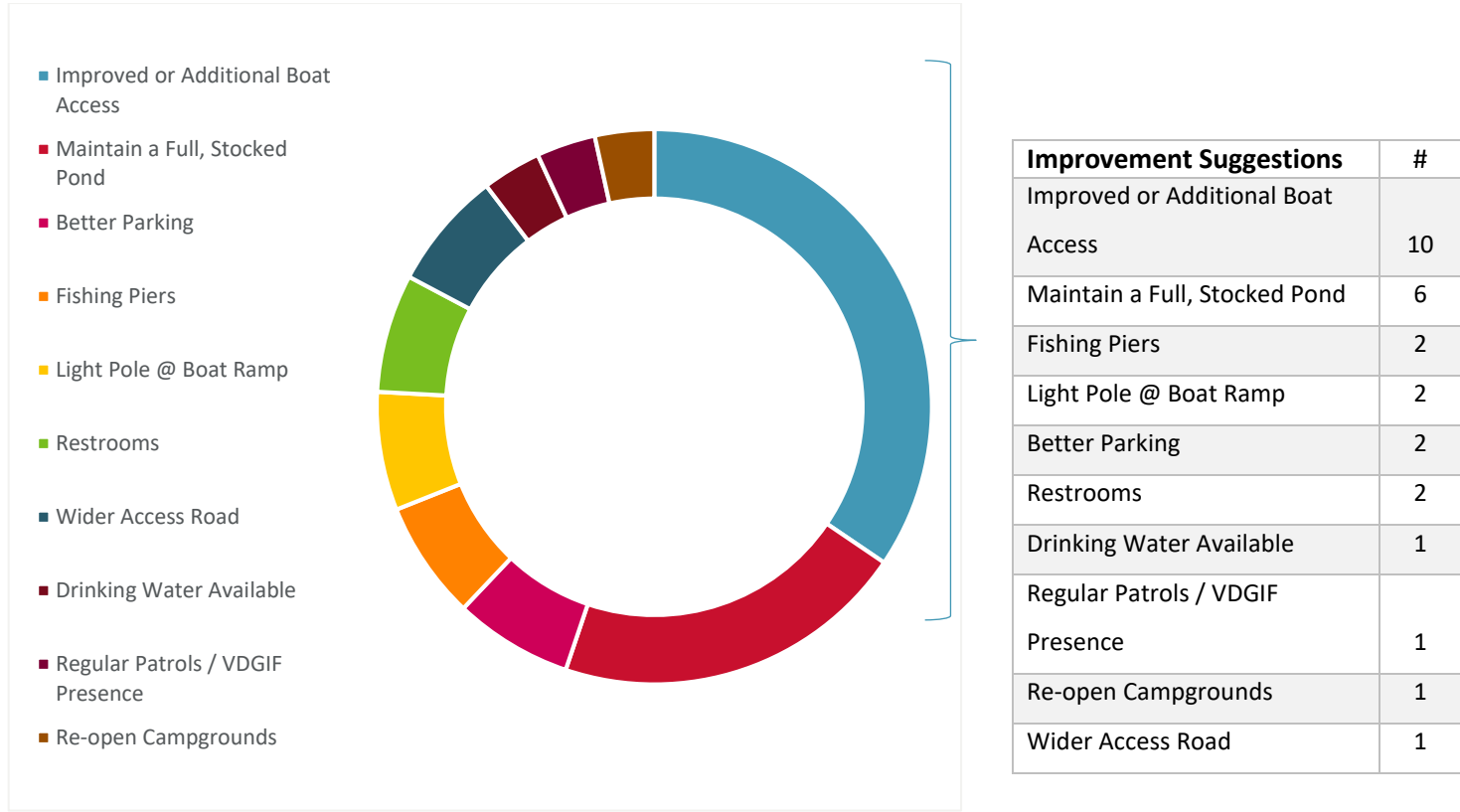
## Activities Participated on Trip:



# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Byllesby Boat Launch



## Suggested Improvement Responses from Byllesby Boat Launch:





## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – *Cumulative Results for Byllesby Boat Launch*

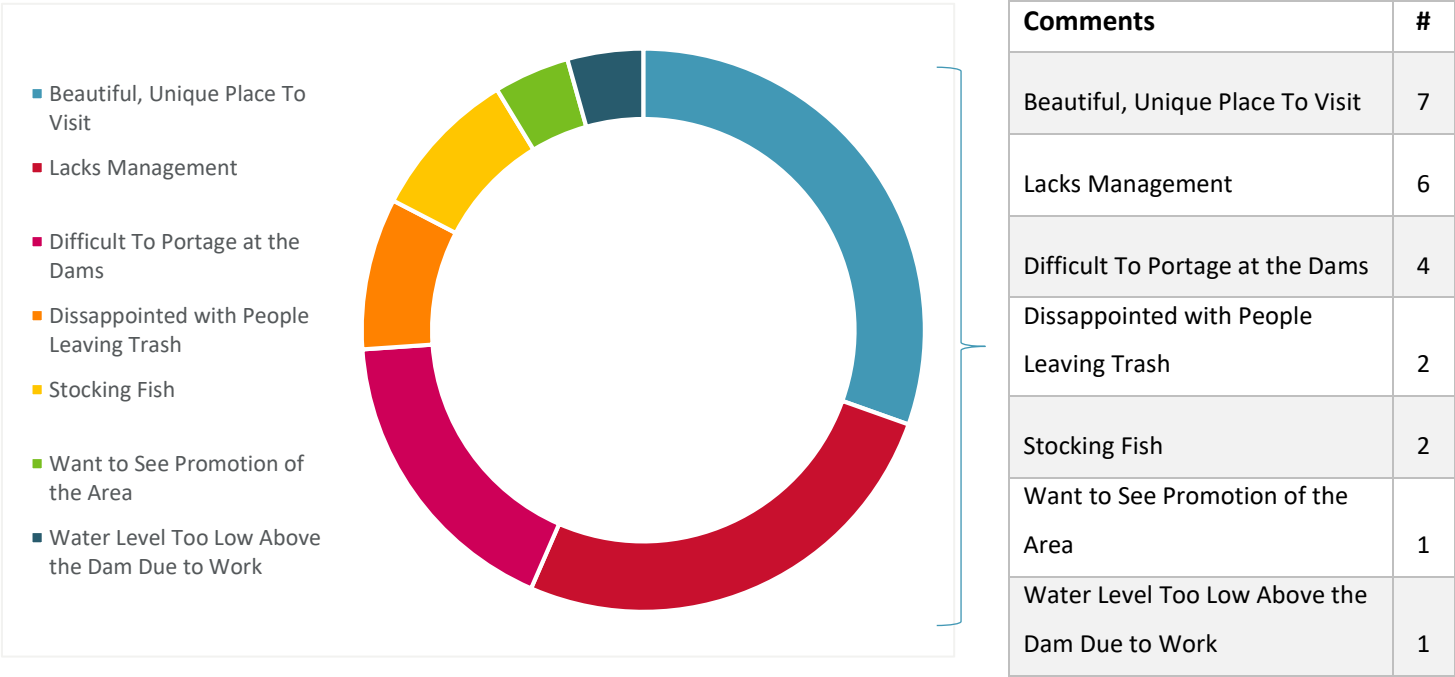
Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better parking area, more police patrol</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better parking, more places that are cleared to fish from the bank, more picnic areas for family activities. More trash receptacles so possibly the riverbanks wouldn't be so trashed up. Campgrounds like there used to be would be great. All along the byllesby-buck project area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat Dock/pier</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat ramp between dams.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat ramp needs a light pole set up at the launch for us night fisherman</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat ramp on the Buck Dam pool.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Byllesby need more stocking of fish!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing piers at tail raise</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wish the campground that was started there would be completed. This would bring people and revenue to the area.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lighting at byllesby boat launch</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more canoe/kayak launches are always a good idea</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My wife and I love fishing below both dams. Below the dams is the absolute best place we find to catch big carp and all species on a regular basis. We were sad to see signs moved further toward the parking area saying no trespassing at byllesby dam below the dam at the canoe launch. A couple years back we could access that small pool and it was good fishing but now they've moved the signs and we couldn't access that part for fear of trespassing. I pay more for fishing license and get less fishing space year to year. Doesn't seem fair.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to maintain full pond as much as possible. Recreation has suffered due to the many years of low flows. Feel it has effected the fishing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None needed at this time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portage at Dam could use some improvement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restroom facilities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wider access road to boat ramp along with regular police patrols due to the location of facility</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality is terrible in terms of the amount of mud coming down river from the dam. Totally unacceptable...</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop equipment from working in the river causing muddy water throughout the seasons.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent area. Frequent for hiking and cycling.</li> </ul>

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – *cumulative results by Byllesby Boat Launch*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In meeting I attended. there was some thought of lowering pond during n winter.. we need to be able to access boat ramp.. kayaking/fishing boats ..</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better availability about the dam on power house side</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canoe and kayak access at the beginning of byllesby lake (end of rapids) so you don't have to paddle 2 miles to get to</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bathrooms at bylledby pool boat ramp.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boat launch at buck dam.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I fish from byllesby boat landing on average twice a week. Enjoy the fact that its usually not over crowded.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water clarity has been really murky this year with a lot of debris in the water</li> </ul>

## Additional Comment Responses from Byllesby Boat Launch:





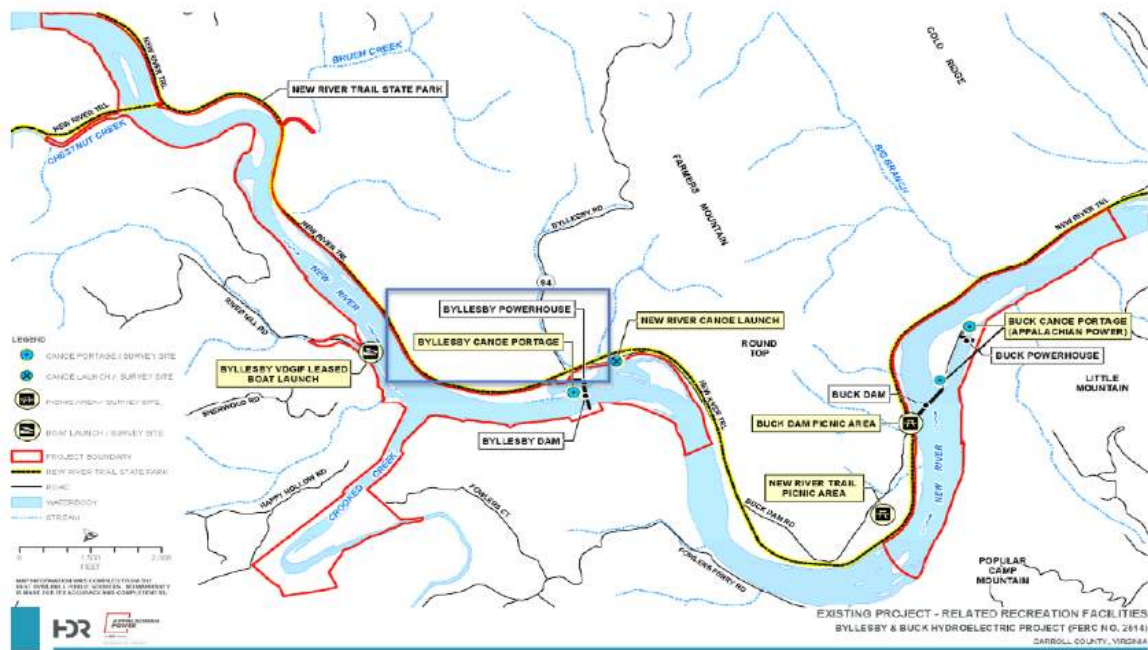
## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – *cumulative results by Byllesby Boat Launch*

### Additional comments: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautiful place to visit and show off to visitors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to dam work the water level above the dam is too low to be used for boating/kayaking and fishing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing has dropped off over the past few years between the dams. What can AEP do to improve this.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I just love it there and go every chance I can.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If this area was helped and marketed correctly I believe it would flourish. I own New River Outdoor Adventures and I would help promote the area for families, fishermen, and nature lovers. Timmy Dixon 2762378823</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ive lived in this area my whole life and enjoyed everything it has to offer please let the younger generation enjoy it also give them something to do in a place with not much else to do</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More visibility of park officials to help patrol the area so maybe people wouldn't leave so much trash and things</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My biggest complaint is the way some people leave their trash all over the ground. There's not much you can do about that. There could be twice as many trash cans and some people would be too lazy to walk five extra steps</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portage above buck dam so we dont have to go below buck dam</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a unique part of the river in our area. I often bring my out of state guests here.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is by far, the best recreation area of its kind!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please do some thing about the muddy condition of the river. It is killing the fishing,</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muddy water conditions that are made by AEP is unacceptable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve what you can.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A beautiful area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar lights for night safety.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only comments i have are positive. Enjoy fishing the area. Would be nice to have a small dock at the landing to make more accessible getting in and out of the boat. Nothing big as i feel it would attract the wrong groups of people and become a hangout instead of a boat launch. Just a suggestion, but i am happy i have a place close to home to enjoy time at.</li> </ul>

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Byllesby Canoe Portage

## Survey Locations:



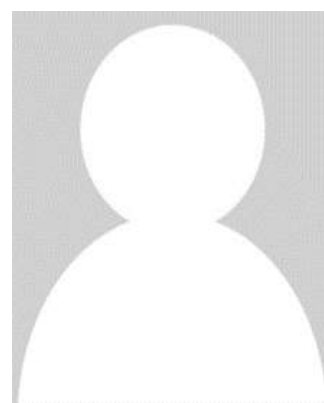
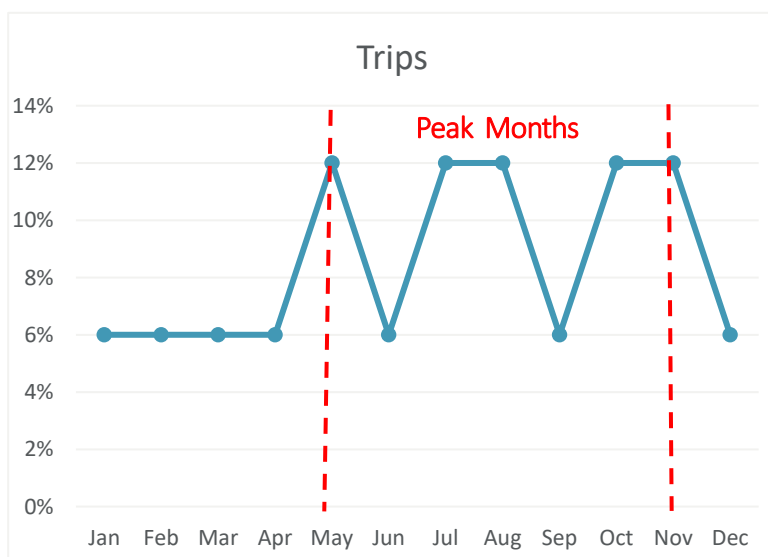
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **4** respondents from the **Byllesby Canoe Portage**. Overall, **3%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **50%** of the survey respondents come from one zip code location, which is **40** miles away from the Project. **67%** of respondents consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **2** hours.

Males made up **75%** of the respondents, **50%** in their thirties.

The months most visited are May, July, August, October & November.



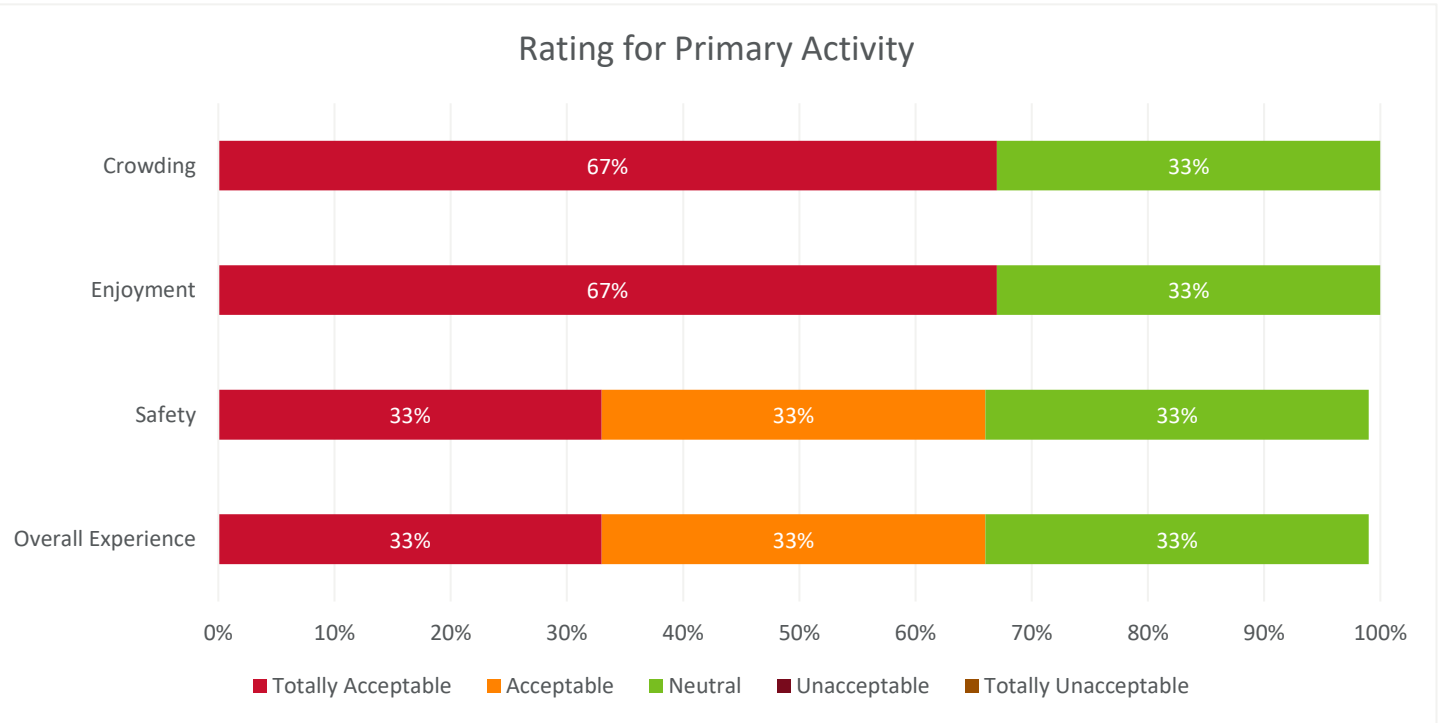
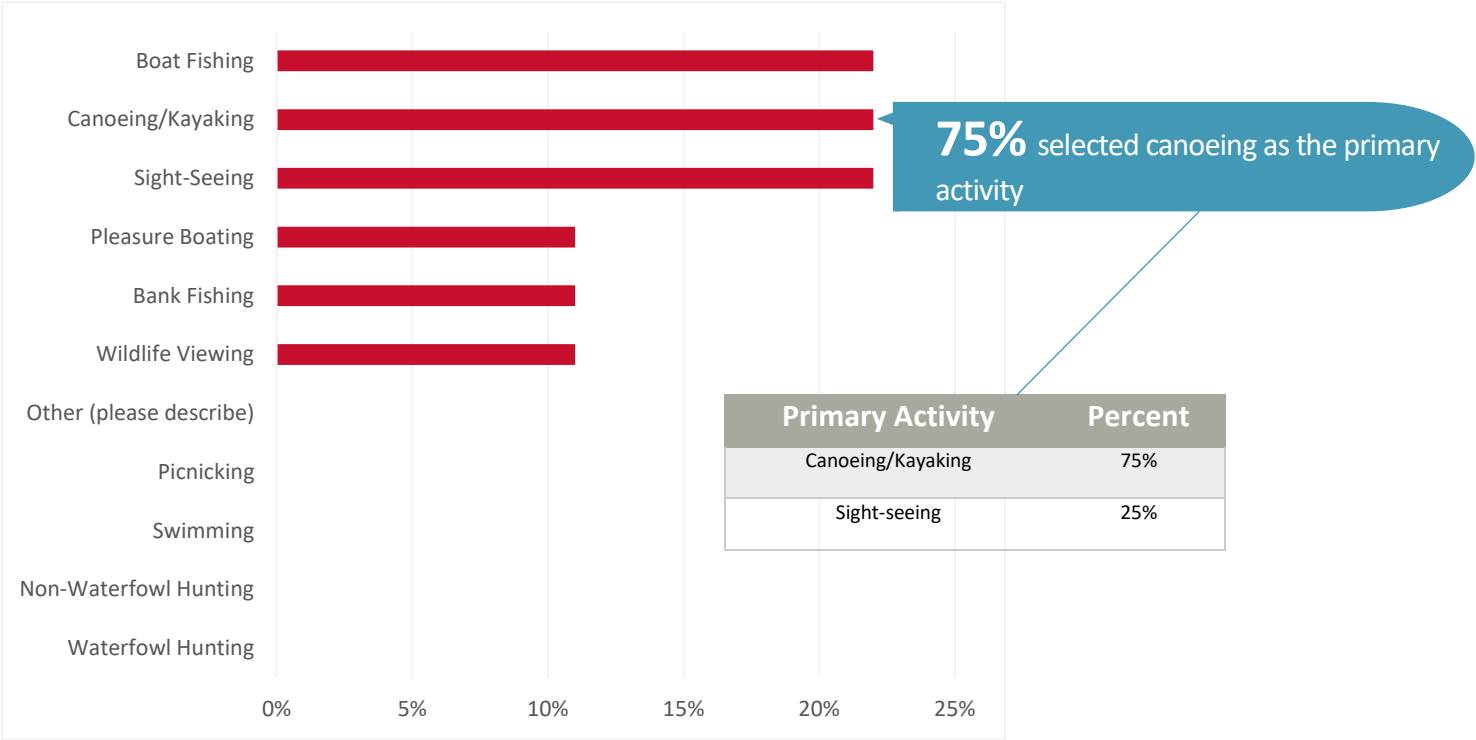
- Zip code of most frequent visitors: **24312**
- Average # of visits per year are **36**
- Average miles traveled: **83**

**100%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area.

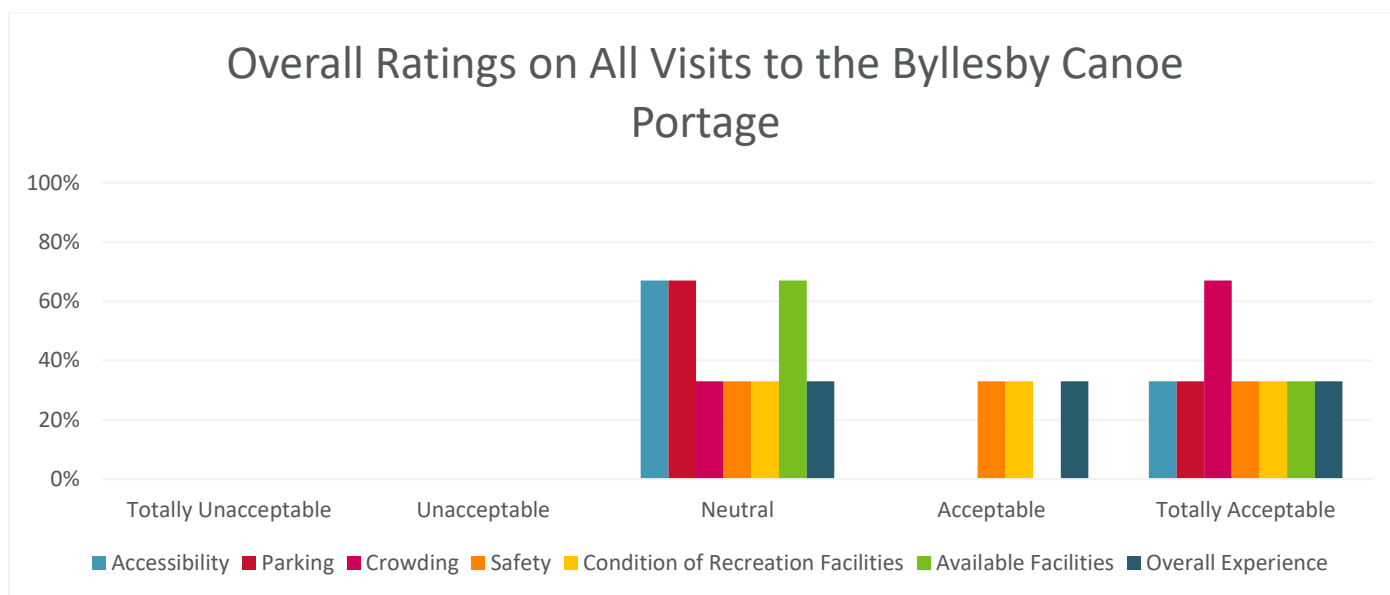


# Byllesby-Buck Recreation –Cumulative Results for Byllesby Canoe Portage

## Activities Participated on Trip:



## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Byllesby Canoe Portage



Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

- Easier public access and Portage options for kayak/canoe around both dams.
- A good boat launch on the power plant side of the river would be awesome.

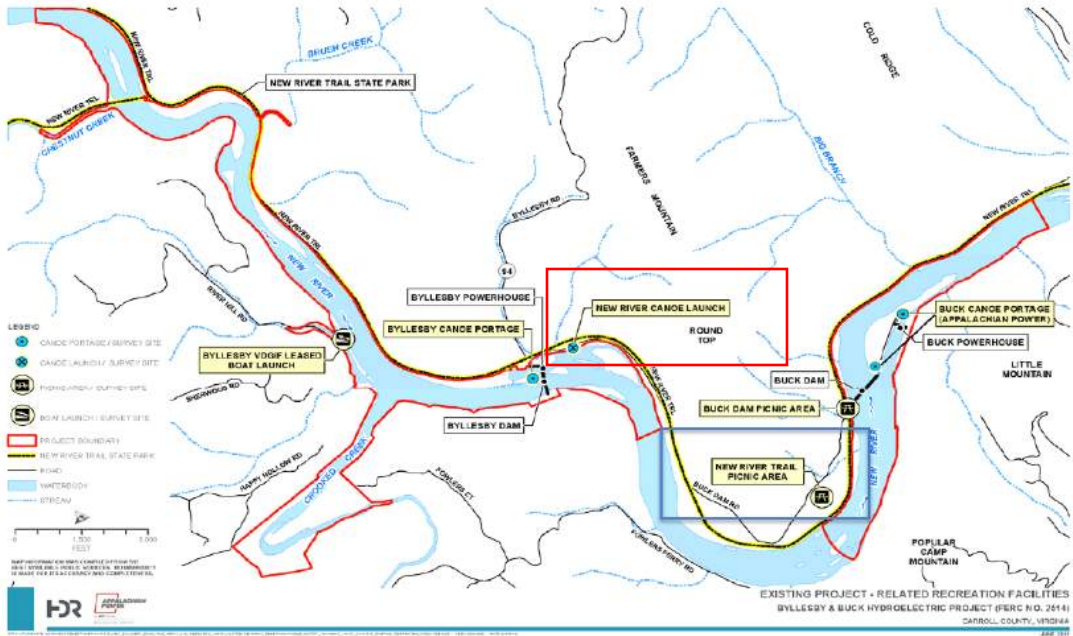
Additional Comments: *(verbatim responses)*

No responses given



# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for New River Canoe Launch

## Survey Locations:



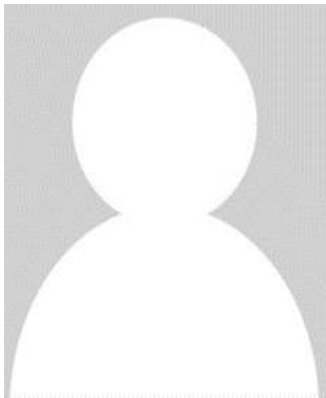
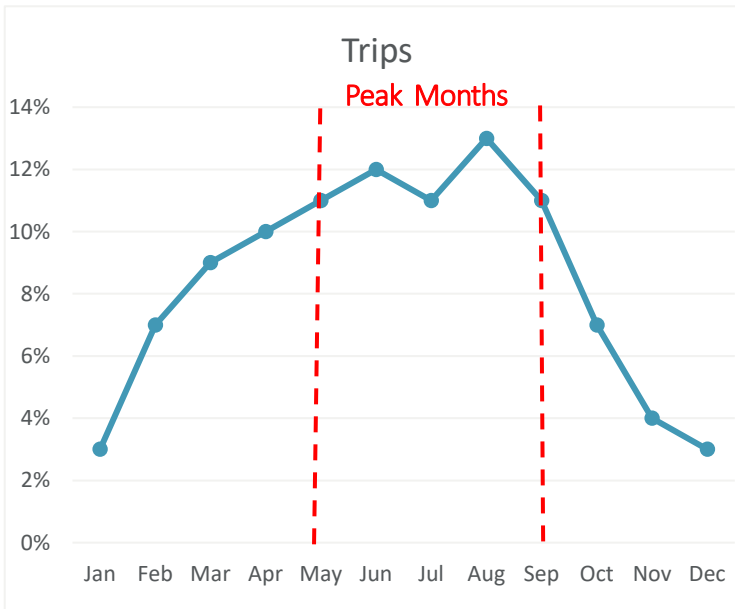
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **19** respondents from the **New River Canoe Launch**. Overall, **17%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **48%** of the survey respondents come from two zip code locations, which average about **21** miles away from the Project. While **100%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **3.6** hours.

Males made up **67%** of the respondents, with **47%** in their forties.

The most frequent months visited are May through September with a slight dip in July.



- Zip codes of most frequent visitors:  
**24330 & 24382**

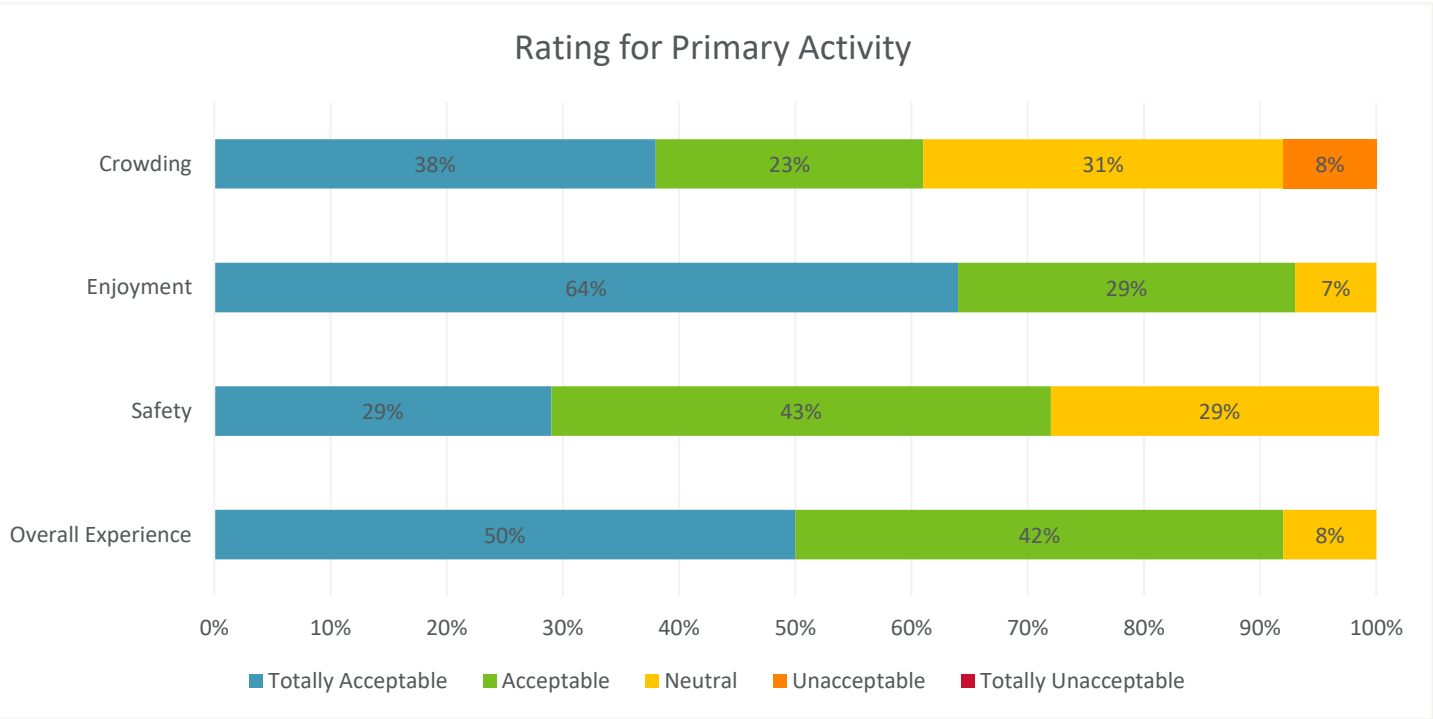
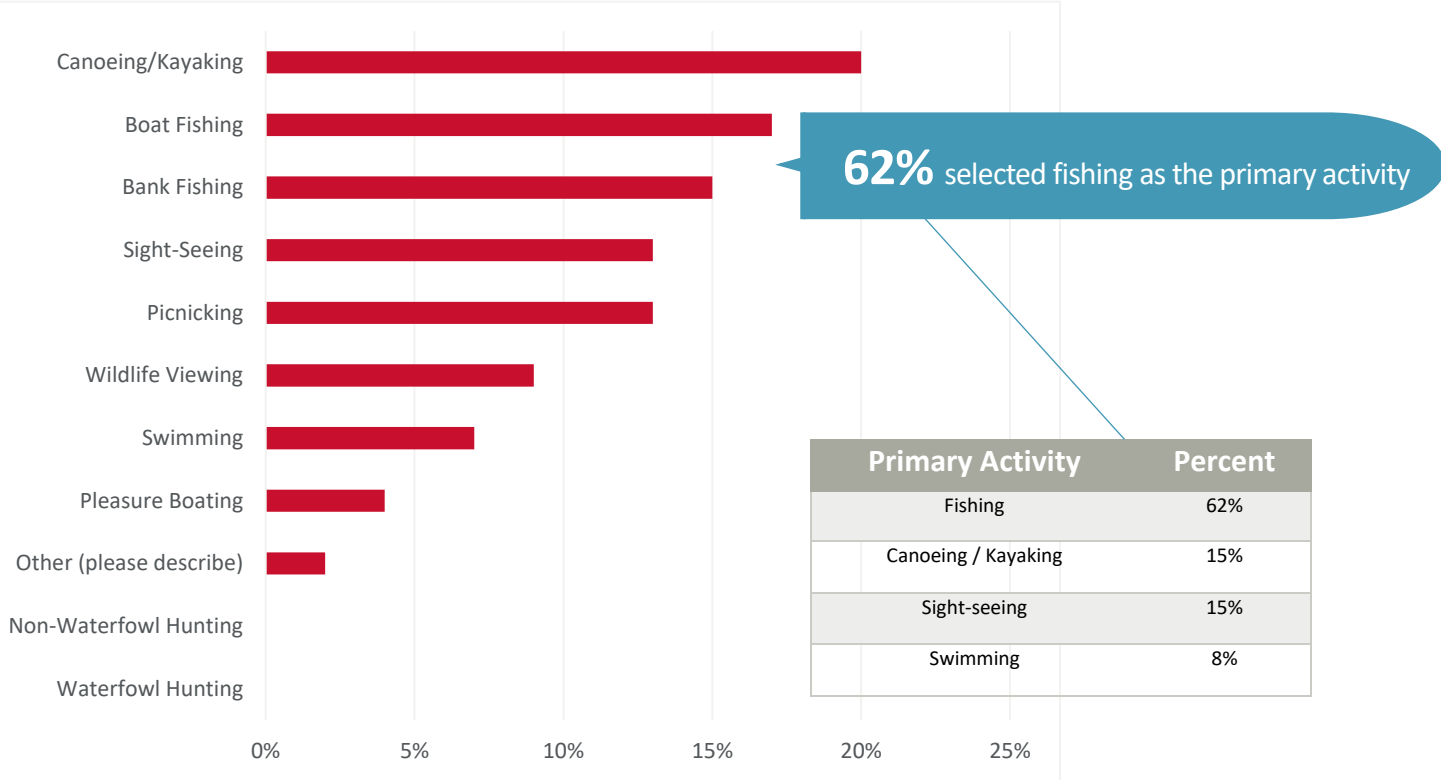
- Average # of visits per year are  
**29**

- Average miles traveled: **39**

**88%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. Of the **12%** that were staying overnight **100%** were staying in either an RV/Auto/Tent campground.

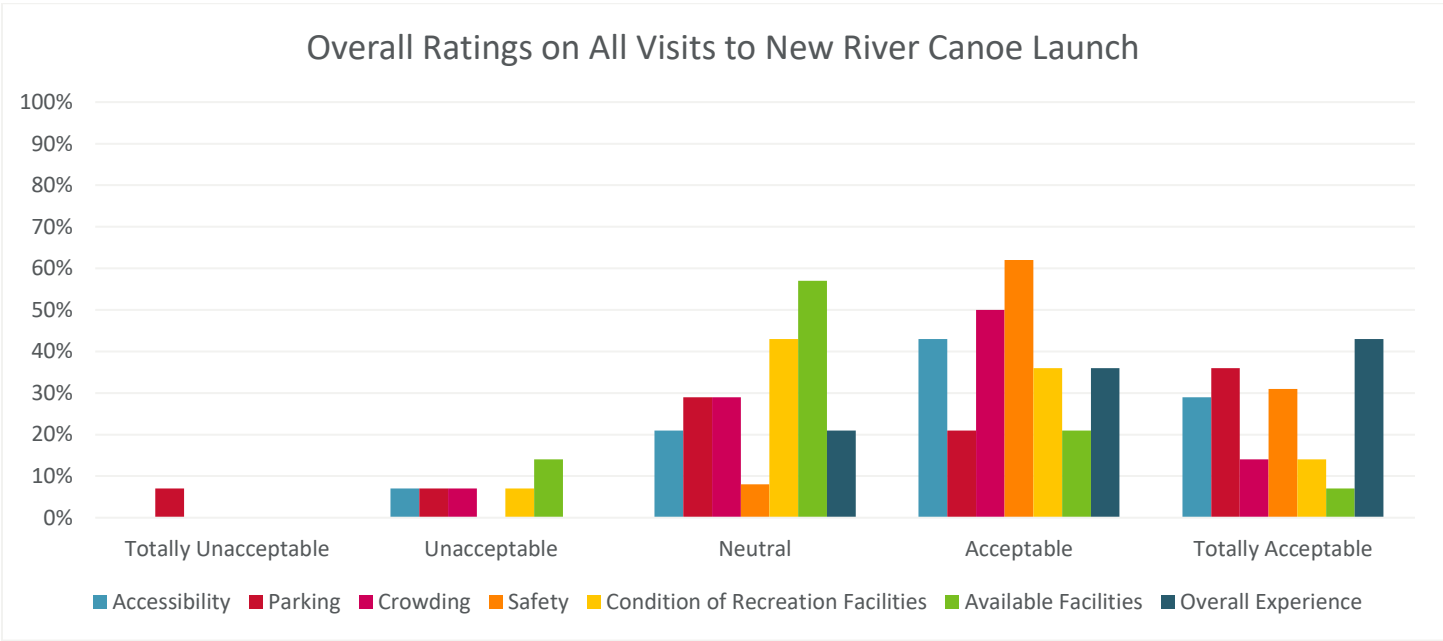
# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for New River Canoe Launch

## Activities Participated on Trip:

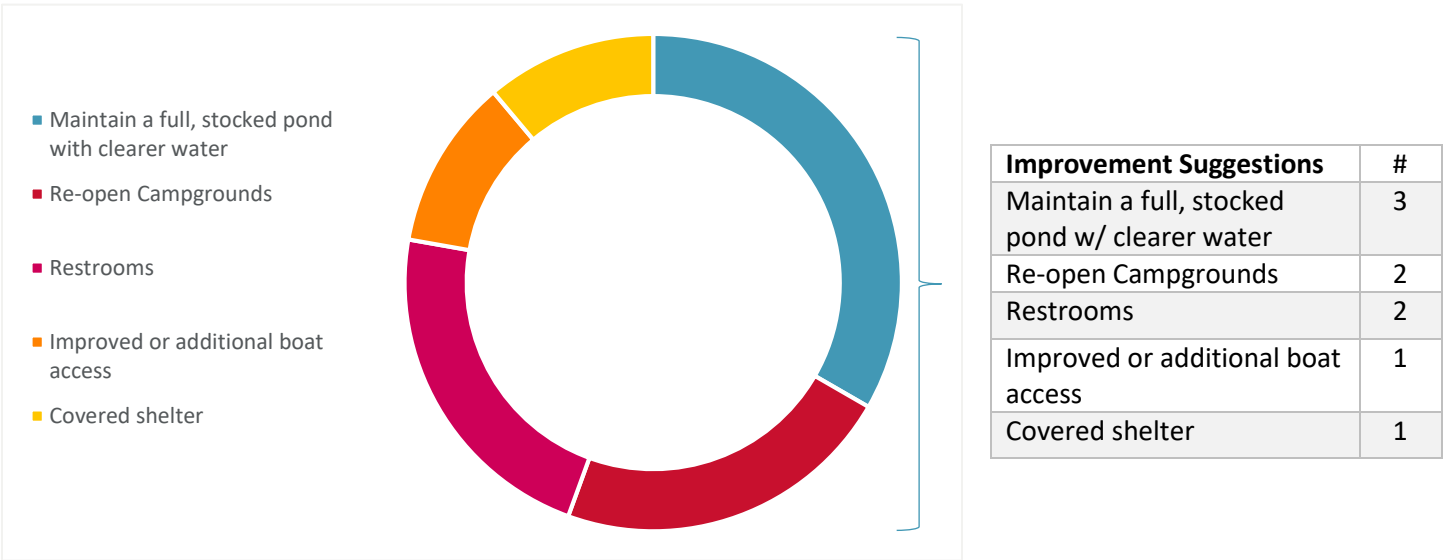




# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for New River Canoe Launch



## Suggested Improvement Responses from New River Canoe Launch:

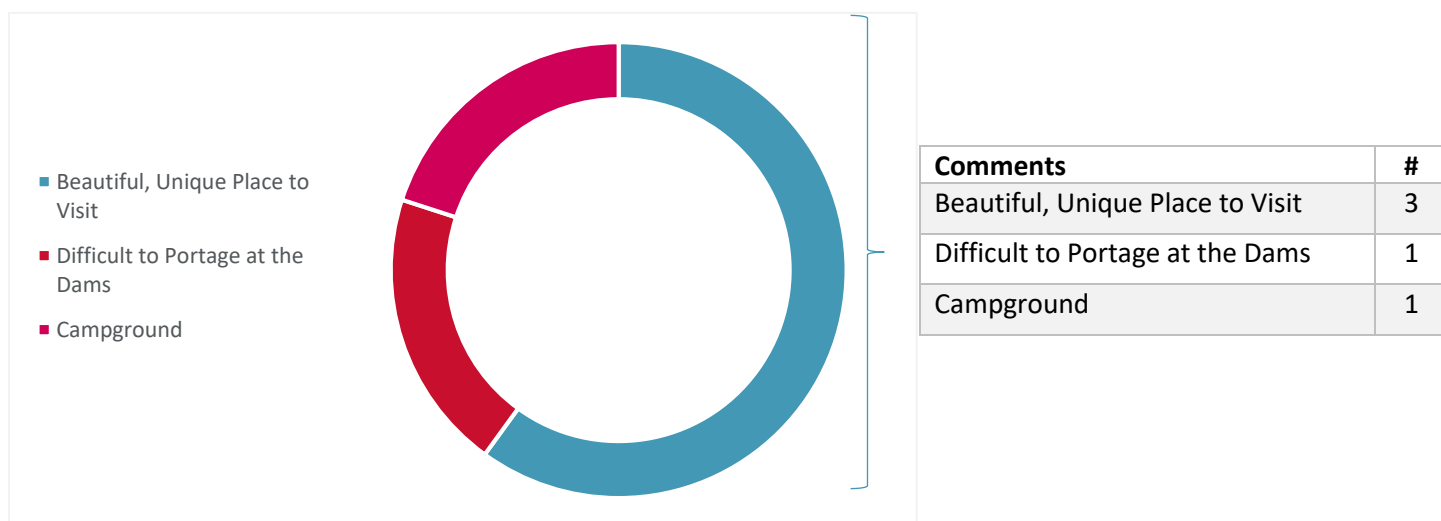


## Byllesby-Buck Recreation — Cumulative Results for New River Canoe Launch

Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open the campground back up</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bathroom facilities at the Byllesby canoe put in and at the picnic area at the bend in the river. More marked hiking trails. More history information. Tours of the dam. An established camping area with water and bathrooms AND the old ticket booth and century old modular home restored as a history of the new river museum. (I would be happy to help manage these, living less than a mile from the dam!) Regular litter clean up. The fisherman frequently leaves bait trash everywhere.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prohibit overnight camping along the riverbank. Campers block access to the river.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrooms, picnic shelter</li> </ul>

### Additional Comment Responses from New River Canoe Launch:





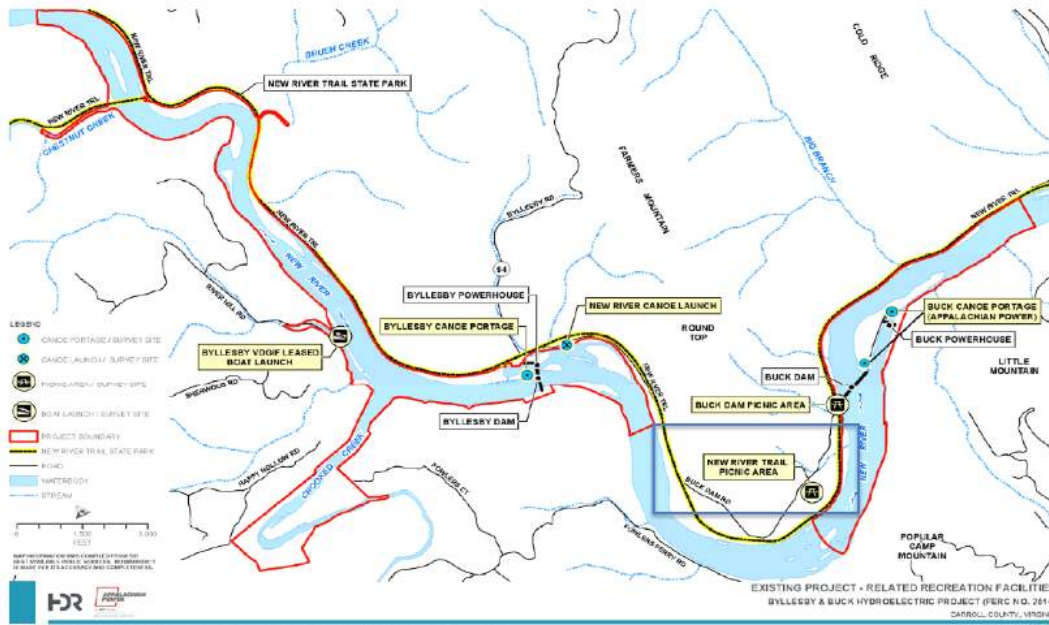
## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – *Cumulative Results for New River Canoe Launch*

### Additional comments: *(verbatim responses)*

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beautiful place to visit.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fishing has dropped off over the past few years between the dams. What can AEP do to improve this.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My family lives on Byllesby Rd. We walk down to the river and the trails every single day. Some days we hike around in the forest. Some days we walk the trail. Some days we bike the road or trail. In warmer months we sit on the bank and play in the sand and swim and tube and kayak. We picnic. We bird watch. We track animal prints. My husband and I go there for date night. We camp. We just exist with nature. I can think of few things we do not do there (except fishing, which we do not enjoy.) My 3 children's entire lives has transpired between our house and Byllesby/Buck Dam. It is our favorite place on Earth and is heaven on earth. We know just about every square inch. If you would like more information on our experience along this stretch of river... please email or call. I would love to discuss further our experience.</li></ul> |

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for the New River Trail Picnic Area

## Survey Locations:



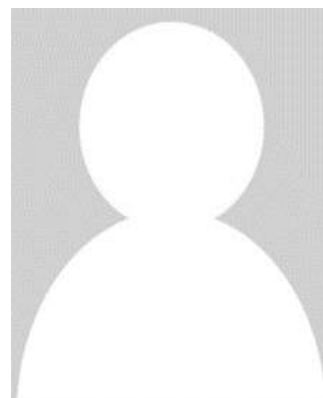
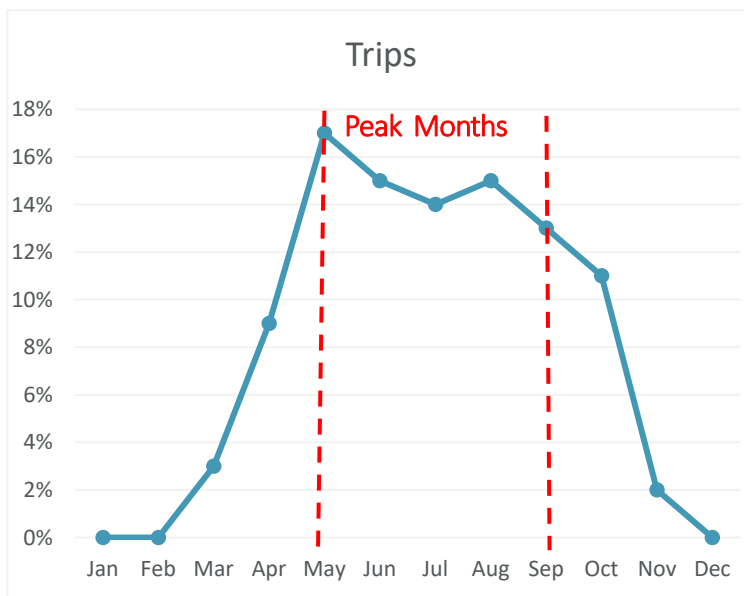
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **24** respondents from the **New River Trail Picnic Area**. Overall, **14%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **46%** of the survey respondents come from two zip code locations, which average about **20** miles away from the Project. **79%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **5** hours.

Males made up **67%** of the respondents, with **75%** in their forties, fifties, and sixties.

The most frequent months visited are May through September. May was the most popular month for this location.



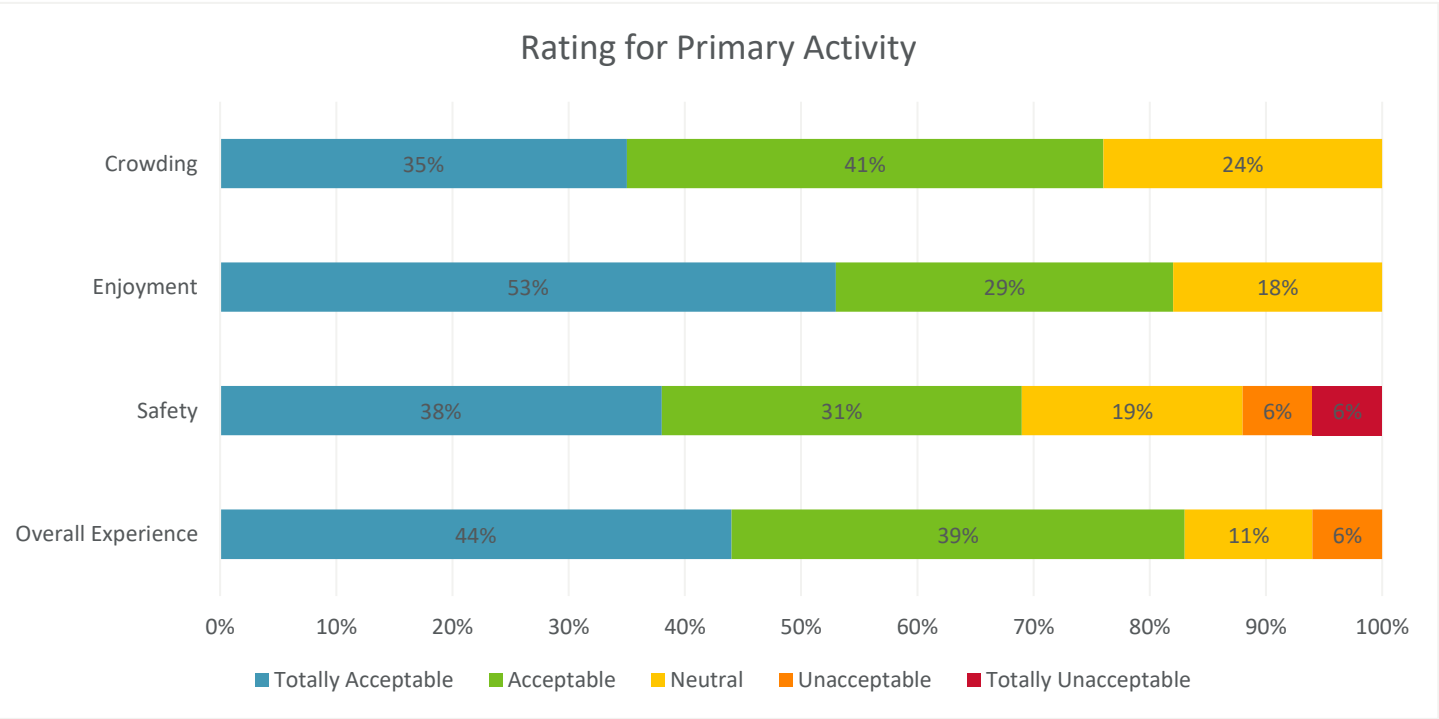
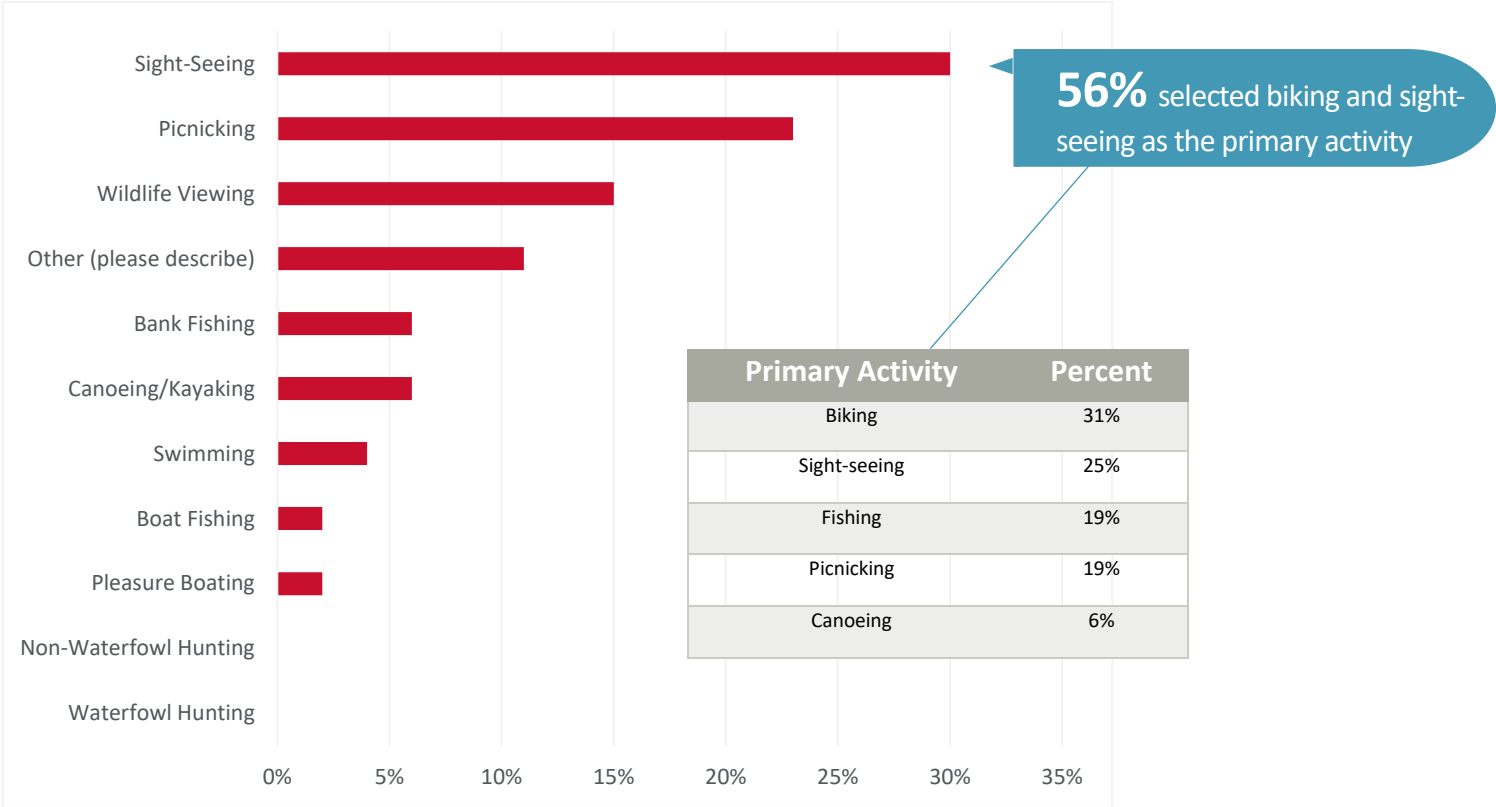
- Zip code of most frequent visitors: **24330 & 24382**
- Average # of visits per year are **10**
- Average miles traveled: **48**

**74%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. Of the **26%** that were staying overnight, they stayed in either a motel/hotel, at a vacation/rental home or at another place.

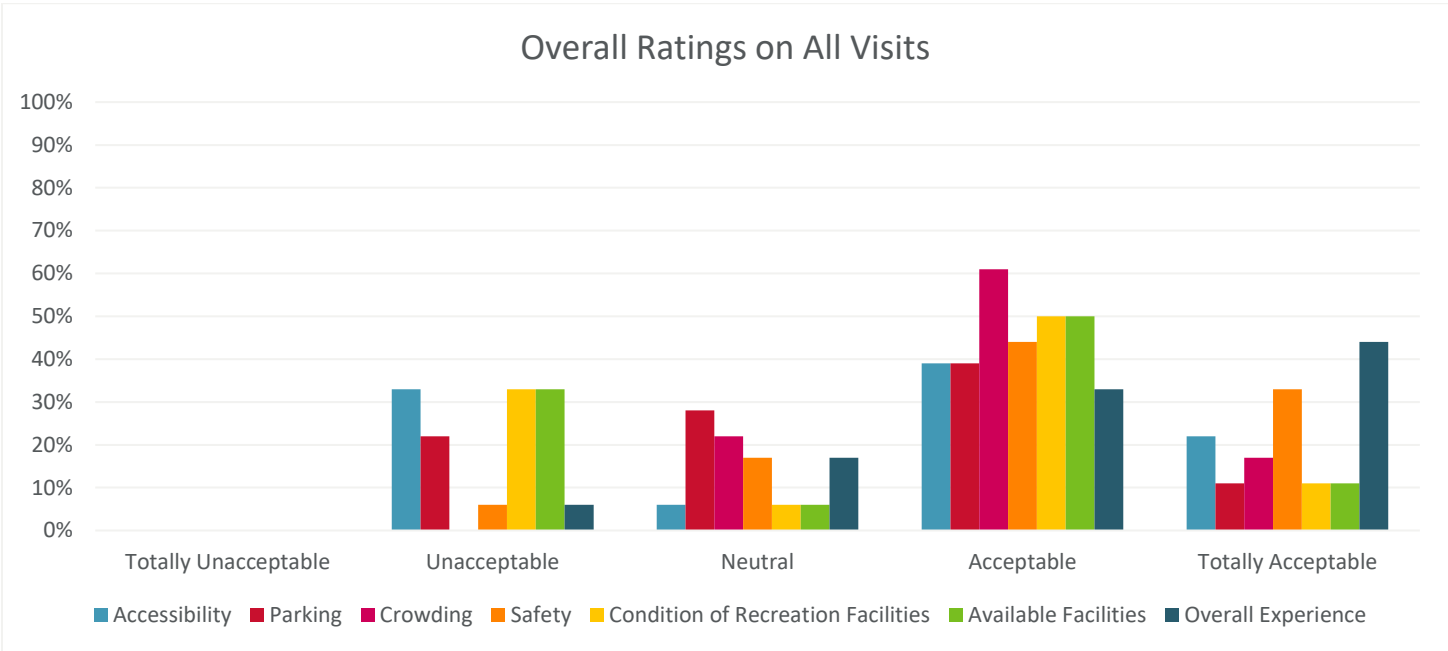


# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for the New River Trail Picnic Area

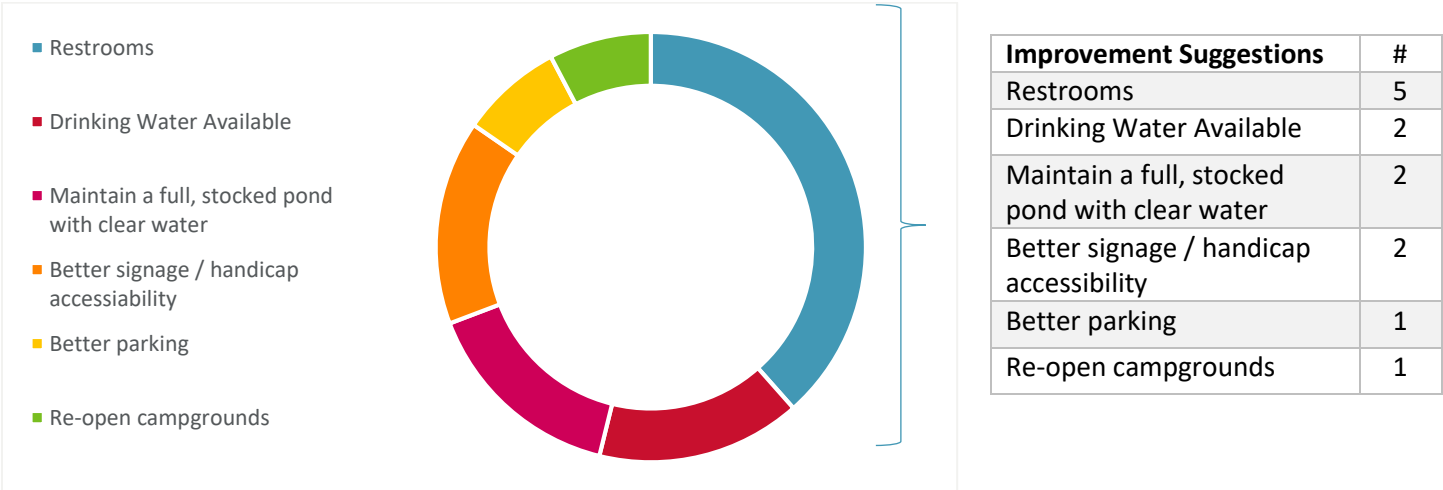
## Activities Participated on Trip:



# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for the New River Trail Picnic Area



## Suggested Improvement Responses from New River Trail Picnic Area:



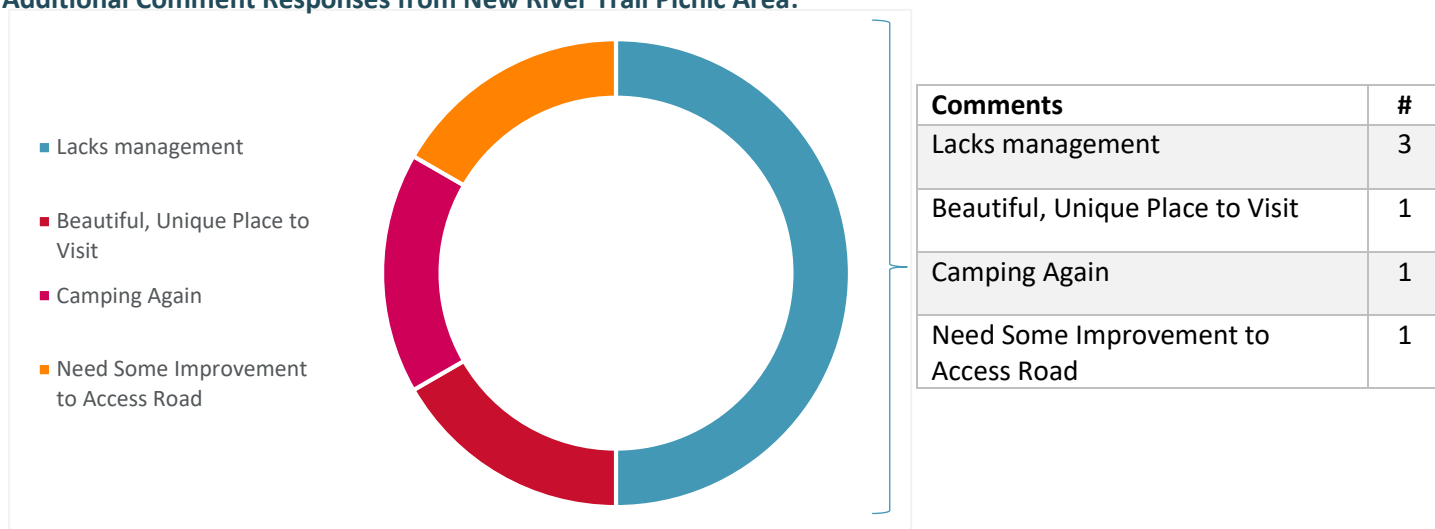
## Byllesby-Buck Recreation — *cumulative results by New River Trail Picnic Area*

Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repairs to bike trail</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restroom at boatlanding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking area, drinking water availability, water usage for kayaking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better signage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River needs cleaned and water level is too low</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better bathrooms and cleaner areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>boat access to the river needs to be improved greatly and the water quality no longer supports a good fishing population</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>faster access to byllesby dam from main roads, drinking water at more locations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Camping between the dams would be amazing. I have great memories of camping when I was younger.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More areas for picnics, off road parking, handicap access, more areas for river enjoyment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restroom facilities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better handicap friendly access</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loved to picnic table by the river. Amazing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bathroom at Byllesby.</li> </ul>



### Additional Comment Responses from New River Trail Picnic Area:

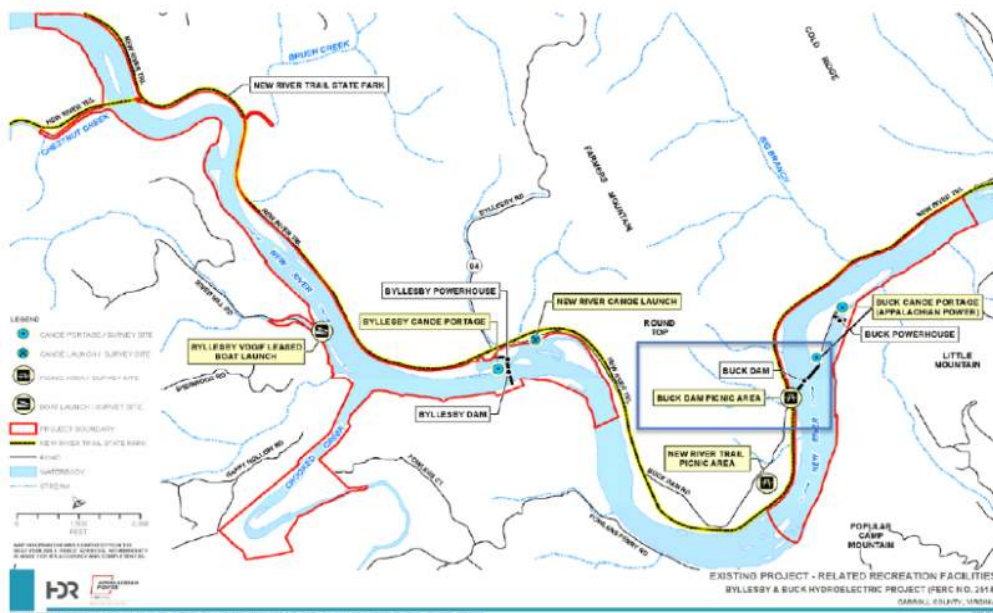


### Additional comments: (*verbatim responses*)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some improvements to the access road going to the boat landing would be nice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Its absolutely beautiful there!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to make improvements to enhance the river area and fishing experience</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are many low income residents in the area that rely on fishing the New River as an important food source. Habitat quality needs to be improved. I am an infrequent visitor due to the current conditions of the river in this area. I would use the river much more frequently if it were to improve. It is also an economic development issue for this area. We are trying to build the number of visitors who stay overnight in our hotels and campgrounds.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs camping facilities again.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give old Forest Service campground to New River Trail and reopen.</li> </ul>

## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Buck Dam Picnic Area

### Survey Locations:



From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **10** respondents from **Buck Dam Picnic Area**. Overall, **7%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities.

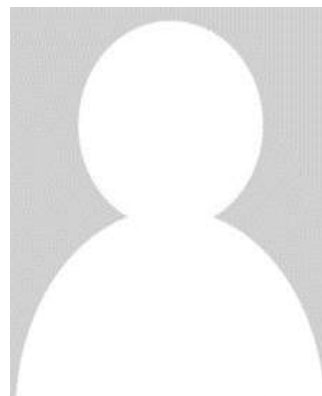
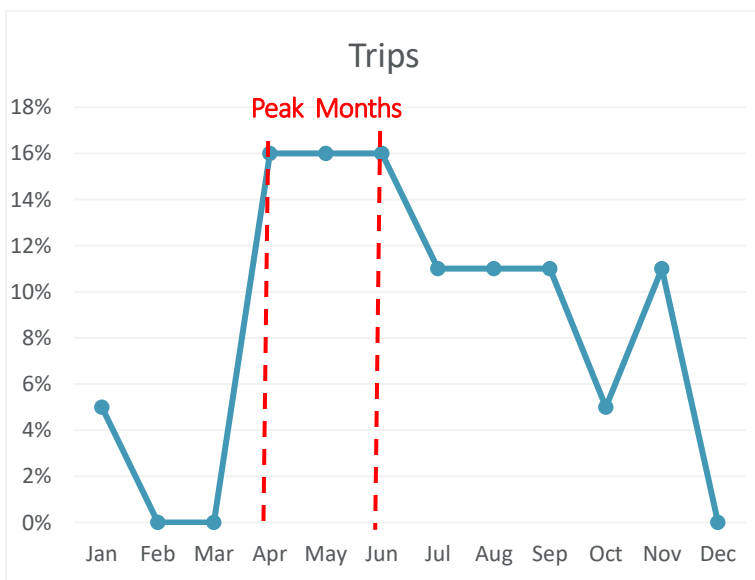
This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **25%** of the survey respondents come from one zip code location, which is about **12.5 miles** away from The Project.

**100%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **6 hours**.

Males made up **56%** of the respondents, with **22%** split between being in their thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties.

The most frequent months visited are April through June.



- Zip code of most frequent visitors: **24330**

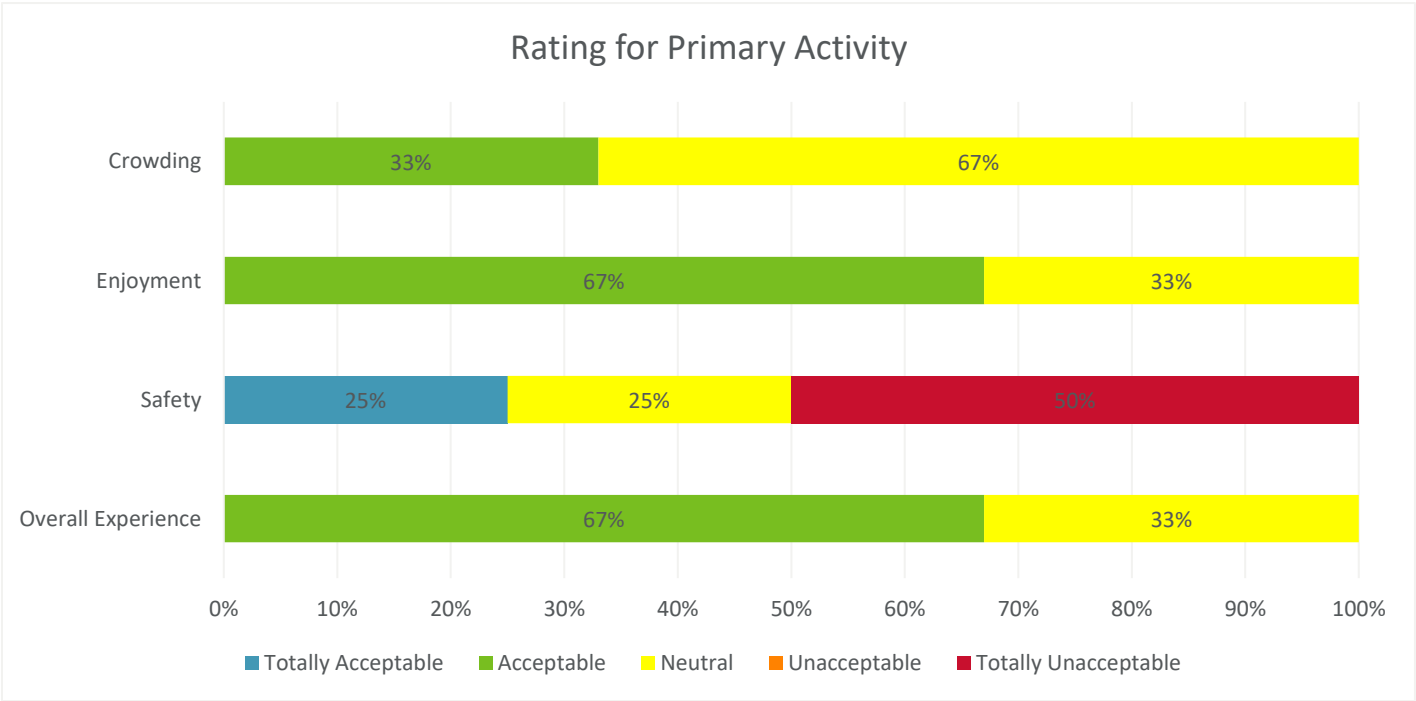
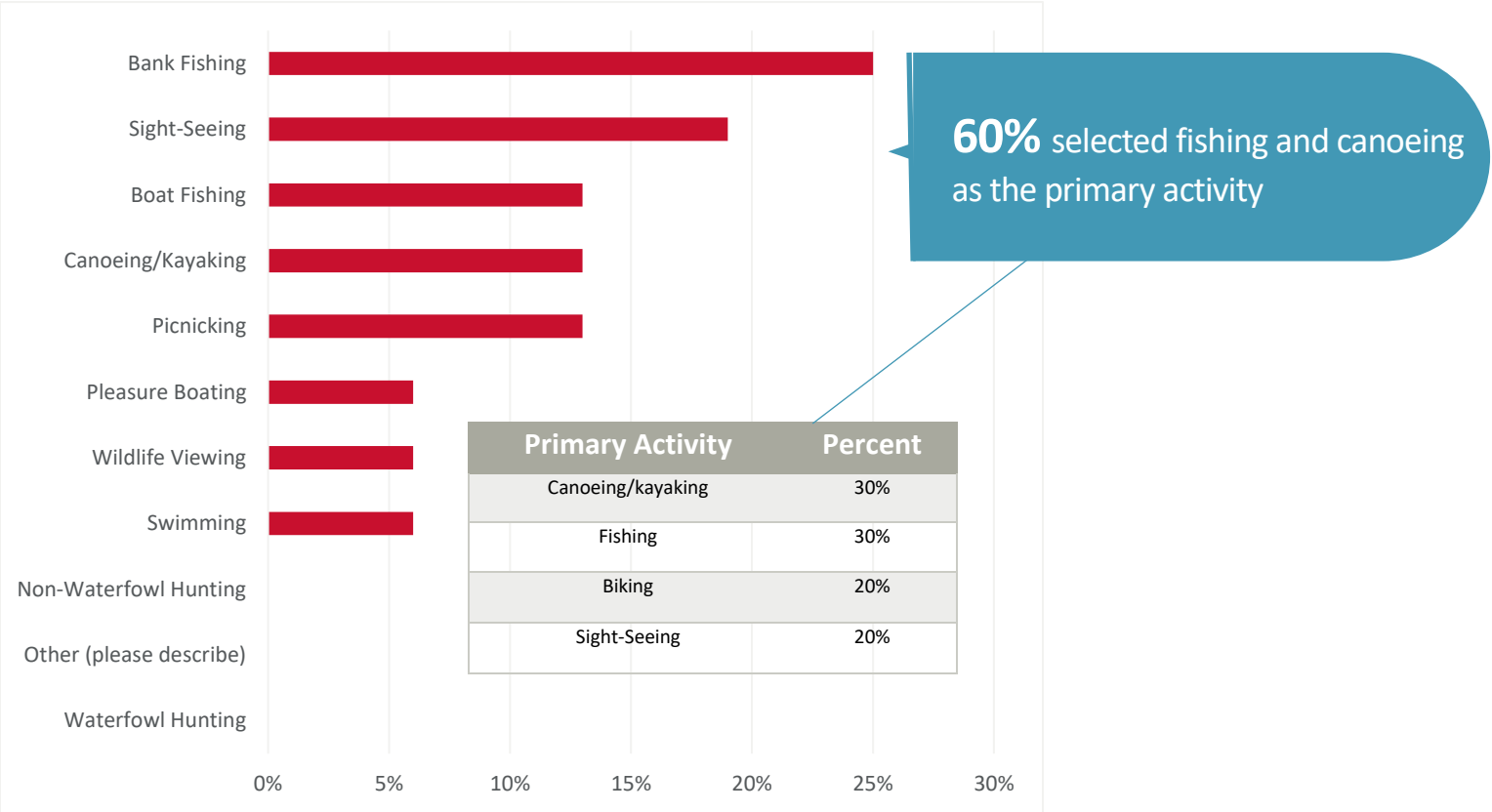
- Average # of visits per year are **10**

- Average miles traveled: **23**

**80%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. 100% of those that stayed overnight stayed in a RV/Auto/Tent Campground.

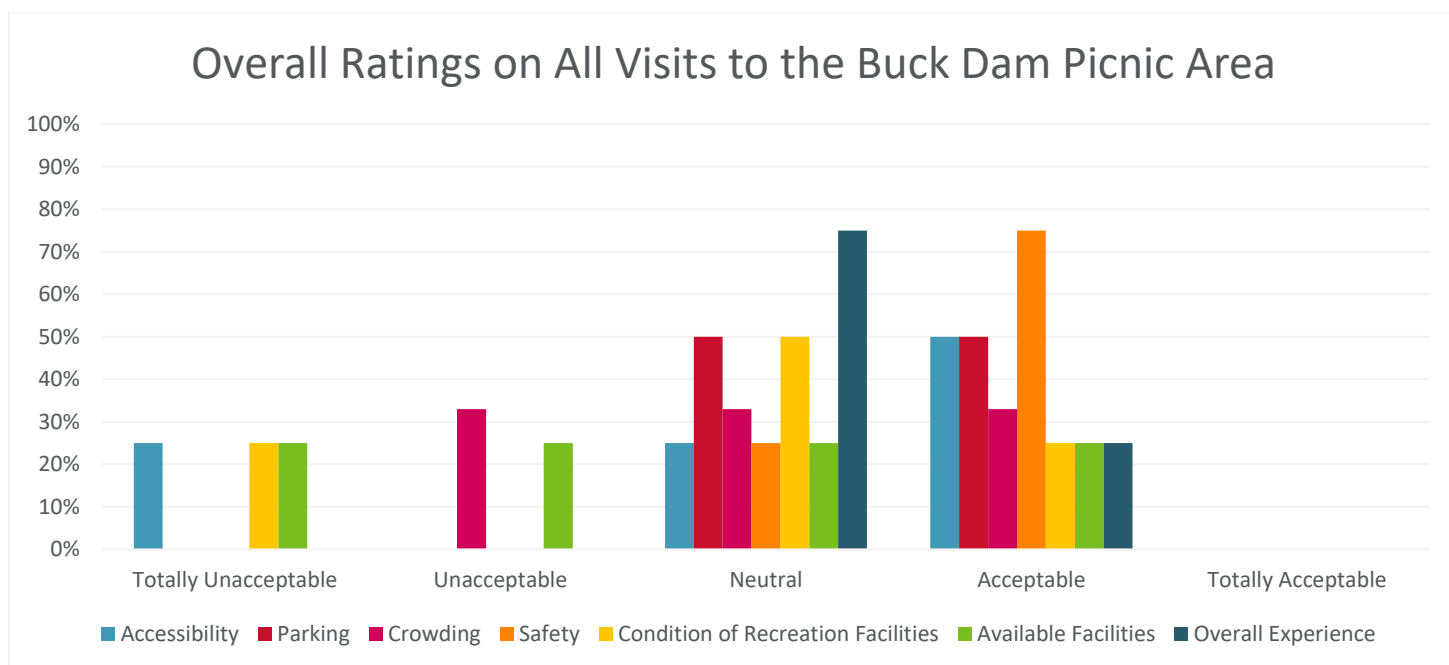
# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Buck Dam Picnic Area

## Activities Participated on Trip:





## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for Buck Dam Picnic Area



Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

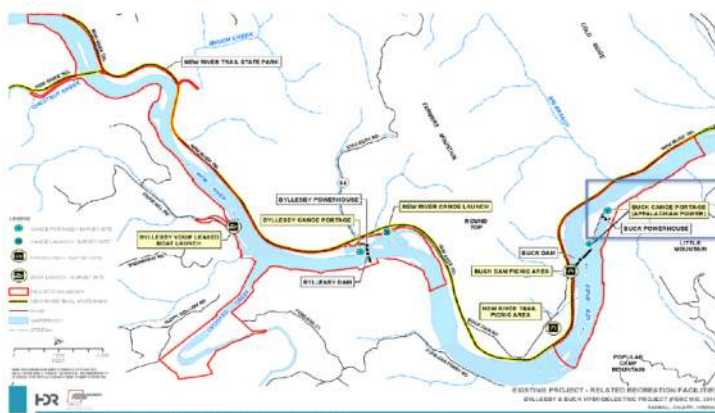
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more public parking at the Byllesby dam canoe portage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to be able to float from below Byllesby dam to above buck without having to go below buck dam</li> <li>Need to be a Portage above buck so you dont have go below</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campgrounds need mowed and maintained. we used to camp there weeks at a time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More bathrooms always plus no matter location in state of Virginia.</li> </ul>

Additional comments: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beautiful area, love the remoteness, quality of fishing could improve by stockings of different species of all the current fish there.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please take down all the no trespassing and no fishing signs below the dams. My father and I fished below buck dam for years and never got hurt or drowned. It's ridiculous that you can put up a concrete dam and then keep people from gaining from its fish collections by placing signs further and further from the dams that say no trespassing. I want to be able to access any part of the area dangerous or not that should be my choice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some improvements to the access road going to the boat landing would be nice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend many days camping and hiking</li> </ul>

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results Buck Dam Canoe Portage

## Survey Locations:



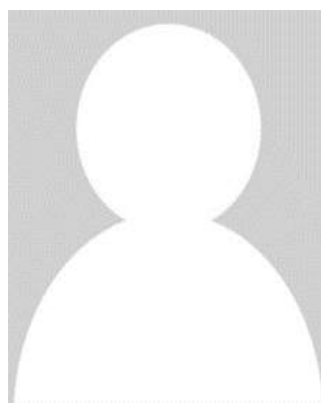
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **24** respondents from **Buck Dam Canoe Portage**. Overall, **17%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **52%** of the survey respondents come from four zipcode locations, which are **20 miles** away from the Project. **100%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **7 hours**.

Males made up **63%** of the respondents, **62%** in their thirties and forties.

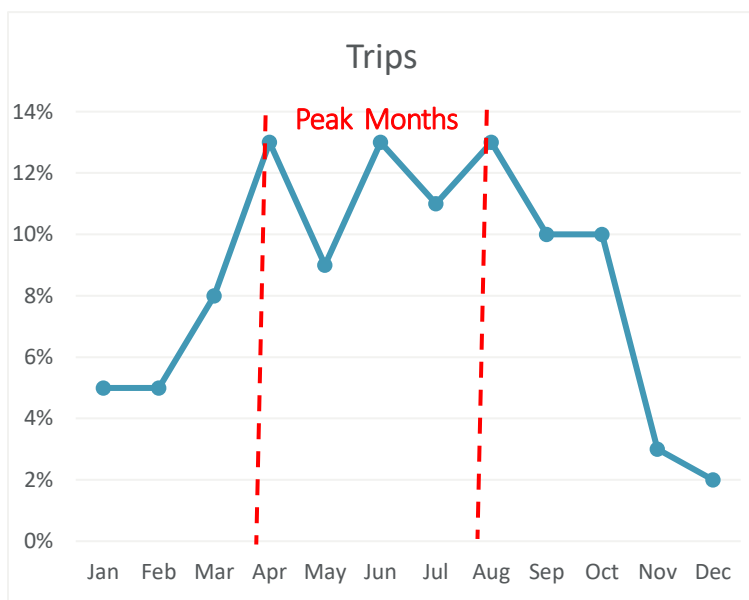
The most frequent months visited are from April to September, with April, June, and August being the peak months.



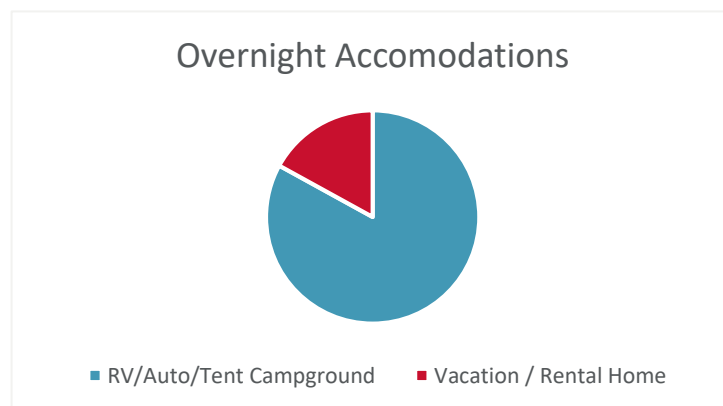
- Zip codes of most frequent visitors: **24333, 24348, 24350, and 24382**

- Average # of visits per year are **16**

- Average miles traveled: **33**

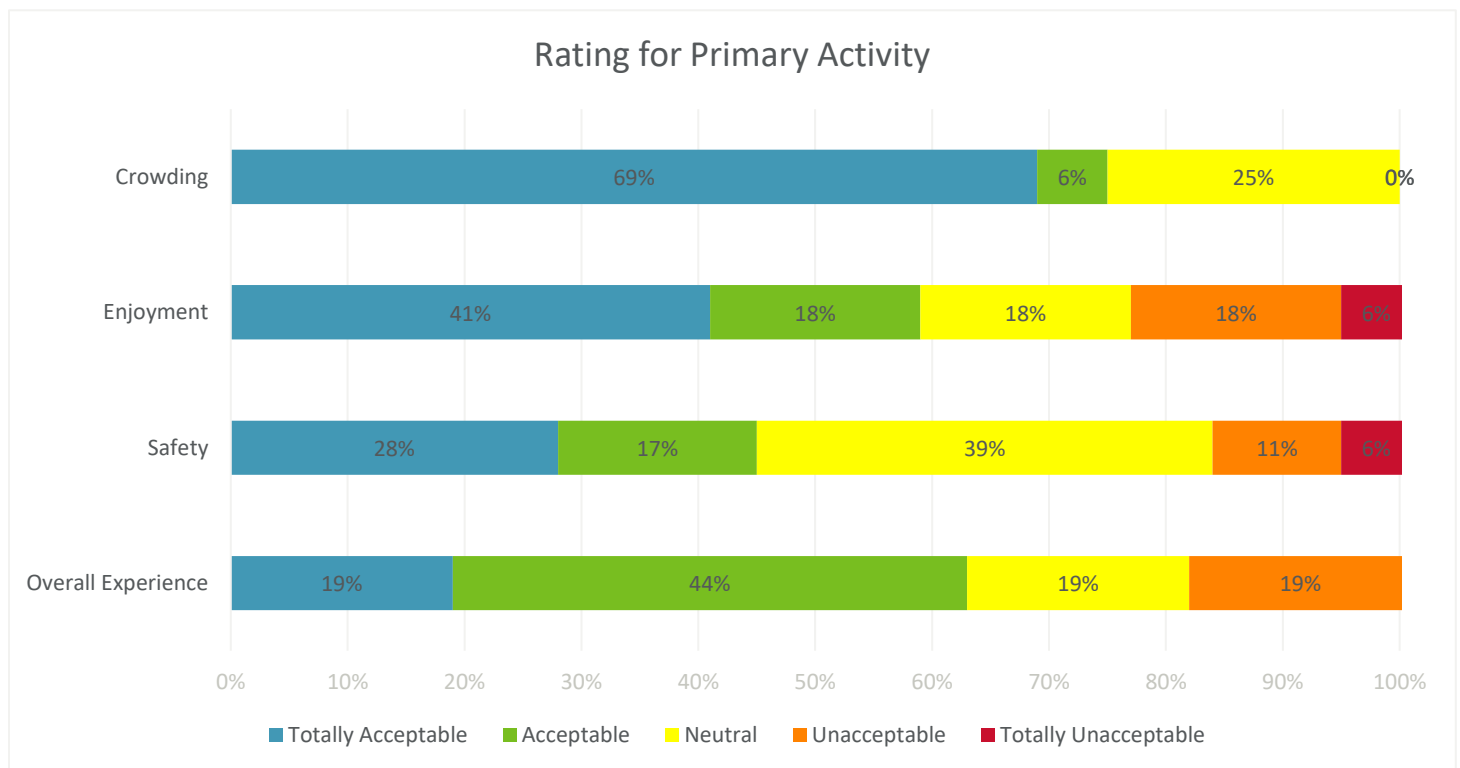
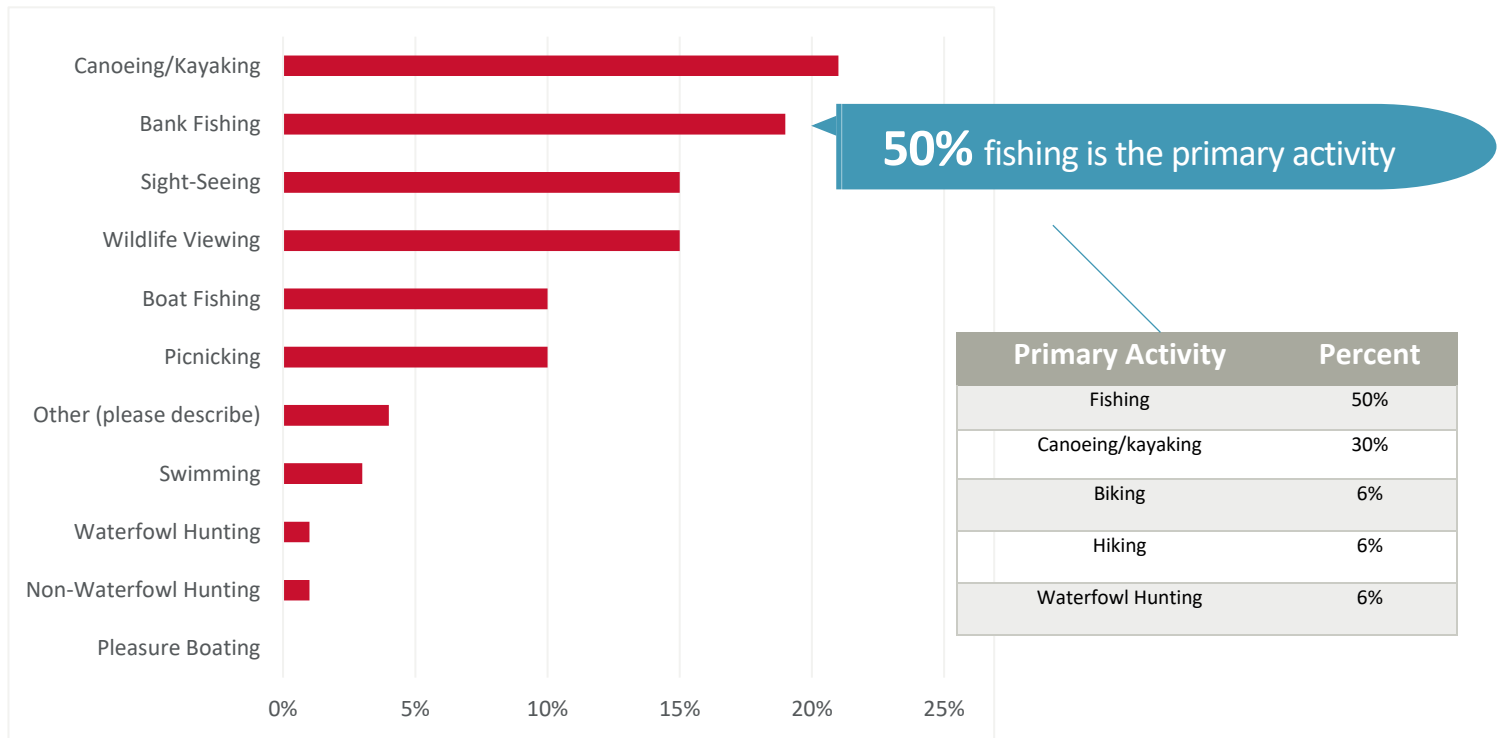


**68%** were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area. Of the **42%** that were staying overnight a breakdown of the accommodations used is shown:



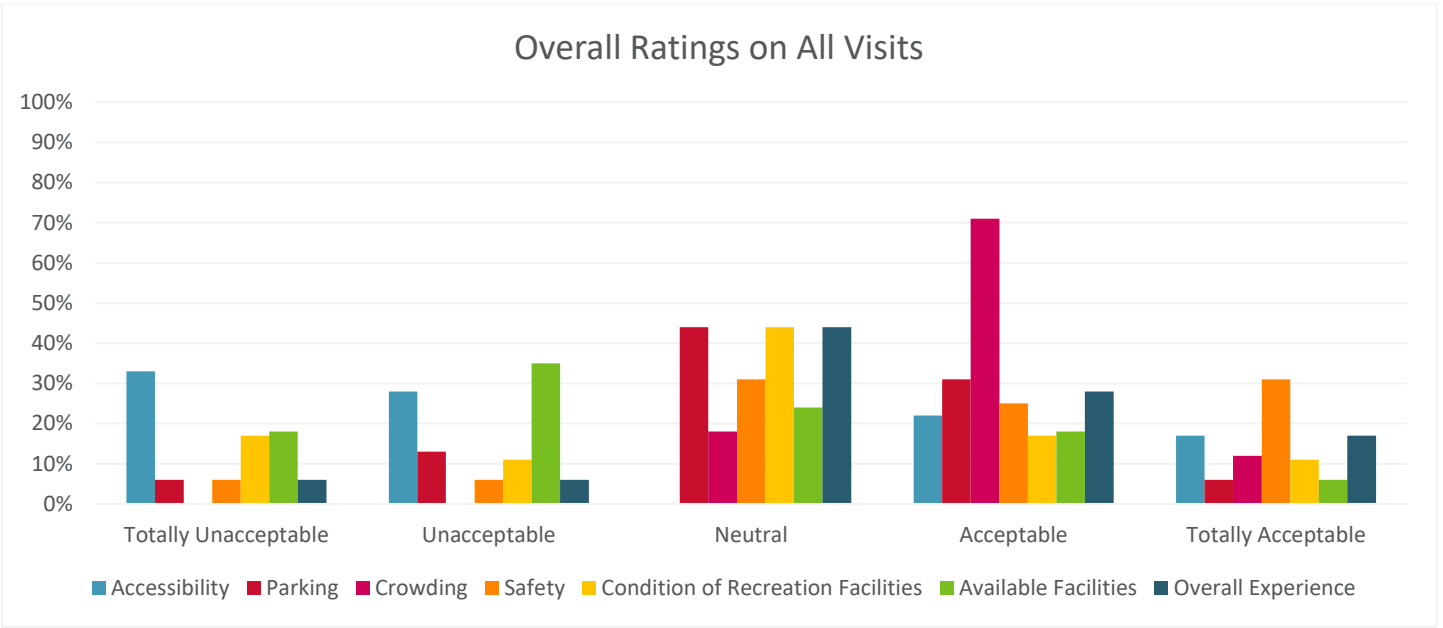
# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results Buck Dam Canoe Portage

## Activities Participated on Trip:

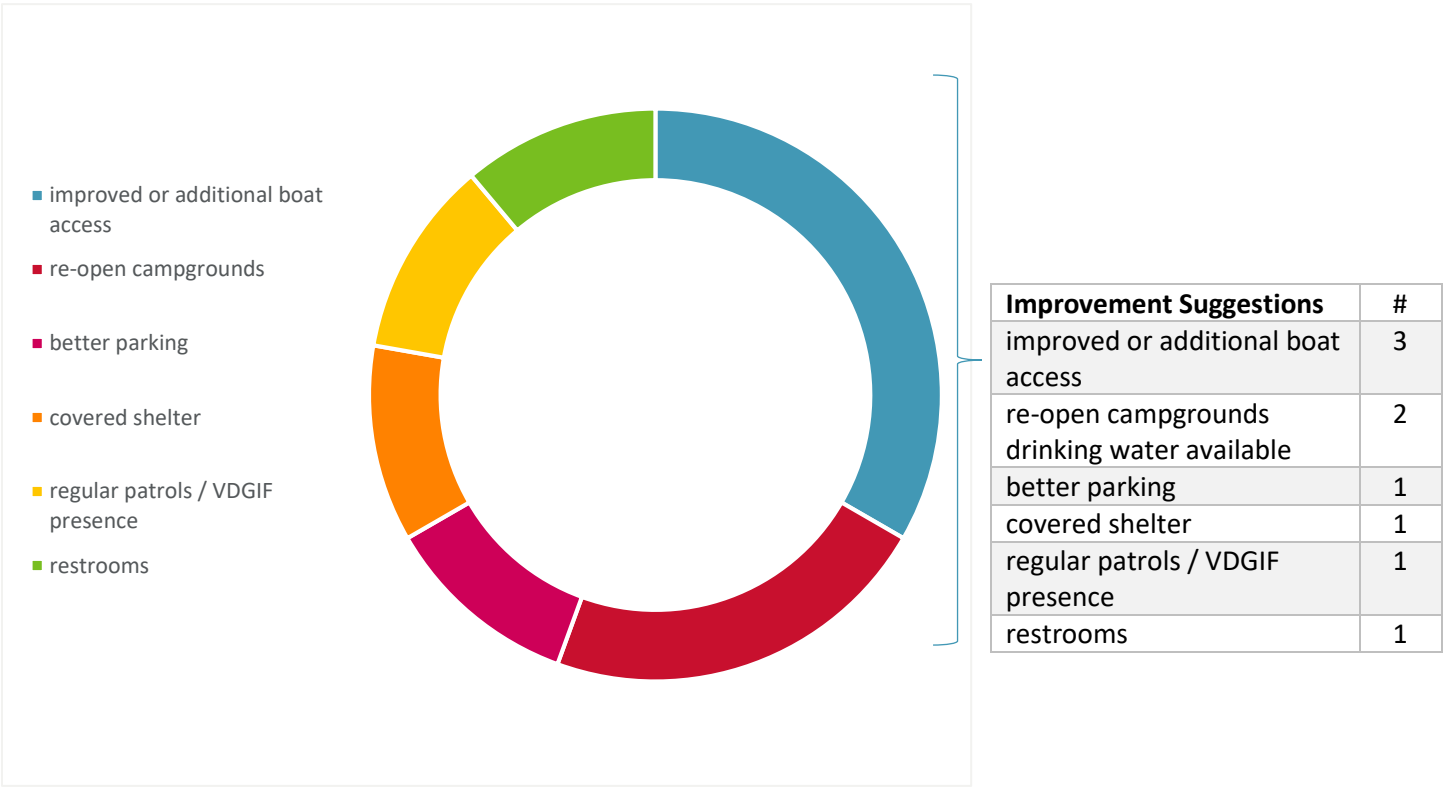




# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results Buck Dam Canoe Portage



## Suggested Improvement Responses from Buck Dam Canoe Portage:

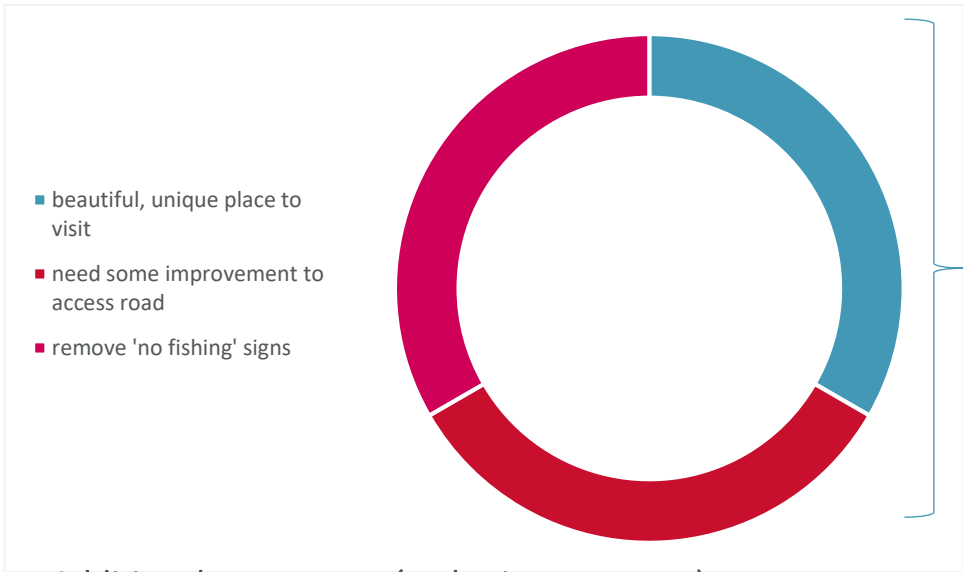


## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results Buck Dam Canoe Portage

Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access below buck dam on opposite side from Ivanhoe. As I am getting older, it is much more difficult to drag canoe/ kayak from parking lot to put in area. Put in area is also terrible. You should be able to drive down to the put in area, unload, and then park back in parking lot. The wildlife biologist from Va dept of game use my boat ramp further down stream for access when shocking fish. Also, trying to get around dams is very difficult and dangerous. There is no easy portage!!!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better access to the Buck Dam tail race.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better canoe and kayak launches, better areas to park and have better access to the water. Need to have more VDGIF presence between the dams.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better parking and facilities. I would like to see better access to the river. The long carry from the parking area to the water through the sand is a bit much. A better portage system.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boat launches and vehicle access to them</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier portage, steep muddy banks are dangerous. Porta Johns would be great, covered shelter</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like to see a more secure boat ramp in order to get to the buck dam pool. Right now the only way I know to get to that water is to run the large Rapids above it. Then to Portage the dam and float to the ivanhoe public boat landing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make access for fishing at buck dam</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maybe a port-a-john at Byllesby</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More access</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More Camping areas and bathrooms and boat launches</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My family and friends have used public access for Buck Dam area located off of Loafers Rest Rd. for over 10 years. We have enjoyed Floating/fishing and kayaking down the river up until 3-4 years ago when the water has been so murky and low. Which unfortunately we have used less and less. We really depended on this recreation for fun, relaxation , stress release , comradery and even sometimes supper, even more important now in this Covid 19 environment! The input has always been challenging, The waxing and waining entrance trail to get to the river put in is not people friendly. Carrying boats of all kinds, single file, thru the tick infested area down a significant slope "thus the waxing and waining" trail to arrive at a dangerous put in at the river. One boat put in at a time and if there is anybody fishing from the bank they have to move, and we all know that the fisherman does not want to move and at times won't move. I challenge some of your 50, 60 and 70 year old employees to take a couple boats down the trail.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs boat launch on loafers rest side.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking area, drinking water availability, water usage for kayaking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would like to see clear water in the river.</li> </ul>

### Additional Comment Responses from Buck Dam Canoe Portage:



Comments	#
beautiful, unique place to visit	1
need some improvement to access road	1
remove 'no fishing' signs	1

### Additional comments: *(verbatim responses)*

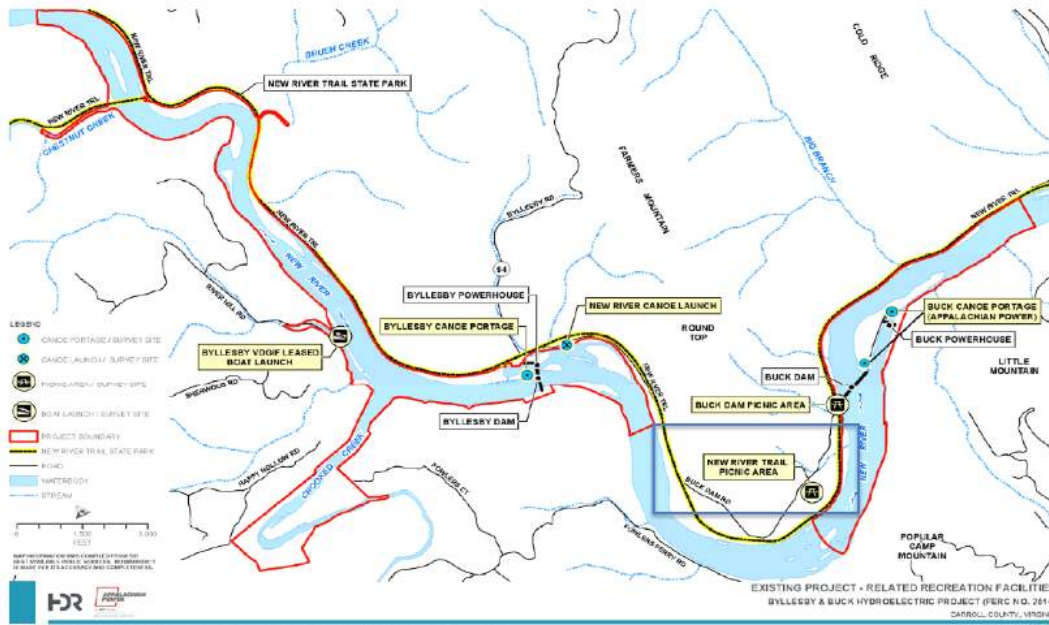
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow fishing against the wall of the Buck Dam tail race.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have always enjoyed putting in on Fowler's ferry road and fishing in between the dams. I have always had good luck and the view of stoots mountain with its rock outcroppings is amazing. Especially when there is a little river mist in the air.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have not spent much time on the river for the past 5 years. the river is always muddy, flood waters not controlled by the dams. Everywhere has become a sandy bottom for all the clean up of the dams. It seems like buck dam is always out of control.</li> </ul> <p>Fishing this section of the river is terrible. Fish count is way down. Spawns are terrible. This use to be a great section to fish. It has been 5 years since there were any good fishing. According to VGIF, the fish count is lowest in 5 years.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I just love it there and go every chance I can.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think better access to the river, parking, and information in the parking area are key. It would be nice to see some type of workaround for the portage as well. The portage around the dam is a nightmare, especially if you are overnighing and have loaded canoes. It is dangerous.</li> </ul> <p>Ideally, for recreation, the dams would not be there. I think the gradient of the area and double shoals between Fries and the dam are a good indicator that there is some excellent whitewater under the reservoir. I know a lot of paddlers who love to paddle double shoals but don't because they hate the 2-mile flatwater paddle to the next access point to get out.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If this area was helped and marketed correctly I believe it would flourish. I own New River Outdoor Adventures and I would help promote the area for families, fishermen, and nature lovers.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ive lived in this area my whole life and enjoyed everything it has to offer please let the younger generation enjoy it also give them something to do in a place with not much els to do</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Man made muddy water throughout the year is just unacceptable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re open the camp ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The boat put in that is maintained by AEP is in my opinion unacceptable and dangerous. There has been no improvements ,only maintenance over the years. The parking is good and room to expand if needed. There is an access with a gate used only by AEP, this site could be a much better access to drop off boats. It would take us up to 45 minutes to drive around to Ivanhoe to put in at that wonderful access, even handicap people can use that put in! After all we are South West Virginia with a lot of poverty and a lot of families rely on the river for recreation and dinner( fishing the last couple of years has been horrible !!) I suspect do to the murky and low waters since the work on the dams, This has not changed much at all for the better even though work on the dams have been complete. So in the Covid 19 pandemic when we are all encouraged to get out side, get some vitamin D, yes we can but cannot enjoy the river or fish for supper, I am a dreamer and I really would like to see this area in South West Virginia develop some seasonal "river rapids" that would be a huge economic impact for Carole County, Wythe County, Galax, Fries and Wytheville. This area needs a project to really boost our economy, open up more jobs, more recreation , help with poverty and substance abuse. I am asking that AEP take a leap of faith, trust and believe in our communities ,for the well being in all these localities and make these improvements and highly consider the "seasonal water Rapids" that can put several Counties and Towns on the map. Thank you for reaching out.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is by far, the best recreation area of its kind!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We kayak fish this area every chance we get. We will sleep in our vehicles or tent camp depending on how many go fishing with our group. We see so many people and the biggest complaints I hear are how hard it is to portage the dams.</li> </ul>

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for “Other” Areas

## Survey Locations:



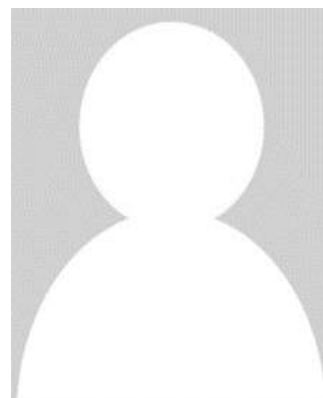
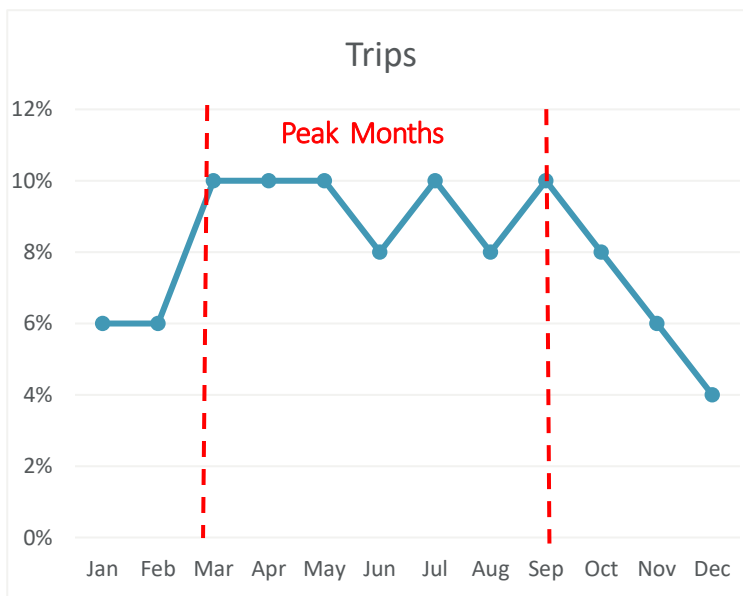
From **April 2020 to December 2020** there have been **9** respondents from “Other” Areas. Overall, **6%** of the responses came from this location.

These respondents answered questions about their use of the recreation facilities. This data is collected to support the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process.

Predominately **33%** of the survey respondents come from one zip code location, which is about **20** miles away from the Project. **86%** consider themselves to be regular visitors to the area with at least 3 or more times a year with an average length of stay being **6** hours.

Males made up **63%** of the respondents, with **72%** in their forties.

The most frequent months visited are March through September with a decline in the fall months.

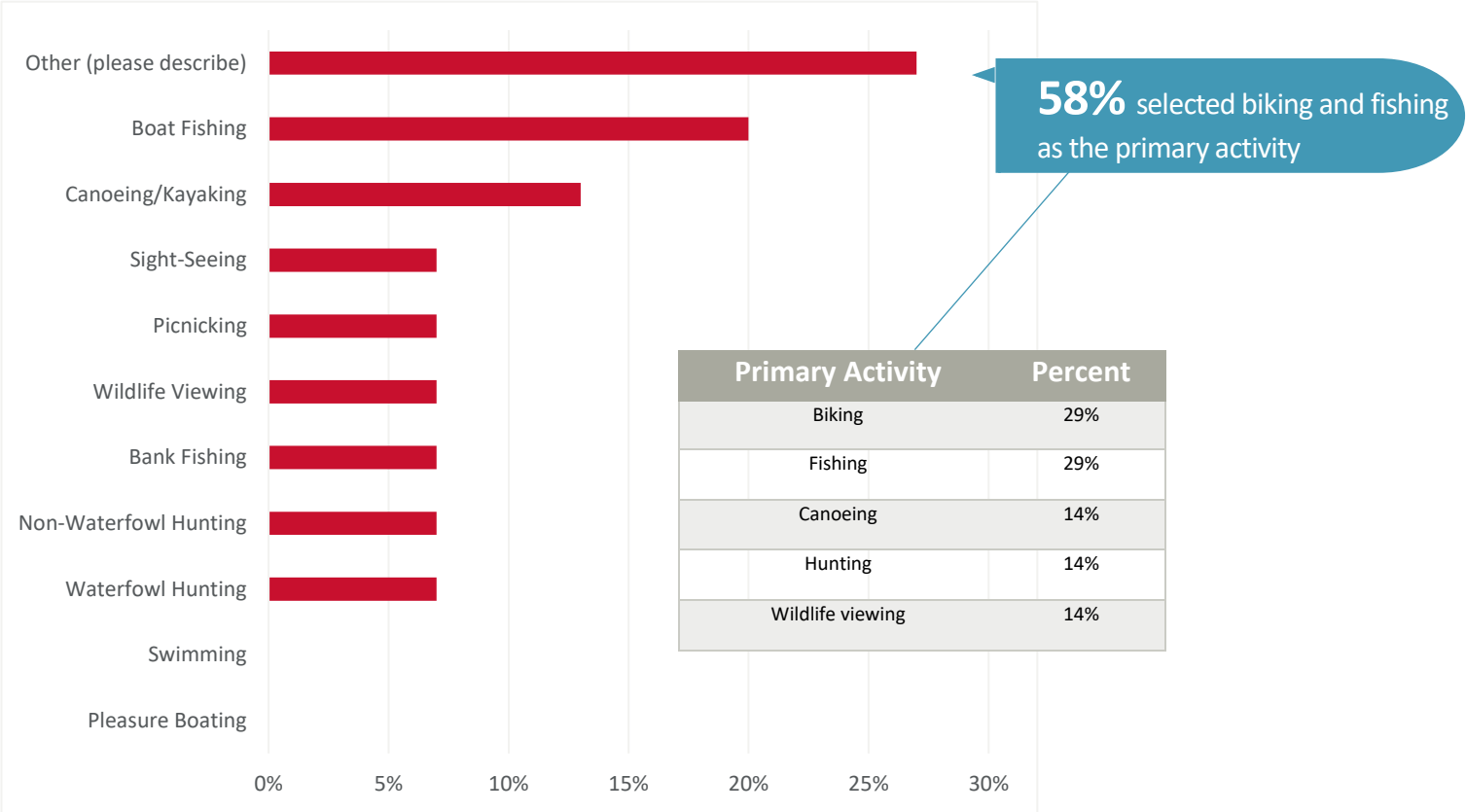


- Zip code of most frequent visitors: **24382**
- Average # of visits per year are **19**
- Average miles traveled: **40**

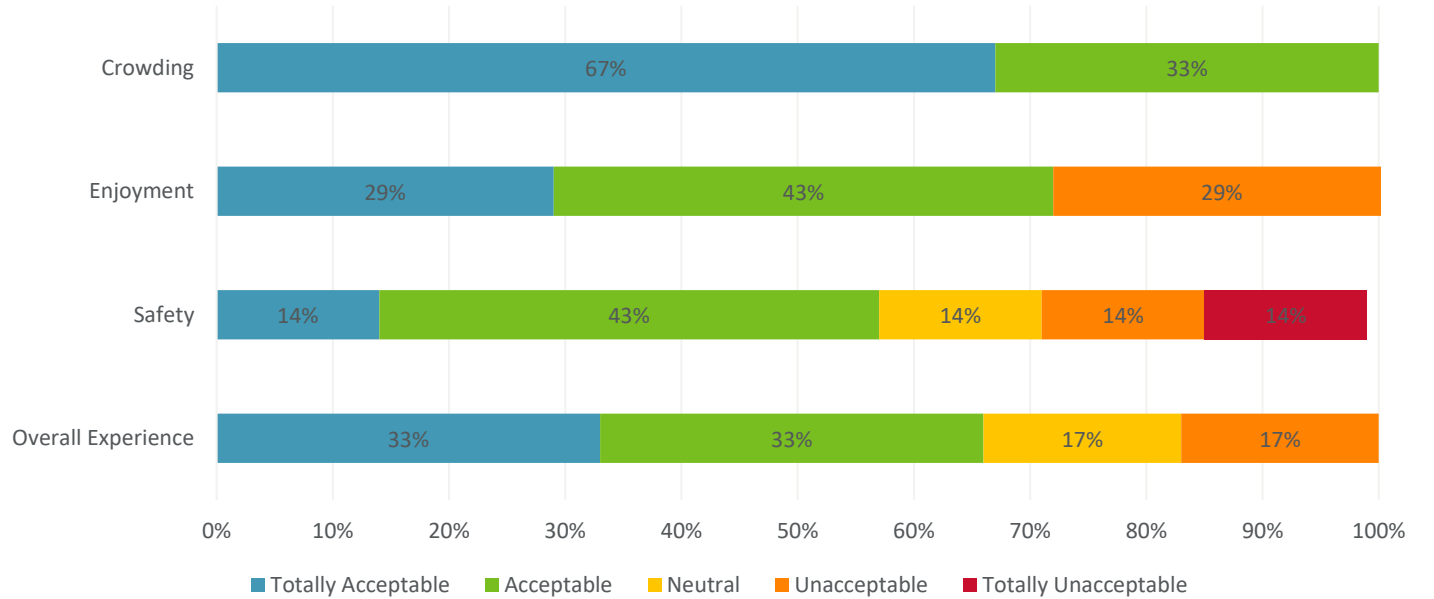
**100%** of respondents were not staying overnight in the Byllesby-Buck Project area.

# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for “Other” Areas

## Activities Participated on Trip:

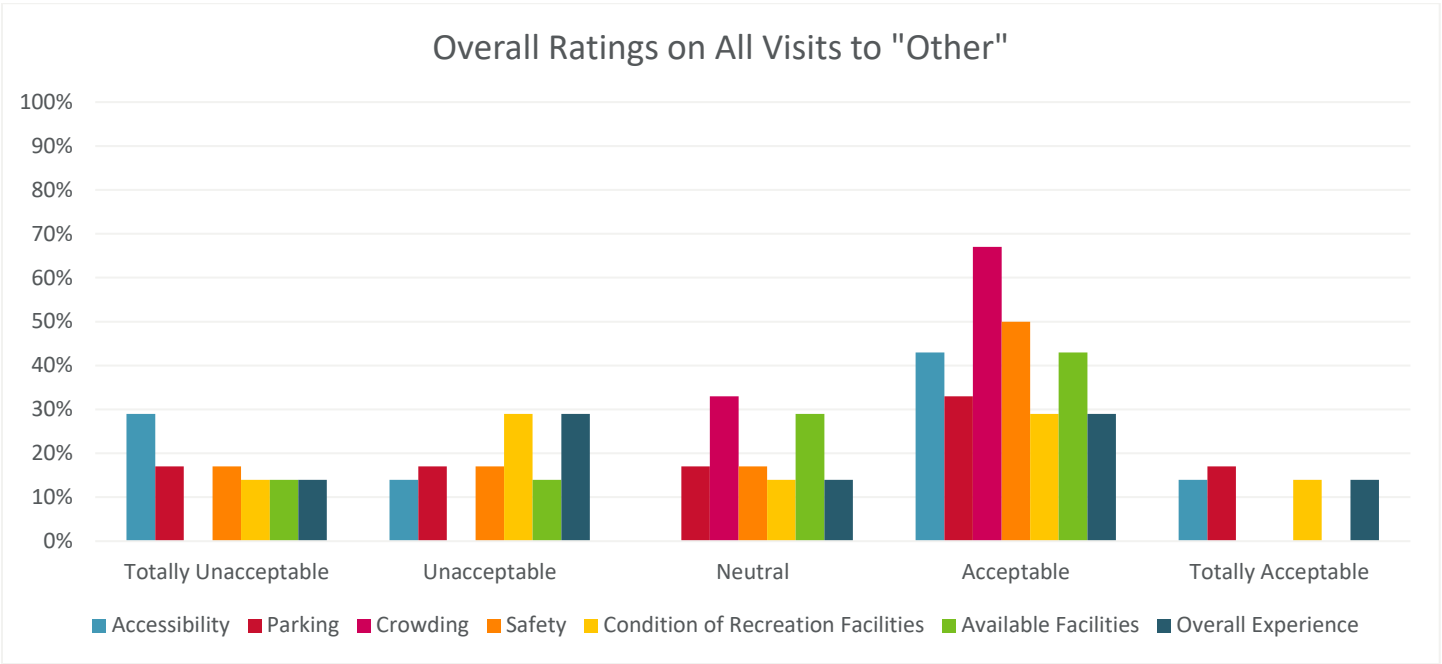


## Rating for Primary Activity

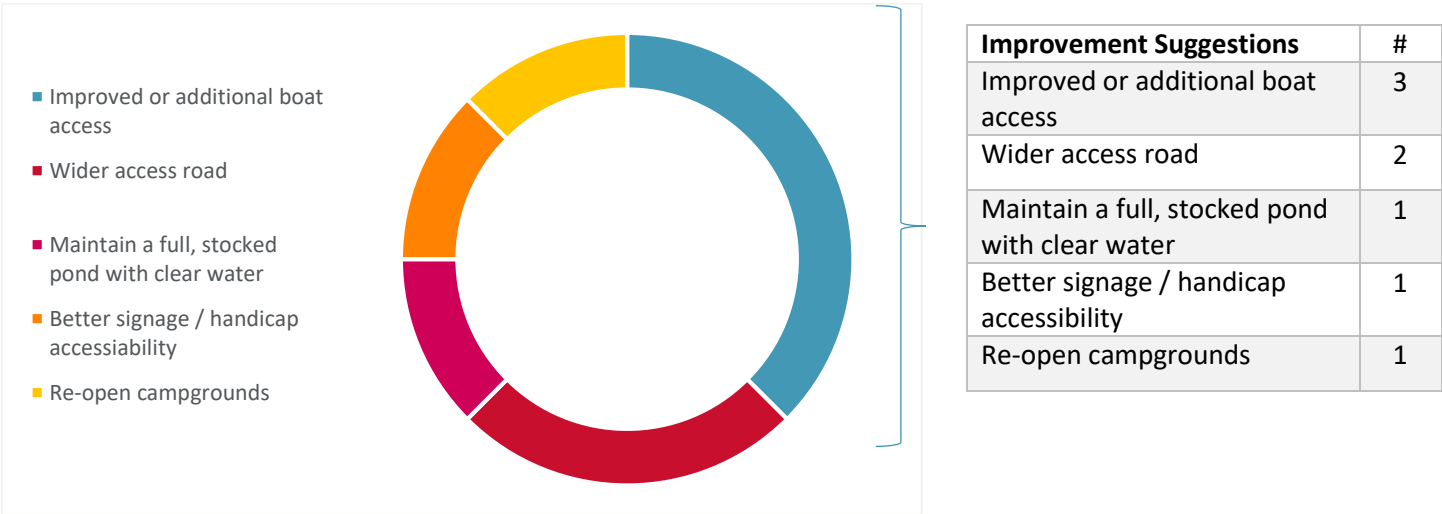




# Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for “Other” Areas



## Suggested Improvement Responses from New River Trail Picnic Area:

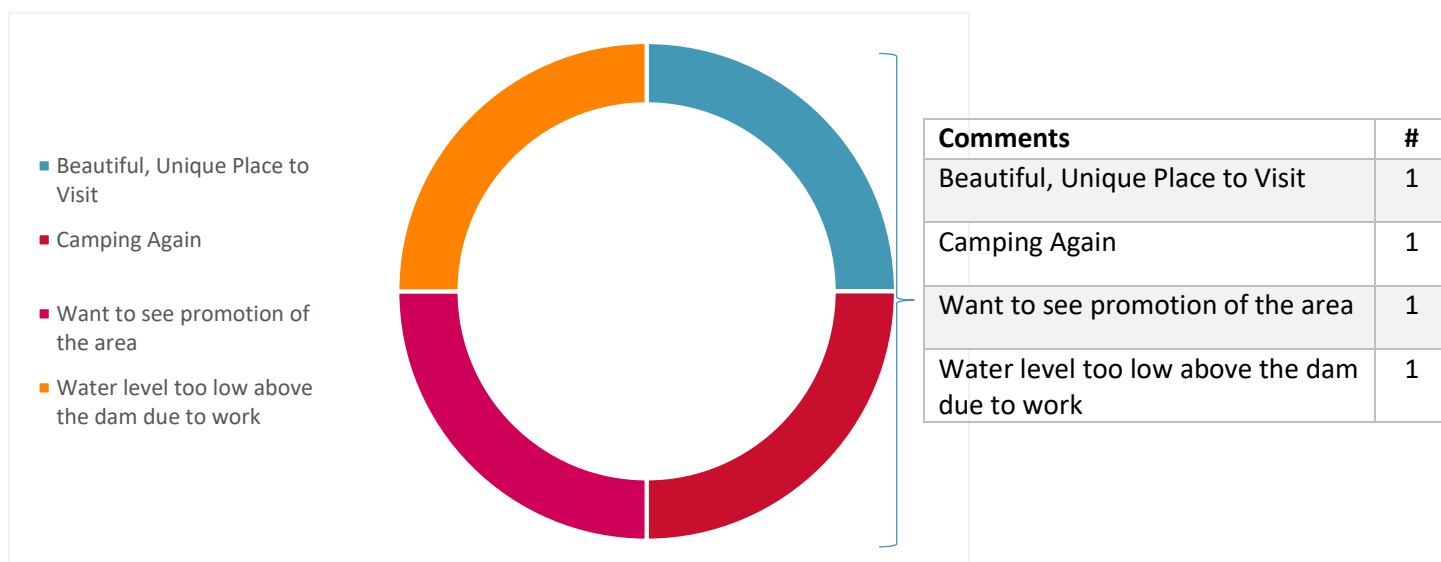


## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – Cumulative Results for “Other” Areas

Type(s) of recreation facilities or improvements respondents believe are needed and at what specific location(s) at the Byllesby-Buck Project: *(verbatim responses)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boat launch below buck dam</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Wythe County residents on Loafer's Rest Rd and Van Lue Rd the VDGIF fishing access and canoe launch is in need of significant repair, for older individuals and others their needs to be accessible access for both bank fishing and canoe/kayak drop off. The Access at the Horse Park in Ivanhoe is too far by road for those of us on river right near the Buck Dam to readily access.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like to see better access to the river, scheduled release dates and improved water quality for fishing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road down to Kayak Launch at Loafers Rest.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The access point off of Loafers Rest needs a tremendous amount of improvement. The parking is very acceptable, The the access is defiantly not accessible for most people, a long hale down narrow winding path that empties into a field with a very narrow path. It is difficult to no navigate these paths without getting into the tall grass that is ladened with tics. Once you arrive at the put in it is about 6-8 feet wide. Heaven forbid there be someone attempting to fish from the non-existing bank, and you have to interrupt that person to get boat in the water, and if you have 2,4, or 6 boats makes for a miserable experience for all parties. It would be a much better experience if a"boat put in" could be at the area that AEP has gated. This would be a game changer and you can add ADA access that now-a-days is a must. Thank you for your consideration</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water quality and fish habitat</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We used to camp many many years ago. It would be nice for the facilities to be reopened</li> </ul>

### Additional Comment Responses from New River Trail Picnic Area:



## Byllesby-Buck Recreation – *Cumulative Results for “Other” Areas*

### Additional comments: *(verbatim responses)*

- As a property owner on the New River in Wythe County which is very close to Bucks Dam, and a citizen and elected official of the Town of Wytheville I ask you all to please take all suggestions serious. The citizens that live in the Towns, County"s and Cities near or on the new area in South West Virginia are affected in many ways by the New River. To include recreation, boating, fishing, both recreational and for sustainability. Sustainability includes environmental, social and economic impacts. The people and families in South West Virginia are usually forgotten, and pushed aside!!! I would ask you to consider making it possible to use Buck Dam to our advantage. It would be a HUGE ECONOMIC BOOST to many Towns, Cities and County"s in the region to have the ability to release the waters on a schedule to provide rapids and thus a huge Tourism destination, that would be a HUGE economic impact for all the Families and Citizens in this section of South West Virginia. This would increase self-esteem, increase employment and help us fight drug abuse. For once, it would be welcome to be treated as if we were Northern Virginia and not treated a certain way because we are SWV. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity not just for the citizens but also for all that are making this decision, and I say this because this relicensing for AEP is what 40 -50 years, and this opportunity won't come again anytime soon. These request, the change in the put-in and providing rapids, is not that costly for AEP and you can be proud that these changes will have a huge impact and will change this area for the better for decades to come and we would have AEP to thank for believing in us and given us not just a chance but a new life stile for people in this part of SWV. The year 2020 mostly with have bad memories for all, especially in areas such as SWV, But I hope you will give us something to hold on to and remember for our lifetime, that we were all part of a huge improvement in so many lives right here in SWV. Think about all that will be gained for comparatively low monetary outlay. Thank you for your time and patience. Be Safe.
- Campground
- Great place for waterfowl and goose hunting. Good access and plenty of game. I hope it stays around
- The turbidity during the work on the dams has been unacceptable. All year the New River has been so turbid as to make it impossible to safely paddle. The number of paddlers and floating fisherman has been significantly reduced this year. Publicly available water quality monitoring should be readily available to residents using the River. Most visitors accessing the Byllesby- Buck Project area do so by travelling through Wythe County even though the project is located in Carroll County.



A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consists of four overlapping rectangles: a large red one in the middle, a grey one above it, a grey one below it, and a black one to the right of the bottom grey one.

# Attachment 4

Attachment 4 – Trail Camera  
Representative Photographs

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## Trail Camera Documentation

### Byllesby VWDR Boat Launch



**Sunday, May 10, 2020**



**Friday, July 24, 2020**





**Saturday, October 24, 2020**

**Byllesby Canoe Portage – Parking Lot**



**Sunday, May 10, 2020**





**Friday, July 24, 2020**



**Saturday, October 24, 2020**



## New River Canoe Launch

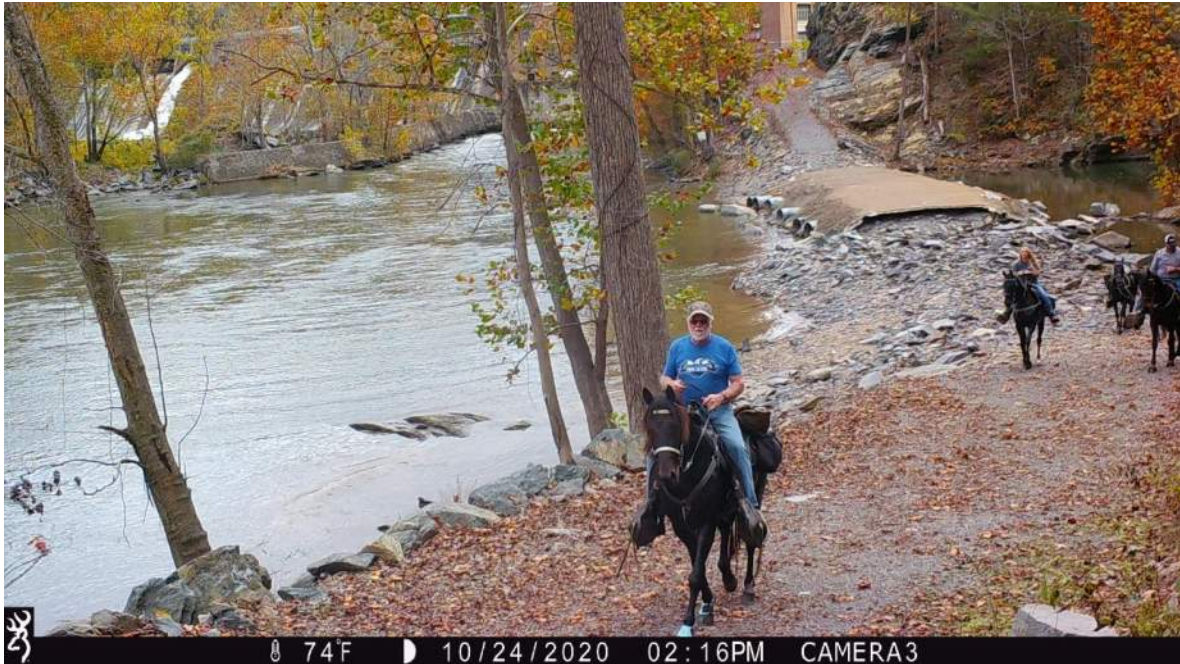


Sunday, May 10, 2020



Friday, July 24, 2020





**Saturday, October 24, 2020**

**New River Picnic Area - Upper**



**Sunday, May 10, 2020**





Friday, July 24, 2020



Saturday, October 24, 2020



**New River Picnic Area - Lower**



**Sunday, May 10, 2020**



**Friday, July 31, 2020**





**Saturday, October 24, 2020**

**Buck Dam Picnic Area**

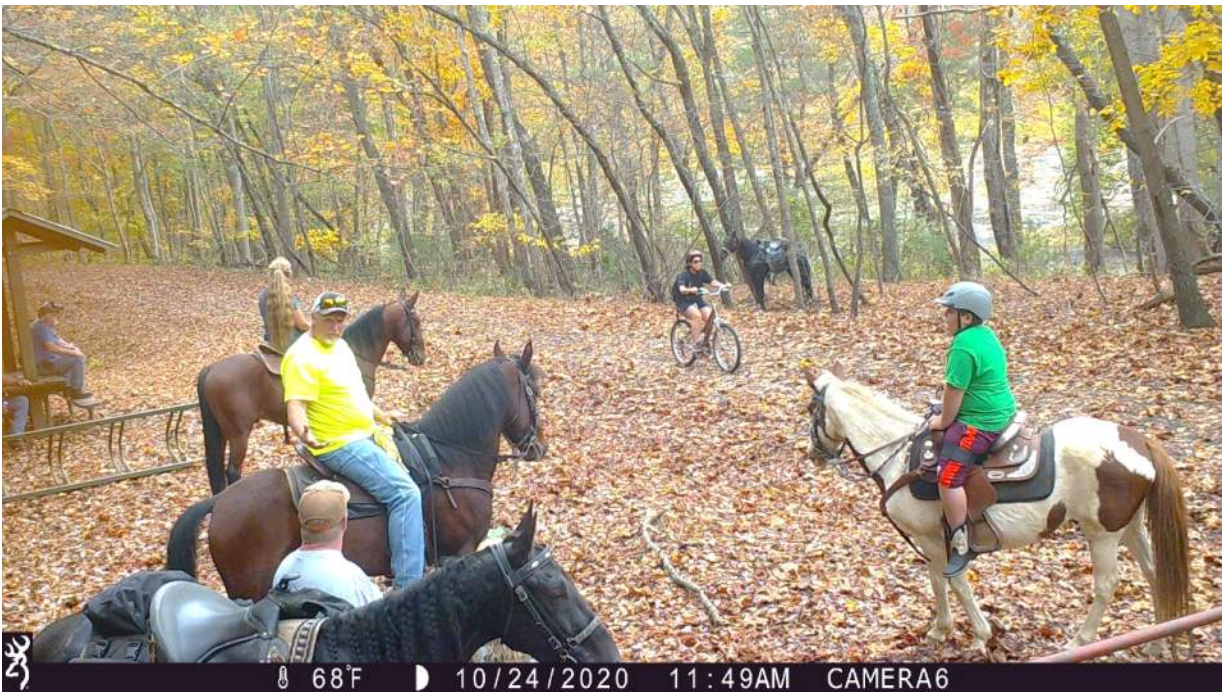


**Sunday, May 10, 2020**





**Friday, July 31, 2020**



**Saturday, October 24, 2020**



**Buck Dam – Fishing Access Trail Camera View:**



**Buck Dam Canoe Portage (Put-In) Trail Camera View:**

