

# HALL'S TOP TRAIL MASTER PLAN

## COCKE COUNTY, TN

- **COCKE COUNTY BOASTS TREMENDOUS NATURAL ASSETS, 40% OF WHICH IS COMPRISED OF STATE AND FEDERALLY PROTECTED LANDS. IT SERVES AS THE EASTERN GATEWAY INTO TENNESSEE AND THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS FOR INTERSTATE-40 TRAVELERS, BUT IS ALSO ONE OF THE FIFTEEN MOST IMPOVERISHED COUNTIES IN TENNESSEE.**
- **WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO RECOMMENDED TRAVEL ROUTES INTO NEIGHBORING SEVIER COUNTY (WHICH HOSTS APPROXIMATELY 15 MILLION VISITORS PER YEAR), ADVENTURE AND NATURE-BASED TOURISM REVENUES OFFER THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.**
- **A FEDERAL GRANT WAS AWARDED TO COCKE COUNTY FROM THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) TO CONSTRUCT 50-75 MILES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE, HIKING, AND EQUESTRIAN TRAILS IN COCKE COUNTY. A RECENT GRANT AMENDMENT HAS ALLOWED FOR DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF UP TO 100 MILES OF TRAILS.**
- **THE PROJECT BUILDS ON MULTIPLE CONVENINGS OF COLLABORATING ENTITIES, INCLUDING THE COCKE COUNTY PARTNERSHIP AND CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST. THESE CONVENINGS RESULTED IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF HALL'S TOP AS THE OPTIMAL AREA TO DEVELOP OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS AND ASSOCIATED ASSETS TO ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ASSOCIATED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT.**







**“ONE OF TENNESSEE’S TREASURED ASSETS IS THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WE HAVE. WE ARE HERE IN ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOTS IN AMERICA, AND WE KNOW WE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO STEWARD THOSE RESOURCES FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.” - SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER**

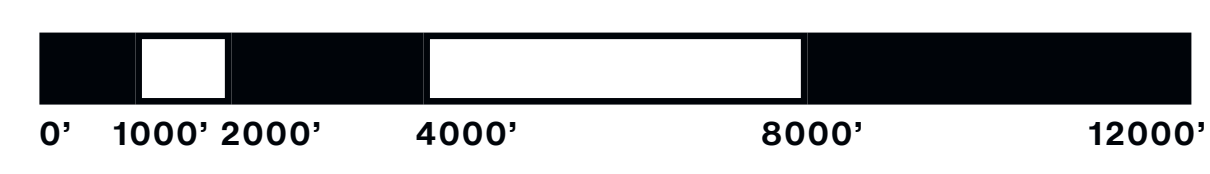
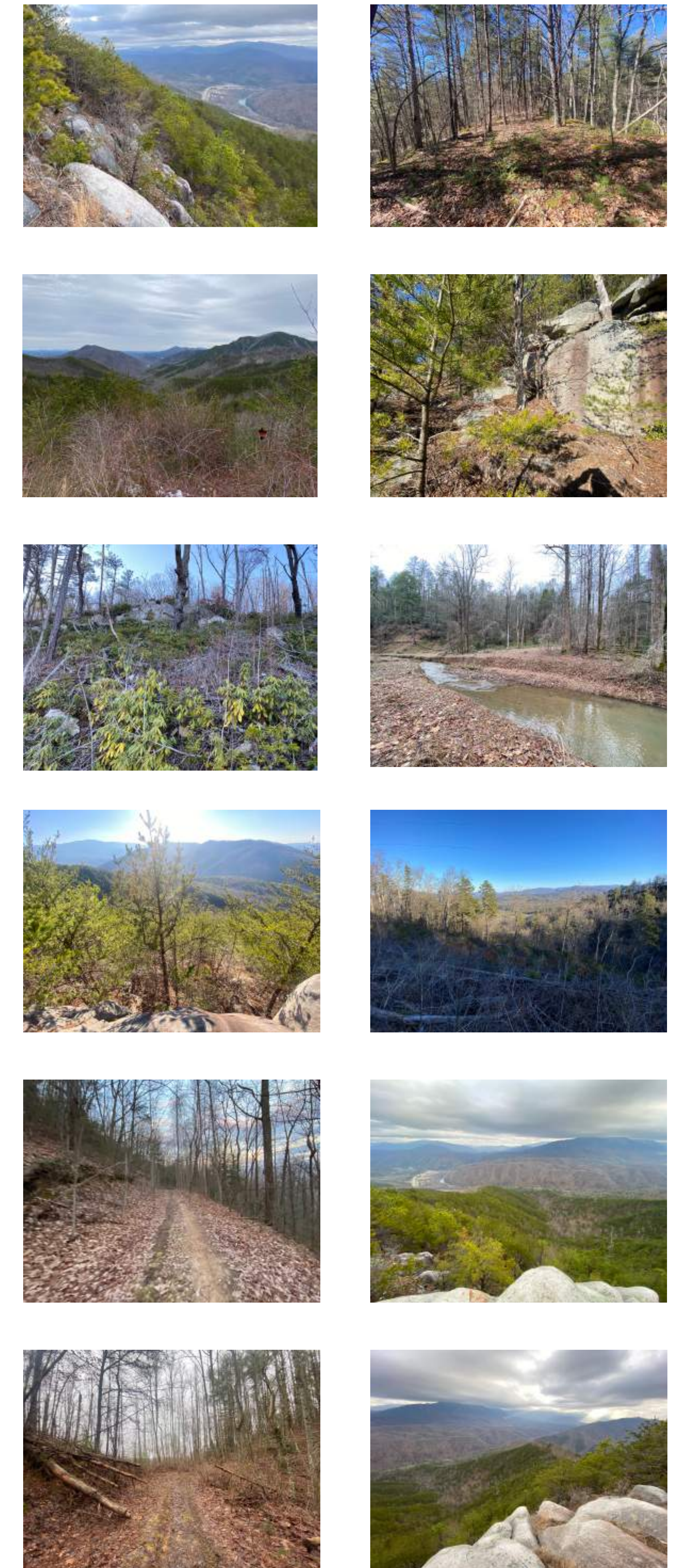
**“THIS INVESTMENT WILL BENEFIT THE PEOPLE OF COCKE COUNTY, AND ALL AMERICANS WHO HOPE TO EXPERIENCE THE BEAUTY AND MAJESTY OF EAST TENNESSEE’S RUGGED MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES FOR THEMSELVES.” - TIM THOMAS, ARC FEDERAL CO-CHAIRMAN**



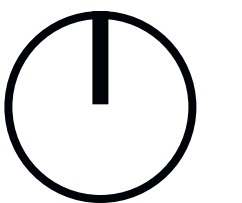


**LEGEND**

-  Interstate
-  CNF Area
-  Road
-  12.B Roadless Area
-  CNF System Trails
-  County Line



SCALE: 1" = 2000'



**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

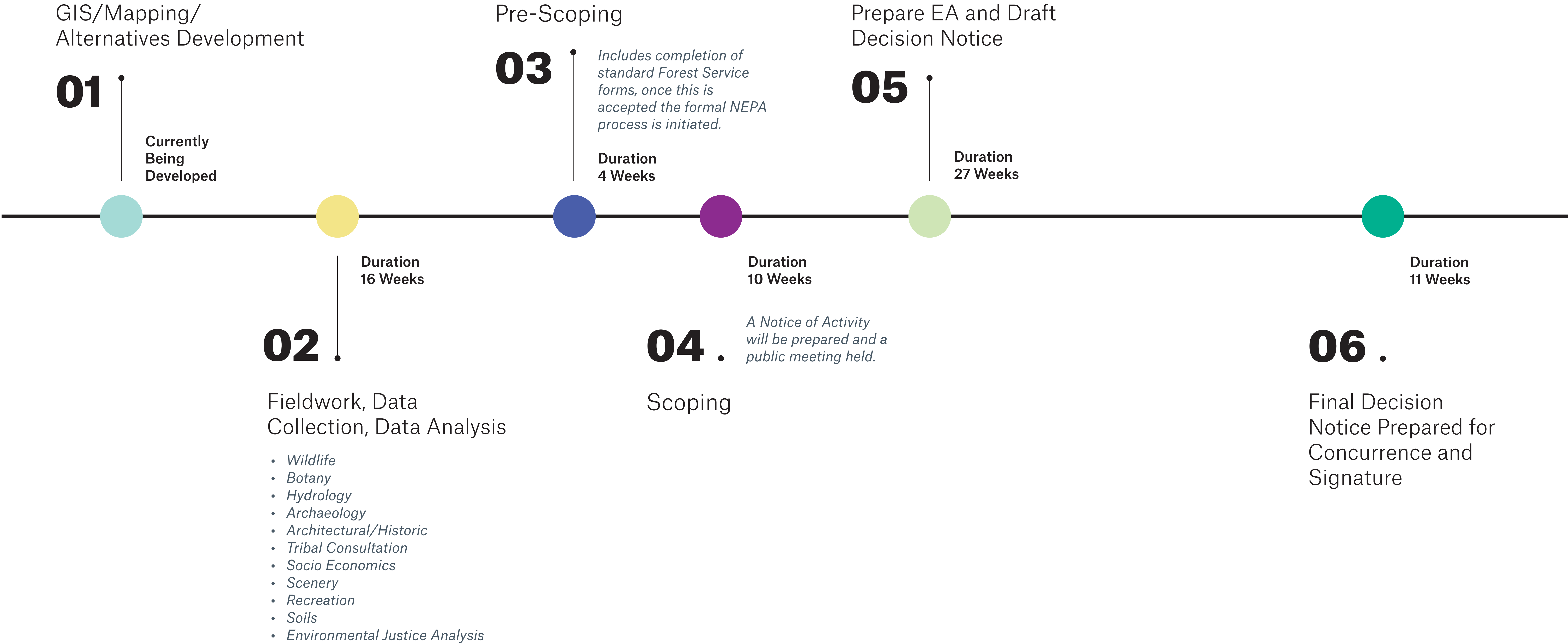
JANUARY 2022

**HALL'S TOP TRAIL MASTER PLAN**





# NEPA Process for the Environmental Assessment





# Mountain Bike Participation Potential

## Large Metro Areas within 4-Hour Drive Time

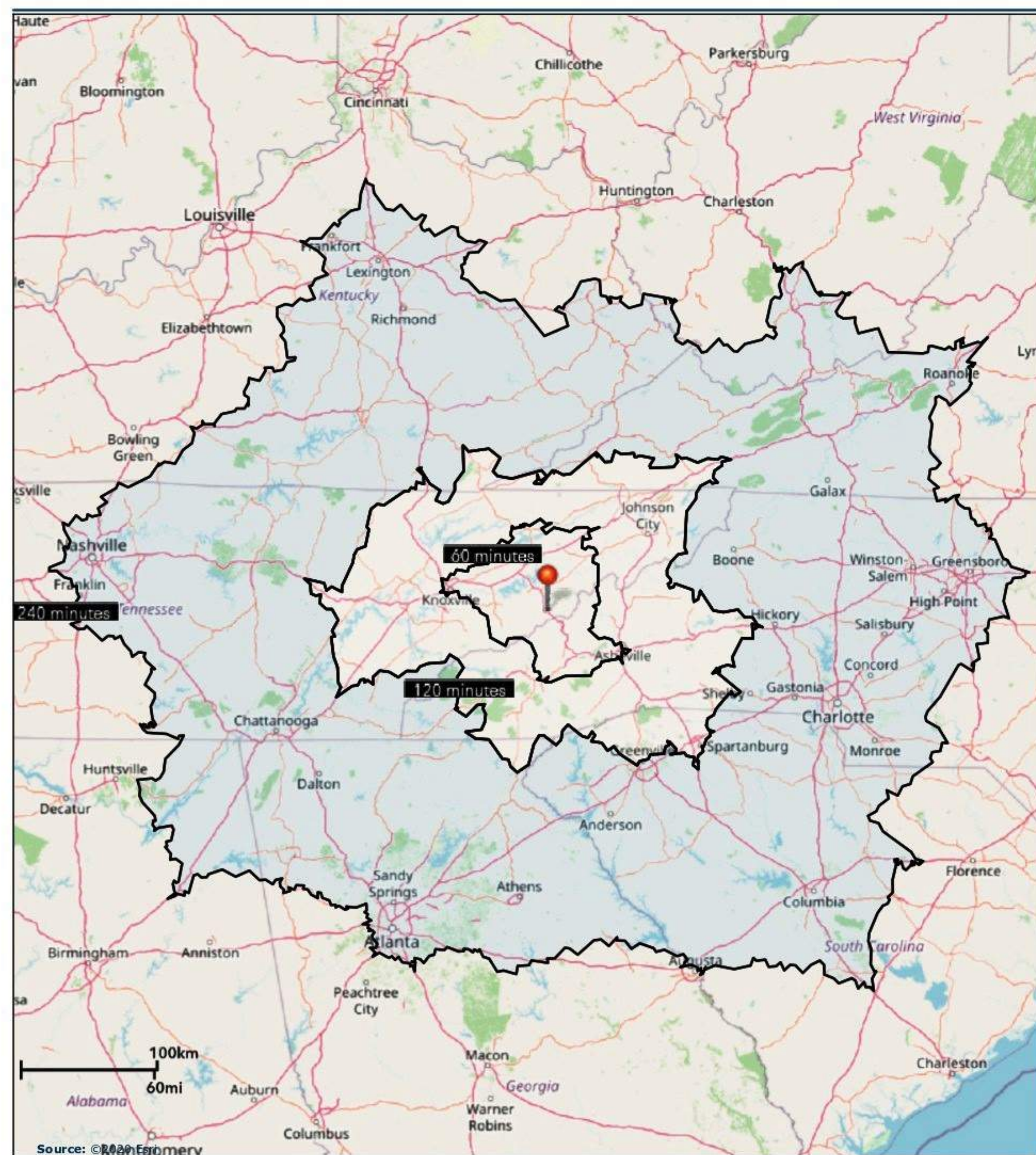
Market Drive Time (Minutes)	MTB Participants	Annual Participation Days
0-60	10,169	128,945
60-120	42,546	539,480
120-240	318,954	4,044,339
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>371,669</b>	<b>4,712,764</b>

- Roughly 370,000 mountain bikers live within a 4-hour drive from Hartford
- Combined they participate 4.7 million days in mountain biking annually
- On average each mountain biker in market area participates 13 days annually

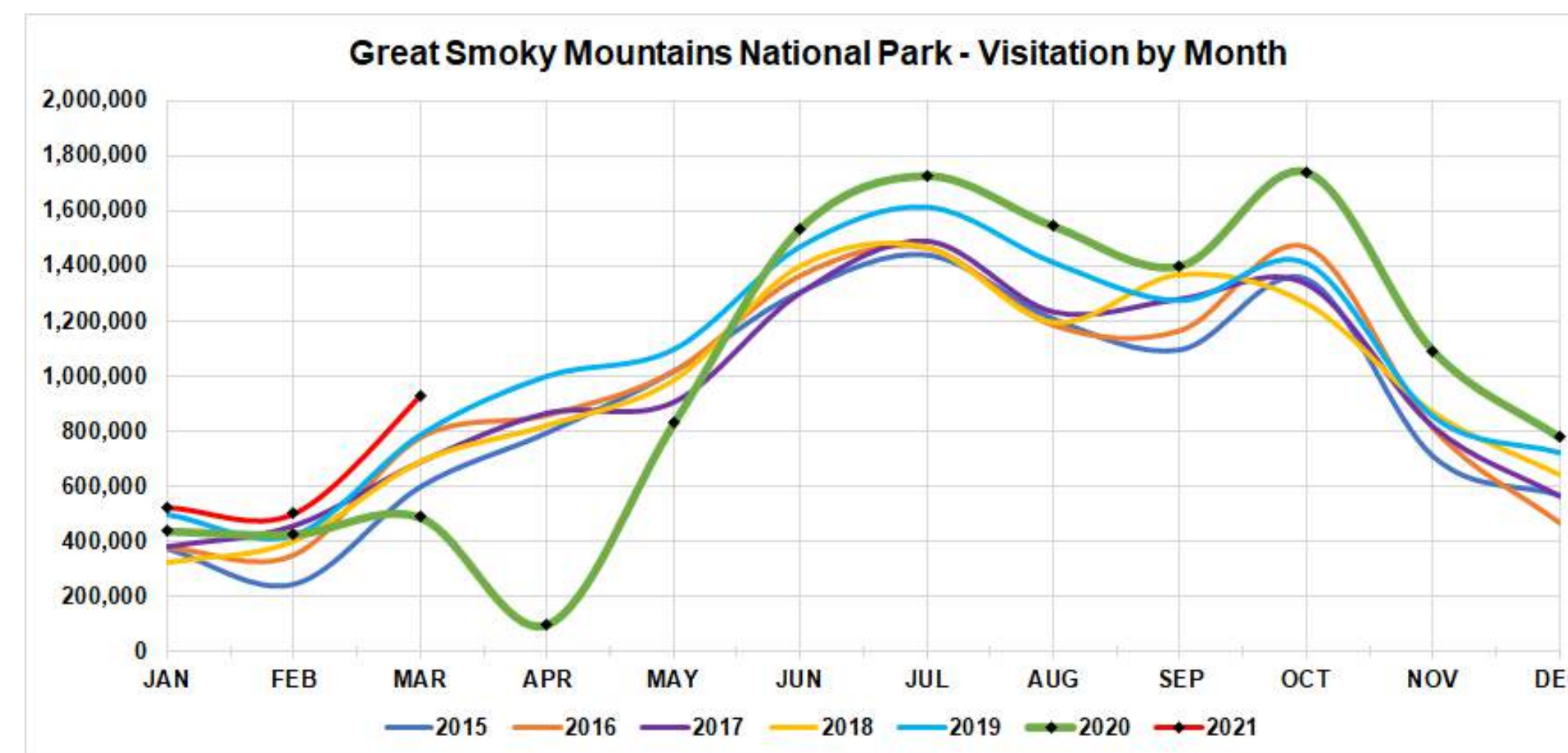
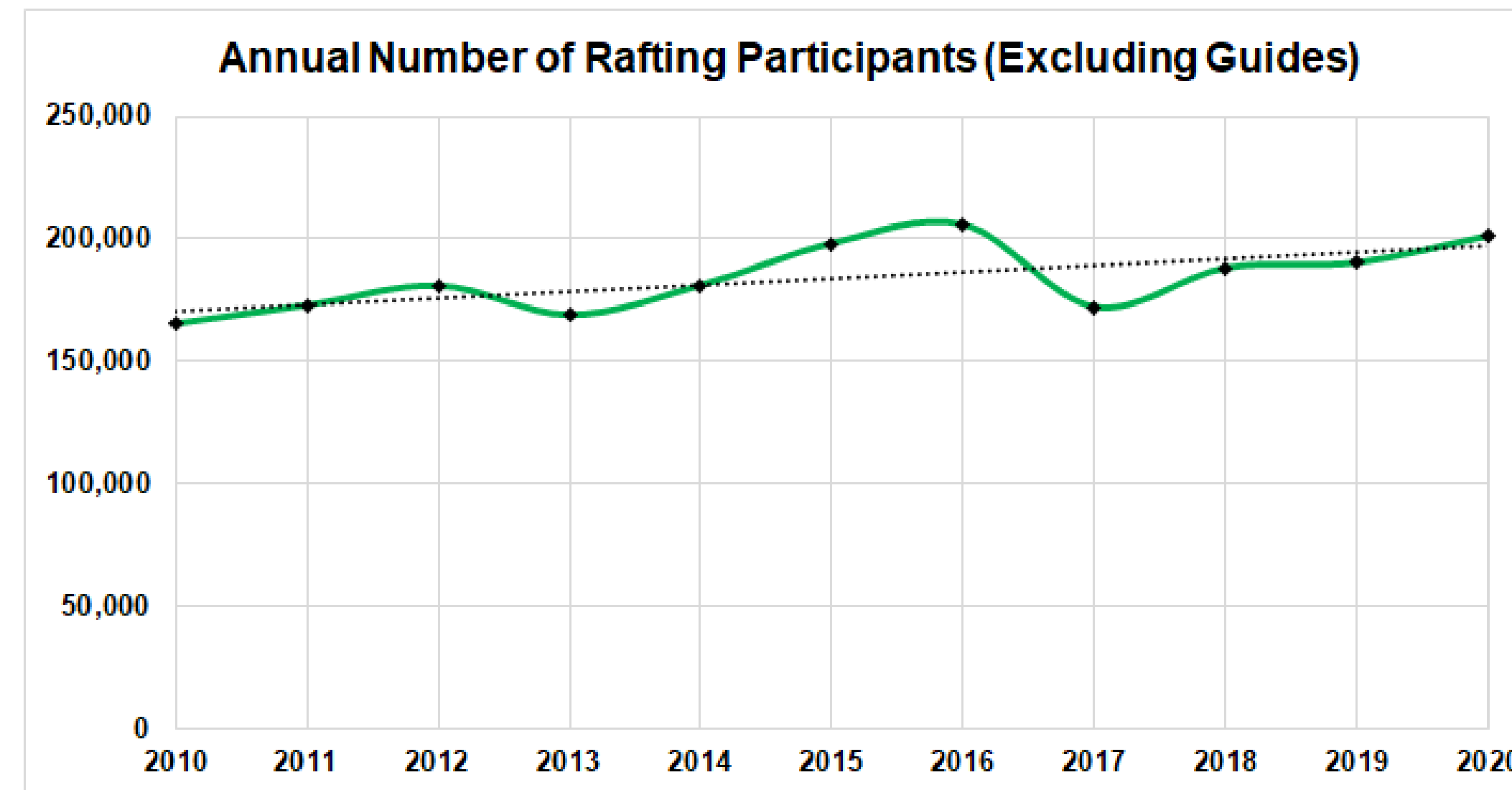


Drive Time Market 240 Minutes

Hartford, TN



# Existing Visitation



# Estimates

## Visitor Estimates by Market Area

Market Drive Time (Minutes)	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
0-60 Minutes	5,986	22,623	28,304
60-120 Minutes	12,904	59,841	83,948
120-240 Minutes	44,656	172,243	261,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,546</b>	<b>254,707</b>	<b>373,806</b>

## Visitor Spending Estimates

Category	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
Accommodations	\$261,558	\$11,894,455	\$18,852,358
Food/Restaurants	\$1,941,085	\$12,471,132	\$19,068,583
Groceries	\$1,609,681	\$10,341,914	\$15,812,972
Entertainment	\$473,435	\$3,041,739	\$4,650,874
Shopping	\$615,466	\$3,954,261	\$6,046,136
Gas/Fuel	\$899,527	\$5,779,305	\$8,836,661
Biking Expenses	\$124,445	\$354,240	\$755,969
Outdoor Recreation	\$1,342,970	\$9,073,502	\$13,659,286
Gaming	\$47,344	\$304,174	\$465,087
Other	\$284,061	\$1,825,044	\$2,790,524
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,599,573</b>	<b>\$59,039,766</b>	<b>\$90,938,452</b>

- Spending budgets of Tennessee tourists and mountain biking participants at their destinations
- Potential spending volume is shown by category per day

## EXISTING MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL SYSTEMS

- 41 trail systems in East Tennessee, most of them in urban areas
  - (Windrock Bike Park, Urban Wilderness Corridor, Chattanooga, Raccoon Mountain, Volkswagen Trails, Johnson City, and Tweetsie Trail Systems, etc)
- 9 in Northwest North Carolina
  - (Jack Rabbit Trails, Brevard / Pisgah, Dupont State Forest, Tsali Trails, Old Fort, Asheville, Bent Creek, Fires Creek, Kanuga Bike Park, etc)
- 11 in Northeast Georgia
  - (Bull and Jake Mountain, Lake Russell, Chicopee Woods, Paynes Creek, Cool Springs, Suches, Toccoa, etc)

## TRAIL NETWORKS WITH THE HIGHEST RIDER COUNT:

- are located in or near urban areas (daily use)
- have a mix of easy, moderate, and expert-level trails that open the trail system up to a much wider range of riders
- have the park/trail system managed by a local MTB club or association
- are designation as an "IMBA Hall of Fame Epic Ride"
- Most trail systems do not offer dedicated MTB trails. Riders have to share the trails with hikers, runners or horseback riders.

## Tax Revenue Estimates

	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
<b>Spending Total</b>	<b>\$7,599,573</b>	<b>\$59,039,766</b>	<b>\$90,938,452</b>
<b>Cocke County</b>	<b>\$216,835</b>	<b>\$1,980,427</b>	<b>\$3,066,378</b>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>\$531,970</b>	<b>\$4,132,784</b>	<b>\$6,365,692</b>

- Tax revenue is shown for sales and lodging taxes
- Potential tax revenue benefit for Cocke County and Tennessee are based on current tax rates



**SURFACE MATERIAL**



**DIRT**



**GRAVEL**



**ROCK**



**PAVED**

**TRAIL TYPES**



**FLOW**



**CROSS COUNTRY**



**ENDURO**



**PROGRESSIVE**



**PUMP TRACK**



**SKILLS AREA**



**HIKING**



**EQUESTRIAN**



## RECREATION



HUNTING



FISHING



RAFTING AND KAYAKING



CAMPING

## AMENITIES



LODGING



RESTROOMS



TRAILHEADS



PARKING

## SITE ACCESS



BIKE RENTAL STATIONS



E-BIKES



SHUTTLE



PUBLIC ROADS

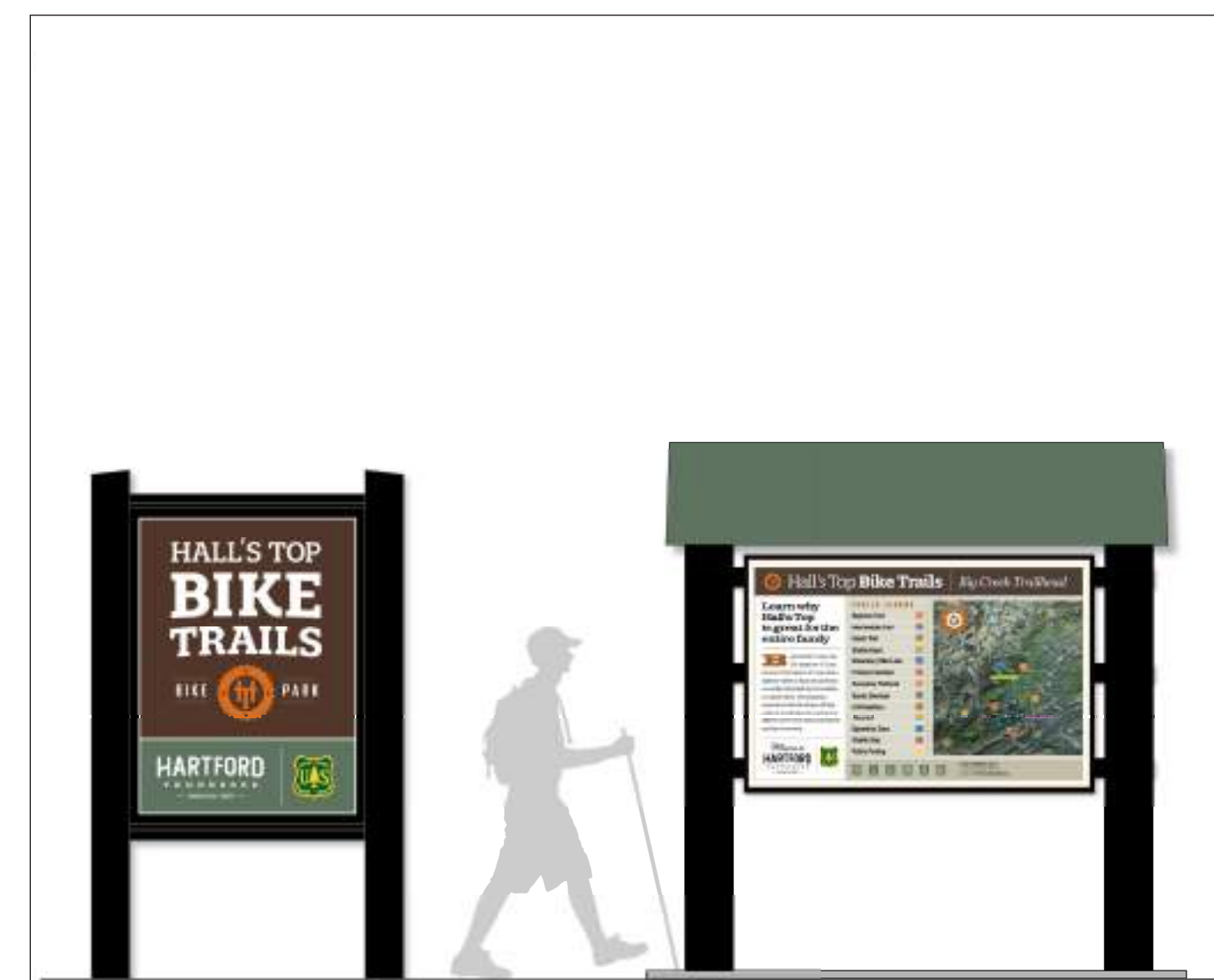




ENTRY MONUMENT & SIGNAGE



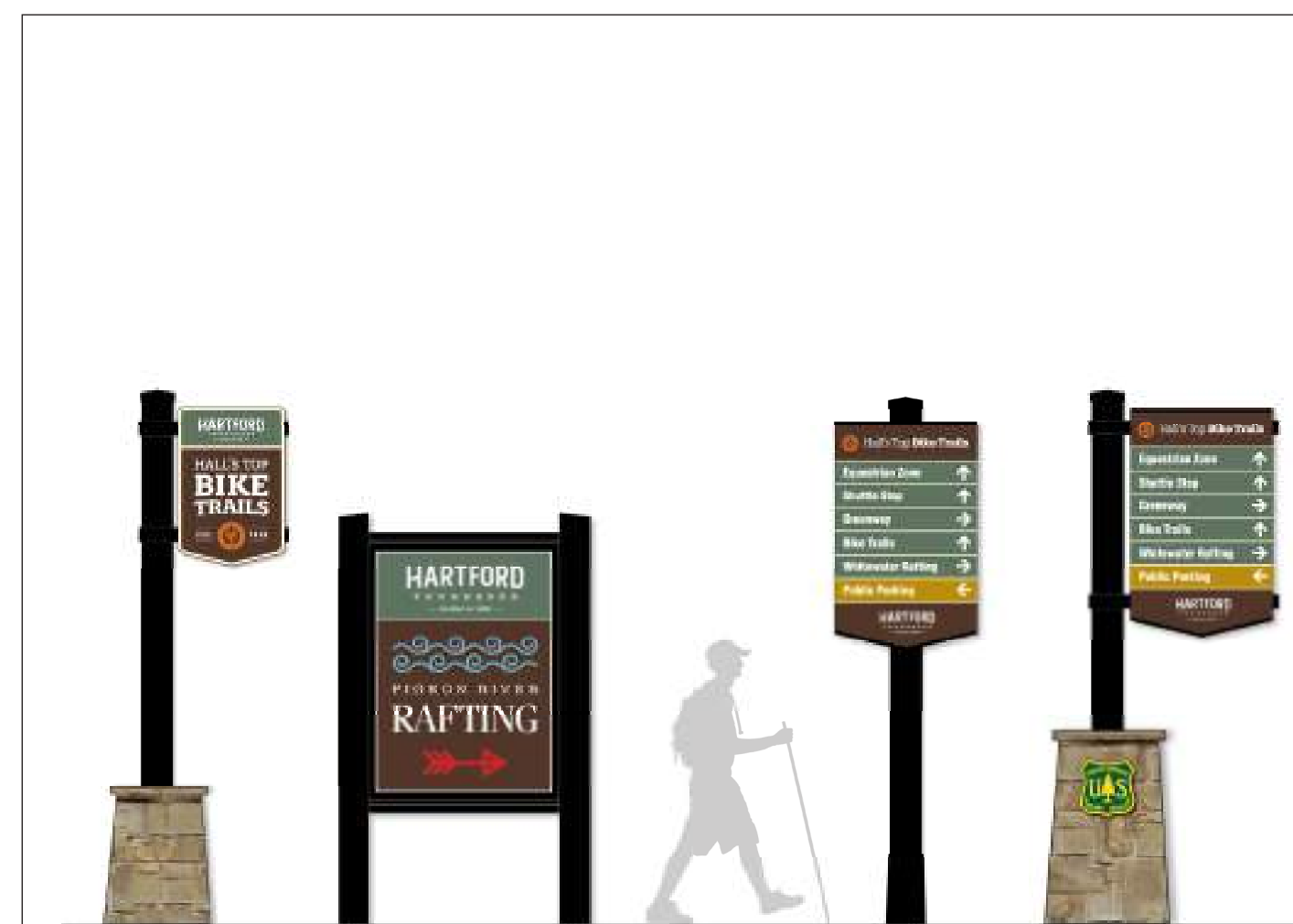
ENTRY MONUMENT



TRAILHEAD KIOSK



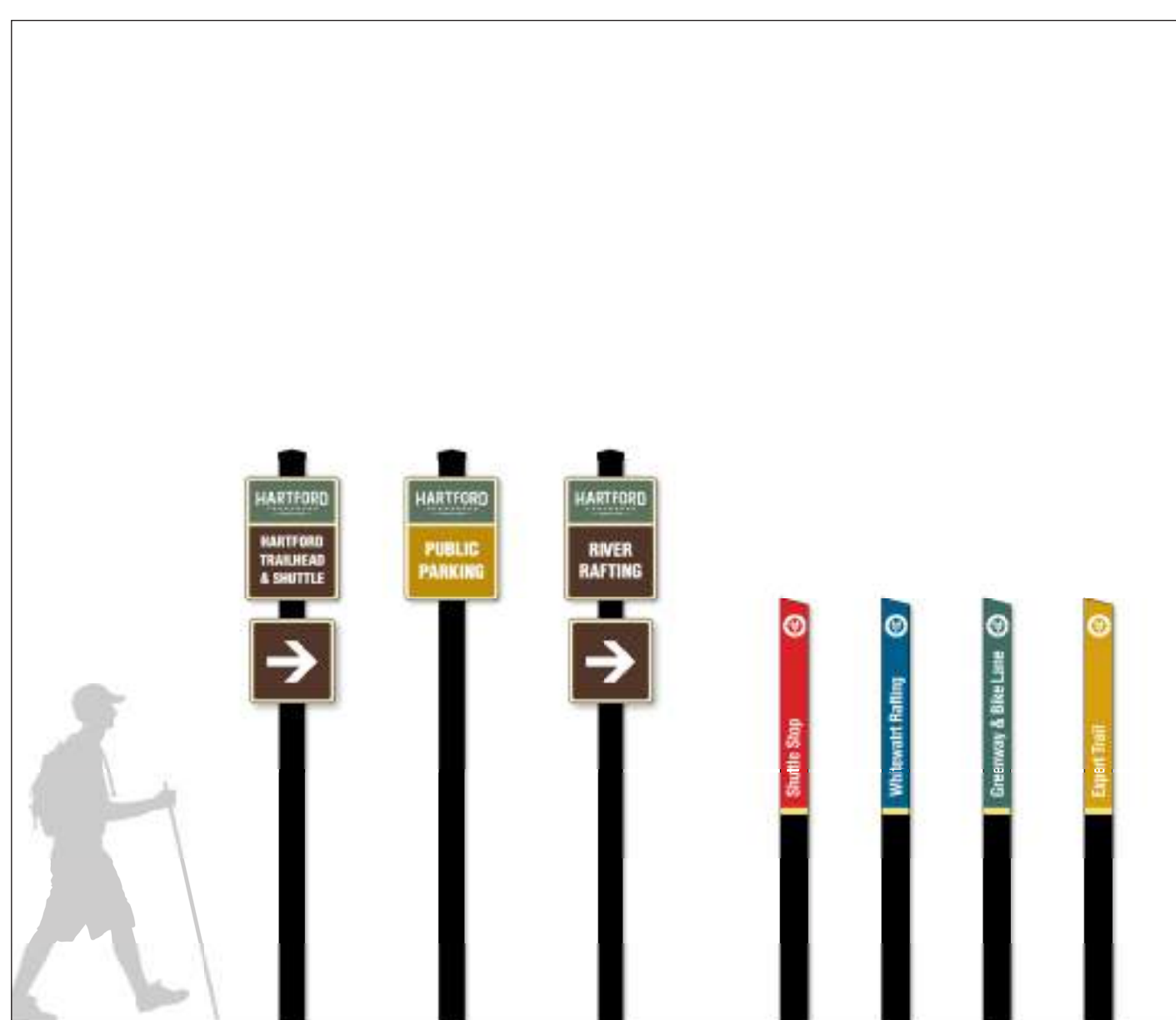
TRAILHEAD KIOSK



DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE



DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE



DIRECTIONAL & ARRIVAL SIGNAGE



DIRECTIONAL BLAZES & SIGNAGE



BILLBOARD SIGNAGE

# WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE





**WATER QUALITY**



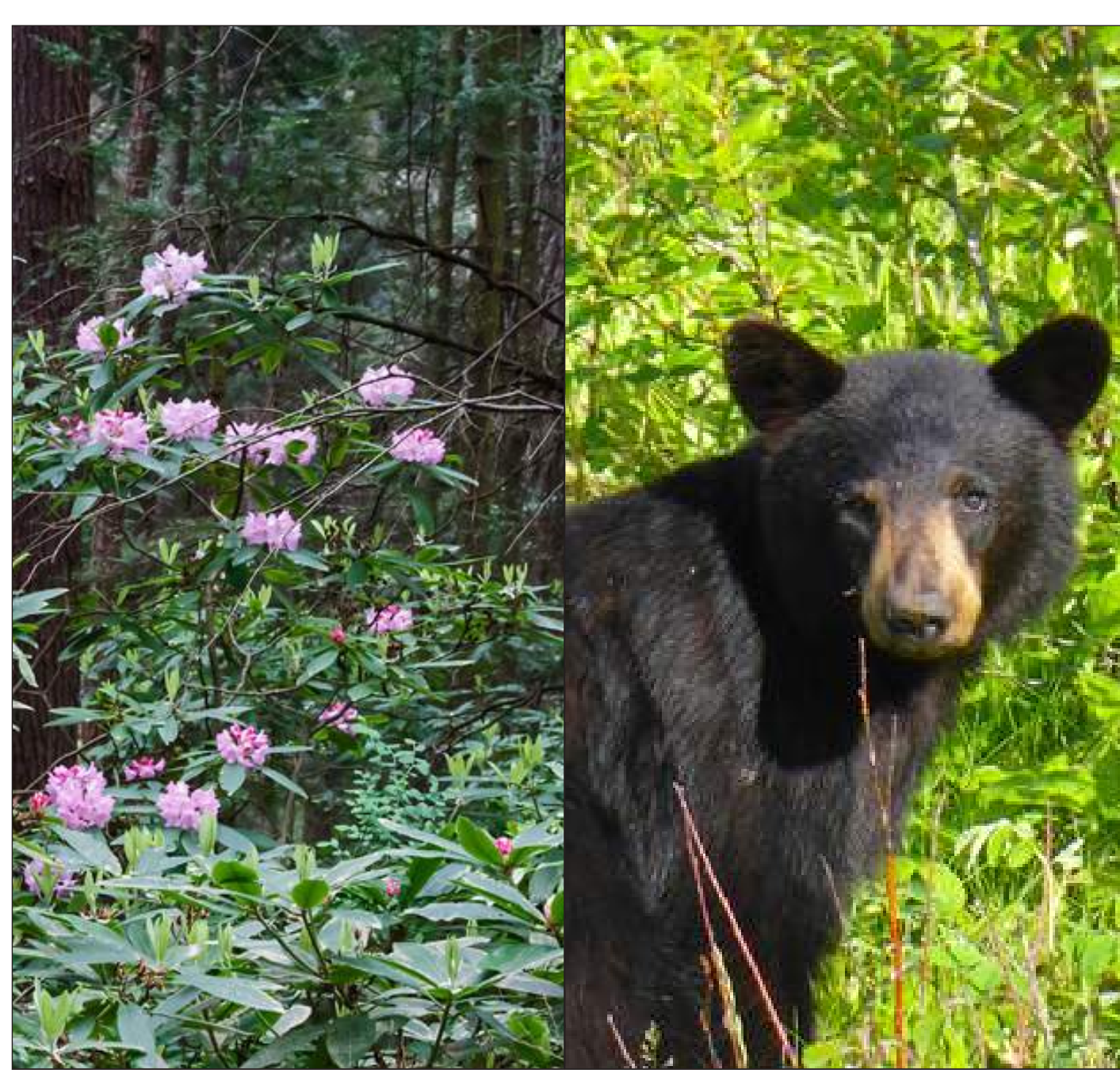
**SOIL QUALITY**



**AIR QUALITY**



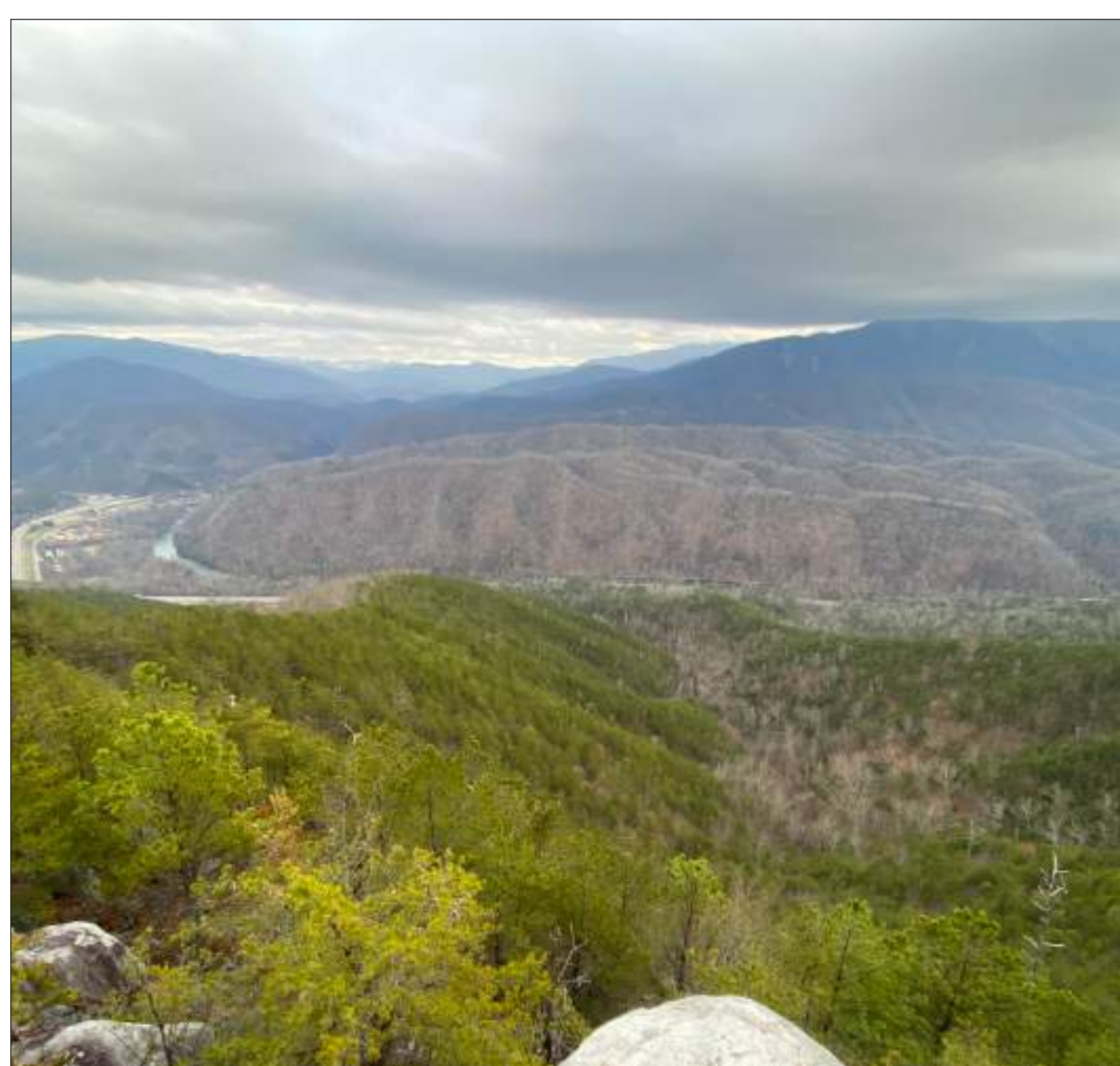
**LIGHT POLLUTION**



**FLORA AND FAUNA**



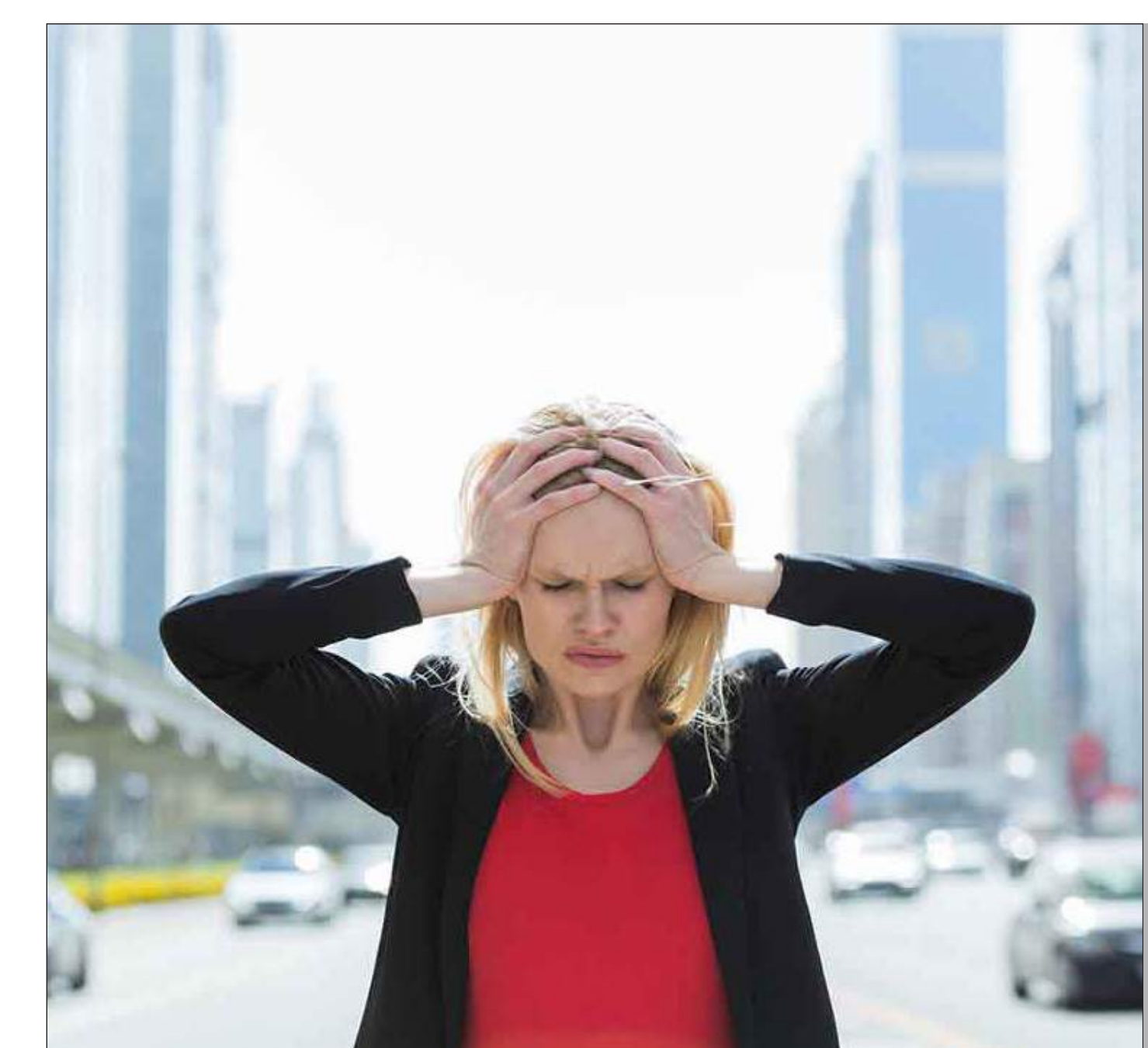
**SLOPE STABILIZATION**



**VIEWSHEDS**



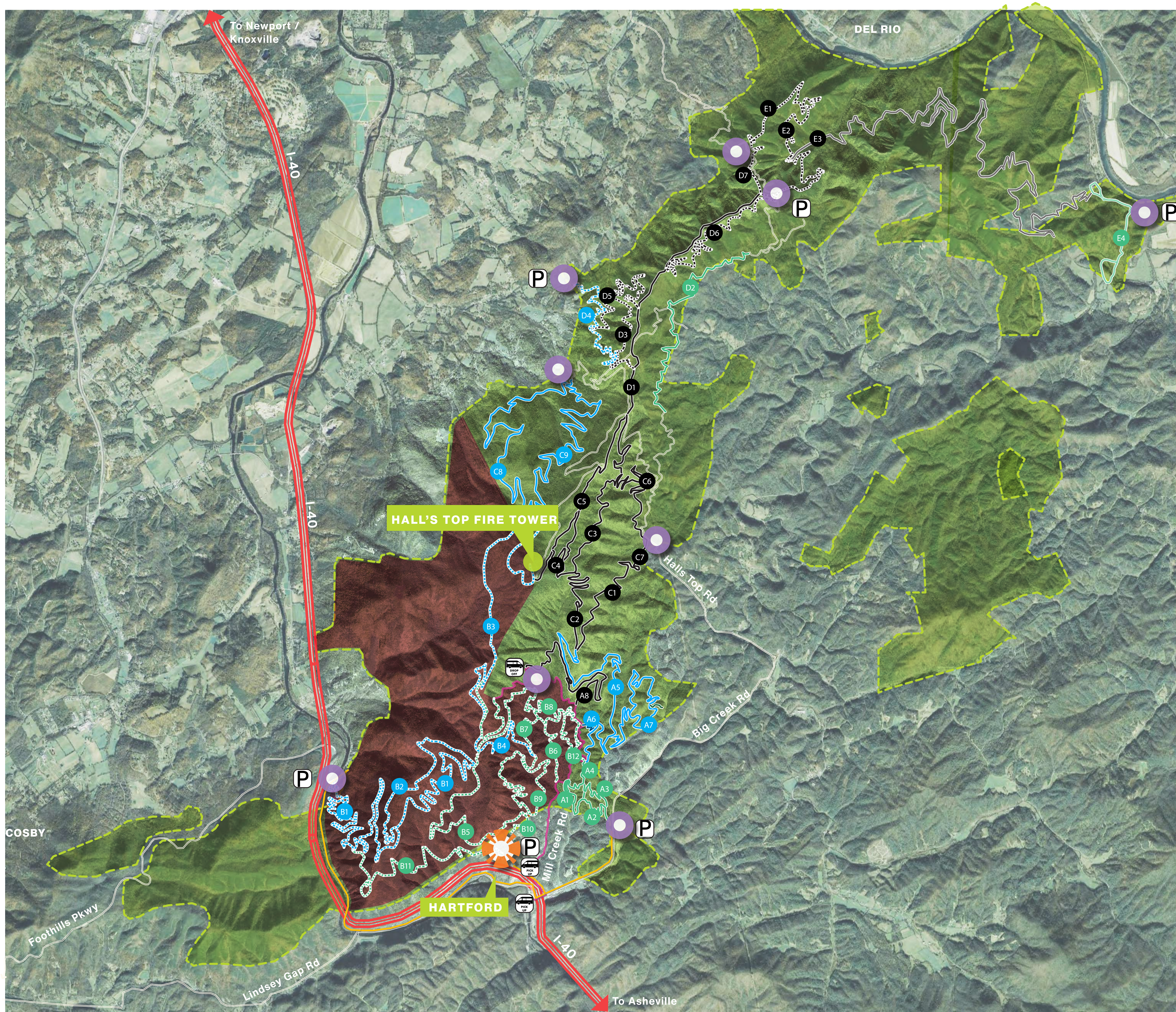
**TRAIL REMEDIATION**



**NOISE POLLUTION**

# **ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION**





### LEGEND

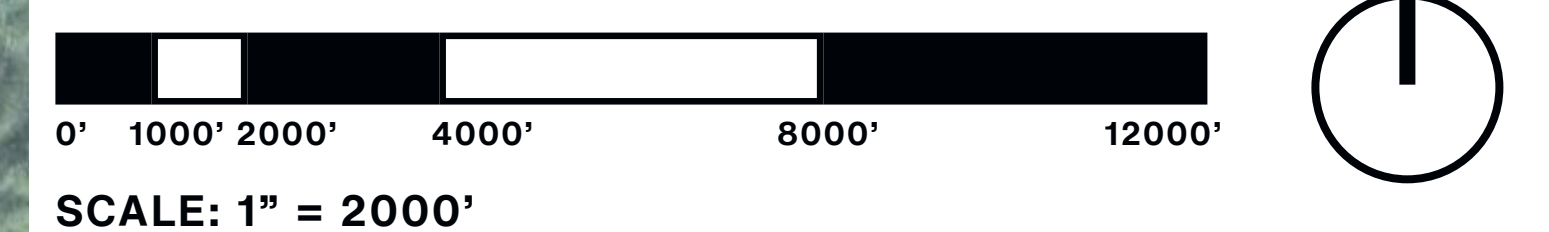
- Interstate
- Road
- Beginner MTB Trail
- Intermediate MTB Trail
- Expert MTB Trail
- Beginner Hiking Trail
- Intermediate Hiking Trail
- Expert Hiking Trail
- Beginner Equestrian Trail
- Intermediate Equestrian Trail
- Expert Equestrian Trail
- Potential Shuttle Road
- Greenway / Bike Lane
- CNF Area
- 12.B Roadless Area
- County Line
- Primary Trailhead
- Secondary Trailhead
- Trail Name
- Parking
- Shuttle Stop

### NOTES

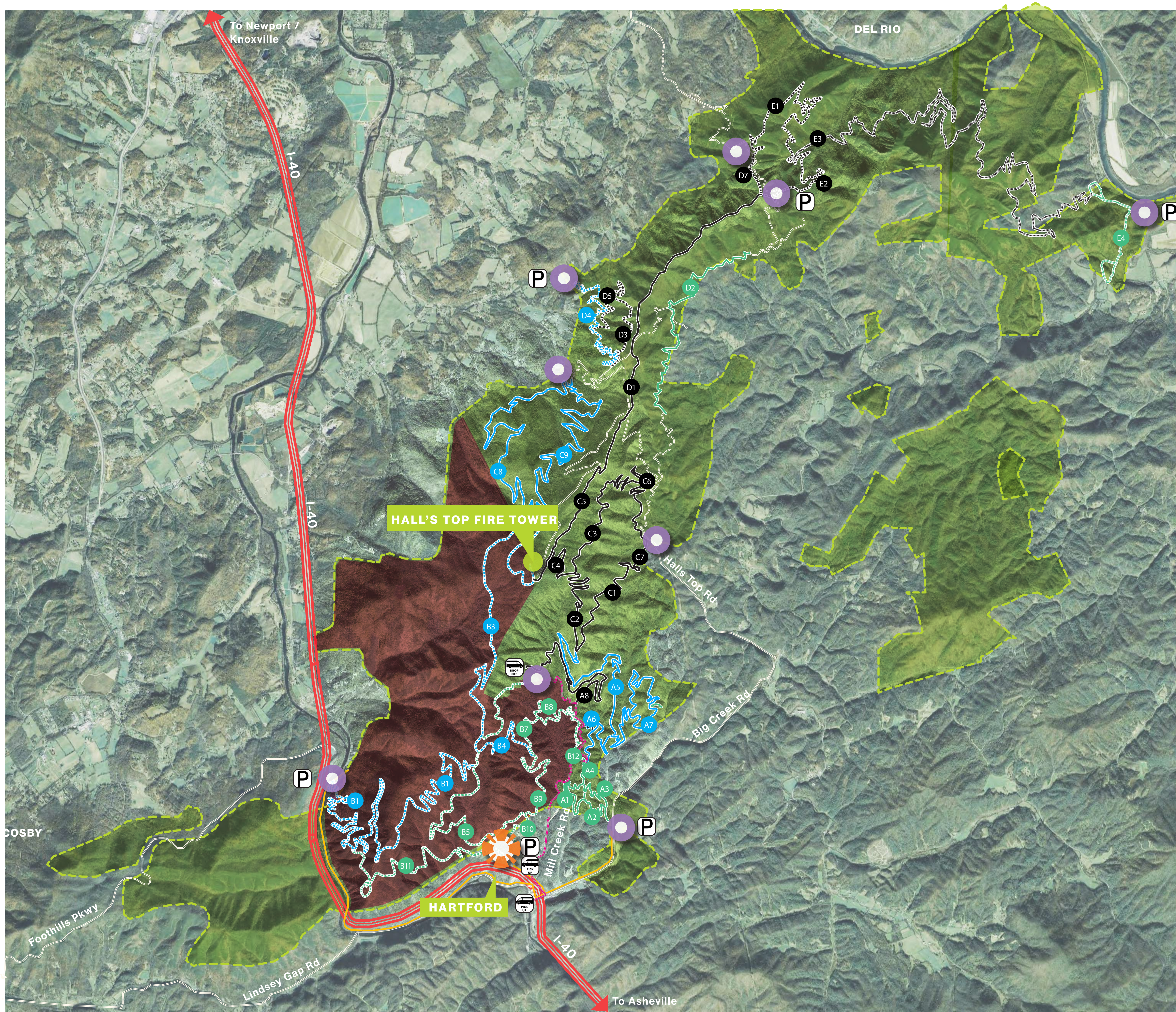
- Approx. **112.12 Total Miles** of Conceptual Trails:
  - BEGINNER- 25.79 MI (23%)**
  - INTERMEDIATE- 48.53 MI (44%)**
  - EXPERT- 38.35 MI (33%)**
  - GREENWAY- 5.44 MI (NOT INCLUDED IN MTB MILEAGE)**

- Advantages:
- Complete mileage offering for all the non-motorized activities in the forest.
  - Multiple loop options for long or short outings.
  - Shuttle road to top of Halls Top Mountain.
  - Multiple points of access throughout the forest into the trail system.

- Disadvantages:
- Trail corridor width impacts several previously un-impacted or lightly impacted sections of forest.
  - The construction budget likely will not cover this amount of mileage.
  - Trails create a porous forest service boundary with multiple points of access.
  - Most trails will need longterm maintenance.
  - Shuttle roads will require significant amounts of construction and administration to be completed.







### LEGEND

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- Expert MTB Trail
- Beginner Hiking Trail
- Intermediate Hiking Trail
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### NOTES

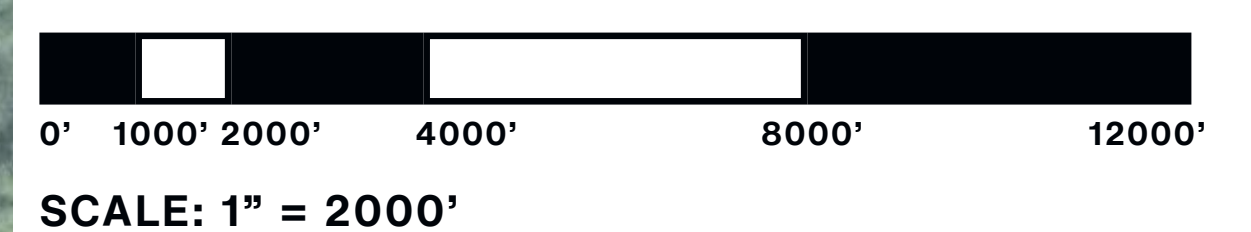
- Approx. **89.83 Total Miles** of Conceptual Trails:
  - BEGINNER- 20.55 MI (23%)**
  - INTERMEDIATE- 42.23 MI (46%)**
  - EXPERT- 27.6 MI (31%)**
  - GREENWAY- 5.44 MI (NOT INCLUDED IN MTB MILEAGE)**

#### Advantages:

- Well rounded mileage offering for all non-motorized forest activities.
- Several loop options for long or short outings which utilize trails and existing roads.
- Shuttle road to continue down to the bottom of Stone Mountain Trail.
- Multiple access points to the trail system throughout the forest.

#### Disadvantages:

- Trail corridor width will impact several previously un-impacted or lightly impacted sections of forest.
- The construction budget may not cover this amount of mileage.
- The trails create a porous forest service boundary with multiple points of access.
- Most trails will require long-term maintenance.







### LEGEND

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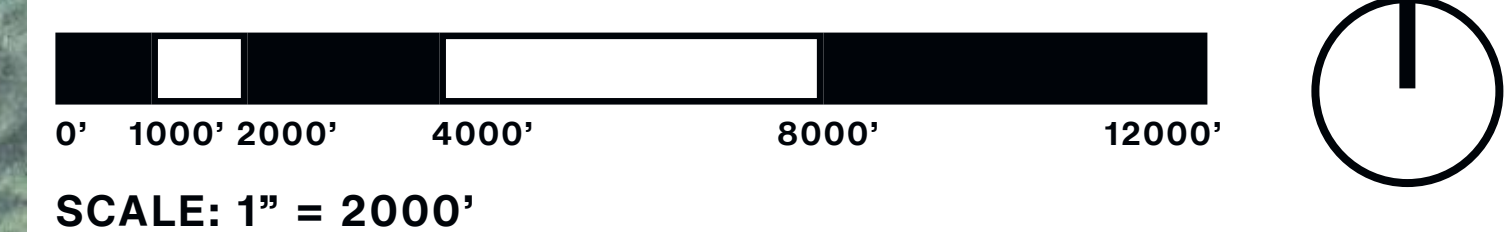
- Approx. **82.34 Total Miles** of Conceptual Trails:
  - BEGINNER- 19.32 MI (23%)**
  - INTERMEDIATE- 37.98 MI (46%)**
  - EXPERT- 25.04 MI (31%)**
  - GREENWAY- 5.44 MI (NOT INCLUDED IN MTB MILEAGE)**

#### Advantages:

- Minimum mileage offering for all non-motorized forest activities.
- Several loop options to utilize new trails and existing roads.
- Shuttle access road to reach first main descending trail.
- Several points of access to the trail system throughout the forest.
- The construction budget will likely cover this mileage amount.

#### Disadvantages:

- Trail corridor width will impact several previously un-impacted or lightly impacted sections of forest.
- Few trail experiences throughout the trail system.
- Creates a porous forest service boundary with multiple points of access.
- The system is dependent on roads to create loop opportunities and access points.



# CONCEPTUAL TRAIL NETWORK *OPTION C*

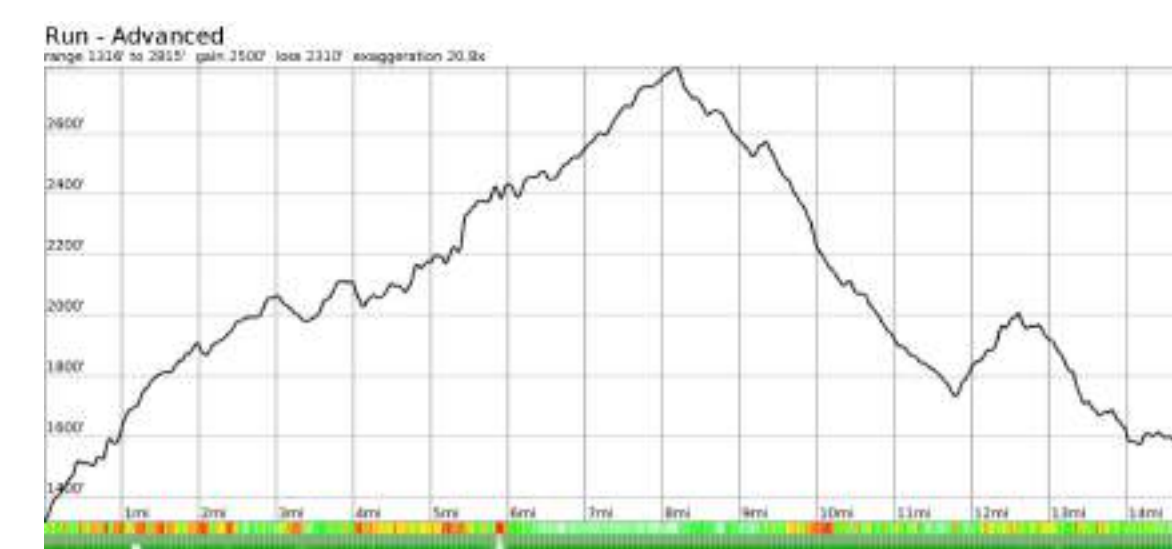
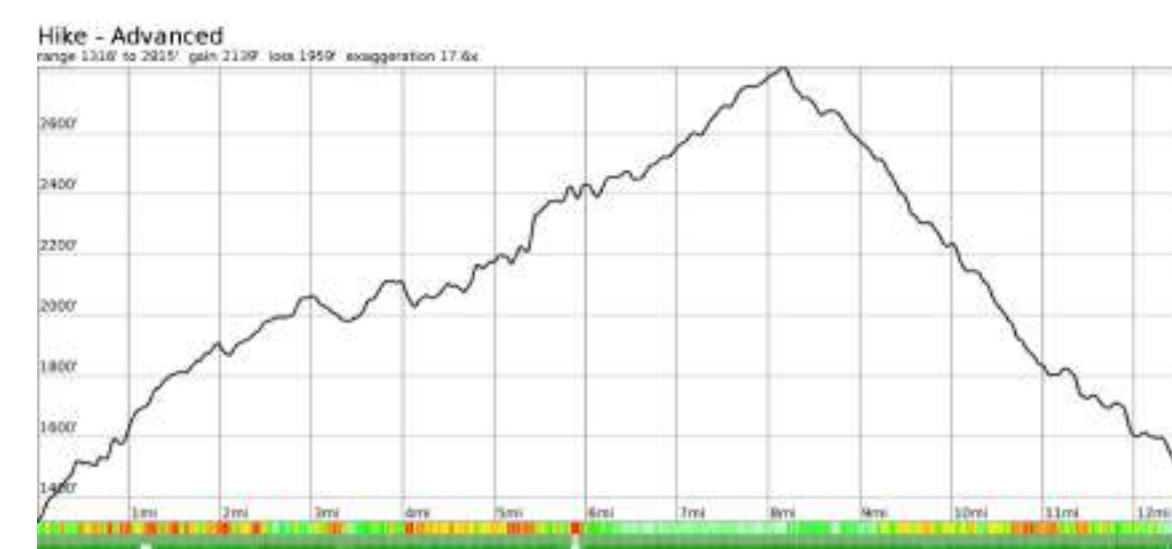
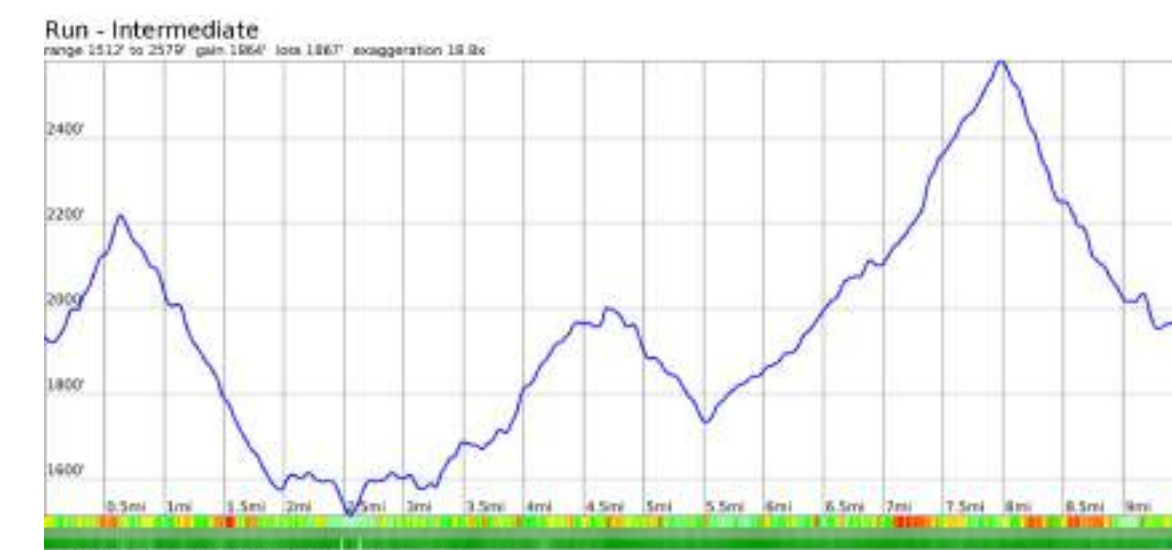
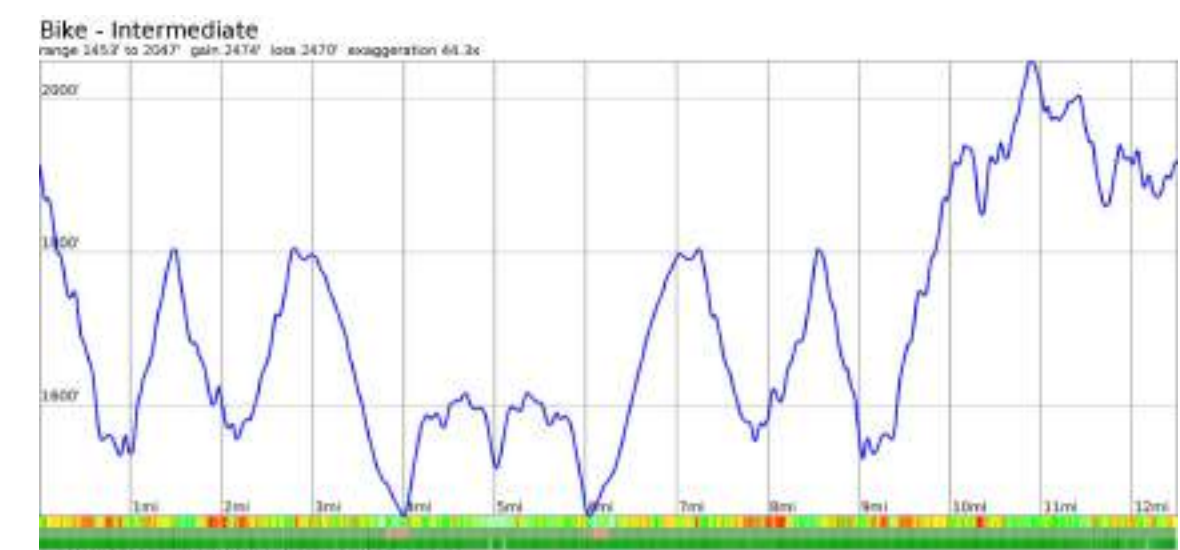
JANUARY 2022

## HALL'S TOP TRAIL MASTER PLAN





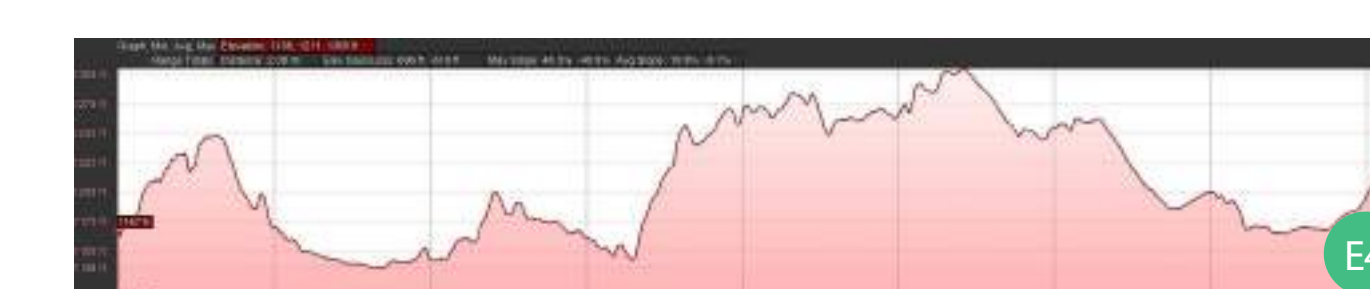
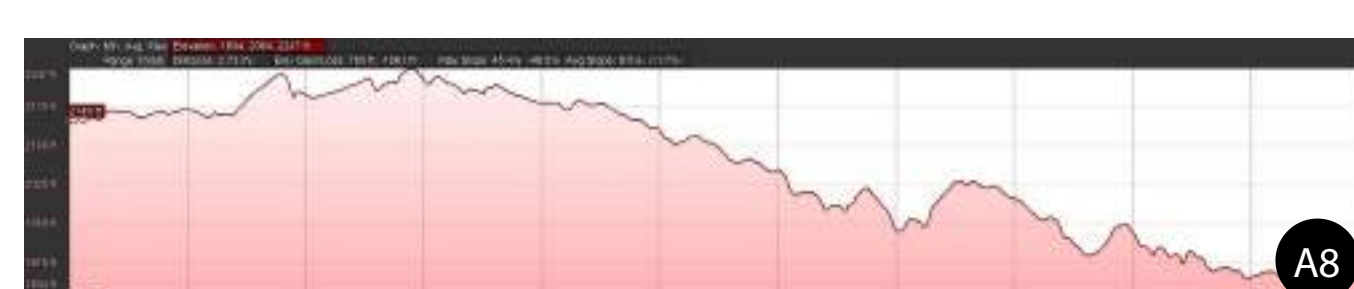
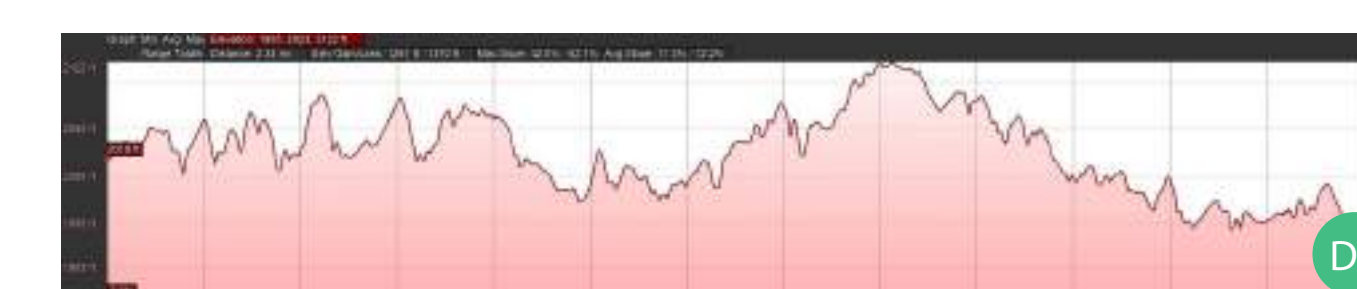
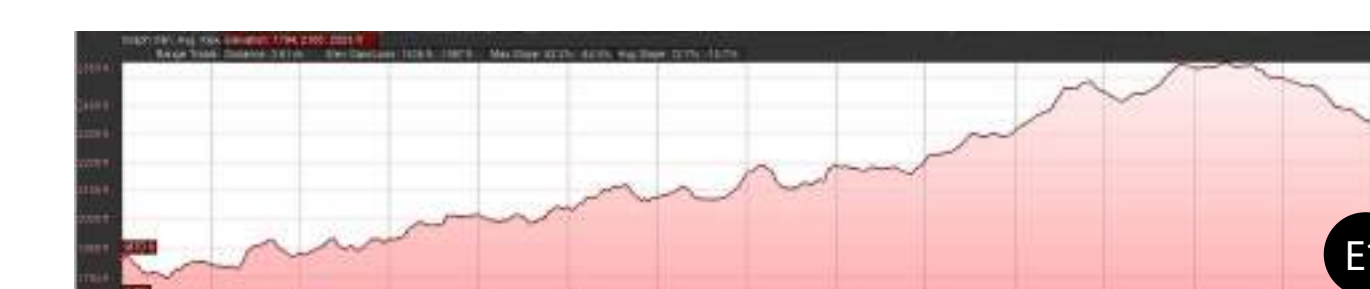
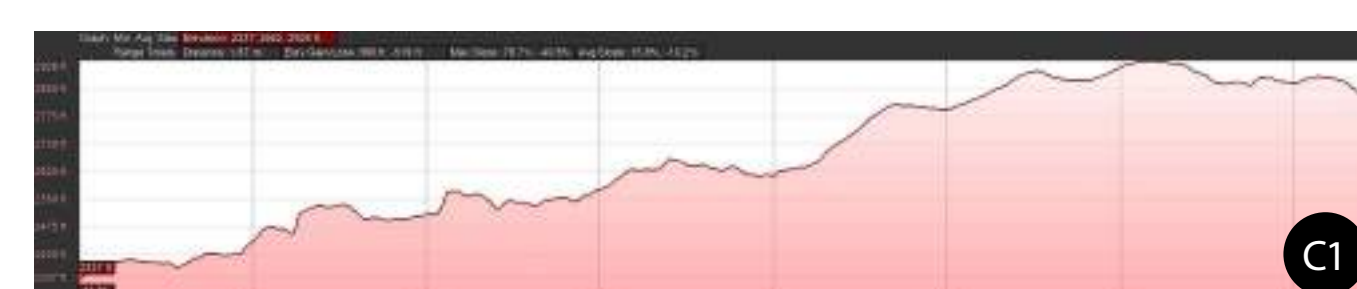
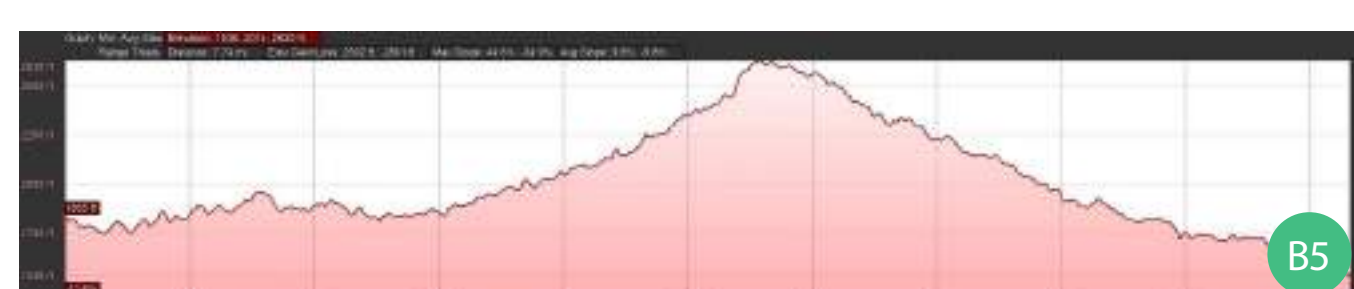
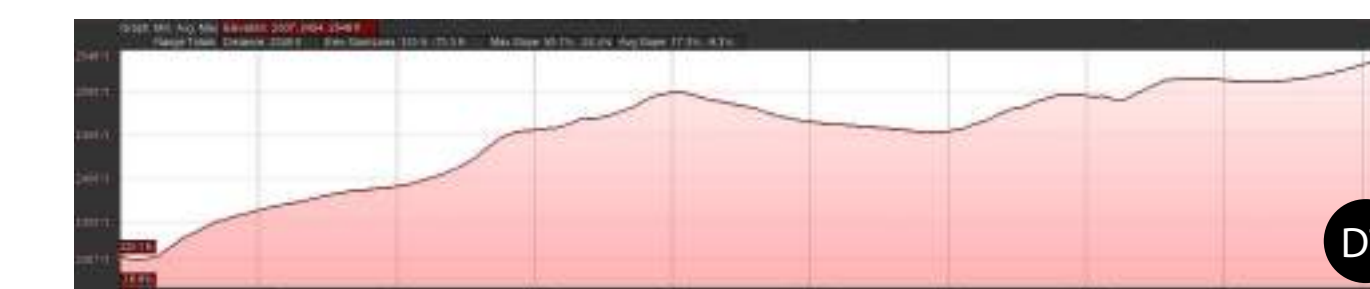
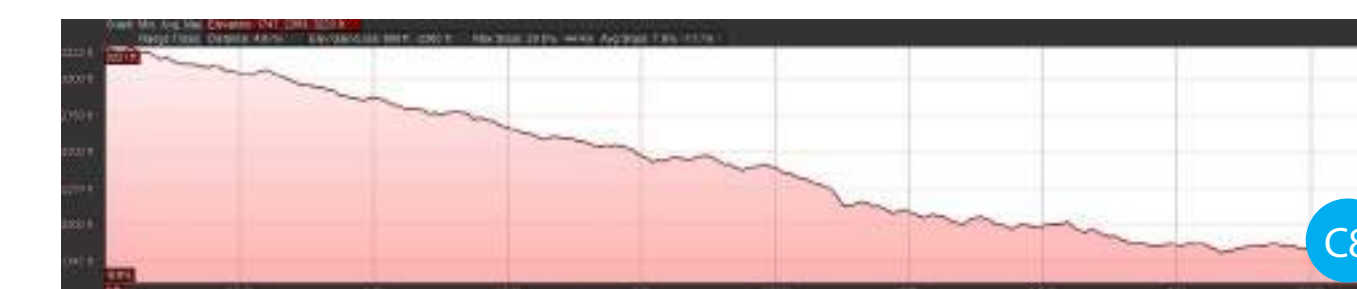
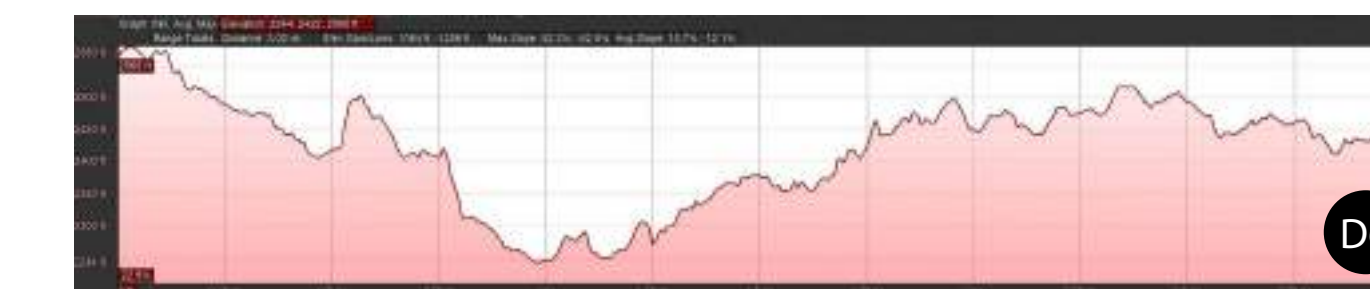
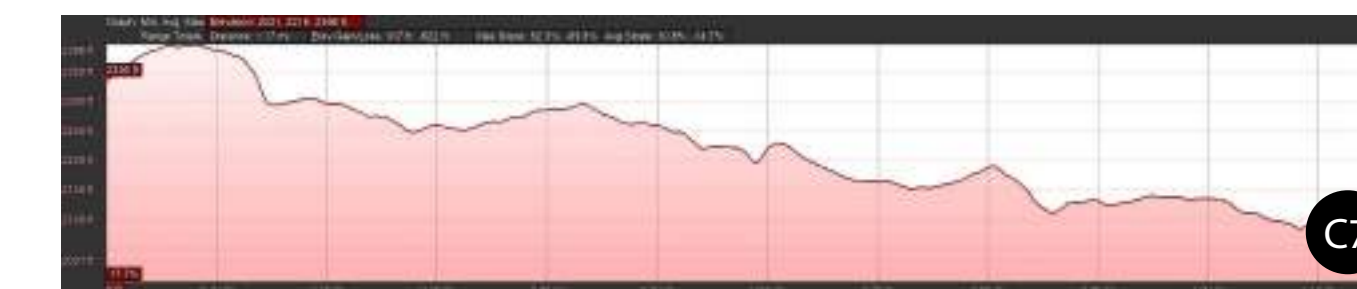
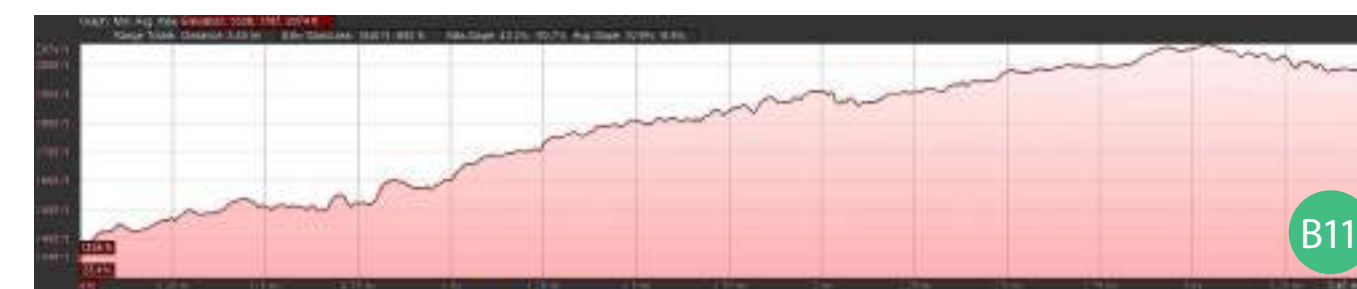
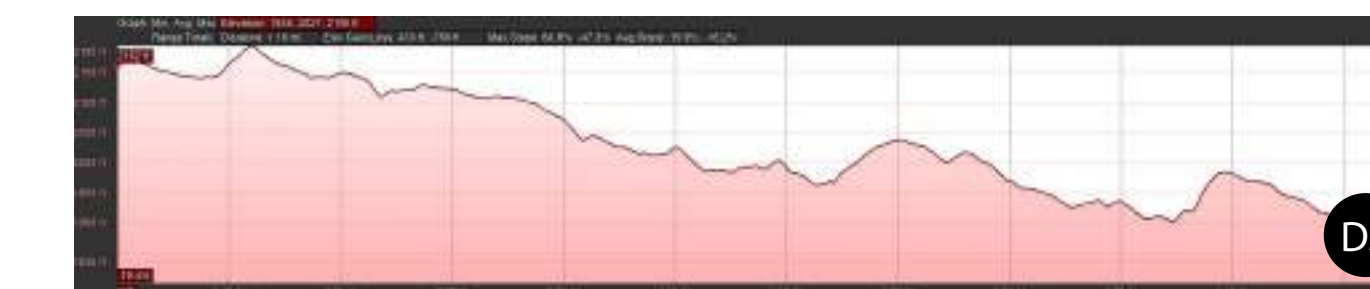
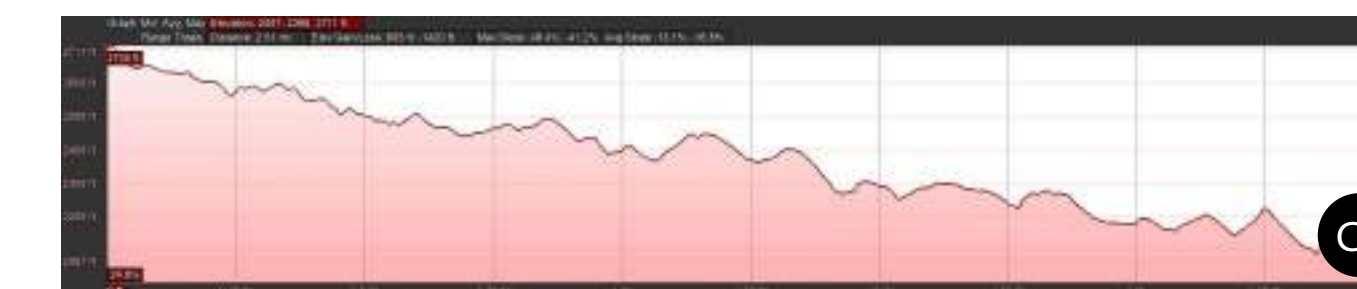
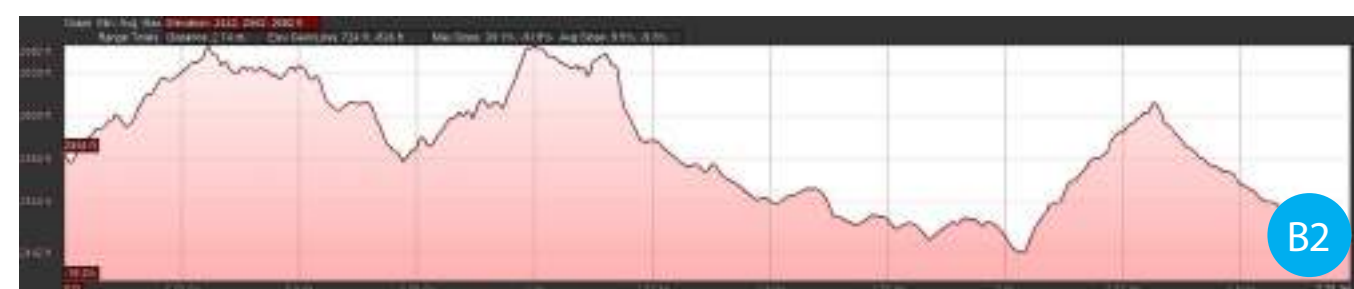
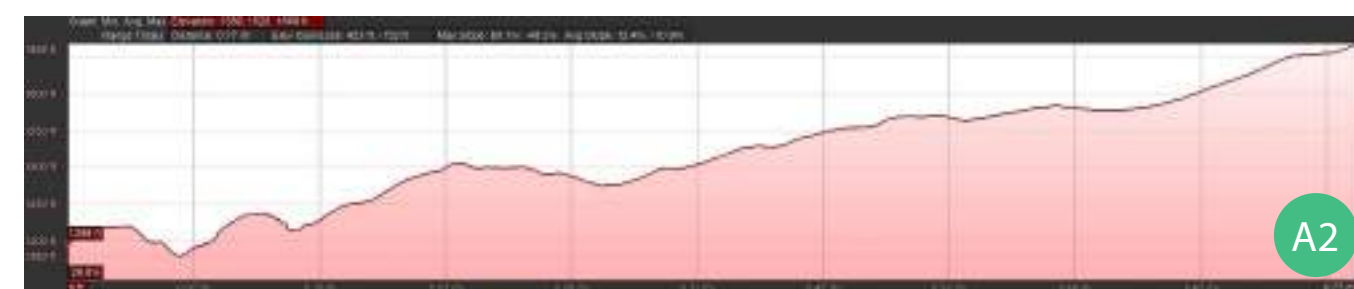
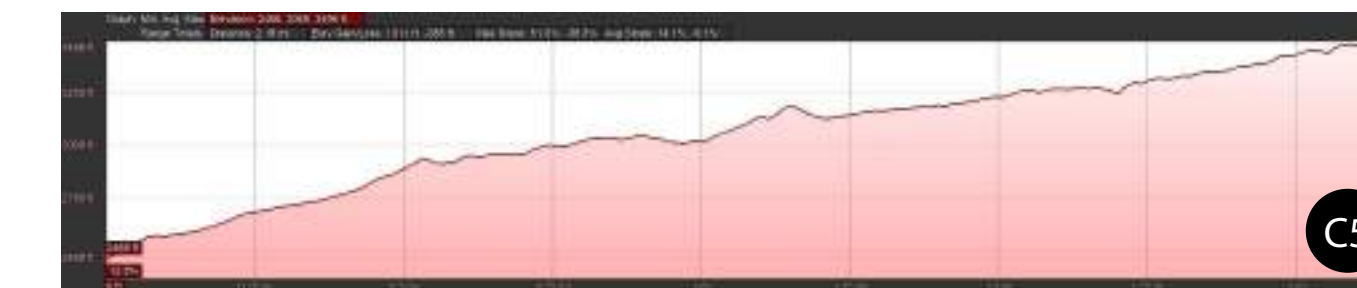
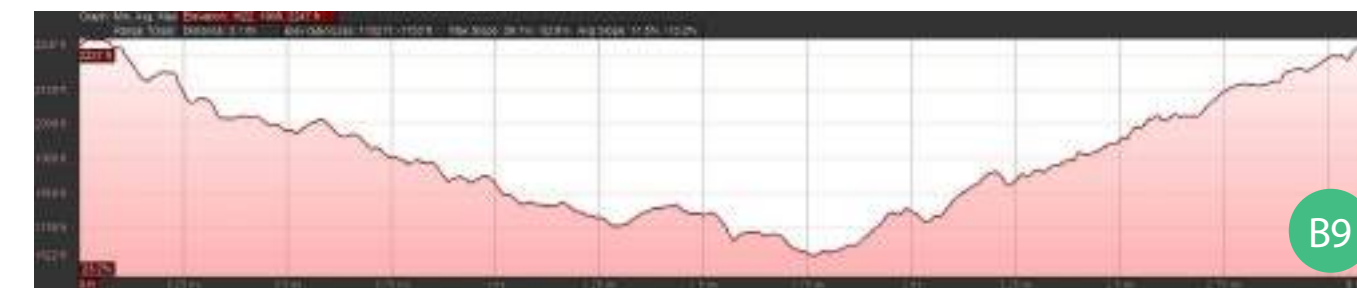
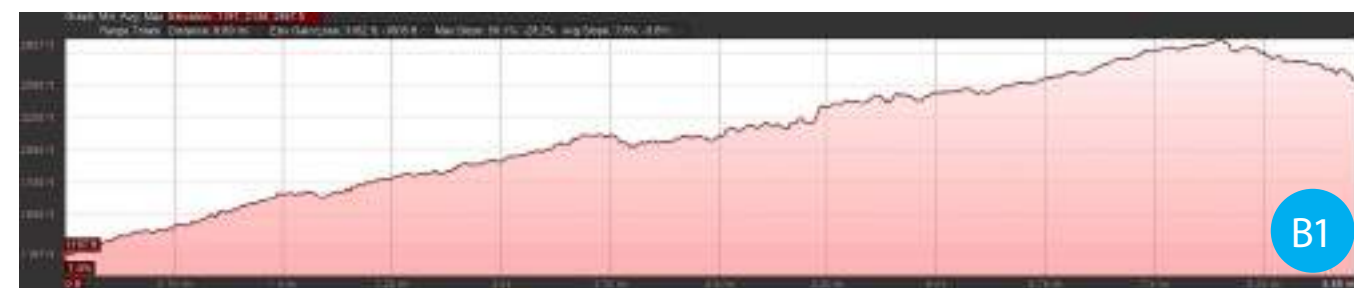
# OPTIONS A & B



# OPTIONS C

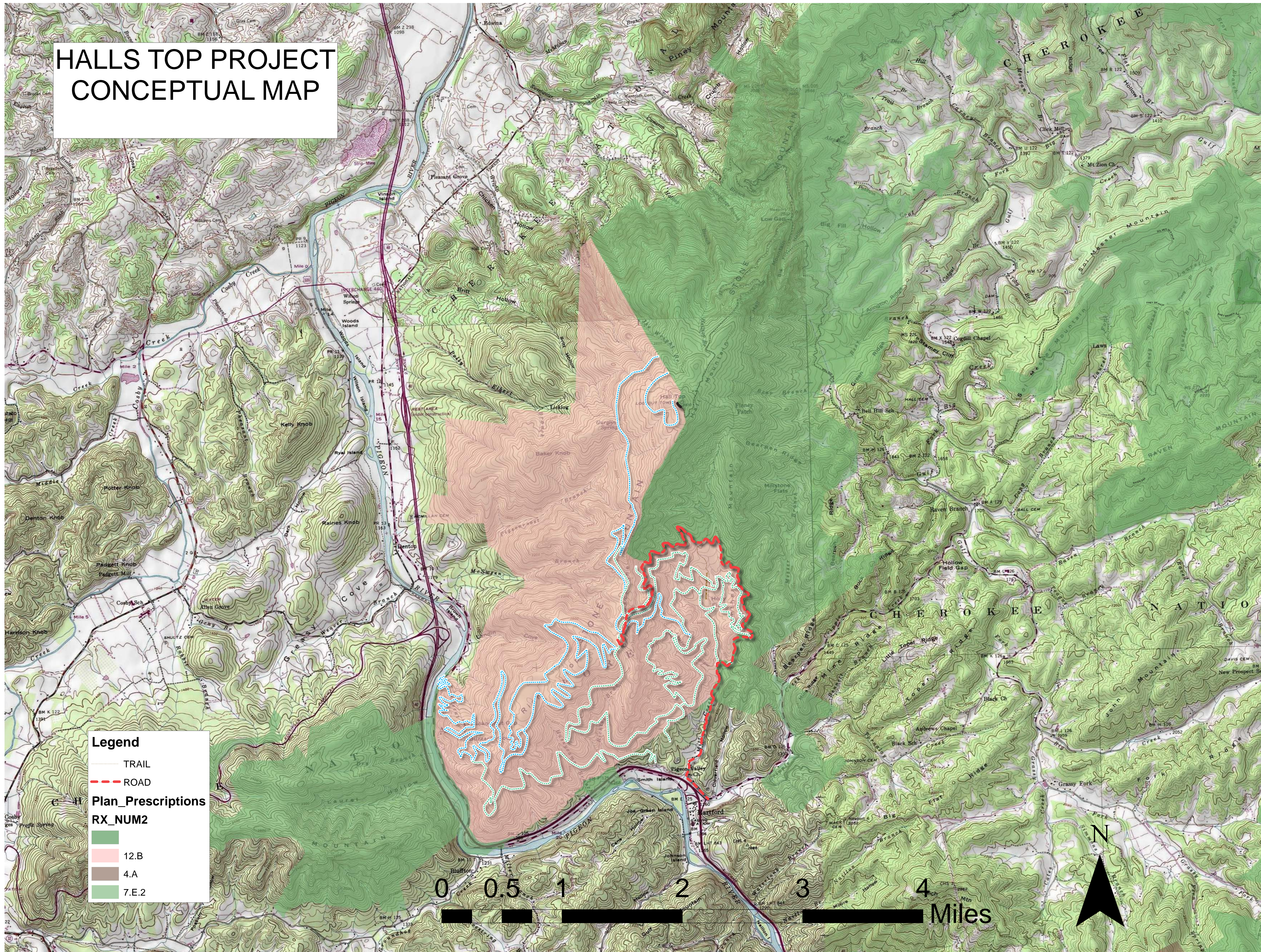


# PROFILES BY TRAIL NAME





# HALLS TOP PROJECT CONCEPTUAL MAP



### 12B Option A - 34.75 Miles Total

- Black/Advanced Trail - 0.00 Miles
- Blue/Intermediate Trail - 17.75 Miles (51% Total)
- Green/Beginner Trail - 17.00 Miles (49% Total)

### 12B Option B - 26.85 Miles Total

- Black/Advanced Trail - 0.00 Miles
- Blue/Intermediate Trail - 15.00 Miles (56% Total)
- Green/Beginner Trail - 11.85 Miles (44% Total)

### 12B Option C - 20.87 Miles Total

- Black/Advanced Trail - 0.00 Miles
- Blue/Intermediate Trail - 10.25 Miles (51% Total)
- Green/Beginner Trail - 10.62 Miles (49% Total)

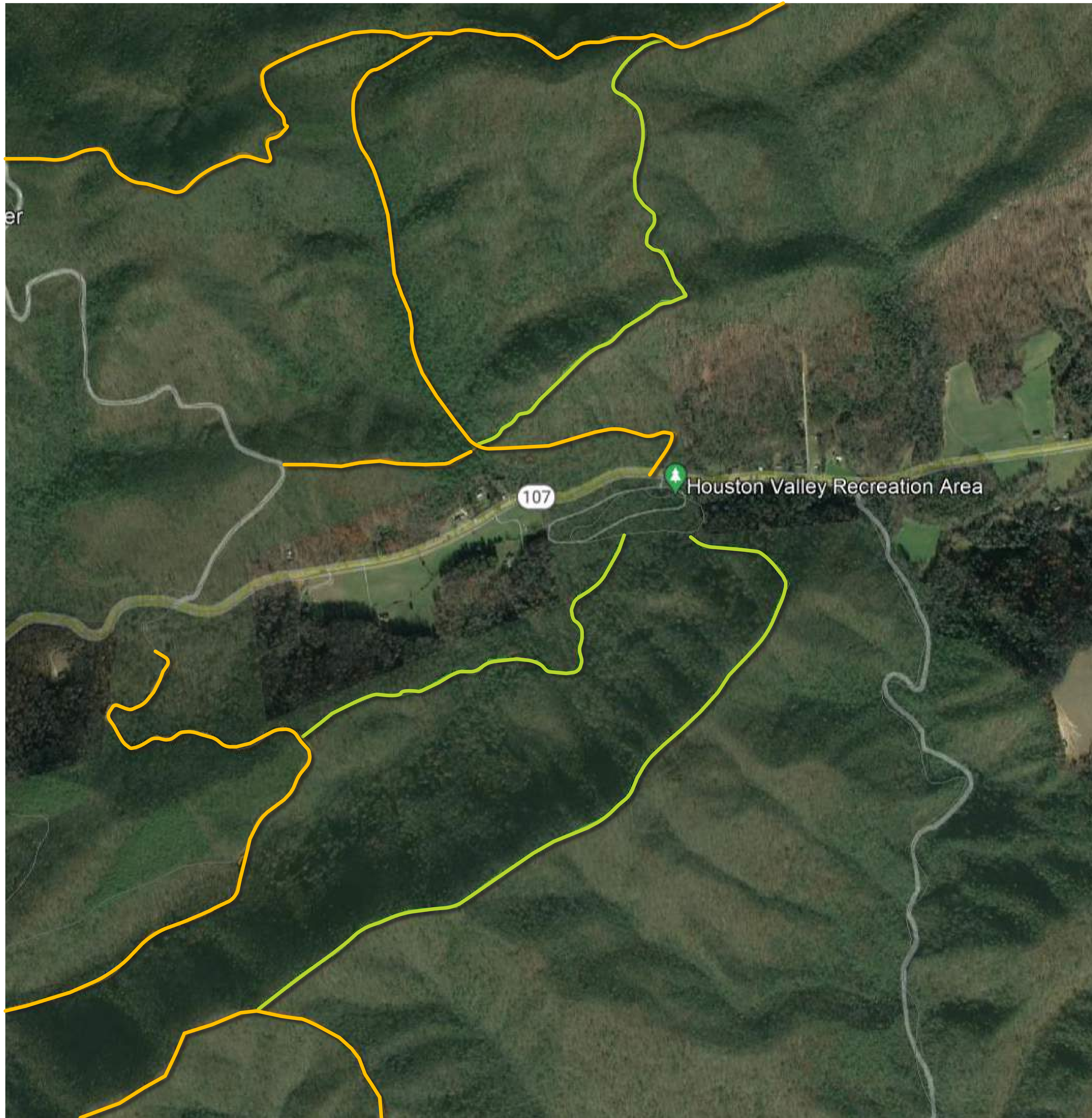
The presence of the 12.B Roadless Area around the Devil's Backbone area is an opportunity to add a unique backcountry feeling trail-use area near the I-40 corridor and immediately adjacent to the town of Hartford. The intent and assumptions in proposing conceptual mileage in this zone is to increase the existing trail mileage from 3.02 miles to a potential 34.75 miles for Option A, 26.85 miles for Option B, and 20.87 miles for Option C.

For Options A, B, and C the intent was to create a larger hiking optimized trail system immediately adjacent to town with connection to backcountry zones. The mileage does assume replacing the existing trails with more sustainable and user-friendly alignments. There would be a net gain of trail miles including the replacement of the popular social route from the Pigeon River up to Buzzards Roost.


The goal was to create multiple loop options originating from the Mill Creek Road area as well as the connection from Pigeon River to Halls Top. The intent was to create more beginner experiences and loops off of Mill Creek Road (FS 110) with connections higher up the mountain. More intermediate experiences are further up the mountain. It would be possible and plausible to create some shorter backpacking routes in this 12B trail system.

Trails were intentionally kept out of the north side of Halls Top to keep a larger area un-impacted focusing the trails between the Stone Mountain Trail and Mill Creek Road (FS 110). It is assumed that the current and recreation uses would be the same as the current uses listed in: *Cherokee National Forest Environmental Impact Statement Roadless Area Evaluations Appendix C: Devils Backbone*; ID. Number: 04016.





 EXISTING FOREST SERVICE TRAILS

 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

- Flood damage led to widespread damage and rendered the site unusable in 2019
- Prior to the flood damage, Houston Valley Rec Area served as a popular overnight camping location in Coker County
- Adjacent to Meadow Creek Fire Tower. ~ 10 min drive
- ERFO remediation work on the flood damage associated with the road and accessway is slated to begin in 2022/23.
- Popular equestrian destination, Burnette Gap Trailhead is only a minute away and offers some of the best horseback riding in the area on the Unaka Ranger District.
- Possibility to connect into the Weaver's Bend, Meadow Creek and Paint Creek trail systems
- Forest Service is committed to working with our community partners on the future of Houston Valley and how it will serve as a quality recreation experience for generations to come
- Houston Valley Working Group meetings are scheduled to begin late February/ early March 2022