

LINKING UP FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

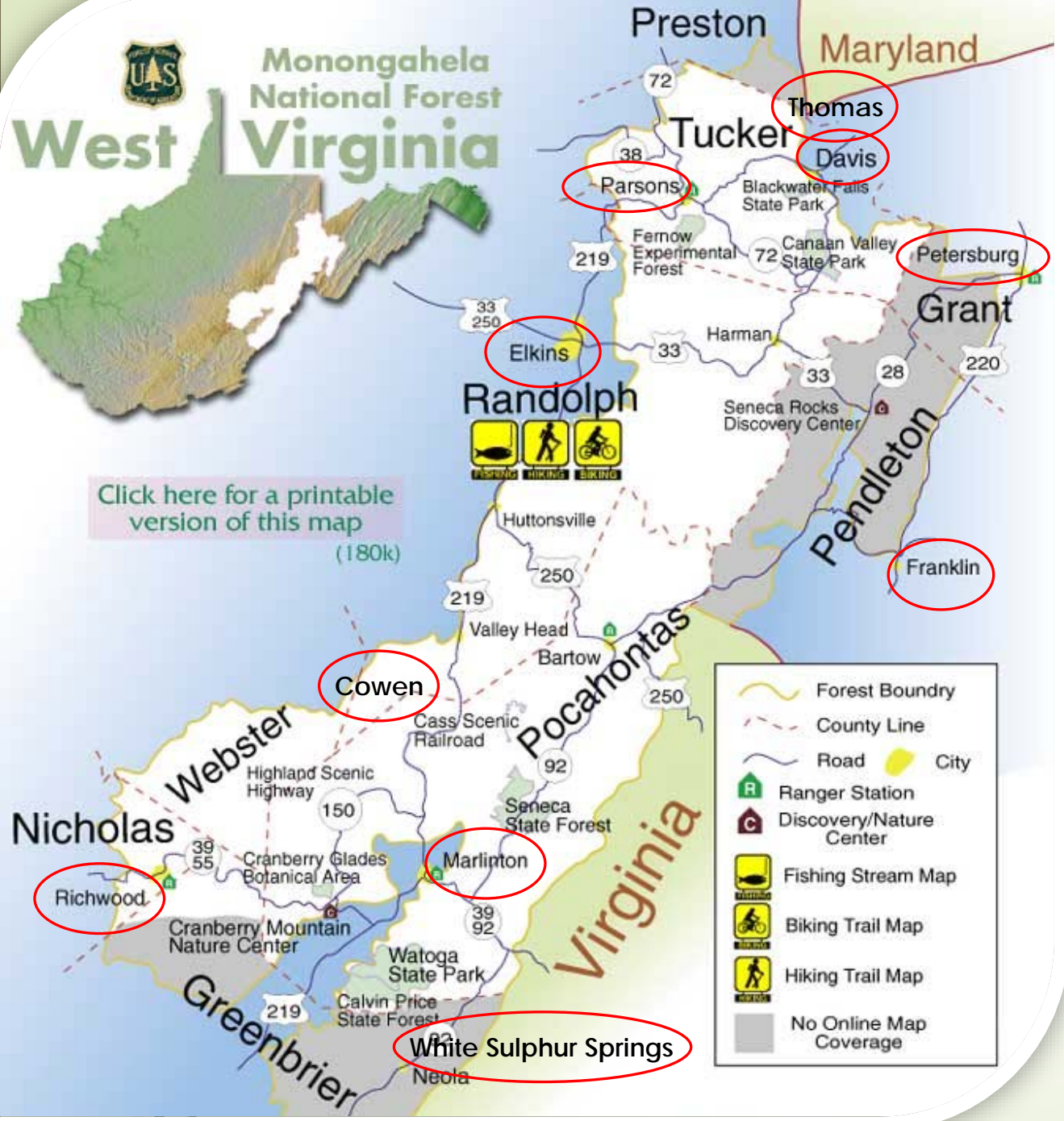
Across the million-acre Monongahela National Forest collaborative partnerships with gateway communities are improving communications and jumpstarting recreation economies.



Doug Arbogast
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WVU Extension Service

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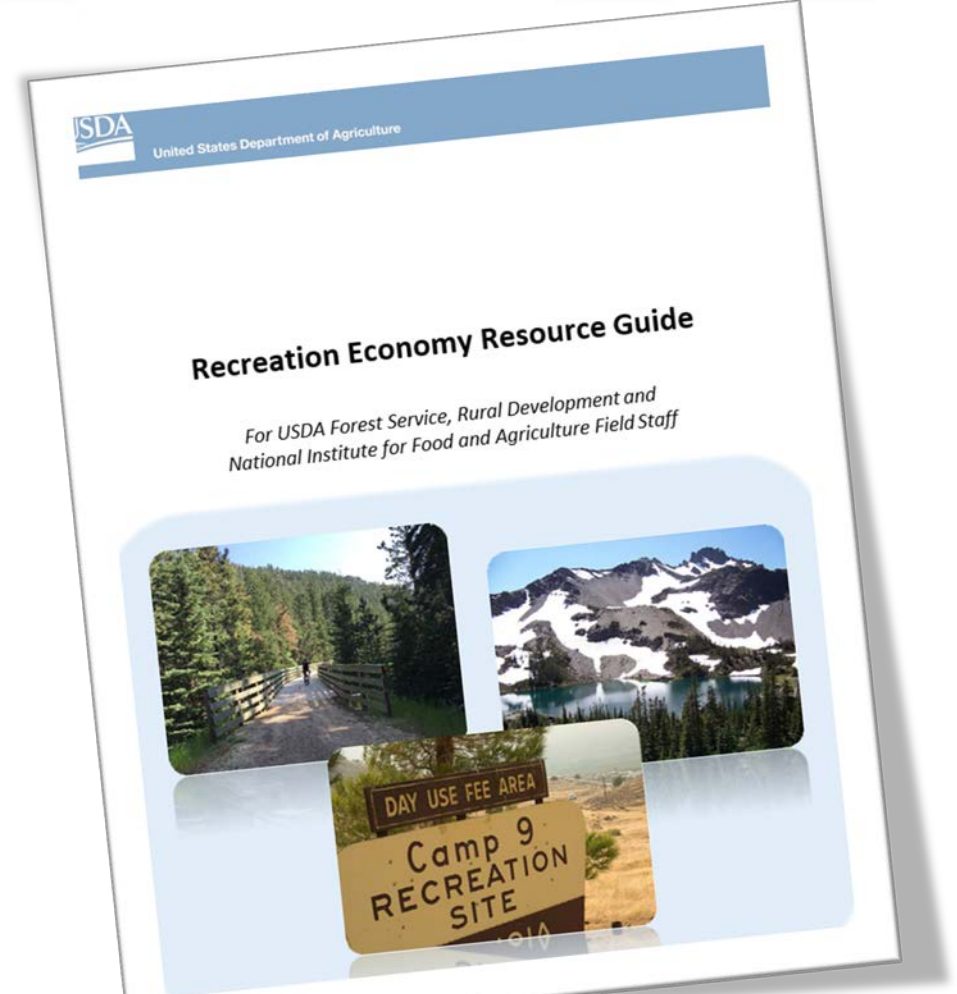

Monongahela National Forest
West Virginia



2018 One USDA

- **Modernizing USDA mission support activities** to be more efficient and effective by utilizing enterprise solutions;
- **Serving customers and improving the delivery of USDA's core missions;**

2017 USDA Recreation Economy Resource Guide



“ **Shared Stewardship** is about working together in an integrated way to make decisions and take actions on the land.”

- USDA Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen

“It is about **working across boundaries** especially with state organizations to implement landscape conservation on the ground. So, the **Mon Forest Towns is a great opportunity to share stewardship at the state, county, and town level.** We are working to **integrate recreation, silviculture, timber, fire, and all resource areas** together to manage the Forest and to improve quality of life in the Forest communities.”

- Cindy Sandeno, District Ranger, Marlinton Ranger District



WV USDA Rural Development Office

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

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WVU Rural Tourism Design Team

Extension Service

- Project Coordination and Facilitation
- Economic Impact Analysis

Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources

- Impact Indicator Measurement

Graphic Design Program

- Social Design and Community Branding

Natural Resources Analysis Center

- GIS Mapping of Forest and Community Resources

Landscape Architecture

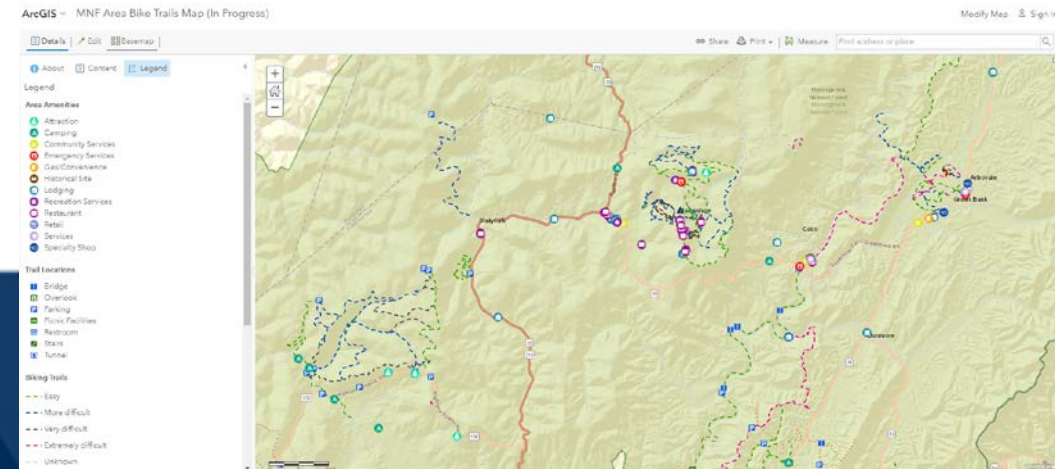
- Site Design for Community Projects

Master of Public Administration

- Capstone research

School of Media

- Adventure Media



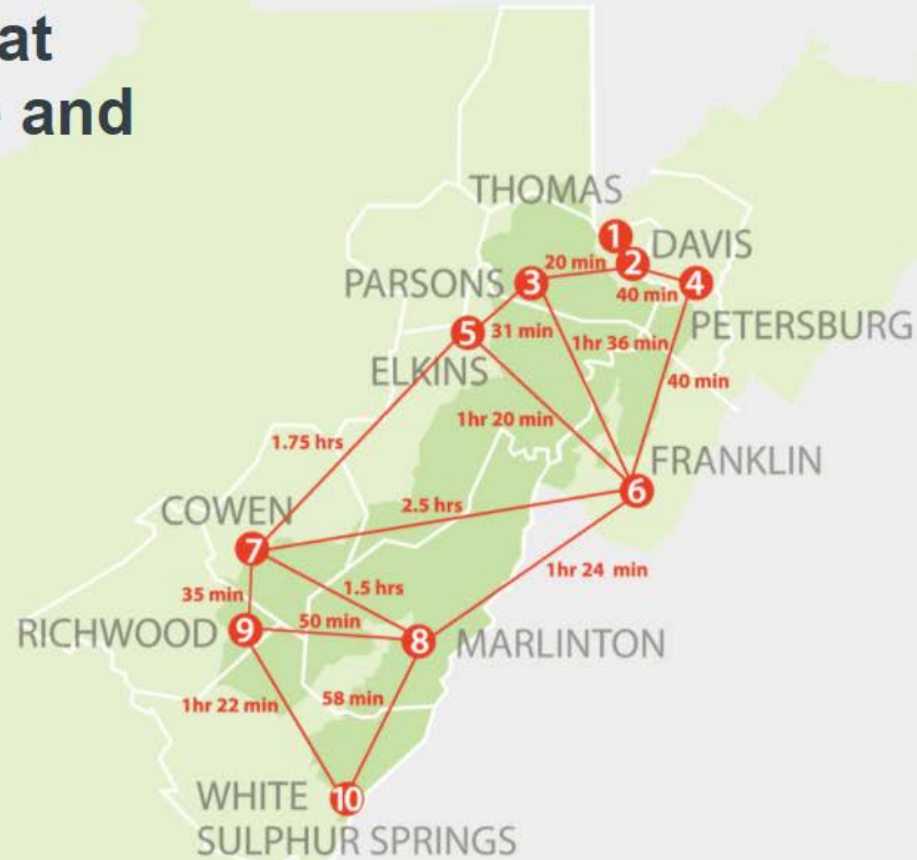
MNF Community Partnership and Collaboration Meetings 2017-18

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.



Our vision is to connect communities to each other, to the forest, and to our natural resources **to generate positive and tangible outcomes** that will improve quality of life and vitality of this region.



THE MON FOREST TOWNS PARTNERSHIP

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

AND

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

ARTICLE I INTRODUCTORY

SECTION 1.1

The rural communities within and adjacent to Monongahela National Forest (MNF) are working to diversify economic development and to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. These communities act as gateways to the forest and provide numerous benefits. Growing and maintaining a healthy recreation sector requires stakeholder engagement to develop a strong plan for the region's future. These efforts present economic opportunities - to work together on sustainable trail and recreation infrastructure development, workforce development, business and entrepreneurial development, branding and marketing, events and volunteer coordination, and health and wellness.

SECTION 1.2

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to develop a formal partnership between the parties to support and develop recreation economies in the communities, referred to as TOWNS, and region in and around the MNF. The Operational Guidelines cover how the partnership conducts business and interacts with TOWN representatives, partnership organizations, and how the partnership will grow to include new members.

Name: The name of the initiative shall be the Mon Forest Towns Partnership (MFTP).

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

SECTION 2.1

Purpose: To serve as a catalyst and forum for the development and delivery of an integrated regional recreation partnership.

SECTION 2.2

Objective: The objective of the MFTP shall be to support and develop recreation economies in the TOWNS and region in and around the MNF.

To accomplish this objective the MFTP will:

- Promote the value of a regional recreation economy through partnerships with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, Rural Development, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

MFT Town Reps & Officers

Thomas – Erika Smith, Treasurer

Davis – Andy Snyder

Parsons – Dorothy Judy

Elkins – Taira Landavere

Franklin – Ciara Lambert

Petersburg – Bob McCalley

Marlinton – Sam Felton, Chair

White Sulphur Springs – Bruce Bowling, Vice Chair

Cowen – Kent Walker

Richwood – Nicole Dudley, Secretary

Family and Community Development

10 Mon Forest Towns Summit June 13, 2019

2019 SUMMIT

MFT stakeholders met to exchange ideas and promote common goals.

[See town presentations](#)



What we hope to gain?

- Collaborative marketing
- Better connectivity
- Cross promotional opportunities



RICHWOOD

That Unique Mountain Flavor

Elkins

Community Need

- ▶ Signage within the Forest to connect back to town
 - ▶ Showcase accommodations in nearest town
 - ▶ Use existing kiosks
 - ▶ Create wayfinding signs within towns to connect to Mon Forest
 - ▶ Map of areas in Mon Forest
- ▶ Market Forest Recreation
 - ▶ Trails marked within Forest
 - ▶ Better maps of recreation areas



A branding of the **symbiotic relationship** of these **communities with the Forest** could help continue the benefits of working together that could **grow the economies** of the towns and **promote environmentally responsible travel** as well as **sustainable planning**.



Parsons **In-town wayfinding signs 35" w**

<p>A. Main St & Davis St</p>	<p>B. Main St & Kohler St</p>	<p>C. First St & Walnut St</p>	<p>D. First St & Central Ave</p>
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Elkins

VICE



MON FOREST TOWNS

 [Explore GIS Map](#) >

Connecting towns near and within the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia.

The MFT partnership was formed to cultivate relations across lands and forest gateway communities that will enhance the economy and quality of life for residents and visitors while sustaining the quality of the environment.

OVER FOUR HOURS TRAVEL NORTH TO SOUTH

1 ALMOST ONE MILLION ACRES

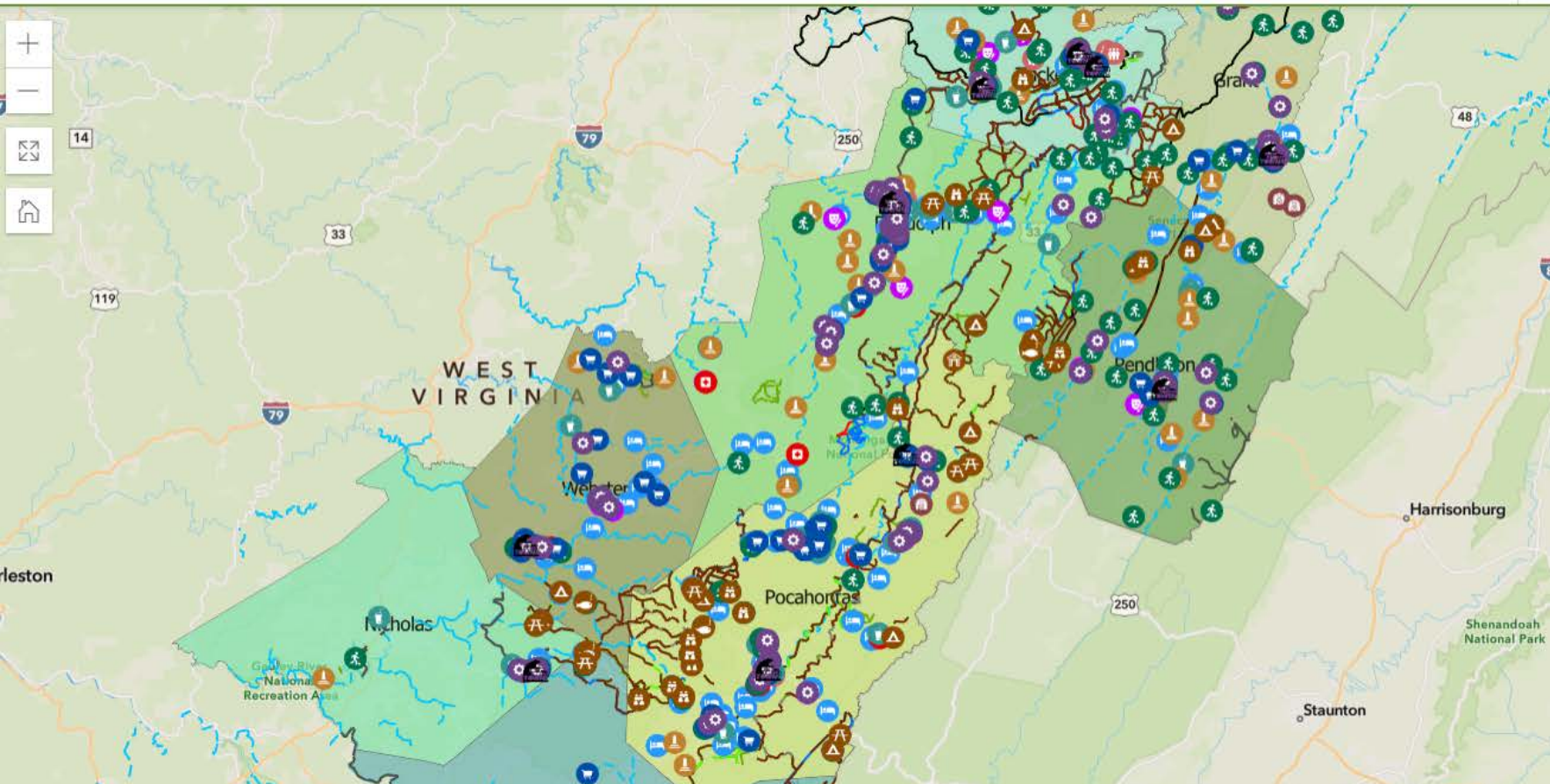
8 EIGHT WILDERNESS AREAS





Explore

Find address or place



Layer List

Filter by



- Mon Forest Towns > i
- USFS Recreation Sites > i
- Tourism Amenities > i
- USFS Trail System > i
- Biking Trails > i
- XC Ski Trails > i
- Hiking Trails > i

Snowshoe-Highlands Ride Center Review Score						
Minimum Scores			Category	Points Available	Your Scores	Award Level
Bronze	Silver	Gold				
60	75	90	Services	20	17	Bronze Level Ride Center
			Destination Best Practices	30	26	
			Trail Types	50	28	
			100	71		
10	20	30	Quality Trail Experience	40	15	

- Silver Level Fall 2020
- 5-year plan to become first Gold Level Ride Center on East Coast
- Marlinton MTB Trail Planning – IMBA, USFS, Ride Center Team



LINKING UP FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

Across the million-acre Monongahela National Forest collaborative partnerships with gateway communities are improving communications and jumpstarting recreation economies.

Read: "Not your father's forest" in the Charleston Gazette



Elk River Trail Foundation

To preserve, protect, and enhance the Elk River rail and water trails

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A photograph of a gravel trail leading to a wooden bridge in a lush green forest. The bridge has wooden railings and spans across a small stream. The surrounding trees are dense and vibrant green.

Trail Opens From Duck To Ivydale

The southern portion of the Elk River Trail is now complete and ready for use. The nearly ten mile trail stretches from Duck to Ivydale.

[Read More](#)