

HALIFAX COUNTY

CREATING OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2031



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REDD announced the technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services in late 2022. Communities from across the state applied to engage with strategic planning services and 34 local governments were accepted to participate. Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) staff, who is responsible for facilitating strategic economic development planning and implementation services, worked with local government staff to communicate the goals of the program, identify local opportunities, and assemble a planning work group.

NC DEPARTMENT of COMMERCE
RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EDA
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

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Adopted by Halifax County Board of Commissioners on July 6, 2026.

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Executive Summary

Through the CORE (Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies) Program, Halifax County collaborated with the N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division staff members and local stakeholders through a strategic planning process to identify and develop outdoor recreation assets that present economic growth opportunities. Strategy development focused on leveraging current outdoor recreation assets to increase tourism, encourage small business development, enhance quality of life for residents, plan for future outdoor recreation asset and infrastructure development, and position the greater Halifax County community to grow and potentially attract outdoor gear manufacturing industries. The planning process was tailored to meet specific needs, goals, and opportunities that were identified by the local stakeholders.



Photo credit: Sylvan Heights Bird Park

The Halifax County CORE workgroup developed its own vision statement to mesh with County strategic goals as well as provide a focal point for the CORE plan:

Historic Halifax County, rich in rivers, lakes, forests and agriculture, is where the fall line unites the flatlands of the coastal plain and the rolling hills of the piedmont. Like generations before us, we resolve to be good stewards of our lands and waterways. With opportunities for year-round adventures, we will foster a sustainable outdoor recreation economy by encouraging investment, connecting communities, and enhancing quality of life.

The plan proposes strategies, goals, actions/projects, and tasks that Halifax County can take to increase economic vitality by leveraging outdoor recreation. For the purposes of this strategic planning program, outdoor recreation is defined as all recreational activities undertaken for leisure that occur outdoors, with an emphasis on those activities that involve some level of intentional physical exertion and occur in nature-based environments. Other community assets and economic institutions that benefit from or complement the outdoor recreation economy are also addressed in the plan.

This plan outlines a total of 31 potential actions/projects under 3 main strategies and 8 priority areas, or goals. These goals, identified by the local work group, include:

Goal 1.1	Improve existing businesses associated with the outdoor recreation sector by facilitating expansion of and/or new investment of three (3) **existing businesses** over five (5) years.
Goal 1.2	Attract new private investment and recruit three (3) **new businesses** over five (5) years.
Goal 1.3	Continue and expand **public investment** in, and maintenance of, the infrastructure and assets that support growth of the outdoor recreation economy and encourage outdoor recreation participation in Halifax County.
Goal 2.1	**Maintain a group** that meets regularly and is dedicated to advancing the goals of this plan.
Goal 2.2	Explore a county-wide **outdoor recreation brand** to provide a consistent message through advertising, social media, and public interactions across communities.
Goal 3.1	**Identify needs and wants** of Halifax County residents regarding the type of outdoor recreation infrastructure, activities, and associated businesses they would like to have available in the County.
Goal 3.2	Increase and expand **participation in outdoor recreation** among Halifax County residents, particularly new and non-traditional participants.
Goal 3.3	Incorporate stewardship of **natural resources** into all plan activities.

Numerous tasks were also identified that Halifax County can undertake to increase economic vitality by leveraging outdoor recreation. These recommendations can serve as guideposts for the Halifax County CORE Work Group as it considers future opportunities and should work in collaboration with other planning efforts undertaken by the County and related jurisdictions.



photo credit: VisitHalifax

Halifax County has a wealth of natural outdoor assets such as the Roanoke River, Lake Gaston, Roanoke Rapids Lake, Medoc Mountain State Park, the Roanoke River Canal Trail, and significant public game and wildlife lands spanning tens of thousands of acres. There is a robust infrastructure for boating, fishing, camping, and outdoor heritage experiences. Interest in outdoor recreation is growing among residents, and the County is poised to capitalize on those opportunities. The County's workforce, economic development, tourism development, and local leaders can leverage outdoor recreation assets to enhance quality of life for residents, increase tourism, encourage small business development, and plan for outdoor recreation asset/infrastructure development. This will ultimately expand the economic possibilities for existing and future outdoor recreation businesses in Halifax County.

Background

There is a long tradition of outdoor recreation in North Carolina. From the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between there are incredible landscapes and unique places to pursue a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Participation in these activities generates a large economic impact. In recent years, statistics show that participation in outdoor recreation is increasing, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Continued growth in participation leads to the opportunity for the increased economic impact of outdoor recreation, particularly in rural locations where many of the state's outdoor recreation assets are located. There is also great potential to expose and engage people who have not historically participated in outdoor recreation activities at the same rate as others. It is important for all individuals to have the opportunity and access to enjoy recreational pursuits and to have an opportunity to benefit economically from outdoor recreation. These factors, combined with other on-going outdoor

recreation initiatives across the state, make it an ideal time to think critically about how this sector can continue to be leveraged to benefit local economies.

Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation activity and associated expenditures generate a large economic impact. This is a broad economic sector that comprises a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, retail, arts, entertainment and recreation, as well as many supporting activities such as construction, travel and tourism, accommodation and food service, and many more.



photo credits: VisitHalifax

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis' Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account in 2024, the nationwide outdoor recreation economy represented $696.7 billion, or 2.4% of the total U.S. GDP. Inflation-adjusted (real) GDP for the outdoor recreation economy increased 2.7% in 2024, compared with a 2.8% increase for the overall U.S. economy. Real gross output for the outdoor recreation economy increased 2.0%. Outdoor recreation compensation increased 5.2%, and employment increased 1.1%. Outdoor recreation employment increased in 36 states and the District of Columbia in 2024, including a 1.4% increase in outdoor recreation employment in North Carolina.

At the state level, outdoor recreation contributed $17.7 billion in total value-added economic impact to North Carolina's GDP. North Carolina ranked as the 11th highest state nationally in "Total outdoor recreation value added of current-dollar gross domestic product" in 2024. This included employment for over 155,000 individuals that resulted in over $8.4 billion in total compensation. Employment in key industries within the outdoor recreation sector includes 7,494 in manufacturing, 55,292 in retail, 33,842 in accommodation and food service, and over 31,172 in arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Outdoor Recreation Participation



According to the 2024 Outdoor Industry Association 'Outdoor Participation Trends Report', "the outdoor recreation participant base grew to a record 181.1 million participants, or 58.6% of all Americans aged 6 and older. The number of "primary"—or most frequent—participants increased by 5.7% (five million participants).

Participants are most attracted to walking, hiking, fishing, camping, bicycling, and running outdoors and each of those major activities gained an average of 2.1 million participants. Nearly every signal in the 2024 participation data is positive for prolonged growth. Despite weakening economic conditions, the prospect of growth in the number of Americans who participate in outdoor recreation is very strong."

Studies show that approximately 56% of North Carolinians participate in some form of outdoor recreation each year[1]. This includes more than 20.1 million visitors to North Carolina state parks in 2023 - a 4% increase over 2022, representing more than 755,000 visitors. These numbers represent a significant sum of individuals participating in outdoor recreation and contributing to associated economic activity. [2]

[2] Outdoor Industry Association. (2026, April). *Reports Library*. Retrieved from Outdoor Industry: https://outdoorindustry.org/research/reports-library/

Setting

Established in 1758, Halifax County is in northeastern/north-central North Carolina approximately 8 miles from the Virginia border. Located in the Roanoke River and Tar-Pamlico River basins, it is one of the largest geographical counties in North Carolina, encompassing an area of approximately 722 square miles with a population of about 55,000 residents. During its more than 240 years of existence, Halifax County has become a premier location for its quality of life and convenient access to a variety of recreational activities. Halifax County has evolved into a center for arts, culture, education, business and tourism. Principal industries include manufacturing, hospitality, health care, education and agricultural/wood products. [3]



map credit: Halifax County EDC

Demographics

The U.S. Census reports that the population of Halifax County has decreased slightly in recent years, from 49,479 residents in 2020 to 48,219 in 2023 – a decrease of 2.5%. [4]

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Halifax County are Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (52%), White (Non-Hispanic) (37%), Two+ (Hispanic) (4%), Native American (3%), Two+ (non-Hispanic) (3%), and White (Hispanic) (3%), Asian (.9%).[5]

Halifax County's poverty rate is nearly double the state average: 25.2% vs. 13.2% [6]

Halifax County's 2024 tourism impact was $131.77 million, +.4% vs. 2023.[7]

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[3] Halifax County. (2026, March). About Halifax County. Retrieved from https://www.halifaxnc.com/278/About-Halifax-County
[4] Census.gov, September 2025. Population and Housing Unit Estimates – Quick Facts. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html
[5] Data USA, 2025. Geo profile. https://datausa.io/profile/geo/halifax-county-nc
[6] Census.gov, September 2025. Population and Housing Unit Estimates – Quick Facts. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html
[7] Visit NC. Tourism Impact Report, Halifax, 2024. partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies

Halifax County Socioeconomic Demographics

Median HH Income	**$45,071**
Average HH Income	**$26,951**
Highest Income Distribution	**Under $50,000**
% of residents earning below $50,000	**54%**
% of residents earning above $50,000	**46%**

Table 1 Halifax County Demographics 20 Min Drive Source: US Census and Claritas

Existing Plan Review

In an effort to complement and build upon subsequent community planning efforts, NC Commerce Rural Planning staff assembled and reviewed other relevant plans and documents. This review provides valuable insight and helps avoid duplication or contradictions of past planning proposals. The following documents were reviewed and considered during the Halifax County CORE planning process.

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Halifax County is a member of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments, a designated Economic Development District (EDD) for the 5-county Upper Coastal Plain region of North Carolina by the U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA). The Upper Coastal Plain EDD's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) indicates that Social Foundations and a Thriving Economy are visionary components of achieving their initiatives to "create healthy and connected communities, improve the region's ability to foster a diverse, thriving economy, and to define and promote the region's sense of place."[8]

[8] UCPCOG CEDS 2023-2027, Annual Update. https://ucpcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CEDS-2023-2027-2023-Annual-Update.pdf

Halifax County Comprehensive Land Use and Recreation Master Plan Update



Photo credit: VisitHalifax

Halifax County is currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Development Plan and its Parks and Recreation Master Plan to replace the 2001 Halifax County Comprehensive Development Plan and the 2014 Halifax County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The new, combined plan will serve as the official statement by Halifax County of its vision, intentions, goals, objectives, and priority strategies to address current and future needs. It will guide the land use policy, funding, resource decisions, and infrastructure investment in Halifax County for the next ten (10) to fifteen (15) years. The Parks & Recreation element of the new plan will shape the direction, development, and delivery of the County's parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. It will serve as a roadmap for improving the parks and recreation system to best serve the community. The plan in its entirety will serve as both a physical plan and policy guide; it will be used by elected officials and appointed boards, county staff, community members, and other decision makers who are charged with shaping how Halifax County will grow in the future. A draft plan is expected for review in Spring 2026.

Halifax County 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment

This assessment and subsequent health-needs prioritization for Halifax County were conducted by the Health ENC CHNA Steering Committee with guidance from local representatives of the Halifax County Health Department and ECU Health North. The CHNA process identifies countywide health priorities by documenting the greatest health needs currently faced by residents and by building on formal collaborations between the Steering Committee and community partners. Several priorities identified in the 2024 assessment could be positively influenced by increased participation in outdoor recreation, including Behavioral Health (mental health and substance use), Chronic Disease Prevention (obesity), and Maternal, Fetal, and Infant Health. Research consistently shows that engaging in outdoor recreation improves mental health—reducing stress, anxiety, and depression—and helps prevent obesity by increasing physical activity, cardiovascular fitness, and metabolic health.[9] Moreover, structured outdoor

[9] Parkinson C, Shen X, MacDonald M, Logan SW, Gorrell L, Lindberg K. Outdoor recreation's association with mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. PLoS One. 2025 Apr 17.

activity during and after pregnancy supports maternal, fetal, and infant health by lowering the risk of gestational diabetes, optimizing labor outcomes, and positively influencing infant birth weight and early development.[10] Because increased participation in outdoor recreation is linked to improvements in multiple health priorities, the Halifax County Health Department may wish to incorporate insights from the CORE (Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies) Plan into its strategies.

Planning Process

Under the Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) at the NC Department of Commerce, Rural Planning Program (RPP) staff facilitate the CORE strategic planning process with participation from the local government and an established local work group. This work group is comprised of individuals who have a vested interest in leveraging outdoor recreation to enhance economic development. The planning process employs established planning methods including presenting economic and associated data, asset mapping, economic driver identification, SWOT analysis, stakeholder interviews, business questionnaires, local work group discussions, and more. The Halifax County planning process was tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and opportunities that were identified by local stakeholders.



Situational Analysis

Following receipt of an initial application for participation in the Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) program, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Resolution for the Halifax County CORE Strategic Plan was developed by Rural Planning staff and adopted by the Halifax County Board of Commissioners at their meeting on April 7, 2025. Rural Planning Staff met with Halifax County Dia Denton and Deputy County Manager Christina Wells on May 29, 2025 to outline the planning process and prepare for the first work group meeting.

[10] Majewska P, Szablewska A. Associations Between Physical Activity in Pregnancy and Maternal, Perinatal, and Neonatal Parameters: A Single-Center Prospective Cohort Study. J Clin Med. 2025 Mar 28.

Local Work Group Establishment and Involvement

The Halifax Deputy County Manager identified community members with an interest in Outdoor Recreation and asked them to participate in the local work group. Beginning in July 2025, the Rural Planning team met monthly for approximately 90 minutes with the local work group for a series of seven sessions to gather and share information and ideas. The group was comprised of business owners, non-profit representatives, residents, and staff from: Halifax County Parks & Recreation, Halifax County Economic Development, Halifax County Visitor's Bureau, Halifax County 4-H Center, Halifax County Manager's office, and Haliwa-Saponi Tribe. During work group sessions, participants reviewed data collected by Rural Planning staff, completed a Work Group Survey, conducted a SWOT analysis, created an economic positioning statement and established goals and strategies for the Implementation Plan. The local work group will be encouraged to remain as a unit to assist the County with strategic plan implementation. **Halifax County Board of Commissioners is encouraged to adopt the existing work group as a standing or ad hoc Outdoor Recreation Committee of Halifax County.**

A full outline of the Halifax County CORE Work Group meetings can be seen in the table below.

Meeting Date	Topic(s)
July 9, 2025	Overview, Survey and SWOT
August 13, 2025	Asset Identification/Asset Quilting
September 10, 2025*	Visioning Exercise
October 8, 2025*	Vision Drafting, Strategies/Goals
November 5, 2025*	Retail Analysis and Placer Report
December 10, 2025*	Strategy Development
January 14, 2026*	Goal Development
March 19, 2026	Implementation Plan Review

*virtual meetings

SWOT Analysis

During the first meeting of the work group in July 2025, participants identified Strengths of and Opportunities for the Outdoor Recreation Economy in Halifax County. This exercise provided a chance for the group to better understand the current standing of outdoor recreation in the county, and how the group might wish to move forward strategically so as to leverage the strengths for economic growth. The chart below provides a snapshot of the analysis, which focused on strengths and opportunities:

STRENGTHS

- Roanoke River
- Lake Gaston
- Highways/Location
- 4-H Center
- Room/land for expansion/growth
- Canal Trail (NC Trails Regional Group)
- Group of interested people to help plan/implement
- Unique assets
- Medoc Mountain State Park

SIGNIFICANT ASSETS

- I-95
- Roanoke River
- Lake Gaston
- Roanoke Rapids Lake
- Medoc Mountain State Park
- Canal Trail
- Chockoyotte Aqueduct
- River Falls Park
- Roanoke Canal Museum
- Sylvan Heights Bird Park

OPPORTUNITIES

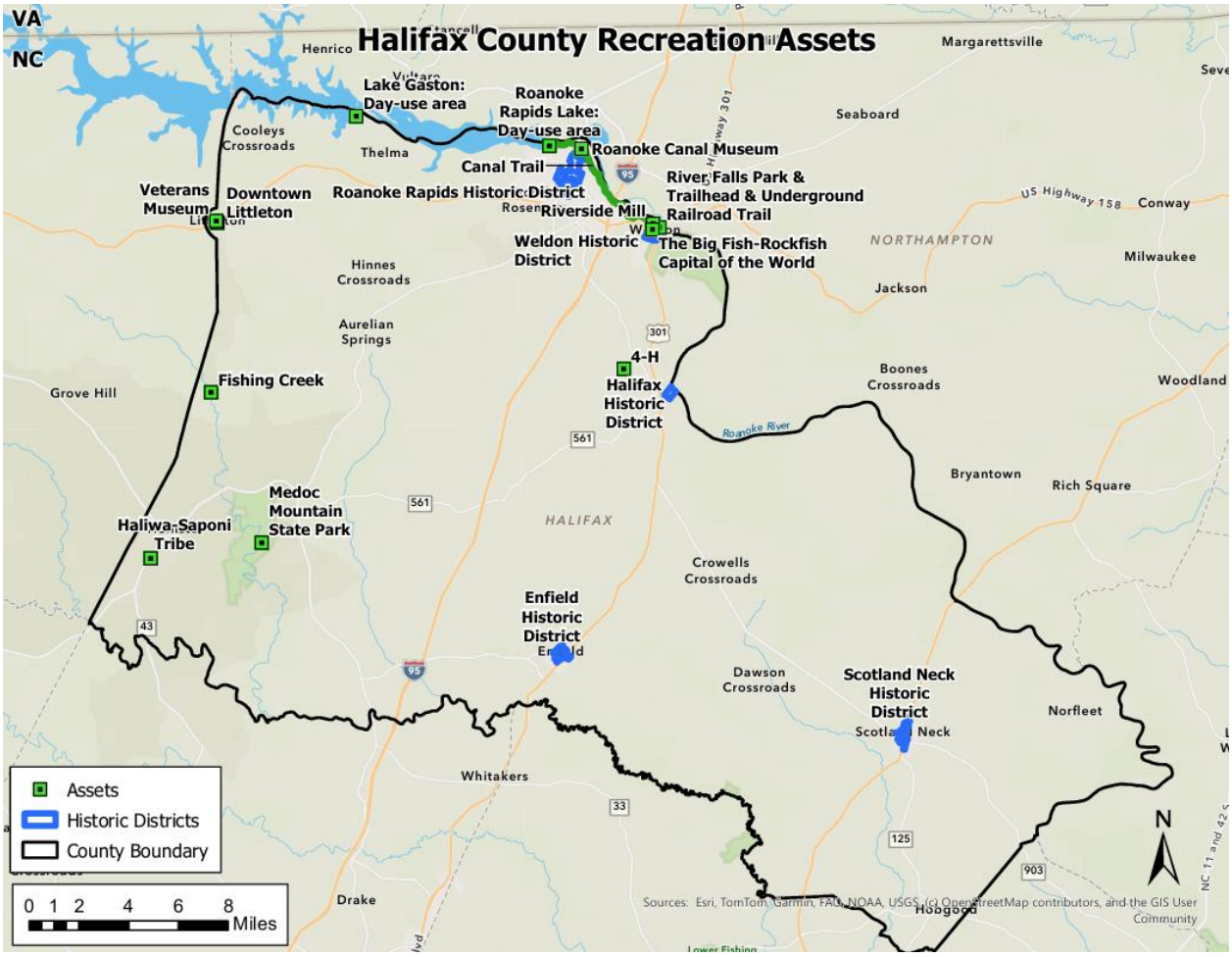
- River access: guides, etc.
- Countywide connections from the river to communities
- Relationship with Dominion
- "Co-op"-ititon: compete for mutual growth
- Walking Track @4-H Center
- New amenities
- Incorporate resiliency for business
- Education re: river, birds, etc.
- More campgrounds
- More restaurants
- Housing: more/affordable
- Local engagement
- Build infrastructure: sidewalks, bike lanes

Asset Mapping

During the August 2025 work group meeting, Rural Planning staff facilitated an asset identification exercise to identify key outdoor recreation and related business assets in Halifax County communities. Asset identification is a process that identifies the strengths of a community, highlights areas for growth opportunities, and brings together key stakeholders. Identifying Halifax County's unique assets helped to establish clear economic development strategies for achieving measurable growth. As a result of the asset identification exercise, the work group focused on:

➢ The most valued aspects of Halifax County
➢ The reasons why people place high value on outdoor recreation assets in Halifax County
➢ Opportunities to leverage Halifax County's assets for growth of the outdoor recreation economy

The Halifax County Outdoor Recreation Asset map below highlights areas of interest to CORE stakeholders.



Public Engagement

An online survey was used to receive anonymous input from the CORE Workgroup and other community stakeholders. A summary of those responses can be found in the Appendices of this report.

During the eight CORE Work Group meetings, three in-person and five virtual, input was gathered from stakeholders representing numerous components of the Halifax County community, and they kept the public informed throughout the process. A listing of work group members and their affiliations can be found at the beginning of this report.

Additional Research

Rural Planning staff reviewed a variety of demographic and market data sources that were used to influence the final recommendations of this report. A Retail Marketplace Snapshot is also attached as an appendix to this report.

Economic Positioning/Vision Statement

An economic positioning statement is a vital component in the identification of how Halifax County fits within the larger, regional outdoor economy. It articulates what the Work Group saw as the greatest strengths and unique role that the County plays, and can expand on, for greater benefit. It is visionary as it is stated as an accomplished condition.

Historic Halifax County, rich in rivers, lakes, forests and agriculture, is where the fall line unites the flatlands of the coastal plain and the rolling hills of the piedmont. Like generations before us, we resolve to be good stewards of our lands and waterways. With opportunities for year-round adventures, we will foster a sustainable outdoor recreation economy by encouraging investment, connecting communities, and enhancing quality of life.

A community economic positioning/vision statement provides a forward-looking strategic framework to provide guidance as the local government, the work group, and the community make disciplined, tactical, and incremental decisions regarding the outdoor recreation economy. The local work group in Halifax County was led through an exercise to develop an Outdoor Recreation Economic Positioning Statement for the County. The Halifax County CORE Work Group met several times to develop the proposed economic positioning statement, first by creating individual statements,

identifying key words, phrases, and developing a draft statement. A final version was crafted by the group, and the above statement was adopted.

Plan Development, Review and Adoption

A draft of this document was produced in April 2026 and shared with the Halifax County CORE Work Group for review and comment. Following review, the Halifax County Board of Commissioners adopted the plan on July 6, 2026.

Halifax County will be responsible for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting accomplishments on the objectives of this plan to the Rural Economic Development Division. Implementation assistance from Rural Planning staff is always available!

Plan Implementation

As mentioned previously, it is recommended that Halifax County maintain a committed team to carry out the goals and objectives outlined in this plan after the planning phase. This continuity will be essential to realizing the full economic potential of these strategies. The team could be comprised of the same work group that helped with development, or a similar group that is representative of the community and can advance the goals of this plan. The sustained presence of such a group builds 'social capital' that improves their ability to work together and effectively address common goals. Furthermore, a dedicated group ensures continuity from planning stage through implementation, provides accountability to ensure that objectives are being met, and allows the community to react and respond quickly when an opportunity is presented. However, this group should not be the sole entity responsible for implementing all the goals of the plan. Instead, the group should function as a convener and point of contact to connect to other individuals, organizations, and resources to help the broader community achieve these goals. Maintaining a regular meeting schedule will also help increase the effectiveness of the group and the overall outcomes of the plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation to review progress on the strategies and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the work group and other community stakeholders, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. Rural Planning staff will periodically check in and offer technical, program and project development assistance to help advance the vision and document the outcomes of the plan.

Halifax County CORE Work Plan

2026 – 2031

Vision: Historic Halifax County, rich in rivers, lakes, forests and agriculture, is where the fall line unites the flatlands of the coastal plain and the rolling hills of the piedmont. Like generations before us, we resolve to be good stewards of our lands and waterways. With opportunities for year-round adventures, we will foster a sustainable outdoor recreation economy by encouraging investment, connecting communities, and enhancing quality of life.	
Strategy #1: Encourage Investment	
Goal 1.1: Improve existing businesses associated with the outdoor recreation sector by facilitating expansion of and/or new investment in 3 businesses over 5 years	
1.1.1. Action/Project: **Investigate potential for local business improvement incentive programs such as micro-enterprise loans, façade grant programs, small business grants, etc.**	**Tasks:** • **Review the North Carolina Main Street "Local Incentives Guide" for examples of grant programs that other NC communities offer.**
1.1.2. Action/Project: **Engage existing businesses to expand services to address potential gaps in outdoor recreation activities that are available in the County.**	**Tasks:** • **Engage an existing business to provide canoe/kayak rental and/or livery services to operate within Halifax County.** • **Engage an existing business to provide guide services in addition to hunting and fishing activities. Services could include scenic tours, nature tours, birdwatching tours and more.** • **Engage an existing business to expand services to offer a sporting clays facility to operate in Halifax County.** • **Identify other business opportunities within the outdoor recreation sector that existing businesses can provide.**

1.1.3. Action/Project: **Continue to offer and expand customer service training for hospitality and other tourism-based businesses and attractions.**	**Tasks:** • **Collaborate with VisitHalifax to explore opportunities for joint training.** • **Consider resources from Halifax Community College and NC Restaurant & Lodging Association.**
1.1.4. Action/Project: **Continue intentional marketing and promotions of outdoor recreation destinations, businesses, and other associated resources.**	**Task:** • **Collaborate with VisitHalifax to explore opportunities for joint marketing/promotion.**
Goal 1.2: Attract new private investment and recruit 3 new businesses over 5 years	
1.2.1. Action/Project: **If not accomplished through Goal 1.1., recruit new businesses to provide services that will address potential gaps in Halifax County outdoor recreation activities.**	**Tasks:** • **Recruit a new business to provide canoe/kayak rental and/or livery services to operate within Halifax County.** • **Recruit a new business to provide guide services in addition to hunting and fishing activities. Services could include scenic tours, nature tours, birdwatching tours and more.** • **Recruit a new business to develop a sporting clays facility to operate in Halifax County.** • **Identify other business opportunities within the outdoor recreation sector and recruit new businesses to provide these services.**
1.2.2. Action/Project: **Create marketing materials to promote Halifax County as a preferred location for outdoor recreation businesses.**	**Tasks:** • **Collaborate with Halifax EDC and VisitHalifax to explore opportunities to create joint marketing materials that can be used by the CORE Work Group and others for promotion of Halifax County as a preferred location for outdoor recreation businesses.** • **Work with NC Commerce Rural Planning Program to develop a Business Recruitment Sheet for Halifax County.** • **Work with NC CORE Program leadership to explore resources from like-minded communities.** • **Consider resources from the NC Office of Outdoor Economy.**

Goal 1.3: Continue and expand public investment in, and maintenance of, the infrastructure and assets that support growth of the outdoor recreation economy and encourage outdoor recreation participation in Halifax County	
1.3.1. Action/Project: **Support the launch of riverfront pop-up markets at the Town of Weldon River Falls Park in collaboration with Halifax County Economic Development and Town of Weldon.**	**Tasks:** • **Facilitate the opportunity for canoe/kayak rental options for recreation along the Roanoke River. This could be in the form of private business rentals, canoe/kayak self-service kiosks, or other arrangements.** • **Recruit appropriate businesses, such as canoe/kayak rentals, food trucks, and other outdoor recreation support services, to operate as concessionaires at the riverfront pop-up market.** • **Develop a coordinated marketing strategy to promote the riverfront pop-up market.**
1.3.2. Action/Project: **Support the development of a public walking trail at the 4-H Rural Life Center in cooperation with plans outlined in the Halifax County Land Use and Master Parks & Recreation Plan.**	**Tasks:** • **Collaborate with 4-H leadership and County management to determine trail status and next steps** • **Once completed, work with VisitHalifax and Halifax County to promote this trail as an available area for public recreation.**
1.3.3. Action/Project: **Plan and secure funding for trail improvements to the Canal Trail, including new connections, segments, and maintenance of existing trail sections.**	**Tasks:** • **Connect with Weldon in Action to help implement their plans for Canal Trail improvements in the Town of Weldon.** • **Collaborate with Halifax County Parks & Recreation, Halifax County management, and other stakeholders to explore funding opportunities**
1.3.4. Action/Project: **Support completion of the canoe/kayak launch along the Roanoke River in the Town of Halifax. Continue engagement and collaboration with**	**Tasks:** • **Once the canoe/kayak launch in the Town of Halifax is complete, support plans to construct a**

land managers, funders, and project administrators to ensure the project meets expectations and is successfully implemented.	**well-marked, safe trail from the launch to downtown Halifax and other local points of interest. Explore the possibility of collaboration with NC State Landscape Architecture program for design assistance.** • **Support marketing, promotion, and use of available resources to "activate" usage of the new launch. Promotional materials should provide detailed and accurate information about paddle routes, trip times and conditions, and other information about how the public can best utilize this new asset.** • **Coordinate with Roanoke River Partners to provide updated information on trip planning and joint marketing efforts.** • **Engage Town of Halifax stakeholders, particularly downtown businesses, to identify ways they leverage and benefit from this new asset. Make intentional efforts to attract river users from the boat launch into downtown Halifax.**
1.3.5. Action/Project: **Investigate the potential for a rail trail in Littleton.**	**Task:** • **Collaborate with Halifax County management and Town of Littleton officials to explore the possibility of creating a rail trail.**
1.3.6. Action/Project: **Increase primitive camping opportunities including those on the Roanoke River State Trail.**	**Task:** • **Partner with Roanoke River Partners to increase camping platforms and other camping opportunities along the Roanoke River State Trail in Halifax County.**

1.3.7. Action/Project: **Pursue creek debris clean out and maintenance activities along Little Fishing Creek to improve this as a paddle recreation destination.**	**Tasks:** • **Consult State Parks to inquire about conducting clean out activities along the creek within State Park boundaries.** • **Investigate stream debris removal grant opportunities including: NCDA&CS - Soil & Water - Stream Debris Removal and NCDA&CS - Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP)**
1.3.8. Action/Project: Develop and implement plan for installation of wayfinding signage. Wayfinding branding and signage should be consistent throughout the county.	**Task:** • **Collaborate with Halifax County Management and VisitHalifax to explore plans for wayfinding signage**
1.3.9. Action/Project: **Leverage connections with Northeast Trails Alliance (NETA) to improve access to funding opportunities and technical assistance associated with improving trails.**	**Task:** • **Maintain CORE Work Group representation on NETA's Halifax County Committee**
1.3.10. Action/Project: Incorporate natural resource stewardship principles into future activities associated with this plan.	**Tasks:** • **Market and promote principles of "Leave No Trace" through VisitHalifax, on outdoor recreation informational kiosks, and other promotional materials. Reference VisitNC's OutdoorNC campaign for guidance.** • **Identify and organize volunteer groups to lead clean-up and maintenance activities at outdoor recreation assets throughout the county.** • **Work with Haliwa-Saponi Tribe representatives to identify culturally appropriate ways to honor tribal heritage in future activity development.**

1.3.11. Action/Project: **Continue marketing and promotion of Halifax County as a premier road cycling destination with low-traffic, rural backroads that are ideal for road cycling.**	**Tasks:** • **Connect with organizers of the Scotland Neck "Country Roads Bike Tour" to increase local engagement and impact associated with this annual event. Promote the event through proper channels and investigate ways to make this event economically impactful.** • **Connect with cycling groups, such as "Red Oak Cyclists" and conduct other targeted marketing to help grow Halifax County as a road cycling destination.** • **Continue engagement with "CycleNC" when they plan routes through the Halifax County area and ensure a local team is supportive of the ride and helps make high quality arrangements for the group when they stop or ride through Halifax County.**
1.3.12. Action/Project: **Continue current efforts and increase marketing and promotion of Halifax County's assets, particularly those associated with the outdoor recreation economy.**	**Task:** • **Collaborate with VisitHalifax to continue itinerary development for various types of activities, demographics, and seasons that highlight unique outdoor, cultural, and business assets county-wide.**
1.3.13. Action/Project: **Improve marketing, promotion, and provide better information regarding the Day Use areas on Lake Gaston and Roanoke Rapids Lake with the goal to increase visitation at these locations.**	**Task:** • **Engage VisitHalifax in identifying innovative approaches for sharing information about Day Use areas to increase visitation.**
1.3.14. Action/Project: Investigate the feasibility for greenway development within the county, particularly in desired locations such as along the river, and connecting outdoor recreation assets to commercial districts.	**Task:** • **As appropriate, add "greenway feasibility study" to planning documents including the Halifax County Comprehensive Land Use and Recreation Plan, Halifax County Comprehensive Transportation Plans, and other relevant planning documents.**

Strategy #2: Connect Communities	
Goal 2.1: Maintain a group that meets regularly and is dedicated to advancing the goals of this plan	
2.1.1. Action/Project: Develop a local alliance of stakeholders that are invested and engaged in the outdoor recreation space to increase networking and support within this sector.	**Task:** • **Identify group members and determine appropriate organizational and administrative structure for this group. Outline roles, responsibilities, and administrative structure of group and members.** • **Continue to identify opportunities using outdoor recreation as an economic driver in Halifax County and advocate for support of related initiatives.**
Goal 2.2: Explore a county-wide outdoor recreation brand to provide a consistent message through advertising, social media, and public interactions across communities.	
2.2.1. Action/Project: Determine feasibility and processes needed to undertake a marketing and branding campaign.	**Task:** • **Review marketing and branding materials from other communities, especially those focused on outdoor recreation, to identify needed branding assets and gather best practices.** • **Explore available resources for wayfinding signage and identify how they can be integrated into an overall branding campaign to strengthen marketing of outdoor recreation in Halifax County.**
Strategy 3: Enhance Quality of Life	
Goal 3.1: Identify needs and wants of Halifax County residents regarding the type of outdoor recreation infrastructure, activities, and associated businesses they would like to have available in the County.	
3.1.1 Action/Project: **Integrate the findings and goals of the CORE plan into the ongoing Halifax County Comprehensive Land Use and Recreation Plan, ensuring consistency between the two documents and building on the outcomes of the CORE plan.**	**Tasks:** • **Halifax County CORE Strategic Plan stakeholders should identify gaps between the planned recreation improvements included in the Halifax County Comprehensive Land Use and Recreation Master Plan, and the identified outdoor recreation wants and needs of Halifax County residents, and**

	work to ensure these outdoor recreational goals are met. • Regularly discuss this plan, priorities, and implementation steps with the Halifax County Intergovernmental Association that meets regularly among local elected officials and leadership.
Goal 3.2: Increase and expand participation in outdoor recreation among Halifax County residents, particularly new and non-traditional participants.	
3.2.1. Action/Project: **Identify organizations capable of delivering programming that introduces residents to outdoor recreation, expands access and confidence in participating, and teaches essential outdoor recreation skills.**	**Task:** • Partner with these organizations to promote and market outdoor recreation programming. • Connect organizations with resources that can help expand or enhance their outdoor recreation programming and strengthen their operations as needed.
3.2.2. Action/Project: Continue to engage with the 4-H program and the 4-H Rural Life Center as a high-quality outdoor recreation asset.	**Task:** • Utilize this asset to increase exposure and skill development in outdoor recreation for youth participants in Halifax County.
3.2.3. Action/Project: **Investigate the opportunity and logistics to revive the Roanoke River Ramble or initiate a similar paddle event.**	**Task:** • Review the event's history and current status to assess whether reviving it is feasible.
3.2.4. Action/Project: **Incorporate outdoor recreation activities as programming offered by the Halifax County Parks and Recreation Department.**	**Task:** • Work with Halifax County Parks & Rec to determine which current activities could be considered outdoor recreation and collaborate to promote them as appropriate. • Collaborate with Parks & Rec to propose future programming that could be developed to fill gaps in identified outdoor recreation wants and needs of Halifax County residents

Goal 3.3: Incorporate stewardship of natural resources into all plan activities.	
3.3.1. Action/Project: **Acknowledge and celebrate Native American heritage within Halifax County, including the tradition of environmental stewardship among Indigenous cultures.**	**Task:** • **Engage with Haliwa-Saponi tribe leadership to collaboratively identify culturally appropriate ways to honor and highlight Native American heritage and environmental stewardship within outdoor recreation initiatives.**
3.3.2. Action/Project: **Identify appropriate organizations capable of developing programming that educates residents and visitors about practices that lead to stewardship of natural resources, particularly among youth populations.**	**Task:** • **Partner with these organizations to promote and market stewardship education and programming.** • **Connect organizations with resources that can help expand or enhance their stewardship programming and strengthen their operations as needed.**