



Shenandoah

The Great River Valley



The Shenandoah River -- over 100 miles of fresh water pulsing life through a lush, thriving valley that is home to thousands of people. The last 100 years have transformed the Valley from an area of small, self-sufficient farms and virgin forests to a bustling center of commerce and one of the state's leading agricultural areas.

The Shenandoah River and its tributaries wind through the Valley nurturing its people, industry, and economy. What happens to these water resources will determine the future of the Valley. Balancing continued growth with sustainable use requires a clear vision built on the values and views of the people who live here.

The Shenandoah River rolls through seven counties and 59 different watersheds, covering a drainage area of nearly 3,000 square miles. The river flows northward from its headwaters in Augusta and Rockingham Counties, to join the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry. It moves on to the Chesapeake Bay, and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean.

Many local groups, organizations, and individuals are looking at ways to protect the watershed as the basis for future prosperity and economic development. This means looking at the entire basin and all of its watersheds. An inventory of the natural, cultural and human resources, will help residents decide what needs to be done to keep the Valley thriving into the 21st century.

Produced by:

USDA
Natural Resources
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In cooperation with:

Headwaters Soil & Water Conservation District
Lord Fairfax Soil & Water Conservation District
Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District

=====*Vision for A Growing Valley*=====

❖ *A Unique Heritage*

The Blue Ridge Mountains blocked settlement from the east until the 1700's, when German and Scotch-Irish settlers moved along the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania into the Valley. Their architectural styles and cultural influences are part of the region's charm today.

❖ *Rural Landscapes*

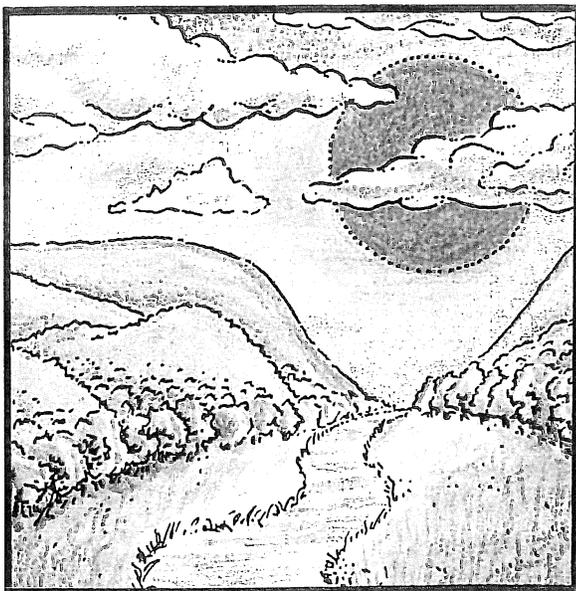
Mostly small towns, there are only four cities with more than 18,000 -- Staunton, Winchester, Waynesboro, and Harrisonburg. Being one of the state's fastest growing areas could change some of this country to city.

❖ *Spectacular Scenery*

Majestic mountains covered with hardwood forests slope steeply to a wide valley floor and fertile farm fields. Valley views are a major attraction. Some of the highest points are Elliott Knob, Reddish Knob and Flagpole Knob. Parks, greenways and well planned growth will help maintain these vistas.

❖ *Historic Treasures*

Many Civil War battlefields, Stonewall Jackson's home, and historic Winchester are just some of the sites that give us a glimpse of the past.



❖ *Agriculture's Beauty and Bounty*

The Valley boasts four of the state's top ten agricultural counties. The region leads in livestock production including poultry, dairy, sheep, and hogs. It is also the state's major milk producer. Phenomenal growth in poultry production and processing over the past 30 years has made the area a national center.

Although small in acreage, farms tend to be diversified, producing more than one type of product. Careful management helps farmers deal with limited cash reserves, small profit margins, and continuous price squeezes. About six acres per day are being converted to non-agricultural uses, forcing farmers to use the land more intensively. Improved grazing management could put more money in farmers' pockets and help protect the environment.

❖ *Visiting The Valley*

Tourism shares top billing with agriculture as the leading industries. Interstates 81, 64 and 66 provide easy access to the Valley. Each year visitors come here to hike, canoe, look for antiques, and enjoy the autumn leaves along the Skyline Drive.

❖ *Fabulous Forests and Wildlife*

The Valley is flanked on the east by Virginia's famed Blue Ridge Mountains, with Shenandoah National Park. To the west are Great North Mountain and Shenandoah Mountain in the George Washington National Forest. There are more than 1 million acres of woodland in the Valley, and timber harvesting generates \$160 million a year. Good management keeps the forests growing.

❖ *Thriving Business and Industry*

There are many commercial enterprises here. The Valley is an excellent place to build a business. There are abundant natural resources, good transportation routes, economic advantages, and community support. Local universities and colleges provide a highly trained workforce. Maintaining the quality of life that attracted everyone to the Valley in the first place is crucial.

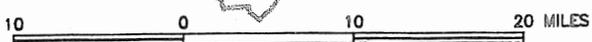
THE SHENANDOAH RIVER BASIN IN VIRGINIA



LEGEND

- Shenandoah River Basin in Virginia
- Shenandoah River and Tributaries
- County Boundaries
- Cities

* Digital Data Source and Map Details: This map was Produced at The Virginia Natural Resources Information Center(VNRIC) - U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service in Harrisonburg, Va. April 25 1995. The Streams and County lines were derived from Mid-Atlantic States DLGS (ESRI Origin). The River Basin was reclassified from VirGIS HUA Boundaries. The Virginia Geographic Information System (VirGIS) database. Developed by: Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, The Division of Soil Water Conservation (DCR-DSWC); Information Support Systems Laboratory, Agricultural Engineering Department, Virginia Tech (VPI&SU-ISSL) . The Grass4.13/Mapgen4.13 Interface was used to create this map.



A River Runs Through It

The Shenandoah Valley is one of the most beautiful and unique regions in the country. The river and its tributaries are like arteries--connecting everything in the Valley together. What happens in one part of the watershed can dramatically affect the other parts.

The watershed benefits citizens in many ways:

- Drinking water for several towns and cities.
- Some of Virginia's finest fishing including smallmouth bass, redeyes and redbreast sunfish.
- A home for a tremendous variety of plants and animals including some rare species.
- A unique "karst" or limestone derived topography that is the source of world renowned cave formations.
- Some of the largest and most important non-tidal wetlands in the Commonwealth.
- Abundant opportunities for recreation.
- Prime and productive farmland and forestland.

Historically, the Valley has been a strong source of innovation and stewardship. In 1789, near Staunton, Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper revolutionizing agriculture. Today, farmers are using riparian easements and other management practices to protect water quality. Other residents are working to protect the watershed through activities sponsored by local conservation organizations or civic groups.

A study of the entire Shenandoah River basin would identify where the important resources are, and provide information that could be used to guide plans for conserving these resources now and in the future. To find out more, contact your local NRCS office or soil and water conservation district.

