



The **Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI)** is a pioneering effort to build local economies in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley—one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed scale with several local partners, this collaborative grassroots effort has developed significant momentum with applicability for communities in Appalachia and beyond.

Utilizing a consensus-based approach, project partners are articulating and prioritizing goals for connecting downtown revitalization, outdoor recreation, water quality, entrepreneurship and environmental education along the Clinch River, and have developed an action plan to realize the prioritized goals (which may be found on the CRVI website). Strategies are being identified to connect downtown revitalization with outdoor recreation along the Clinch River Valley. Utilizing a regional planning approach, the project connects to cultural and natural heritage efforts including Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway, 'Round the Mountain, Crooked Road, and other artisan networks and local efforts. Finally, the effort builds upon the unique cultural and ecological assets of the Clinch River to distinguish and create new possibilities in the communities along the Clinch as distinctive cultural and ecological areas, particularly around environmental education and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Building on a vision for the Clinch River Valley, which may be found below, five active action groups are currently developing substantial actions around five goal areas as part of the Initiative:

By 2020, the Clinch River Valley will be a global destination based on its unique biodiversity, natural beauty, cultural attractions and outdoor opportunities. This collaboration will bring measurable economic, environmental and social benefits to the region's communities while protecting the Clinch's globally rare species.

- **Goal 1:** Develop a Clinch River State Park.
- **Goal 2:** Develop and Integrate Access Points, Trails, and Campgrounds along the Clinch River.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance Water Quality in the Clinch River.
- **Goal 4:** Develop and Enhance Environmental Education Opportunities for all Community Members in the Clinch River watershed.
- **Goal 5:** Connect and Expand Downtown Revitalization, Marketing and Entrepreneurial Development Opportunities in the Clinch River Valley.

Several meetings have been held as part of the Clinch River Valley Initiative, with numerous community events and meetings planned for 2013 and beyond (see the website for details). The Clinch River Valley Initiative originated at a forum in the fall of 2010 around Building Local Economies in Southwest Virginia, and is coordinated by the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia, with numerous local, regional and state partners.

Additional information about the effort and how to become involved may be found on the website: www.clinchriverva.com or by contacting Christine Gyovai at 434-924-1970 or christineg@virginia.edu. Action group chair contact information is on the website as well.

