

# NATURE

**VIRGINIA**

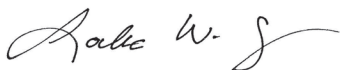
Summer 2021 • [nature.org/virginia](https://nature.org/virginia)



© Kyle LaFerriere

## Where the Elk Roam

Our Appalachian Mountains are rich in nature, but economic prosperity in this region remains a challenge, one that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Yet local communities continue to demonstrate their resilience. The Nature Conservancy conserves natural resources that not only sustain life in our mountains, but also offer economic opportunities, such as compatible ecotourism. Our success depends on many conservation and philanthropic partners, including people like you. With additional vital support from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, along with the Worrell family and Genan Foundation, TNC has protected 1,100 acres critical to elk restoration and nature-based recreation. Thank you for helping us build on our quarter-million-acre Cumberland Forest Project and fostering a brighter future for this special region!



Locke Ogens, Virginia Director



Bull elk in Buchanan County, Virginia © Steven David Johnson

## Home on the Range

### Elk habitat protected in southwestern Virginia

Thanks to dedicated supporters, including the Worrell family and Genan Foundation, and to a generous matching-gift challenge from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, The Nature Conservancy protected 1,100 acres in Buchanan and Dickinson counties. This acquisition directly connects to TNC's 153,000-acre Cumberland Forest Highlands property, acquired in 2019. The largest parcel was the site where elk were first reintroduced to Virginia in 2012. This property remains central to ongoing restoration and ecotourism efforts initiated by state and federal wildlife agencies, along with the SWVA Sportsmen and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, whose members manage viewing stations in the area. Learn more at [nature.org/clinchvalley](https://nature.org/clinchvalley).

### How to See Elk in Virginia

The most reliable times to spot elk in Virginia's restoration area are during the spring calving season and the fall rut. Breaks Interstate Park on the Virginia-Kentucky state line offers guided tours on weekends from late August through October. On Buchanan County lands west of Grundy and accessible from the Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure Center, three viewing stations and an online elk cam overlook restored grasslands that attract elk and other wildlife. Learn more at [dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/elk](https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/elk).



Elk in Buchanan County, Virginia © Roger Kirby



Big Schloss vista © Tom Hamilton; Hiking through mountain laurel © Daniel White; Eastern Shore kayaking © Peter Frank Edwards

# Season in the Sun

## Where to explore nature this summer

Along with fresh greenery and long, sunny days, summer 2021 brings new optimism and a sense—as Nick says in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*—“that life [is] beginning over again.” During this season in the sun, consider exploring places protected by The Nature Conservancy and our conservation partners where you can relax and recharge.

In the mountains of western Virginia, for example, sample nature’s “peak” season with a visit to our Warm Springs Mountain Preserve in Bath County. From mountain vistas to a close-up look at a globally rare pine barren, each of the preserve’s three public trails

offers a distinctive experience. Then beat the heat with a dip in cool waters in the adjacent national forest or nearby at Douthat State Park.

**“I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”**

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

If the coast is more to your liking, you can soak up the sun’s warmth and vitamins

D and N (for nature) along the Eastern Shore of Virginia, home to TNC’s Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve. Stroll our bird and wildlife trail at Brownsville Preserve or follow the scenic shoreline of Oyster along our new Horse Island Trail. Extend your visit by exploring the peninsula’s national wildlife refuges, as well as the forested bluffs and sandy Chesapeake Bay beaches of Kiptopeke State Park.

Learn more about these and other Virginia escapes today at [nature.org/VAgetaways](https://www.nature.org/VAgetaways).

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# 34%

Proportion of carbon dioxide pollution in Virginia emitted via exhaust from personal vehicles.

Source: U.S. EPA

### Clean Car Standards Passed



Charging electric car © Michael Simons

In February, Virginia legislators voted to adopt new Clean Car Standards. This legislation aims to increase the availability of electric vehicles in Virginia, leading to more consumer choice, improved public health and reduced carbon pollution. To address our climate crisis and speed our transition to a low-carbon future, “the most urgently needed policies are those that will reduce emissions from the transportation sector,” says Lena Lewis, energy and climate policy manager for The Nature Conservancy in Virginia. “Transportation is our largest source of carbon dioxide pollution in Virginia; moreover, nearly 34% of our state’s carbon emissions come from personal-use vehicles—compared to 29% coming from the entire power sector,” Lewis adds. The new standards are targeted to go into effect in 2024. Learn more about our climate work at [nature.org/vaclimate](https://www.nature.org/vaclimate).