



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

4.1 Overview



Roanoke County citizens have a strong desire to preserve the quality of the County's natural, scenic, and historic resources. The County's natural features - including mountains, forests, productive soils, waterways, fresh air, and wildlife - serve to distinguish the greater Roanoke Valley as a unique regional environment and center for biodiversity. The County's scenic beauty contributes to its value as both a place to live and an attractive place for outdoor recreation enthusiasts and a growing tourism industry. These natural and scenic features are enriched by the County's many cultural features that symbolize the County's history and provide citizens with a sense of place and connection to the area.

This chapter discusses the natural and cultural resources that citizens cherish and wish to protect into the future. As the County continues to grow, citizens believe that it is essential to maintain the high quality of these natural and cultural amenities that are unique to the area while accommodating pressures for future growth and development.

4.2 Land Resources



According to the 2019 National Land Cover Dataset (See map on page 4-3), approximately 69% of Roanoke County is covered in forest, almost 20% is developed land, 11% is shrubland and pasture/cropland, and 0.3% is water or wetland.

Conservation Easements

There are over 13,950 acres of land under conservation easements. These are held by Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. National Park Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. There are an additional 5,186 acres of land in private or public protective management, including parks. A map of designated conservation lands is found on page 4-4.

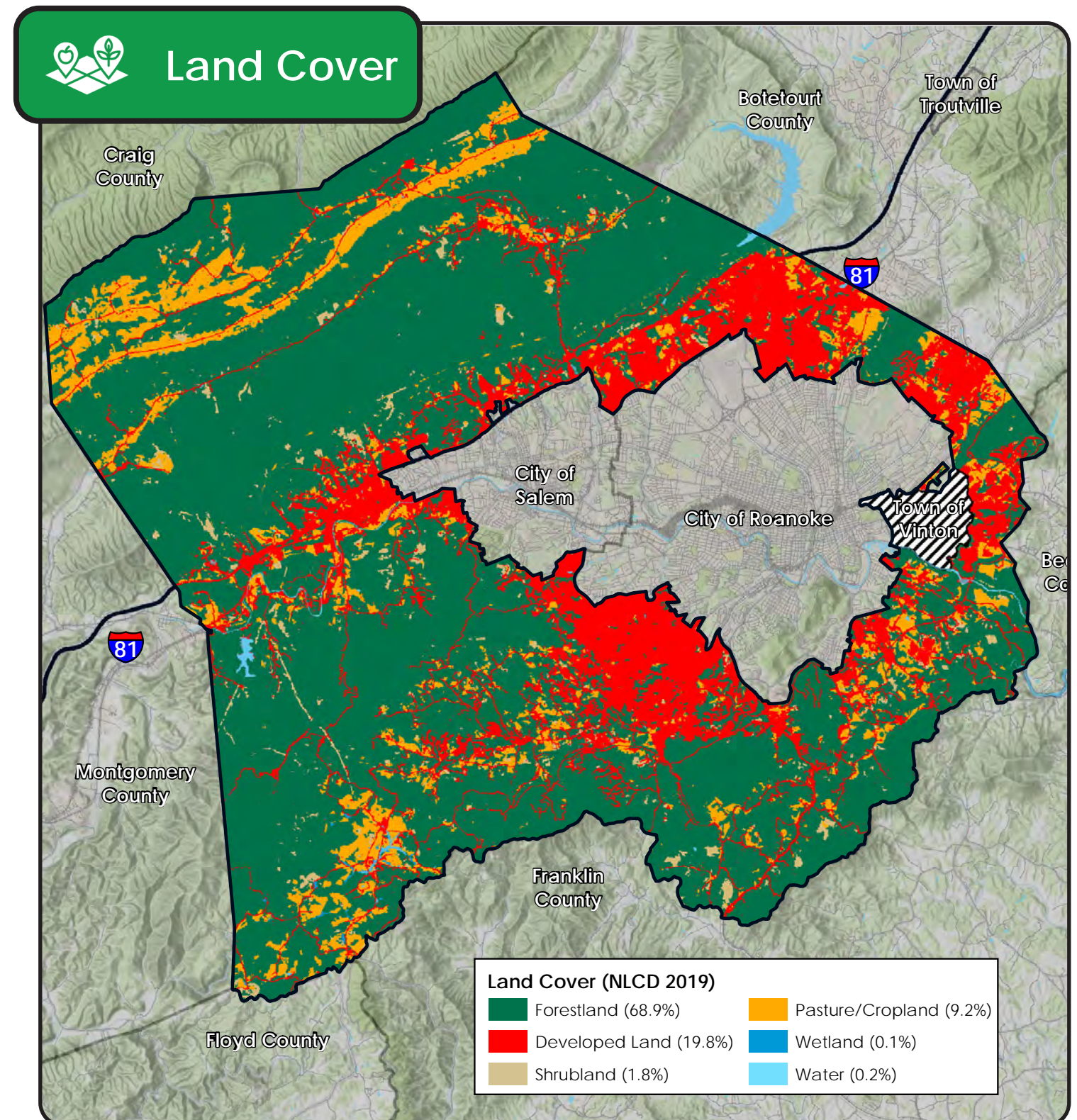
The Blue Ridge Land Conservancy is a community-based, non-profit organization formed to help protect local lands important to the quality of life and environmental health of their regions. A land conservancy works to encourage balanced community development and to save important local landscapes - the natural and cultural features that define a community's character and identity. Of the lands held in conservation easements in Roanoke County, 702 acres is managed by the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy.

Geology

Roanoke County is unique as it is the only county in Virginia to be covered by five physiographic subprovinces (see map on page 4-5). The southern portion of the County is within the southern Blue Ridge subprovince which consists of broad upland plateaus with moderate slopes. The eastern portions are within the Foothills province, which consists of rolling hills and moderate slopes with low elevations, and the northern Blue Ridge subprovince, which consists of rugged terrain with steep slopes and narrow ridges. The northwest portion of the County is within the Ridge and Valley province which is described as long linear ridges separated by valleys with trellis drainage patterns. Lastly, the central portion of the County is within the Great Valley subprovince which includes broad valleys with low to moderate slopes underlain by carbonate rocks. The location of the various rock formations found throughout the County are shown on the map on page 4-6.

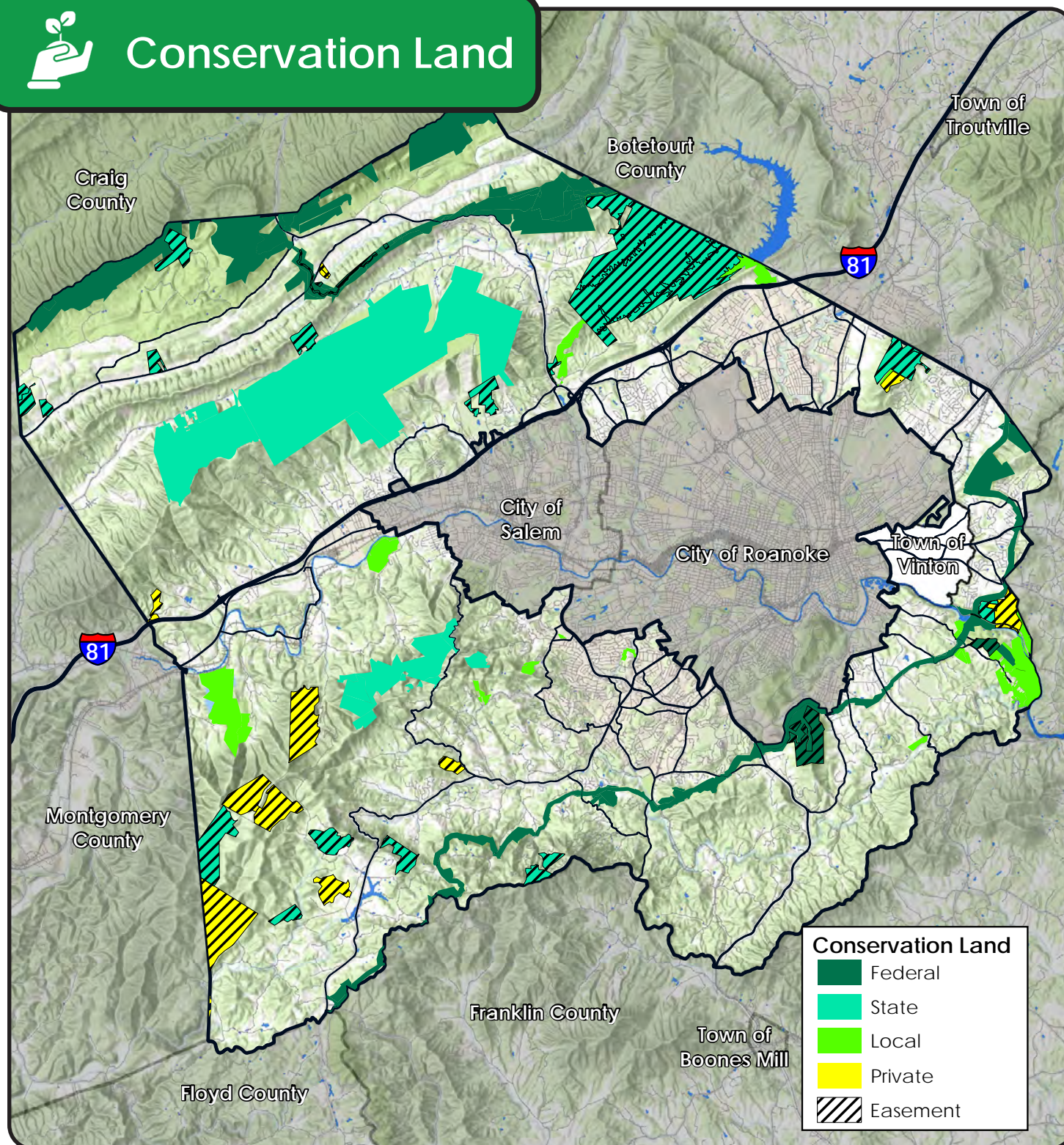
Mountains & Ridgelines

There are eight mountain ranges in Virginia which include the Ridge and Valley range (also known as the Appalachian Ridges) as well as the Blue Ridge Mountain range. Roanoke County is unique in that it falls within two of the eight. The northwestern portion of the County contains the eastern most portion of the Ridge and Valley range as Fort Lewis Mountain and Catawba Mountain span throughout the Glenvar, Catawba and Masons Cove Community Planning Areas. These mountains are also sometimes called the

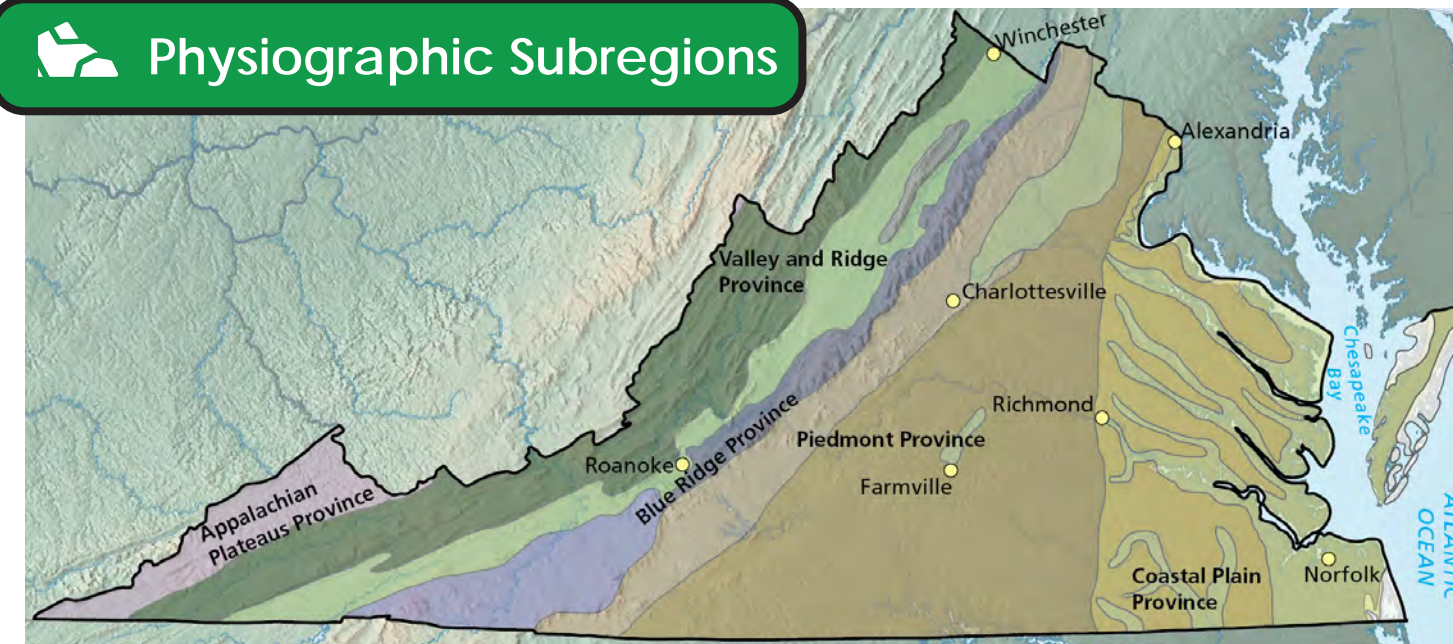




Conservation Land



Physiographic Subregions



Appalachian Plateaus Province	Valley & Ridge Province	Blue Ridge Province	Piedmont Province	Atlantic Coastal Plain Province
Appalachian Plateau	Ridge & Valley subprovince	northern Blue Ridge subprovince	Foothills subprovince	Upland subprovince
	Great Valley subprovince	southern Blue Ridge subprovince	Mesozoic lowlands subprovince	Lowland subprovince
	Massanutten Mountain		Outer Piedmont subprovince	Barrier Islands & Salt Marshes

Allegheny Mountains. Catawba Mountain is home to McAfee Knob, one of the most photographed overlooks on the Appalachian Trail.

The widely recognized Blue Ridge Mountain range is located to the east of the Ridge and Valley range and south of the Shenandoah Valley. It is adjacent to an important feature that spans across the entire Appalachian Mountain range in the eastern United States called the Great Appalachian Valley. This is a chain of valley lowlands and is the central feature of the Appalachian Mountains system. The trough stretches about 1,200 miles from Quebec in the north to Alabama in the south and has been an important north-south route of travel for centuries. All mountains in the eastern portion of the County are located in the Blue Ridge Mountain range, including notable peaks such as Roanoke County's tallest peak, Poor Mountain. Other notable mountains include Buck Mountain, Read Mountain, Bent Mountain, Roanoke Mountain, and Twelve O'clock Knob (see map on page 4-7).

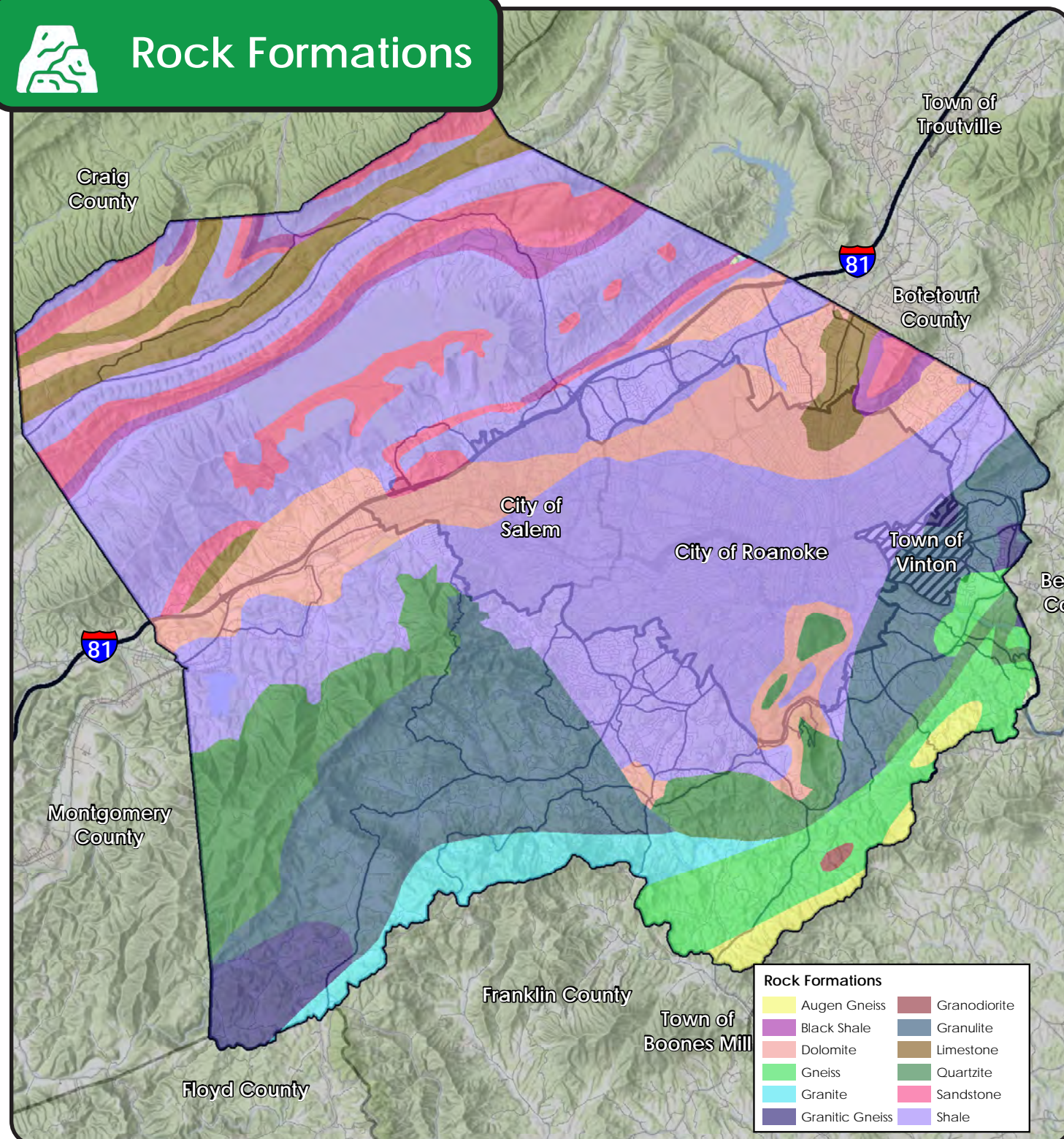
Topography

The highest point in Roanoke County is Poor Mountain at 3,928 feet above sea level while the lowest elevation is found at the base of the watershed at a low point of nearly 800 feet in the eastern portion of Roanoke County in the Roanoke River Basin.

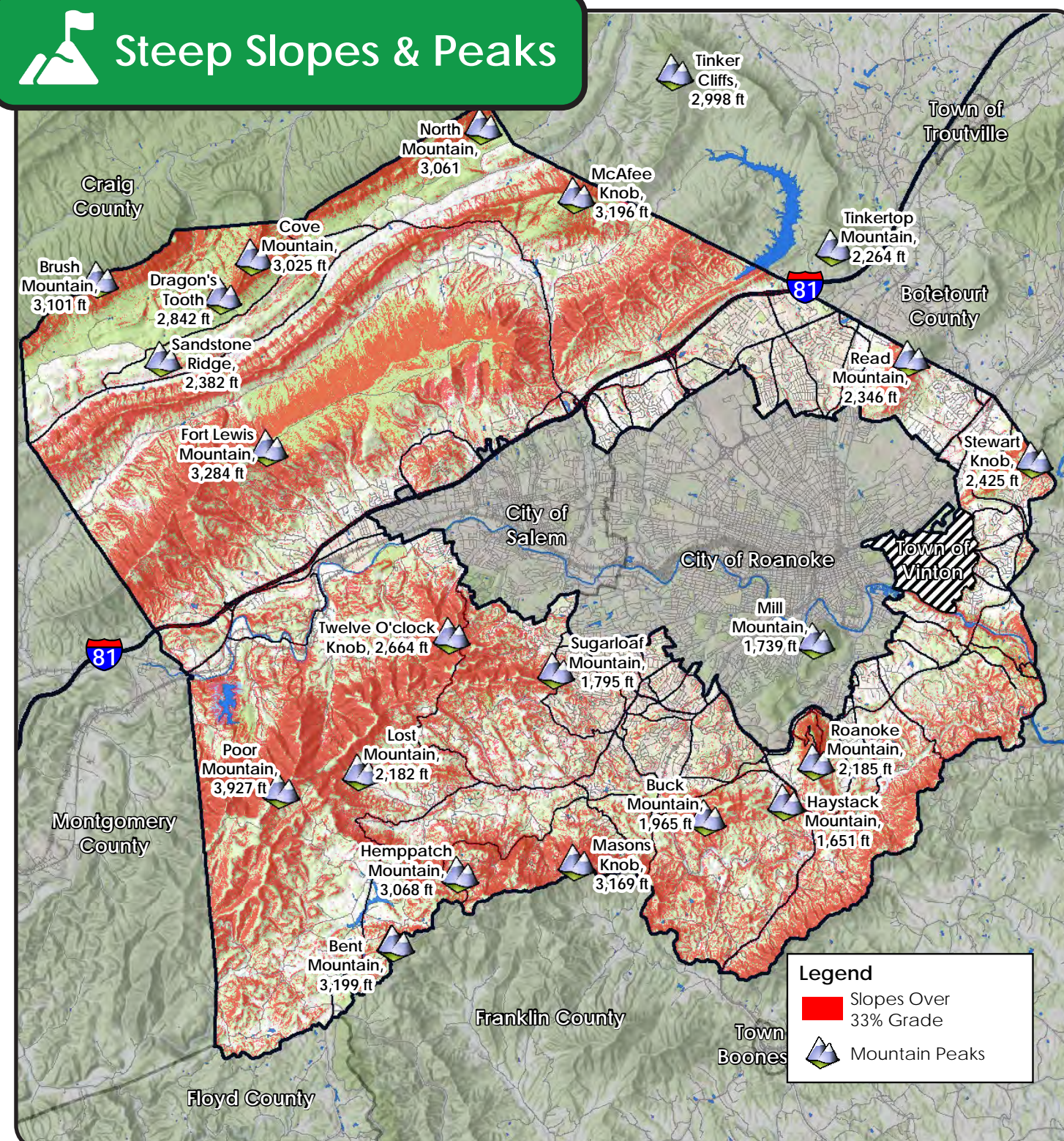
Approximately 38.9% of Roanoke County is classified as having "steep slopes" or slopes greater than 33% grade (see map on page 4-7). Approximately one-quarter of all steep slopes in the County occur within the combined Glenvar, Catawba, and Masons Cove Community Planning Areas. More than half of all land in the Masons Cove CPA is considered "steep" and approximately 47% of land in Glenvar and Clearbrook Community Planning Areas are "steep." The Peters Creek CPA and Cave Spring CPA have the least steep slopes, at 14% and 17% respectively.

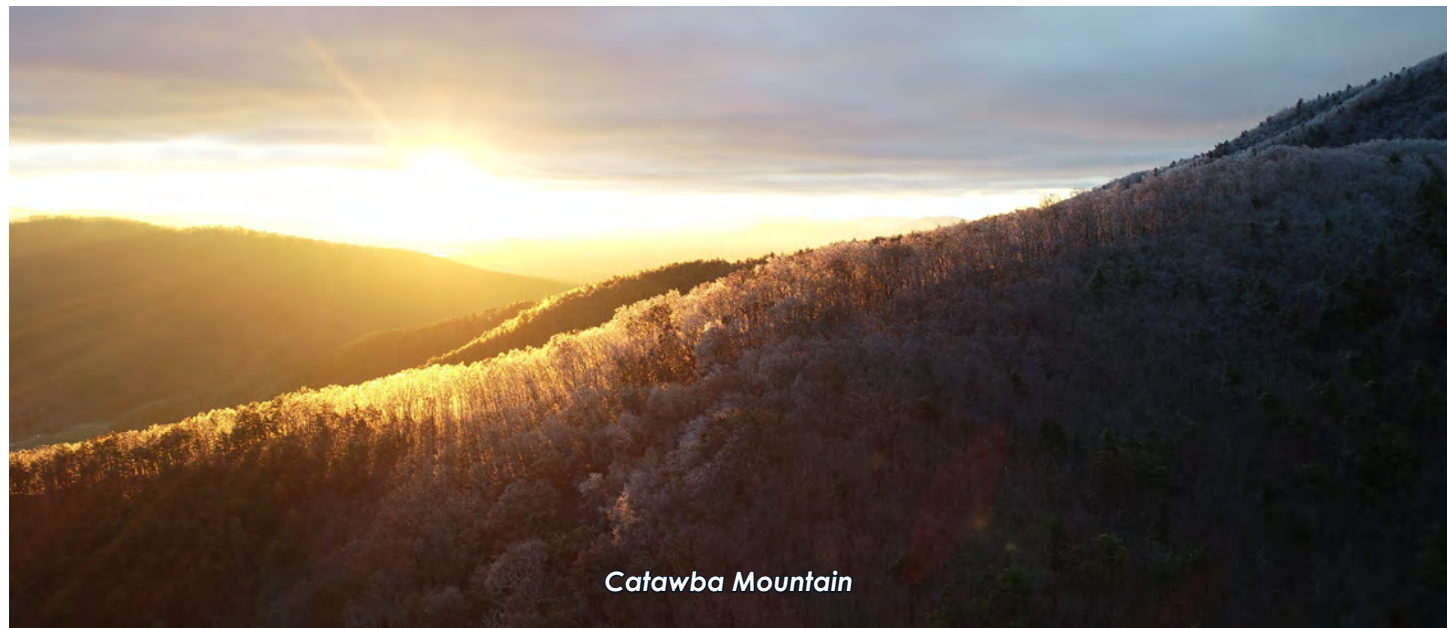


Rock Formations



Steep Slopes & Peaks





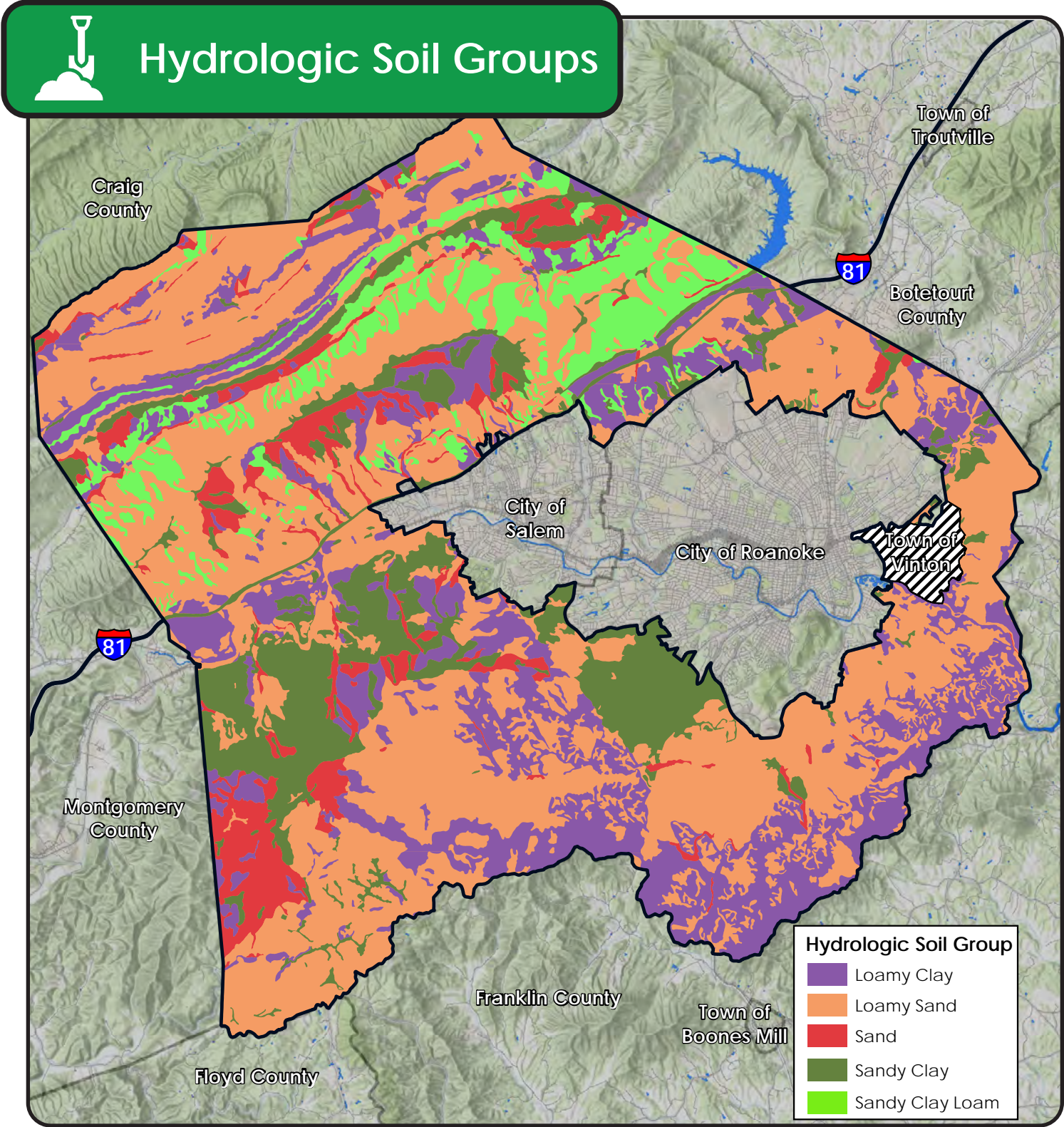
Catawba Mountain

Soils

In 1989 a soil survey was conducted in Roanoke County that contains information that can be used in land planning programs in the County. The soil survey contains predictions of soil behavior for selected land uses such as agriculture, woodland management, recreation, and development. The survey also highlights limitations and hazards associated with the soil, improvements needed to overcome the limitations, and the impact of selected land uses on the environment.

Soils are grouped into hydrologic soil groups according to their runoff-producing characteristics (see map on page 4-9). The chief consideration in determining the hydrologic soil group is the inherent capacity of soil bare of vegetation to permit infiltration of water. Some soils are seasonally wet or subject to flooding, while some are shallow to bedrock. Some are too unstable to be used as a foundation for buildings, roads or other development. Wet soils are poorly suited to use as septic tank absorption fields. A high water table makes soil poorly suited to basements or underground installations.

In doing this survey, soil scientists observed the steepness, length, and shape of slopes; the pattern of drainage; the kinds of crops and native plants growing on the soils; and the kinds of bedrock. The soils in the survey area occur in an orderly pattern that is related to the geology, landforms, relief, climate, and natural vegetation of the area. Each kind of soil is associated with a particular kind of landscape or with a segment of the landscape. By observing the soils in the survey area and relating their position to specific segments of the landscape, a soil scientist develops a model of how the soils were formed. During mapping, this model enables the soil scientist to predict the kind of soil at a specific location with a degree of accuracy. Predictions about soil behavior are based on soil properties and on variables such as climate and biological activity. Soil conditions are predictable over long periods of time, but they are not predictable from year to year. After soil scientists located and identified the significant natural bodies of soil in the survey area, they drew the boundaries of these bodies on aerial photographs and identified each as a specific map unit.



Prime Farmland

As part of the 1989 soil survey, prime farmland was identified throughout Roanoke County (see map on page 4-11), which is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the land that is best suited to be used for food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. Prime farmland is recognized as of major importance in meeting the Nation's short and long-range needs for food and fiber and therefore should be responsibly managed.

The 1989 soil survey, which included the cities of Salem and Roanoke, found that the largest areas of prime farmland are primarily found along the flood plains and terraces of the Roanoke River and its main tributaries. At the time of the survey, most areas of prime farmland were being used for pasture, hay, and cultivated crops such as corn, corn silage, and small grain. The survey also identified that some prime farmland has been lost to industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational uses. This loss of prime farmland to other uses puts pressure on marginal lands, which generally are more erodible, droughty, and less productive and cannot be easily cultivated.

Karst

Most of the karst topography in Virginia is found in the Ridge and Valley Province. Over time, the carbonate bedrock (limestone and dolomite) can be dissolved by acidic waters, forming a network of interconnected caves. These areas can be especially troublesome for groundwater wells because of the potential for water quality degradation. Sinkholes can also be a problem for development when the karst formations are close to the surface. Approximately 188 acres of land in Roanoke County is designated as karst topography, which is primarily found within the Catawba, Glenvar, and Peters Creek Community Planning Areas (see map on page 4-12).

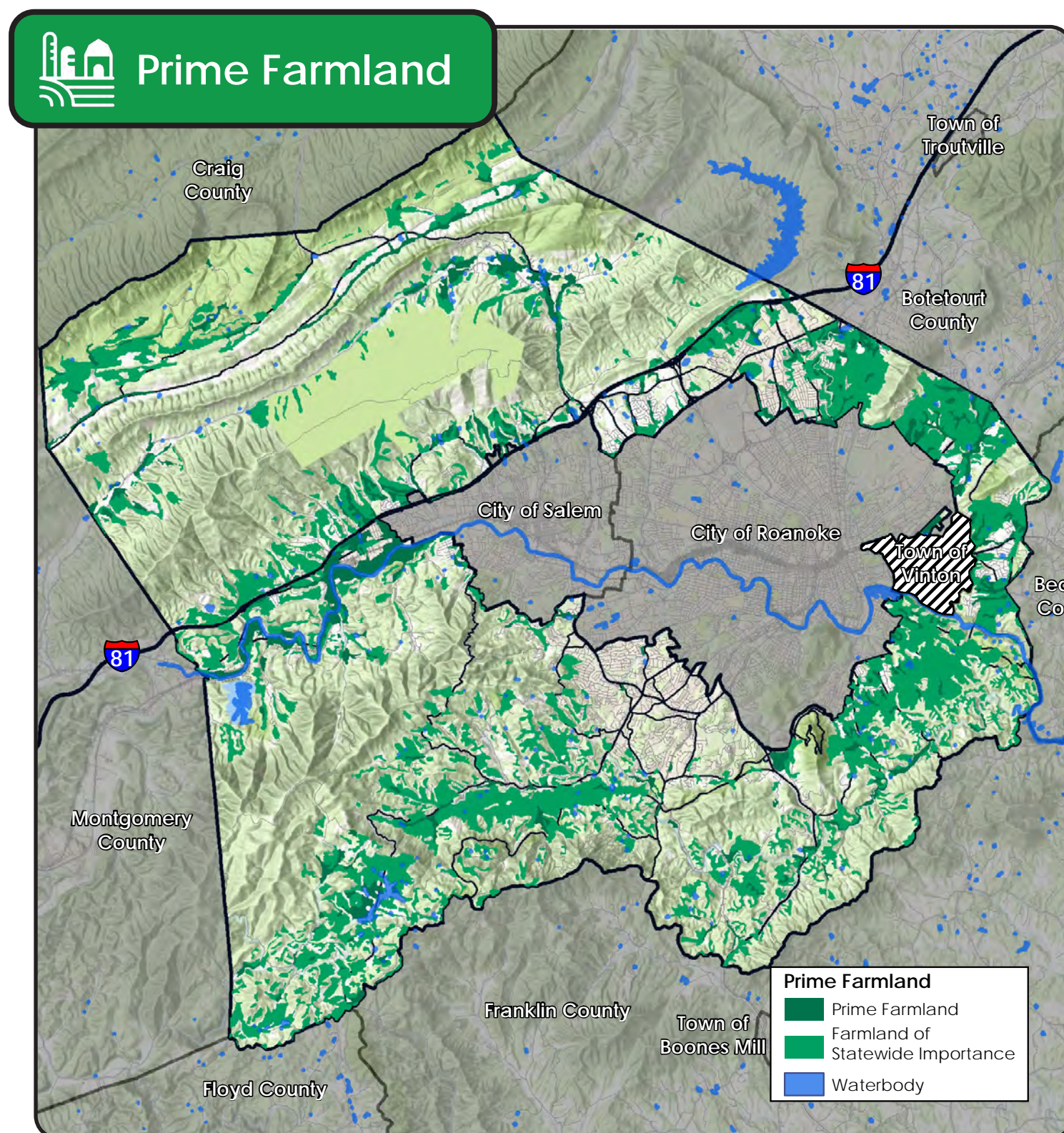
Flora & Fauna

The Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains of the Southern Appalachian Mountain range are one of the most significant natural wilderness areas in the United States. Roanoke County contains several

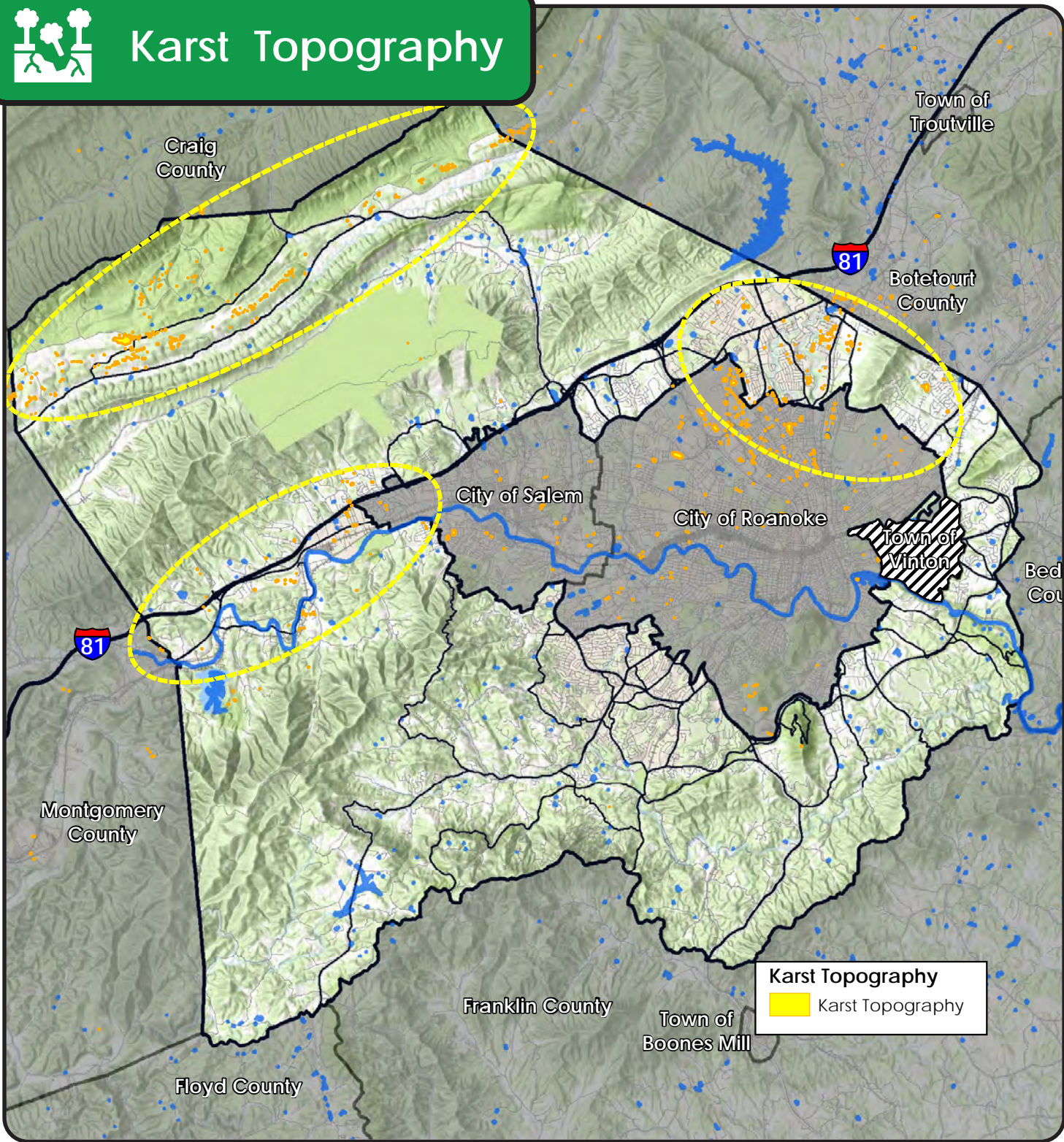
national, state, and local forested and wildlife protection areas that are conjoined creating a massive wilderness area that is ideal for plants and wildlife to thrive. This mountainous region of the southeastern United States is a natural biosphere where one can enjoy and appreciate the many facets of its diverse plants and wildlife species. In addition, there are 32 natural heritage sites in Roanoke County including Dixie, Poor Mountain, Bradshaw Creek, and many more. These sites can be seen on the map on page 4-13.

Flowering shrubs in the spring and foliage changing colors in the fall make Roanoke County a haven of natural beauty throughout the year. The changes of elevation in the mountains display various colors and blooming periods. The peak periods of change in Roanoke County tend to occur earlier in the year than those in other parts of the Appalachian Mountains which typically occurs in late-April to mid-May. The azalea is at its brightest in mid-May while mountain laurel typically blooms during the first two weeks of June. Groves of rhododendron can also be found in the region during the first part of June. There are also various species of wildflowers that bloom in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Roanoke County at different times in the spring and fall. There are also an abundance of tree species.

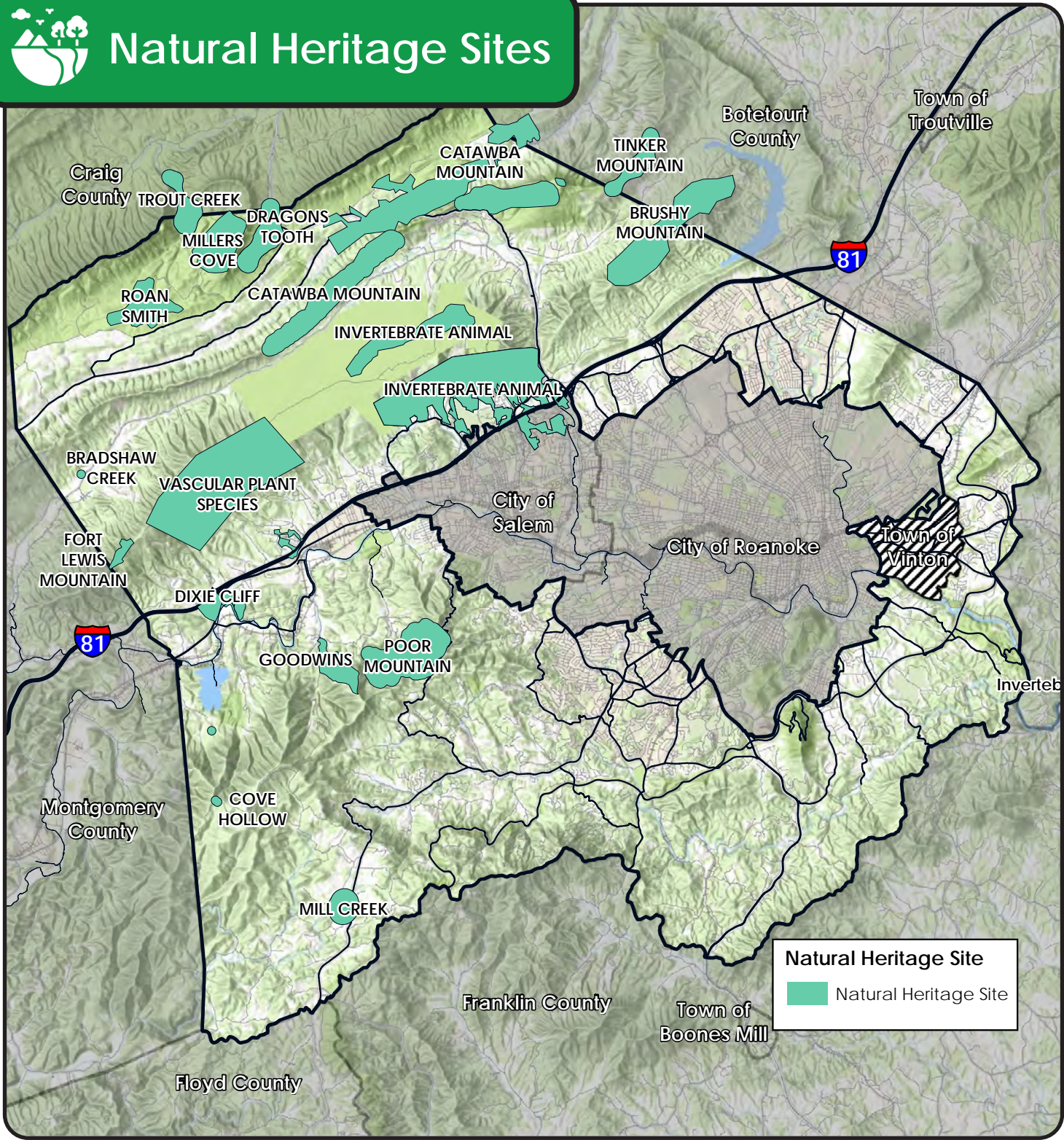
On any given mountain in Roanoke County, you can expect to find varieties of oak, pine, maple, dogwood, redwood, and other assorted plants. The colors on the trees during the fall make the Blue Ridge Mountains in the County, one of the most beautiful destinations in the world for a fall getaway. Dogwood, sourwood, and black gum trees produce an intense color that paint the Blue Ridge with shades of red, yellow, and orange. Tulip trees and birch trees provide a beautiful yellow color, sassafras produce a vivid orange, and red maples help complete the unique ecological experience. In the spring, the Blue Ridge Mountains are dotted with flowering shrubs and wildflowers, including rhododendrons and dogwoods that help make the Blue Ridge Parkway one of the most beautiful scenic drives in the world. Daisies make some of the striking color of the mountains during



Karst Topography



Natural Heritage Sites



the summer. The evergreen trees that provide the beautiful green hues of the mountains come from the Virginia pine, white pine, hemlock, spruce, and fir trees in Roanoke County. The region's location and climate allow for the mountains of Roanoke to offer us iconic views and colors during all four seasons of the year.

The combination of hard and soft mast-producing trees and the availability of cover habitat provides for high mammal population diversity. The Roanoke River Basin is classified as an area with a high density of white-tailed deer habitat, with density estimates ranging as high as 60 deer per square mile in some areas. Likewise, a remnant population of black bear occurs along the lower river in one of the few remaining expanses of habitat for this species in this part of the state. In addition to the availability of food, these bears likely take advantage of the abundance of large old trees for winter denning sites. Gray squirrels and marsh rabbits are abundant. Furbearers include raccoon, mink, muskrat, otter, fox, bobcat, beaver, and opossum. Typical birds found in Roanoke County include eagles, hawks, falcons, turkeys, owls, woodpeckers, pigeons, hummingbirds, cardinals, doves, and countless others.

The Roanoke River and its associated floodplain wetlands are especially critical to aquatic and reptilian species. Roanoke River fish include the striped bass, blueback herring, alewife, hickory shad, and American shad. The river provides critical spawning habitat for a highly significant population of striped bass. Representative floodplain amphibians and reptiles include the southern leopard frog, green tree frog, southern dusky salamander, black rat snake, eastern cottonmouth, yellow-bellied turtle, snapping turtle, and five-lined skink.

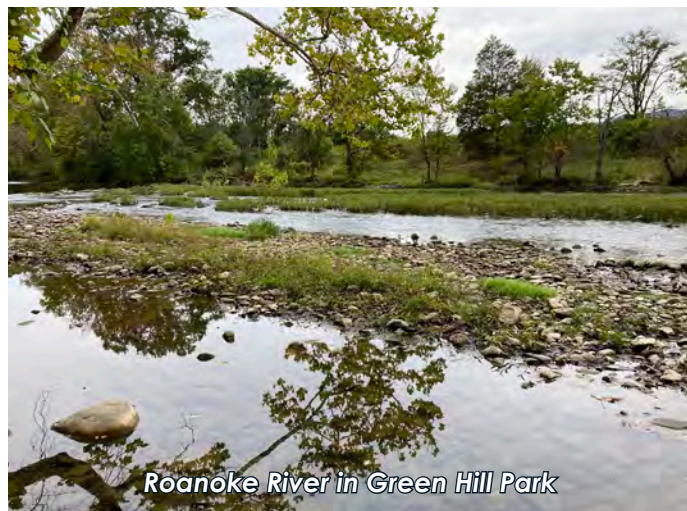
The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources is responsible for managing threatened and endangered species in Virginia. Species are listed by the federal government as well as the state government. As of 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists 77 species in Virginia that are protected under the Endangered Species Act. These include fish, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, birds, mammals, and plants.



A Bird Eating Seed



Havens Wildlife Management Area



Roanoke River in Green Hill Park



Carvins Cove Reservoir

The 2015 Virginia Wildlife Action Plan prepared by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries notes that there are 111 species needing protection in Virginia that occur in the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Planning area. The highest priority within Roanoke County are located in the northwest portion in the Catawba and Masons Cove Community Planning areas. Some of those priority conservation species in the region include the Jefferson Salamander, Eastern Meadowlark, Alleghany Crawfish, and the Brook Trout.

4.3 Water Resources



Roanoke County has an abundant amount of water resources ranging from rivers and streams, to wetlands and groundwater. Water resources serve many purposes, including providing a source for drinking water, contributing to the functionality of the area's diverse ecosystems, and offering recreational opportunities.

Watersheds

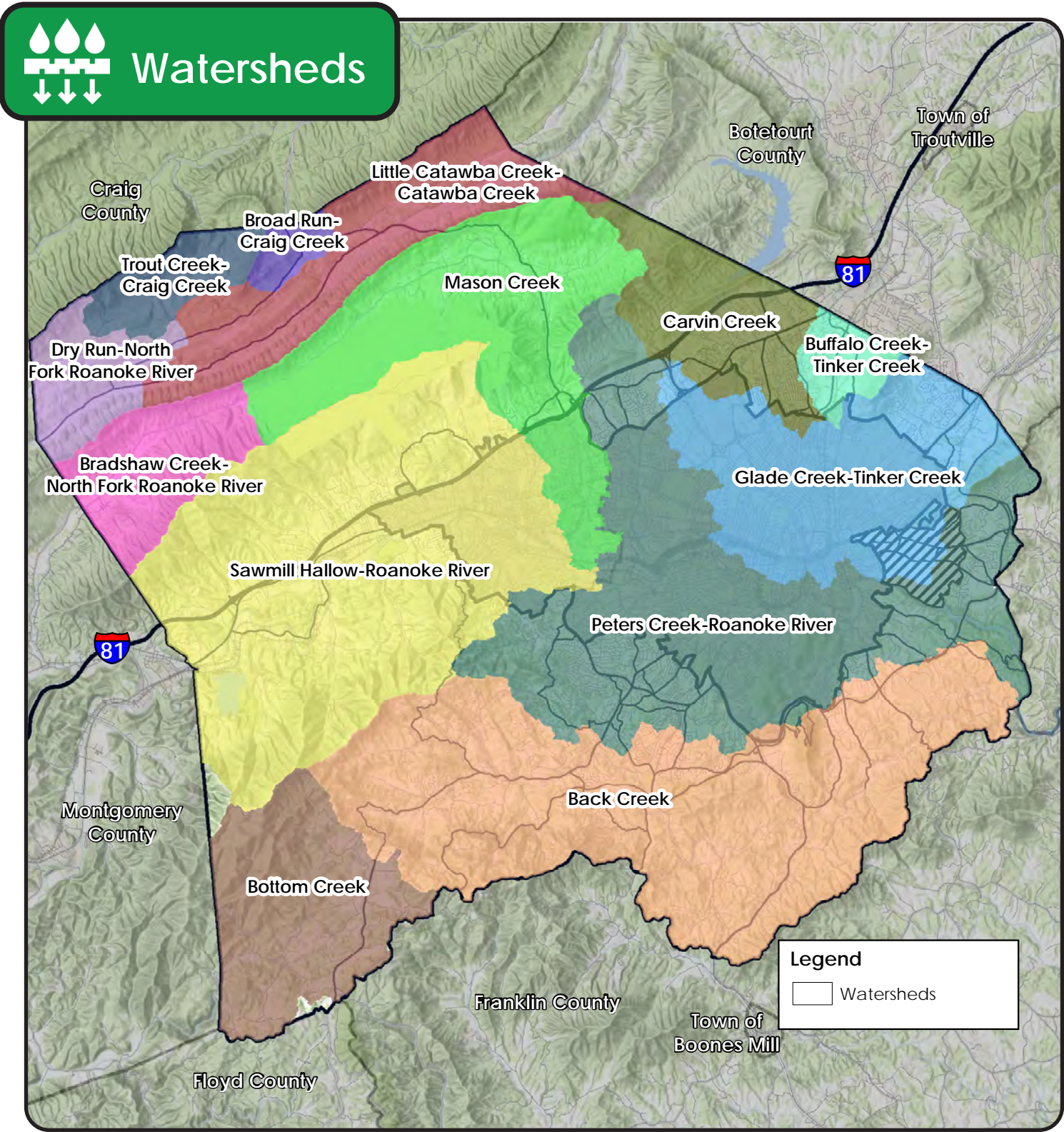
The Upper Roanoke River drainage system serves the entirety of Roanoke County, aside from a small area in the northern portion of the County that is drained by the Catawba Creek watershed and is part of the James River drainage that flows to the Chesapeake Bay (see map on page 4-16). The

Roanoke River springs from the Jefferson National Forest in Virginia's western mountain highlands and flows through Montgomery County to Roanoke County and east to Smith Mountain Lake and eventually to the Albemarle Sound in North Carolina.

Rivers, Streams & Lakes

There are approximately 201 acres of surface water and 15.75 linear miles of the Roanoke River within the County boundary. In addition, there are over 760 miles of streams and creeks.

The mainstem of the Roanoke River is formed by the confluence of the North Fork, which drains a portion of the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, and the South Fork, which drains the western face of the Blue Ridge. The two converge at Lafayette, a short distance west of the Roanoke County line, and the mainstem continues on through a narrow, steep-walled valley near Glenvar. It then traverses the main valley, picking up many short and steep tributaries as it passes through the cities of Salem and Roanoke. The river follows the western slope of the Blue Ridge to Mill Mountain, where it turns east and enters the Roanoke Gap. Once through the Blue Ridge, the river enters the rolling Piedmont province, where it has been impounded to form Smith Mountain Lake in Bedford County, Franklin County, and Pittsylvania County.



Tubing on the Roanoke River at Explore Park

While flowing through the County, the Roanoke River is fed by several streams and creeks: the North Fork of the Roanoke River; Mason Creek in the Masons Cove area, which flows into the Roanoke River in Salem; Tinker Creek, which drains from the north out of Botetourt County and joins Carvin Creek, which drains from Carvins Cove Reservoir to the northwest; Back Creek, which drains from the Poages Mill area and joins the Roanoke River east of the Bedford County line; and Bottom Creek, which drains the Bent Mountain area.

Stream Impairments

Impaired streams are considered to be streams or rivers that do not meet water quality standards because pollutant levels are too high. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality maintains a list of impaired waters that is updated periodically. As of the date of this Plan, Roanoke County has thirteen (13) streams that are considered impaired. The location and source of pollution (BMIs, E. coli, PCB in fish tissue, and Fecal Coliform) for these streams can be seen on the map on page 4-18.

Roanoke River Blueway

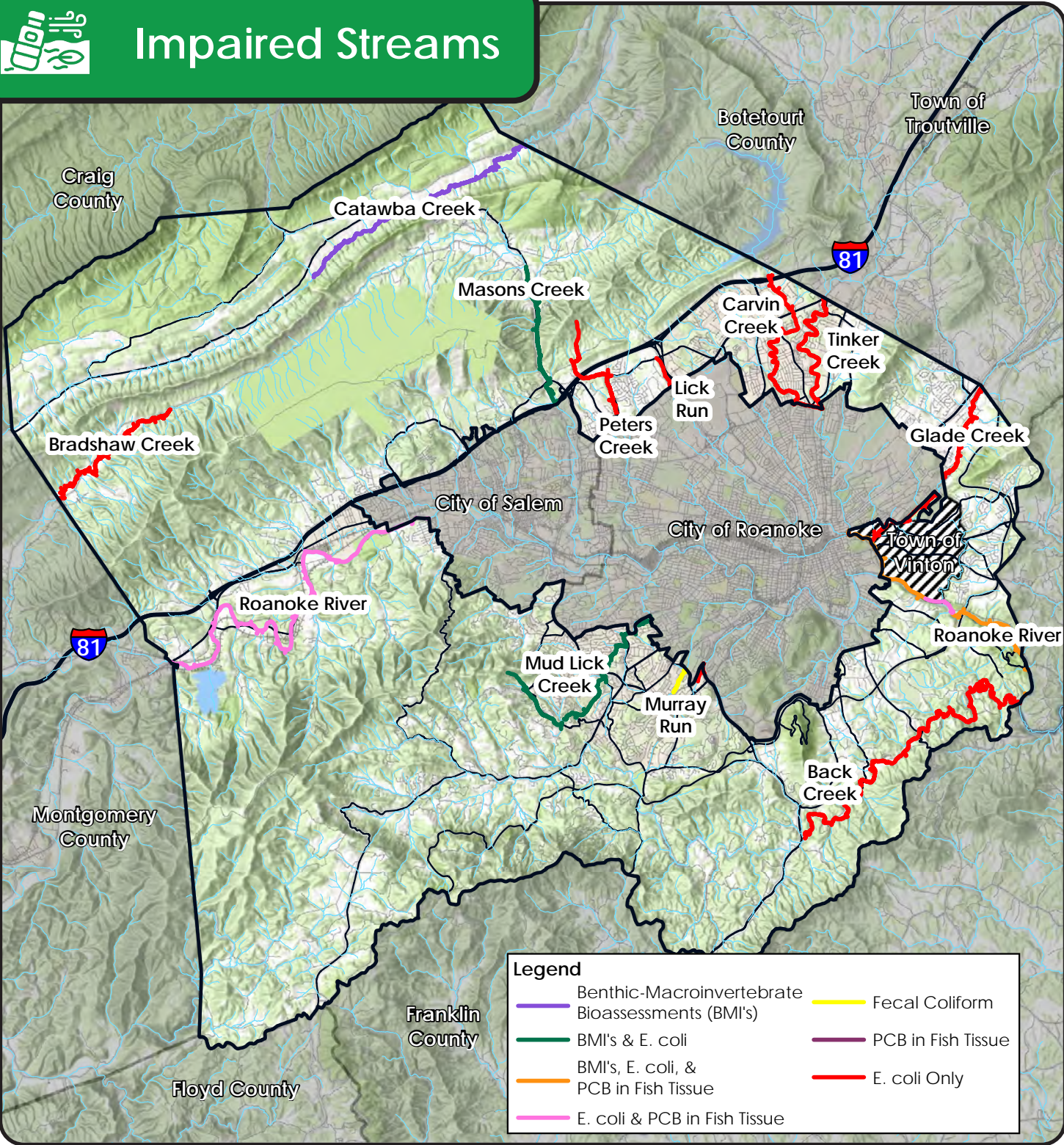
The Roanoke River Blueway is a 45-mile water trail that runs from eastern Montgomery County to Smith Mountain Lake. The Blueway consists mostly

of the Roanoke River but also contains portions of Back Creek in Roanoke County, Tinker Creek in the City of Roanoke, and South Fork Roanoke River in Montgomery County. All in all, the Blueway runs through or borders seven localities:

- Bedford County
- Franklin County
- Montgomery County
- Roanoke County
- City of Roanoke
- City of Salem
- Town of Vinton

The Roanoke River Blueway offers access to the river for various recreational activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, tubing, wading, and wildlife observation, and connects to numerous local parks. In Roanoke County, the Blueway can be accessed from Wayside Park, Green Hill Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Explore Park. The planning, development, and marketing of the Roanoke River Blueway is facilitated by the Roanoke River Blueway Committee of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC).

Impaired Streams



Lakes, Ponds & Wetlands

There are over 600 acres of surface water including ponds, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands in Roanoke County. This does not include more than 600 acres of Carvins Cove Reservoir located on the Roanoke County and Botetourt County boundary. A map of surface water bodies and wetlands can be viewed on the map on page 4-20.

Carvins Cove Natural Reserve is one of the largest municipal parks in the United States and offers outdoor recreation opportunities including boating, fishing, and hiking. It is approximately 12,700 acres with 11,363 acres that are protected by the largest conservation easement in Virginia's history. The reservoir and land immediately surrounding the reservoir are owned by the Western Virginia Water Authority, while the City of Roanoke owns the land above the 1,200 foot contour line. In addition to receiving water from the watershed, the reservoir is fed from two underground tunnels that carry overflow from Tinker and Catawba Creeks. This surface water source stores 6.4-billion gallons of water when it is full.

Spring Hollow Reservoir is located in western Roanoke County. The water stored in the Spring Hollow Reservoir comes from the Roanoke River and is pumped into this 3.2-billion gallon side-stream storage reservoir. The Western Virginia

Water Quality 2020 Annual Report stated that total Coliform and E.coli bacteria were not detected at Spring Hollow Reservoir. Water treated at the Spring Hollow Treatment Facility meets all state and federal monitoring and reporting requirements.

There are over 127 acres of wetlands in Roanoke County, with 44% classified as emergent wetland and 56% classified as forest/shrub wetland.

Groundwater

Groundwater is water that exists underground in saturated zones beneath the land surface. The upper surface of the saturated zone is called the water table. All water that is not located on the surface (lakes, rivers, streams, etc.) is considered groundwater and is an equally important fresh water source for the ecosystem.

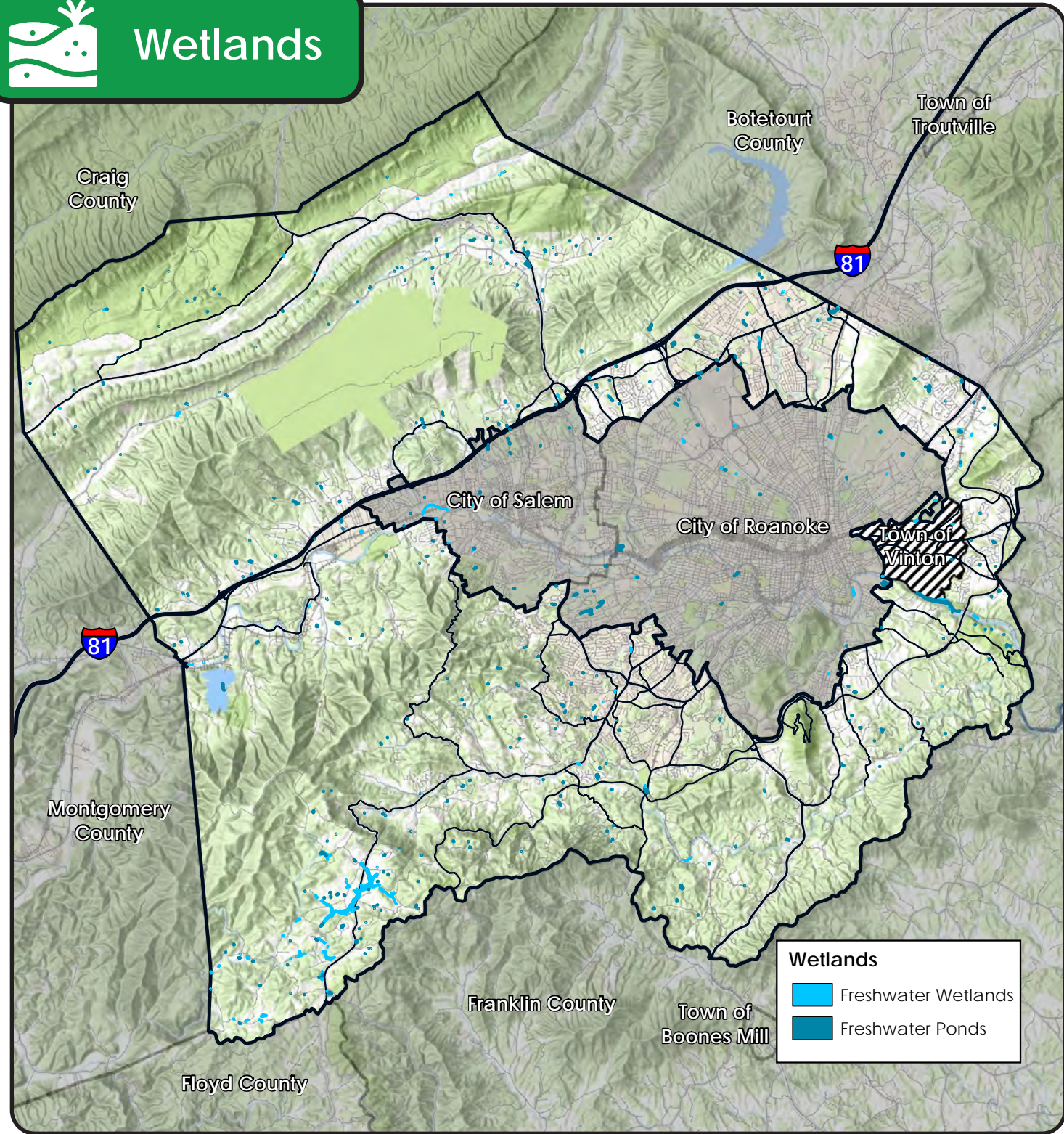
While most drinking water comes from reservoirs, residents in parts of the County without public water use wells to access groundwater. The Western Virginia Water Authority maintains over 70 wells in Roanoke County. However, some of the wells are inactive while many serve communities that are farther away from the main distribution system. The wells that are inactive offer an additional supply of water if needed.



Niagra Dam near a Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge



Wetlands



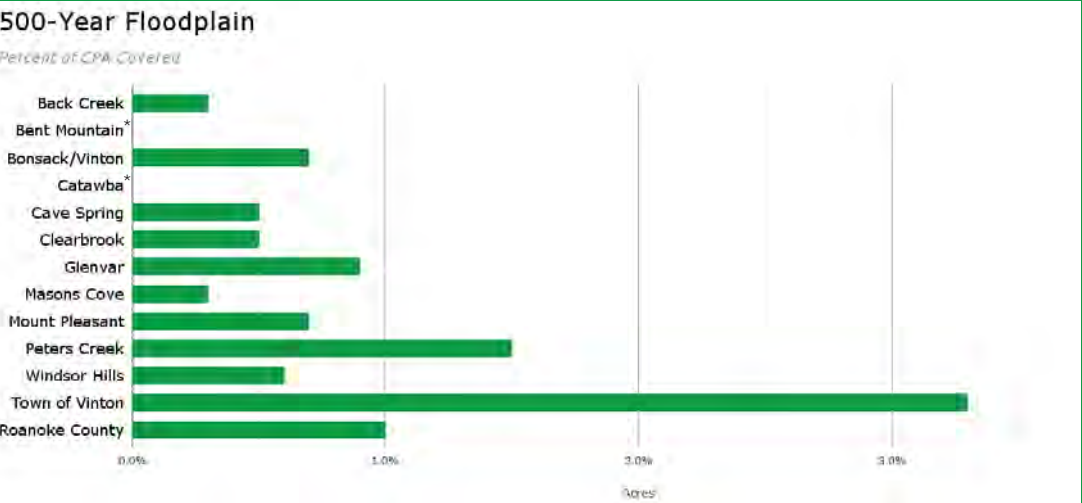
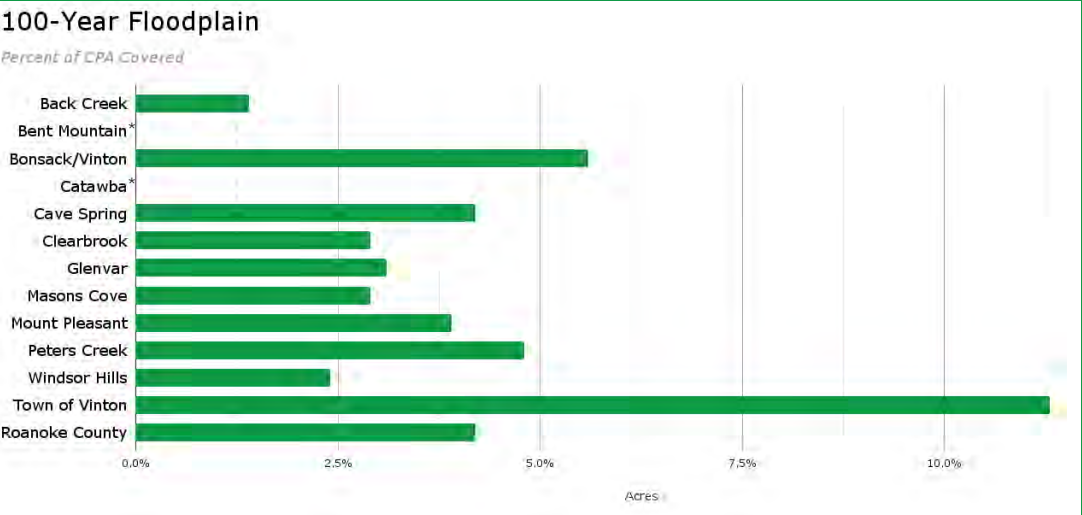
Floodplains

A majority of the County has been mapped to show floodplains, with the exception of the Bent Mountain and Catawba Community Planning Areas. There are approximately 1,910 acres designated and mapped as floodway, 2,274 acres

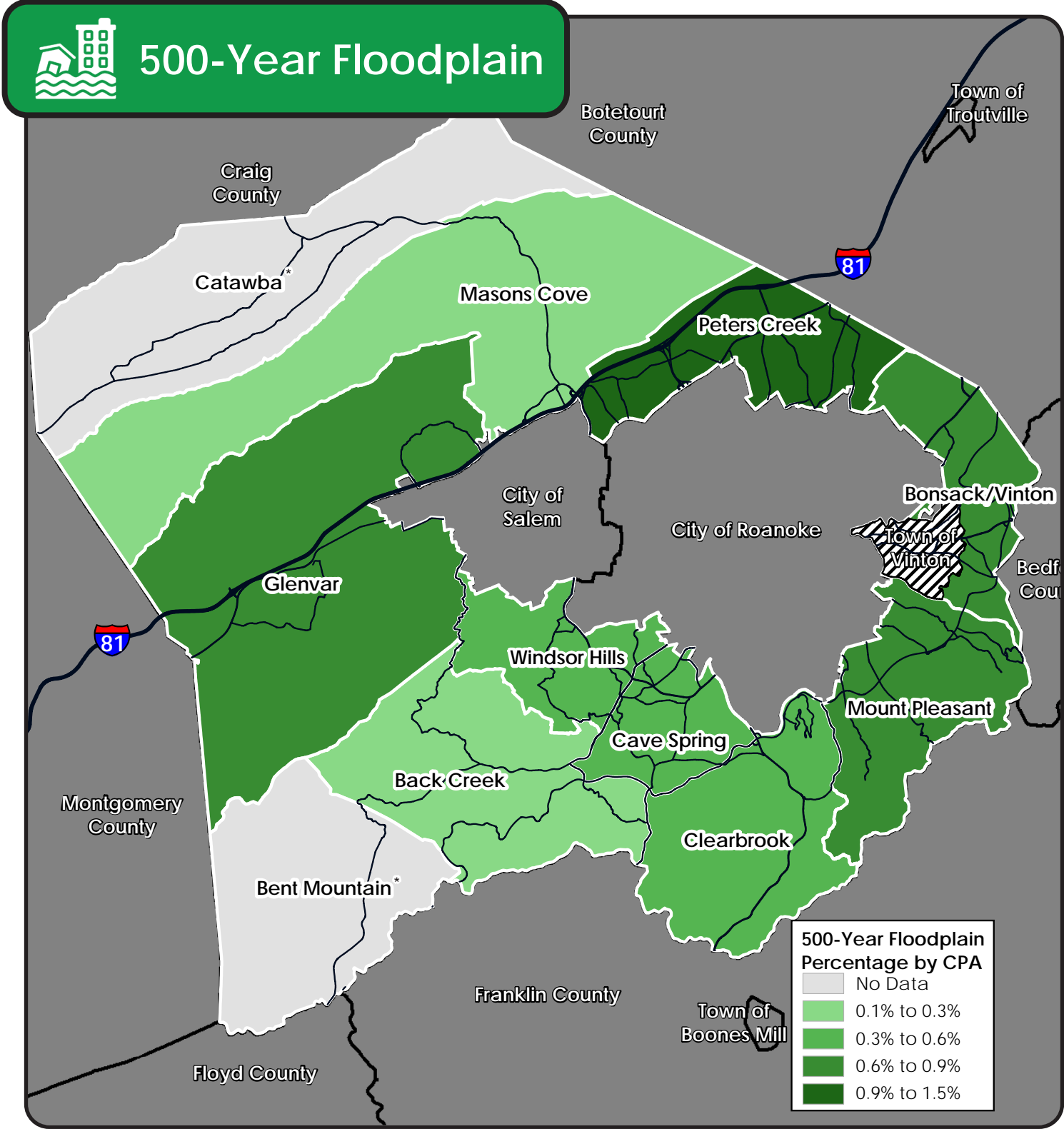
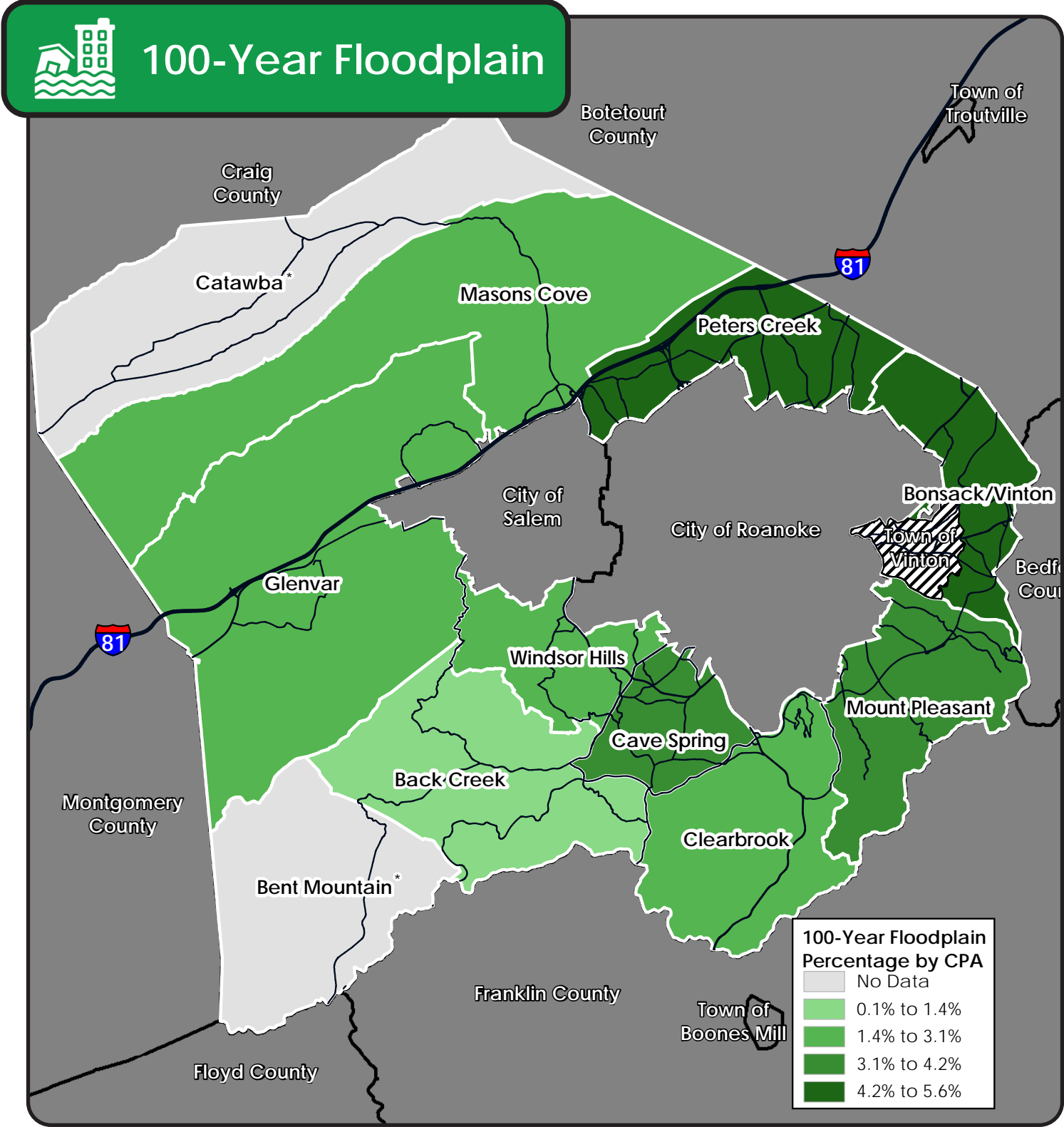
of 100-year floodplain, and 848 acres of 500-year floodplain. The following charts and maps show the percentage of floodplain per Community Planning Area in Roanoke County.

Floodplains


There are approximately 1,910 acres designated as floodway, 2,274 acres of 100-year floodplain, and 848 acres of 500-year floodplain. The following graphs show the percentage of floodplain per Community Planning Area in Roanoke County.



*The Bent Mountain and Catawba CPA Floodplains have not been mapped.



4.4 Air Resources

 Air resources relates to climate, weather patterns, wind, and air quality which measures particulate matter in the air. Roanoke County is attractive due to its healthy, clean air and is known for its distinct seasons. It is classified as a humid, subtropical climate.

Climate

Since the flow of air over Virginia is predominantly from west to east, the continental influence is much greater than the ocean or marine influence. Therefore, the state experiences a fairly large variation in temperature from winter to summer.

Meteorological data is used to determine climate over time and it is collected daily at various locations around the County with the most prominent at the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. According to data recorded since 2000, summers are warm and humid, the winters are very cold and snowy, and it is partly cloudy year round. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 29°F to 87°F and is rarely below 16°F or above 94°F.

The hot season lasts for three months, from mid-June to mid-September, with an average daily high temperature above 78°F. The hottest month of the year (recorded at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport) is July, with an average high of 86°F and low of 68°F. The cold season also lasts for three months, from the beginning of December to the beginning of March, with an average daily high temperature below 54°F. The coldest month of the year (recorded at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport) is January, with an average low of 30°F and high of 46°F.

The clearer part of the year recorded at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport begins around mid-July and lasts for nearly four months, ending around mid-November. The cloudier part of the year begins around mid-November and lasts for eight months, ending around mid-July. The cloudiest month of the year (recorded at

Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport) is January, which on average is overcast or mostly cloudy over half of the time. September is the clearest month of the year on average.

Humidity comfort level is based on the dew point, with lower dew points feeling drier and higher dew points feeling more humid and sticky. Unlike temperature, which typically varies significantly between night and day, dew point tends to change more slowly and seasonally, so while the temperature may drop at night, a muggy day is typically followed by a muggy night. The muggier period of the year lasts for nearly four months, from May to September. The month with the muggiest days is July, with approximately 17 days that are classified as highly humid. The least muggy days of the year are within the month of February, when muggy conditions are extremely rare.

To show precipitation variation within the months and not just the monthly totals, rainfall accumulation is collected over a sliding 31-day period centered on each day of the year. Roanoke County experiences some seasonal variation in monthly rainfall due to its leeward position in relation to the Appalachian Mountains, with a wet day considered to be one with at least 0.04 inches of precipitation. The wet season lasts approximately five months, from the end of March to the end of August, with a greater than 31% chance of a given day being a wet day. The month with the wettest days in Roanoke County is July, with an average of 13 days with at least 0.04 inches of precipitation. The drier season lasts the remaining seven months, from the end of August to the end of March. The month with the fewest wet days is October, with an average of six days with at least 0.04 inches of precipitation. The month of May has the highest average rainfall, with an average of 3.5 inches. The month with the least rain is February, with an average rainfall of less than two inches.

The snowy period of the year lasts for three months, from the beginning of December to early March, with a sliding 31-day snowfall of at least one inch

during this time. The month with the most snow recorded at the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport is February, with an average snowfall of five inches. However, this average has decreased drastically in recent years. The snowless period of the year lasts for eight months, from the end of March to the end of November.

Air Quality

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, whose regional office is located in Salem near exit 141 off of Interstate 81, monitors particulate matter in various locations throughout Southwest Virginia in accordance with adopted emission standards. Roanoke hosts an air quality monitoring station for ozone at East Vinton Elementary School and an additional station is located at Salem High School. Based on historical data reported by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality in the Virginia Ambient Air Monitoring 2020 Annual Report, Roanoke County had no days in which ozone levels exceeded the established standard for ozone. As of 2022, historical data indicates that air quality has remained within established standards and is considered good.

Wind

The wind experienced at any given location is highly dependent on local topography and other factors, and instantaneous wind speed and direction vary more widely than hourly averages. The average hourly wind speed at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport experiences mild seasonal variation over the course of the year.

The windier part of the year lasts for nearly 23 weeks, from mid-November to the beginning of May, with average wind speeds of more than 4.4 miles per hour. The windiest month of the year is February, with an average hourly wind speed of 5.6 miles per hour. The calmest month of the year is August, with an average hourly wind speed ranging from three to four miles per hour.

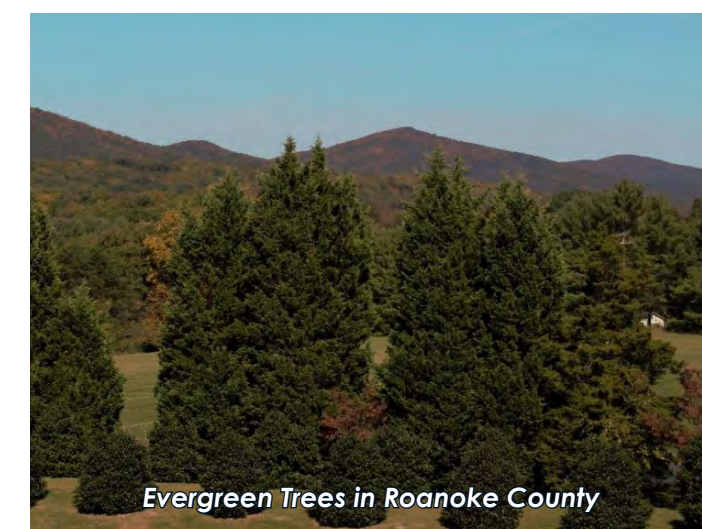
4.5 Scenic Resources



The mountainsides and ridgetops that surround Roanoke County have always served as a source of great beauty, community pride, and cultural heritage to those who call this area home. The mountains that form the bowl around the Valley below make this area unique - very few places can claim the scenic beauty of this region.

The mountains are not only beautiful to look at, but they also provide a valuable tool in economic development whether it be courting a new industrial prospect, being selected as the site of a major sports event, or drawing in outdoor enthusiasts and tourists from around the region and the world.

The Roanoke Valley is able to offer something unique and different from anywhere else and that can be attributed to the scenic beauty of the region - the mountains, the forests, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, and so many more incredible resources. As Roanoke County grows and developable land is used, it becomes increasingly important to implement strategies to protect these mountains, viewsheds, and unique ecosystems.



Evergreen Trees in Roanoke County

4.6 Cultural Resources



Settlement began in Roanoke County in the mid-18th century, with the first immigration into the Great Valley of Virginia. The earliest settlers came south along the Great Wagon Road, through the Shenandoah Valley and into the Roanoke River Valley. By 1838, Roanoke County was established, with the growing town of Salem as its county seat. In 1852, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad completed tracks through Salem to Bristol improving access to other markets. By the 1880's, Roanoke had become a major transportation hub for several railroads, particularly when Norfolk and Western Railroad established Roanoke as the location of its major headquarters for its Virginia operations. The Roanoke area is focal in the regional network of historic and resource preservation in southwest Virginia.

Historic Resources

The Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey was conducted in 1992 and inventoried nearly 400 historic structures in Roanoke County. More than 80% of the structures were single-family dwellings and more than 60% were constructed in the early 1900's with another 35% built in the



Bellvue Hotel and Office

mid-to-late nineteenth century. More than 60% of the structures were wood frame with 68% located in rural or rural neighborhood settings.

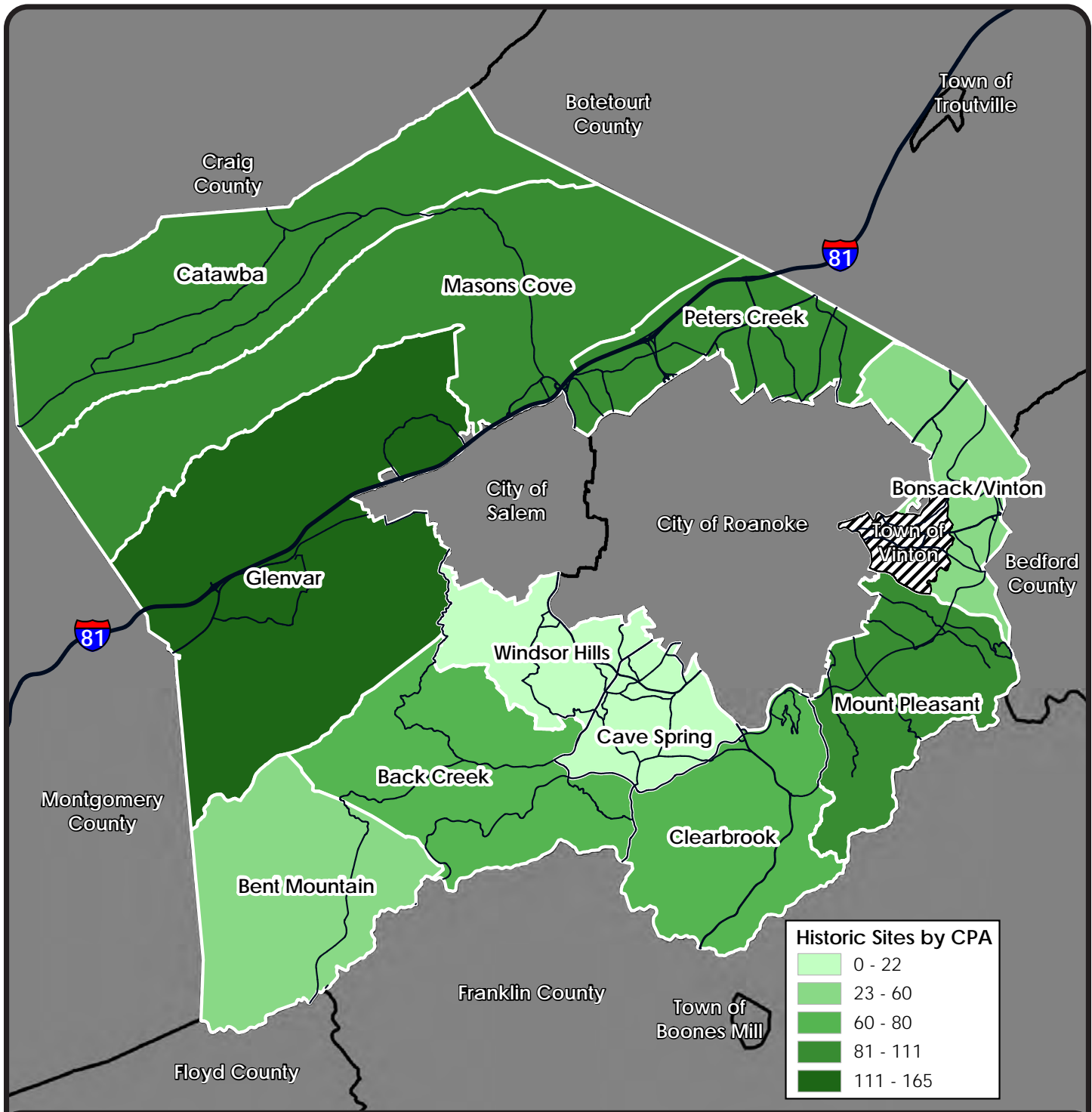
According to the survey conducted in 1992, there are approximately 871 historic sites. These sites include 713 houses/cottages, 42 farms, 25 churches, 24 university structures, 15 stores, 12 schools, and 11 barns. The remaining 31 structures include bridges, mills, taverns, and a hospital. A map showing the amount of historic sites surveyed in each Community Planning Area is shown on page 4-27.

This survey identified 384 early 20th century properties throughout the county, including largely bungalows, foursquare, and other vernacular dwellings. These buildings were identified on the U.S.G.S. Quad maps and their building types noted. Additional survey efforts could record these buildings at the reconnaissance level. Pages 4-28 and 4-29 provide charts showing how many acres of land in the County contain historic sites with various historic building types, materials, construction periods, degrees of change, and settings.

Farm buildings are one of the most endangered building types in the County with the rapid development occurring in Roanoke County and the abandonment of its traditional agricultural base. This particular survey effort documented all



Historic Cabin Structure

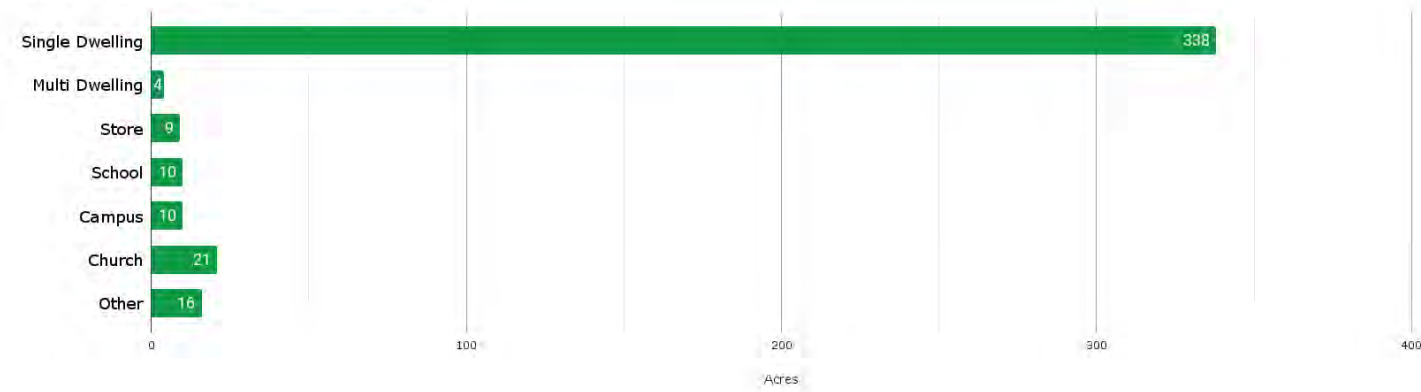


Historic Sites

A majority of historic sites are located in the northwestern part of Roanoke County in the Catawba, Glenvar, and Makers Cove CPAs

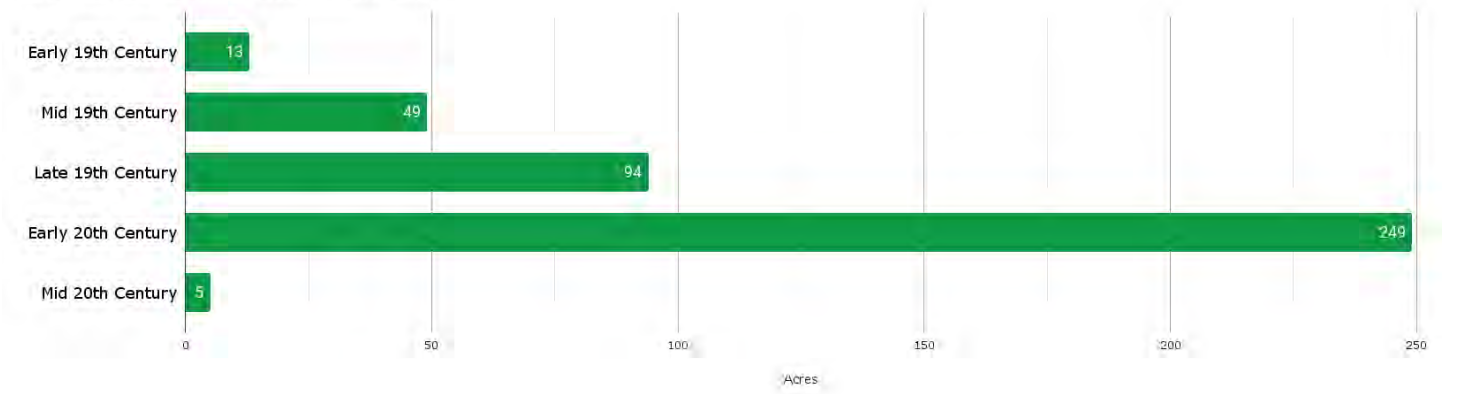
Historic Building Types

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



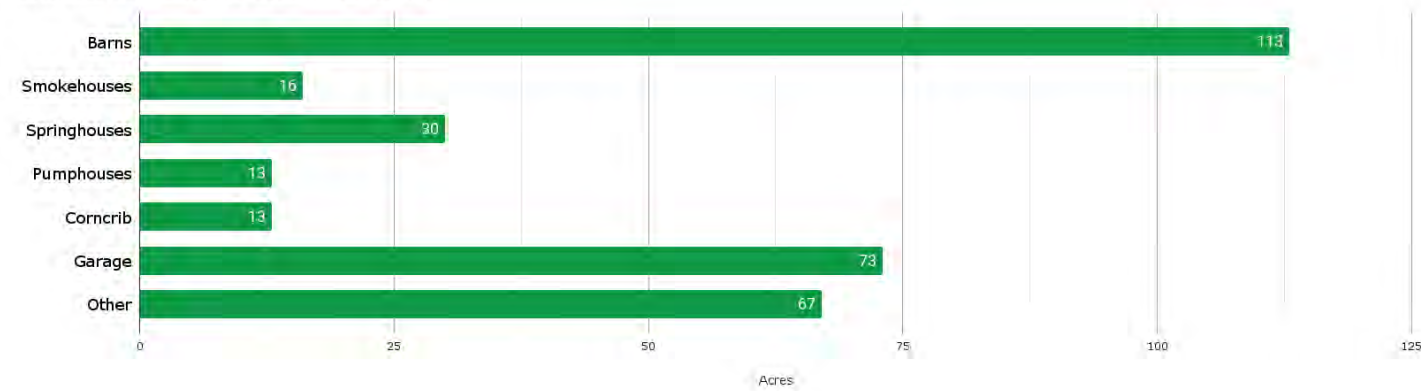
Period of Construction of Historic Buildings

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



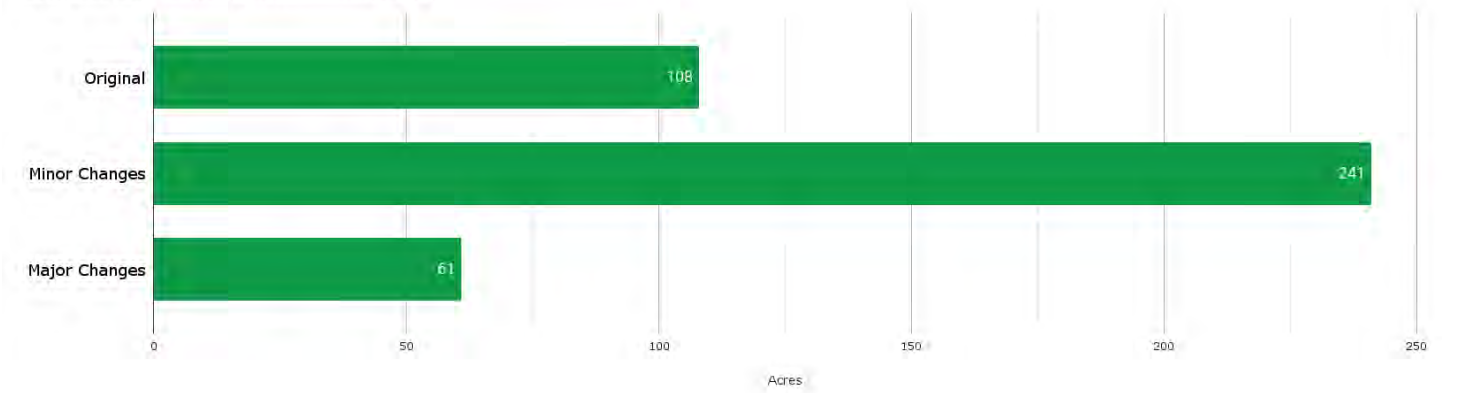
Historic Outbuilding Types

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



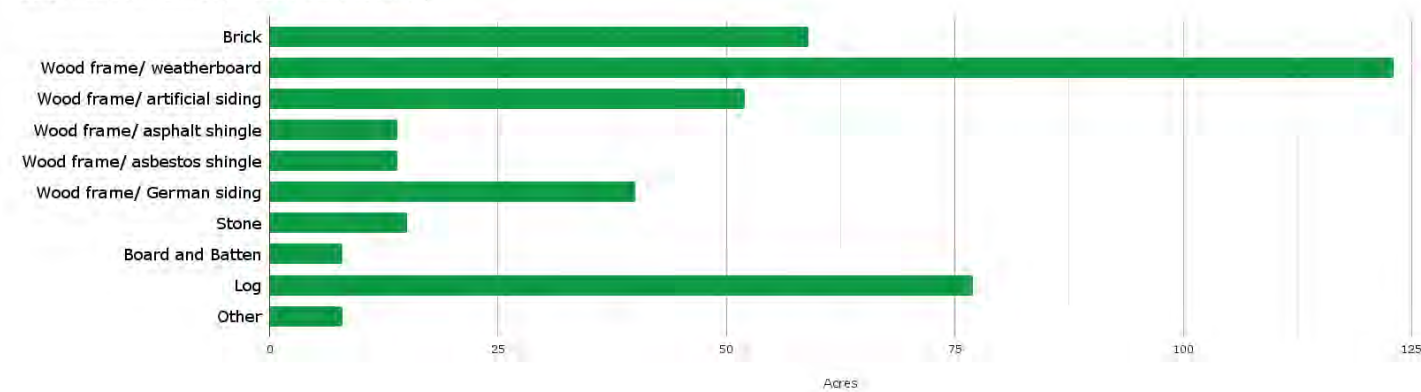
Degree of Change

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



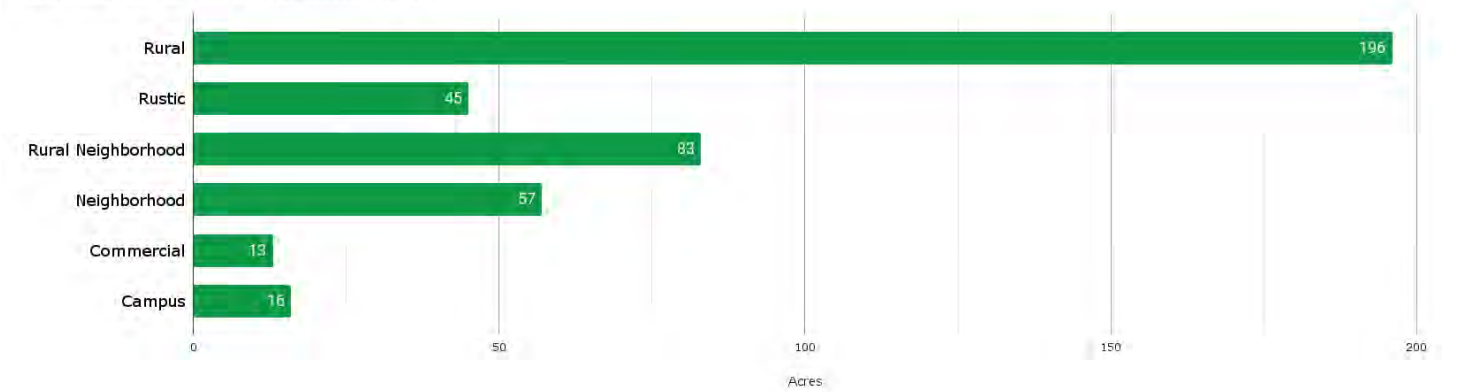
Building Materials of Historic Building

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



Settings of Historic Structures

1992 Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey



standing agricultural buildings within the survey area. More time should now be devoted to surveying these resources at a more intensive level. Many of the buildings recorded in the survey are currently suffering from neglect and may soon be gone. Additional survey efforts should document historic structures, such as 19th century log houses to help preserve the heritage of Roanoke County. These resources might also include stores, schools, or churches, some of the most common building types recorded in the survey. These efforts can also lead to National Register nominations, which is one way to identify, recognize, and nominate a variety of building types in the County.

An important starting point in the protection of the historic resources in the county is making nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for individual properties and for historic districts. Once the importance of the structures is recognized, the owner and local and state governments have the authority to permanently protect these resources. Furthermore, the government is required to investigate alternatives if any federal or state funded project will have an adverse impact on a property listed on the National Register. Once historic sites have been identified through the survey, it is very beneficial to study the impact of the present zoning on these

properties. The zoning ideally should promote the retention of the property and not allow categories that would encourage destruction of the integrity of the historic property. The provisions of the zoning classification in a historic district should assure that any new construction site has similar lot size, building height, and building size relative to the existing historic properties in the district.

There are currently twelve (12) Registered Historic Places in Roanoke County on the National and State Register:

- **Anderson-Doosing Farm:** The Anderson-Doosing Farm is a working farm and residence in the Catawba Valley that includes 10 contributing buildings. The farm was originally deeded at 675 acres in 1789, but has been split into smaller parcels as it changed ownership over the years. The first farm structures on the property constructed in 1810 by Joseph Anderson, and subsequent owners Jacob Gish and John Doosing constructed additional buildings over the next fifty years. This farm was added to the National Register in 2009 for meeting the criteria of architectural significance.
- **Black Horse Tavern/Bellevue Hotel and Office:** The property includes the 1782 Black Horse Tavern, the 1854 Greek-Revival style Bellevue



Anderson-Doosing Farm

Hotel and the 1840 temple-fronted Bellevue Office. This property was added to the National Register in 2002 for meeting the criteria of architectural, educational, commercial and transportation significance.

- **Gish Mill:** Gish Mill is located along the south bank of Glade Creek in the Town of Vinton. The oldest portion of the building is a circa 1846 three-story brick structure. Gish Mill ceased operation in 1982, operating as a feed and seed store until closing in 2015. The property was added to the National Register in 2021.
- **Harshbarger House:** The Harshbarger House is one of the earliest documented homes built in the area with the original stone section of the house constructed in 1797 for Samuel Harshbarger. This house was added to the National Register in 1992 for meeting the criteria of architectural and ethnic heritage significance.
- **Hollins College Quadrangle:** The Hollins Quadrangle stands on the site of the former Botetourt Springs resort, which operated from 1820 – 1841. The school was founded in 1837 as the Roanoke Female Seminary, and then became a leading woman's college in 1846. The school's name was changed to Hollins in 1855 to honor Mr. and Mrs. John Hollins of Lynchburg, who paid for East Dormitory, the quadrangle's oldest building. The quadrangle was added to the National Register in 1974 for meeting the criteria of architectural and educational significance.



Harshbarger House

- **Johnsville Meetinghouse:** The Johnsville Meetinghouse is one of only two known meetinghouses to survive in its original form. The meetinghouse was added to the National Register in 1998 for meeting the criteria of ethnic heritage and religious significance.
- **Old Tombstone (Denton Cenotaph):** The Denton Cenotaph, nicknamed "Old Tombstone" was erected for nine-year-old Robert Denton after his death in 1805. This tombstone was added to the National Register in 1980 for meeting the criteria of art and funerary art significance.
- **Pleasant Grove:** Pleasant Grove was built on a mid-19th-century 1,150-acre plantation located on the Roanoke River. The collection



Hollins College Quadrangle

of buildings constitutes one of the most intact examples of historic domestic architecture in the region. This house was added to the National Register in 2003 for meeting the criteria of architectural and agricultural significance.

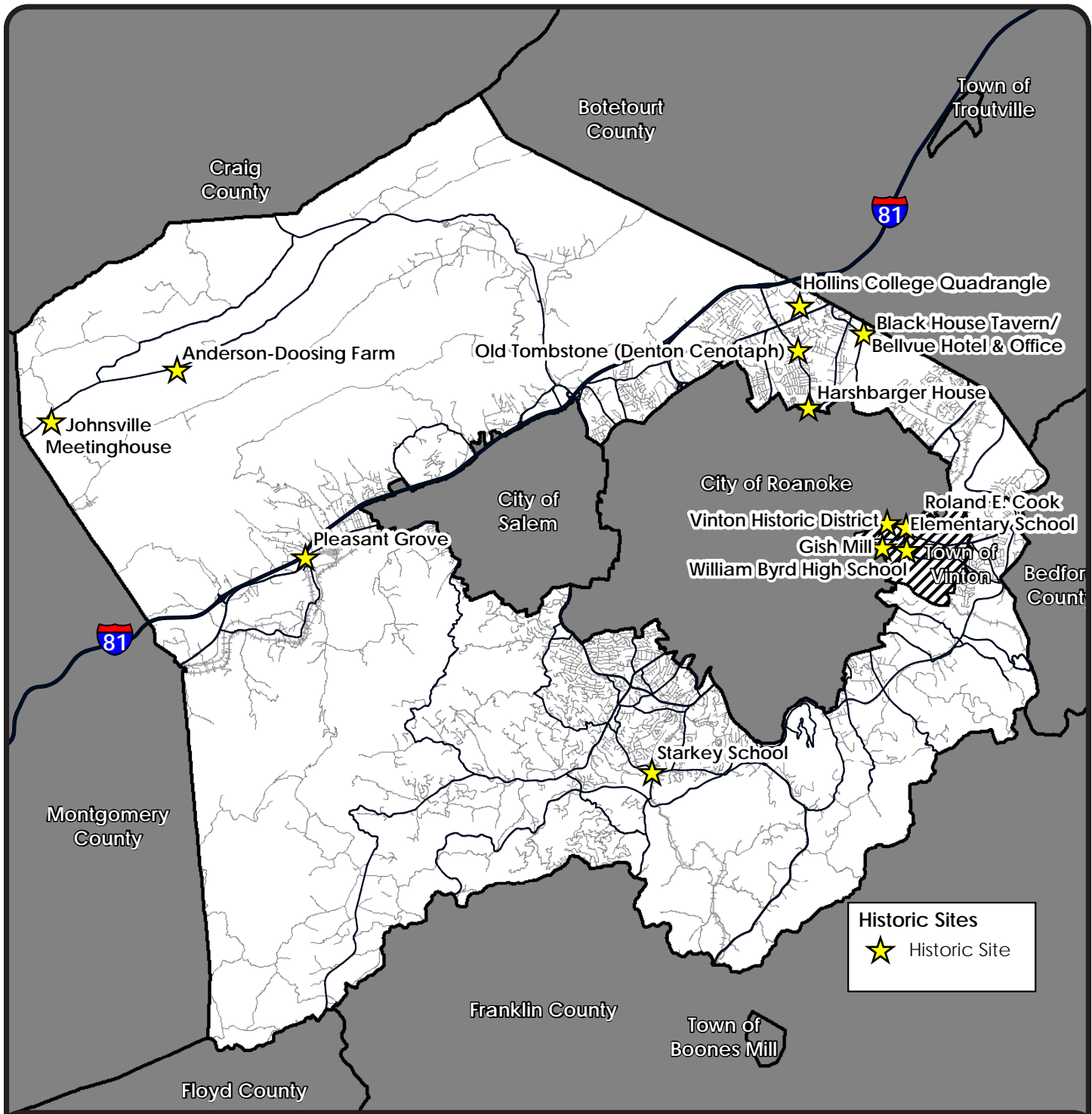
- Roland E. Cook Elementary School:** The Roland E. Cook Elementary School was built in 1915 and expanded in 1924. It is an example of a local adaptation of the Classical Revival style, which was popular for governmental, civic, and educational buildings in the early 20th century. The school was added to the National Register in 2016 for meeting the criteria of educational and architectural significance.
- Starkey School:** Starkey School, situated in the village of Starkey, served the small agricultural community for more than six decades. It began as a vernacular, two-room brick schoolhouse, constructed in 1915, prior to the consolidation of county schools in the 1920s. The school was added to the National Register in 2002.
- Vinton Downtown Historic District:** This district encompasses the commercial core of the Town of Vinton and includes 27 contributing buildings. The district, which features a collection of commercial and municipal buildings from the early to mid-20th century, typifies a rural community in Southwest Virginia that developed into a downtown business hub over the course of the 20th century, after the establishment of railway transportation. This Historic District was added to the National Register in March 2024 for meeting the criteria of commercial and architectural significance.
- William Byrd High School:** The main building of the William Byrd High School Historic District was built in 1933 in a Classical Revival-inspired style. The District consists of the main building, two annexes, secondary resources, and the associated parking and athletic field areas. This school was added to the National Register in 2017 for meeting the criteria of architectural, educational, and social history significance.

In addition, three (3) rural historic districts (RHD) have been proposed in the Bent Mountain Community Planning Area. These include the Coles-Terry Rural Historic District (submitted in 2019), Apple Orchard Rural Historic District (submitted in 2017), and Bent Mountain Rural Historic District (submitted in 2016). The Coles-Terry RHD and Bent Mountain Apple Orchard RHD were both deemed eligible historic districts in 2021, however, no further steps were taken by the submitter to pursue official listing as of January 2024. The Bent Mountain RHD was identified to secure federal permits for the Mountain Valley Pipeline by the applicants and reached the status of "potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places." However, this district did not go to the next level of investigation, where the Department of Historic Resources determines if it actually does meet the criteria for hypothetical listing on the National Register.

Lastly, one of the most significant cultural resources in Roanoke County is the Blue Ridge Parkway. This highly recognized resource is directly related to the culture and identity of Roanoke County and southwest Virginia. It was one of the first rural parkways to be conceived in America with nearly 24 miles of Blue Ridge Parkway within Roanoke County. Its original purpose was to link two national parks - the Shenandoah in Virginia to the north and the Great Smokey Mountains in North Carolina to the south - a distance of nearly 470 miles.

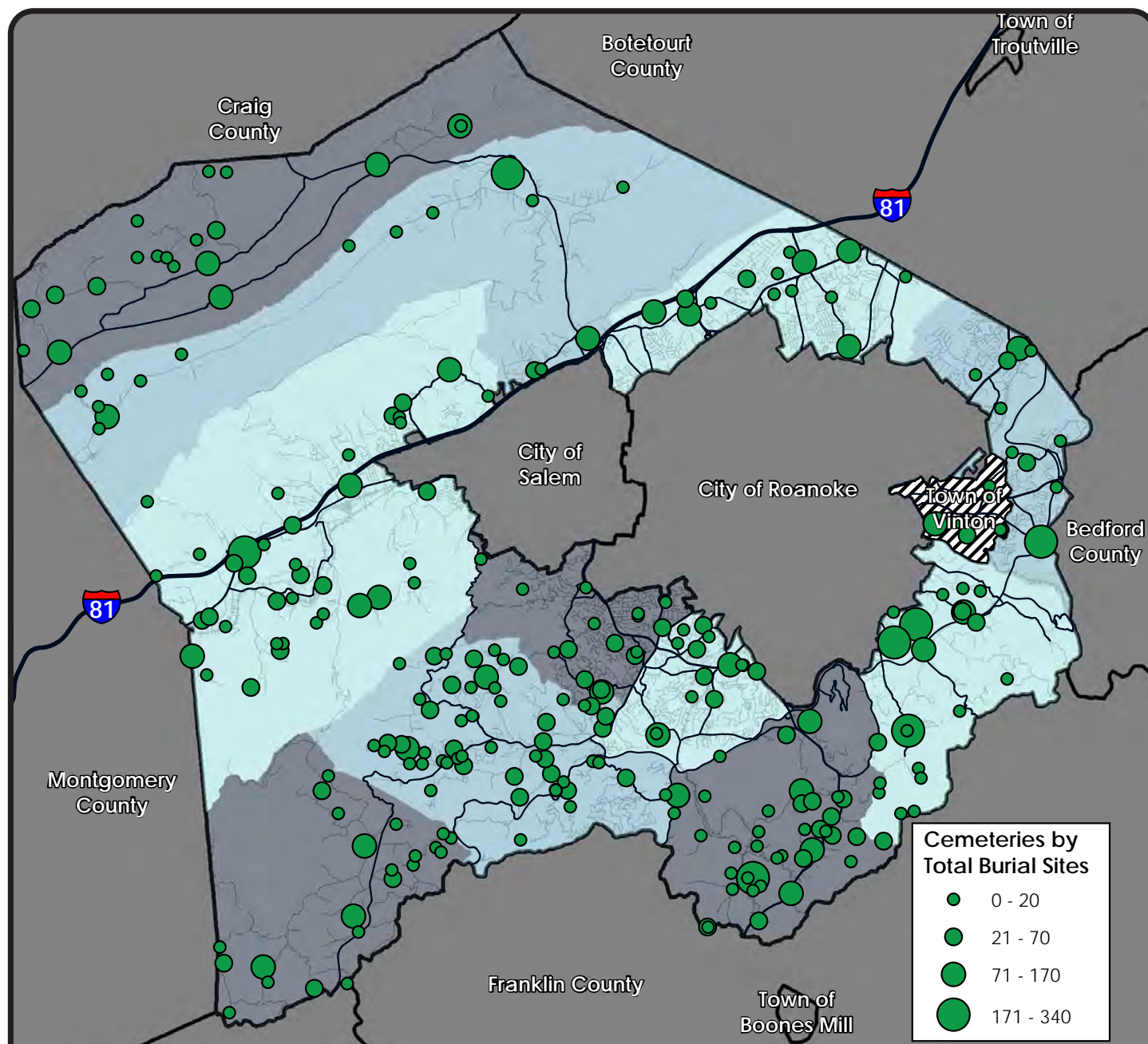
Cemeteries

At the time of the Historical Architecture Reconnaissance Survey, there were 273 private cemeteries surveyed in Roanoke County, which can be seen on the map on page 4-31. A majority of the cemeteries are located in the southern and southwestern portion of Roanoke County, particularly in the Clearbrook, Back Creek, and Bent Mountain Community Planning Areas. Some of the larger cemeteries with the most burial sites are located in the Mount Pleasant CPA.



Registered Sites

There are currently twelve (12) Registered Historic Places in Roanoke County on the National and State Registers.



Cemeteries

The cemetery locations are symbolized with circles with the circle size increasing based on the number of burial sites at that location. These range from 1 to 340.

