

Clinch River Days Festival

In-Person Event Summary Report



May 31, 2025 | Clinch River Days Festival Summary



Event Overview

The Clinch River Days Festival is an annual celebration held in St. Paul, Virginia at the Clinch River State Park. The event showcases the region's rich Appalachian heritage and the ecological significance of the Clinch River. The festival fosters awareness of the Clinch River's unique ecosystem and the need for its conservation through educational events such as the Mussel Walk and visits to Wetlands Estonsa.

On May 31, 2025, the Arcadis team represented the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan (VFPMP) at the Clinch River Days Festival by hosting an educational booth with information on the VFPMP development process and opportunities for members of the public to provide feedback on the plan.

Booth Engagement

The Arcadis team interacted with more than 70 members of the public at DCR's educational booth. Members of the Arcadis team shared information about DCR and the VFPMP and solicited feedback on the planning process through conversations with event attendees.

COMMON THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

- While some visitors were already familiar with DCR, most were unaware of the VFPMP or related initiatives.
- Most visitors showed strong interest in learning more about DCR's efforts and were provided with informational materials, including survey instructions and the project webpage link.
- Many attendees expressed appreciation for DCR's presence at the event and the opportunity to engage directly with staff and listen to community members.
- Nearly all visitors shared personal stories or experiences tied to recent major flood events in the region.
- Several visitors reported that flooding had impacted their homes, personal property, or ability to leave their neighborhoods due to washed-out roads or downed trees.
- Areas frequently mentioned included St. Paul, Wise, Dante, Bristol, Cleveland, Abingdon, Saltville, and communities along the Clinch and North Fork Rivers.
- A member of the St. Paul Fire and Rescue squad shared experiences from the 2021 flash flooding in Hurley (Buchanan County), where sudden rainfall led to landslides, home damage, and emergency rescues.
- Other residents recalled flooding incidents in Cleveland, Saltville, Dickenson County, Russell County, and Martin City, describing both the physical and emotional toll on their communities.

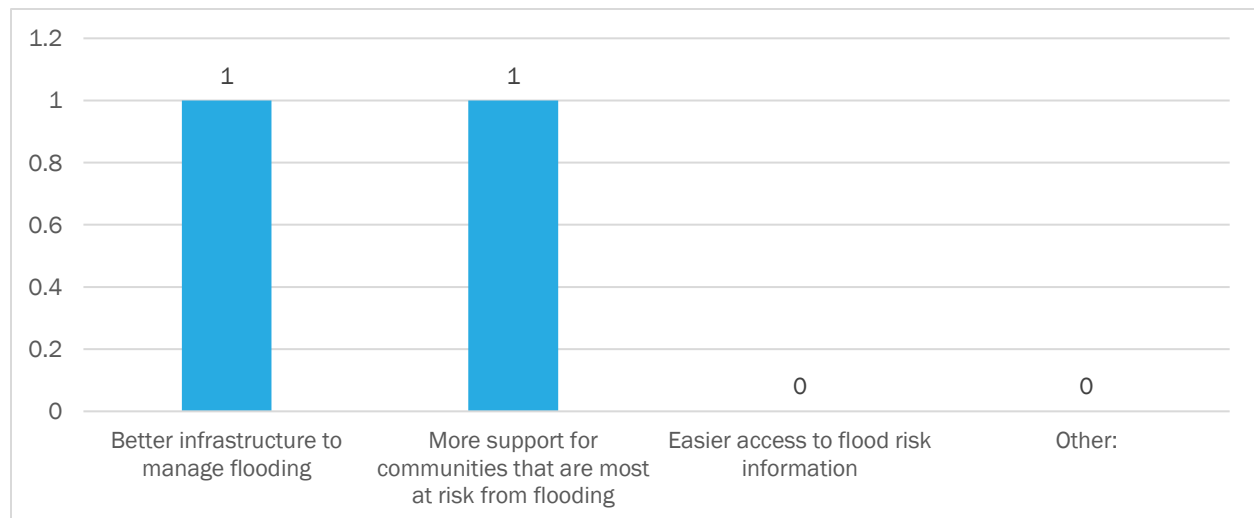
- Many visitors noted that even if their homes were spared, fallen trees and damage to roadways left them stranded and unable to travel for work or emergencies.
- One resident from Dante, Virginia recalled being unable to leave home due to flooding and emphasized how crucial community-led response efforts, such as sharing supplies and critical information, were to recovery.
- Visitors who shared personal flooding stories were introduced to the Flood Story App, which was well-received and recognized as a helpful tool for documenting local impacts.
- Most attendees who had experienced flooding connected the relevance of DCR's work to their lived experiences and saw value in these efforts.
- One visitor emphasized the importance of agencies visiting flood-affected areas in person to fully understand the extent of the damage and build trust with residents.
- Children and adults alike who visited the booth actively participated in exploring DCR's floodplain model, which provided a hands-on educational tool to improve the understanding of flood impacts.
- Both children and adults enjoyed the giveaway items, particularly the compass whistles, magnifying glasses, and wildflower seed paper.

SURVEY COLLECTION

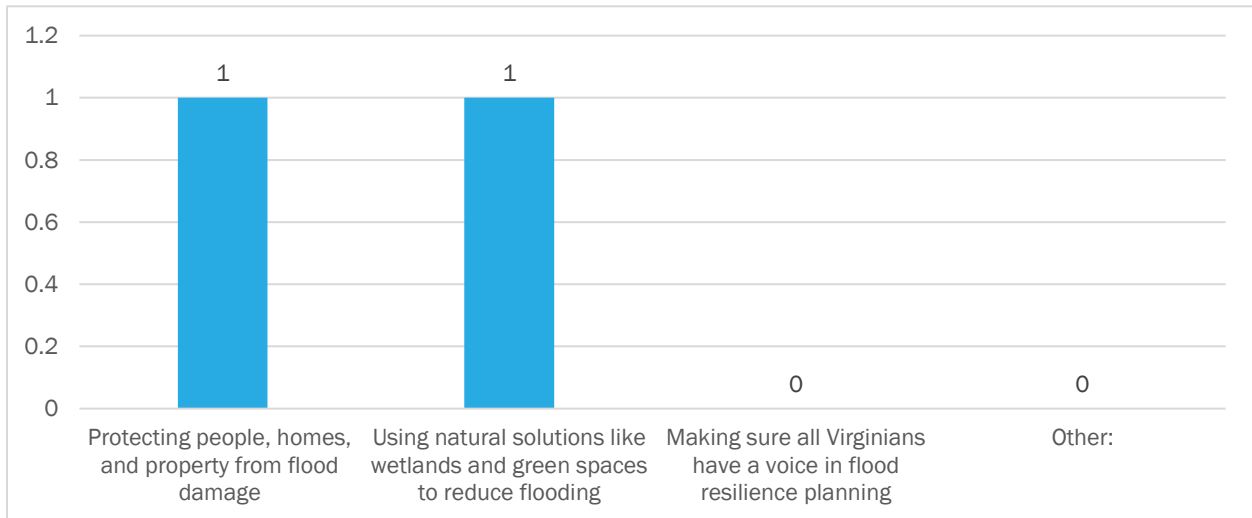
The Arcadis team collected 2 in-person surveys from event attendees. Visitors were asked to fill out the paper survey at the booth, and DCR representatives assisted when needed. Visitors were also directed to the QR code to take the online survey.

The in-person surveys prompted responses to the questions displayed in the graphs below. Graphs represent survey responses collected during the Clinch River Days event.

What do you believe are the greatest flood resilience needs in the Commonwealth?



What is your greatest priority to advance flood resilience needs in the Commonwealth?



General Notes

- The Clinch River Festival drew a diverse age range of attendees, including older adults, young adults, teenagers, and children.
- The floodplain model demonstration was particularly effective in engaging children and sparking meaningful conversations among families about flooding and community resilience.
- There was a general lack of awareness among visitors regarding DCR's broader flood resilience planning efforts. However, after hearing more about the VFPMP and other initiatives, visitors noted the value of the ORP's efforts.
- Most attendees were already aware of the increasing frequency and severity of rainfall and riverine flooding in recent years. Many had firsthand experience with flood impacts or were familiar with neighboring communities that had been affected. There was a strong recognition of the importance of community-based resilience and support systems in responding to these challenges.