

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

Timothy M. Kaine  
Governor

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**Governor Kaine Announces Completion of Norfolk Southern's Gift  
of High Bridge  
– Rail line to become focus of High Bridge Trail State Park –**

**APPOMATTOX** – Governor Timothy M. Kaine today announced that Norfolk Southern’s donation of a 31-mile abandoned rail line in Southside Virginia has been completed, bringing the rail line running through Nottoway, Cumberland and Prince Edward counties a giant step closer to becoming the new High Bridge Trail State Park. The bridge is 2,400 feet long and towers 160 feet above the Appomattox River, and was the site of one of the last battles of the Civil War. The rail-trail ultimately will connect Pamplin to Burkeville, and run through Prospect, Farmville and Rice.

“High Bridge will be the centerpiece of this new state park, and Norfolk Southern’s generous donation of this unused rail line has been highly anticipated and is greatly appreciated,” Governor Kaine said. “People in Burkeville, Farmville, Rice, Pamplin City and other communities are excited to see this historic and scenic resource protected. Thanks to Norfolk Southern, it also will serve as a ‘must see’ attraction, drawing visitors to this area, and enhancing the health of the region’s environment, economy, and people.”

With the new deed in hand, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), managers of the Virginia State Park system, will begin to erect gates and signs at rail line access points to help control unauthorized use. Ultimately, the new rail-trail state park will be opened for a number of non-motorized activities – hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. Once decking and side rails are added, visitors will for the first time have access to the bridge, from which they would command a unique view of land where Union and Confederate soldiers skirmished on April 6 and 7, 1865.

The clash at High Bridge took place soon after the battle at Sailor's Creek, which also is a namesake state park managed by DCR. Both encounters took place as Robert E. Lee's army retreated from Petersburg after a siege that lasted more than nine months. Because rebel forces failed to destroy High Bridge, federal forces were able to pursue them through Farmville to ultimate surrender two days later in Appomattox.

“While we are very excited about this donation, there is much work that needs to be done before this rail line becomes High Bridge Trail State Park,” said DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon.

“Thanks to the enthusiastic support of the communities along the trail, we have a master plan developed for the trail. But we now need to start the process of turning an abandoned rail line into a safe, well-managed state park.”

DCR has received several transportation grants and a \$1 million appropriation for planning, securing, and initial development of the park property. Additional development and operational monies, plus staff, must be secured before an opening date can be determined.

For more information on the High Bridge Trail State Park project, go to the DCR website at [www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov), click on “Recreational Planning,” then “High Bridge Progress Online.”

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