

March 10, 2024

James River Access at Balcony Falls

The Balcony Falls Project goal is to provide better access to the James River from Rt. 501 through the GW & TJ National Forest and over the CSX railroad for boaters of all types. Better access should increase river and forest use, reduce parking and access conflicts with the Appalachian Trail users and others, and eliminate 4 extralegal public crossings of the railroad tracks.

Here's the most current update of the Balcony Falls river access project:

- FORVA has obtained approval of a VDOT permit by waiver for a new access road off Rt 501.
- The Forest Service has looked at the FORVA plans and has said it will require a political jurisdiction to be the responsible party for the project. FORVA is working on this and our first goal is to get Amherst County to be our partner.
- CSX has indicated it is supportive of a pedestrian bridge and not a tunnel. Bridge maintenance would be the responsibility of the county, whereas tunnel maintenance would be the responsibility of the railroad.

FORVA is interested in Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) funding. We think it is an excellent match with their mission and goals as we understand them.

Once we get a jurisdiction to be our partner, we will then be reaching out to the FLAP program for funding.

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