



Agenda — Tuesday, September 8

12:30 – 4:30pm | AdventureWorks Experiences – advanced registration required

New River Tubing

Join Radford University Outdoors for a fun day floating on the New River! Relax, enjoy the scenic views, and spend time with friends as we tube down one of Southwest Virginia's most iconic waterways. Transportation, tubes, and safety equipment are provided. No experience necessary!

Christiansburg Huckleberry Park: Investing in Outdoor Recreation to Drive Tourism & Community Growth

Discover how strategic investments in outdoor recreation can strengthen communities, enhance quality of life, and serve as a catalyst for tourism and economic development. This guided walking tour of Christiansburg Huckleberry Park will explore one of Southwest Virginia's premier outdoor recreation destinations and the intentional planning behind its development.

Participants will learn how the Town of Christiansburg leveraged outdoor infrastructure to create a vibrant, multi-use community asset that welcomes residents and visitors alike. From the all-inclusive playground and zero-depth splash pad to tournament-quality athletic fields, dog parks, open green space, and direct connection to the Huckleberry Trail, the park demonstrates how thoughtful recreation investments can support placemaking, attract visitors, encourage healthy lifestyles, and generate economic activity.

The excursion will begin with a welcome from Samantha Livesay (Radford University alumna, Class of 2012), Executive Director of Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery County Regional Tourism, followed by a guided tour led by Brad Epperley (Radford University alumnus, Class of 1997), Director of Christiansburg Parks & Recreation.



Agenda — Tuesday, September 8 - continued

Mill Creek Waterfalls and What-fors?

Participants will hike together to Mill Creek Falls, a series of waterfalls that cascade through the mountains, off of the Appalachian Trail and just outside of downtown Narrows. There are multiple hikes and sections to enjoy, but from the parking lot to the falls is ~1.4 miles one way. The out and back hike will take about 1.5 hours. Participants will be joined by community volunteers who build and maintain the trails, support the park through fundraising and destination events, and local tourism stakeholders.

Claytor Lake History Boat Ride

Participants will tour Claytor Lake, hear the history of how the lake was formed, and gain insight on the impact of Claytor Lake on Pulaski County. They will tour the areas of Claytor Lake Dam, Dublin Hollow, Crescent Falls, Woolwine Springs, Godbey's Cliffs, The Poor Farm and Howe House.

Le Tour de Roanoke – Greenway Edition

Join Roanoke Parks and Recreation for a progressive lunch tour of the Roanoke River Greenway. The Roanoke region is home to over 400 miles of paved and natural surface trails and counting. The greenway provides not only connections to exercise, nature, neighbors and employment but also entertainment and local food!

The journey starts at a local bike shop along the greenway and progress through appetizers and entrees and end the afternoon with a sweet treat as participants get a feel for the greenway and river corridor and its neighborhood connections!



Agenda — Tuesday, September 8 - continued

Buffalo Mountain Ziplines Adventure

Experience Floyd County from a new perspective with an aerial tour at Buffalo Mountain Ziplines. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Buffalo Mountain Ziplines offers participants the opportunity to experience one of the region's outdoor recreation assets while taking in scenic mountain views and forest landscapes. This guided zipline adventure will provide insight into how outdoor recreation attractions contribute to tourism, support local businesses, and enhance quality of life in rural communities. Participants will enjoy a memorable outdoor experience while learning about the role adventure tourism plays in the regional economy.

5:30-7:30PM | AdventureWorks Welcome Reception

Selu Conservancy, Radford University
Casual Attire

6:00PM | Welcome Remarks – President Danilowicz, Radford University

Following the day's excursions and experiences, join fellow attendees at Selu Conservancy for the official kickoff of **AdventureWorks: An Outdoor Economy Summit**.

This casual evening reception provides an opportunity to connect with leaders from outdoor recreation, tourism, economic development, higher education, business, government, and community organizations from across Virginia and the region. Continue conversations sparked during the day's experiences, exchange ideas, and build relationships that support collaboration and strengthen the outdoor economy.

Enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages in one of Radford University's most unique natural settings while networking with professionals who are shaping the future of their communities and organizations.



AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT

Agenda — Tuesday, September 8 – continued

Reception Highlights

- Informal networking across sectors
- Heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages
- Opportunities to connect with regional and statewide leaders
- Conversations inspired by the day's excursion experiences
- A relaxed outdoor setting designed for collaboration and relationship building

Transportation Information:

Parking at Selu is limited. Complimentary shuttle service will be available for all attendees.



Agenda — Wednesday, September 9

8:00 | Breakfast, Networking & Registration

8:45 AM | Welcome & Open Remarks

- Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D., President of Radford University
 - Nichole Hair, Director of Economic Development & Community Engagement, Radford University
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9:00AM | Setting the Stage: The State of the Outdoor Economy

Kick off AdventureWorks with a fast-paced conversation on the forces shaping Virginia's outdoor economy. From rising tourism demand and outdoor recreation investments to statewide priorities and regional opportunities, this session explores where momentum is building, what challenges lie ahead, and how communities, businesses, and institutions can position themselves to lead in one of Virginia's most dynamic economic sectors.

Moderator: Angela Joyner, Ph.D., Vice President, Economic Development & Corporate Education, Radford University

Panelists:

Cassidy Rasnick, Chief Operating Officer, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

Maribel Castaneda, Deputy Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Commonwealth of Virginia

Katie Conner, Director of Destination Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation

Katie Boswell, Executive Director, Onward New River Valley





AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT

Agenda — Wednesday, September 9 - continued

10:00AM | Beyond Recreation: Leveraging Outdoor Assets for Community and Economic Growth

Explore how communities are transforming trails, rivers, parks, and recreation assets into powerful engines for tourism, talent attraction, placemaking, and economic growth. Through real-world success stories and hard-earned lessons, panelists will share the strategies, partnerships, and investments that are generating measurable results and creating models others can adapt in their own communities.

Moderator: Kimberly Davis, Executive Director, Friends of Southwest Virginia

Panelists:

Cora Gnegy, Tourism Director & Economic Development, Giles County
Representing Visit NRV

Debora Wright, Chief Strategist, Vice President
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

Pete Eshelman, Director, Roanoke Outside &
Senior Director of Creative Designs, Roanoke Regional Partnership

Allison Mays, Director, Southwest Center
Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement

10:45AM | Break & Networking



Agenda — Wednesday, September 9 – continued

11:00AM | From Operators to Outcomes — Running Outdoor Businesses in the Real World

Hear directly from the entrepreneurs, operators, and industry leaders powering Virginia's outdoor economy. This candid conversation explores what it takes to build and grow successful outdoor businesses, from navigating workforce and infrastructure challenges to creating memorable visitor experiences, adapting to change, and identifying opportunities for future growth.

Moderator: Heather Fay, Executive Director, Greater Roanoke Region and New River Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Panelists:

Steve Pike, Spearhead Trails, St. Paul, Virginia

Shawn Hash, Tangent Outfitters, Giles County, Virginia

Michael Valach, Mountain 2 Island, Pulaski County, Virginia

Jessica Bowser, Host, Virginia Outdoor Adventures Podcast

12:00PM | Find Your Next Adventure — How Universities & Brand Builders Shape Place, Brand, and Opportunity in the Outdoor Economy

This closing conversation will explore how higher education institutions, destination marketers, and outdoor brands help shape the places where people choose to live, work, learn, and play. From attracting talent and visitors to strengthening community identity and creating economic opportunity, panelists will discuss the partnerships and strategies that transform outdoor assets into lasting impact. Join us as we connect the day's themes and look ahead to the future of the outdoor economy.





AN OUTDOOR ECONOMY SUMMIT

Agenda — Wednesday, September 9 - continued

Moderator: Ryan Bowyer, Chief of Staff, Radford University

Panelists:

Kent Sanslow, Assistant Director of Outdoor Programs, Emory and Henry University

Michael Clark, Deputy County Administrator, Franklin County

Joshua Carroll, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, Radford University

12:45PM | AdventureWorks Concludes

1:00PM | Lunch on your own