

## **Module 2: Collaborative Collection Development**

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## **Virginia Trails Collaborative Collection Development**

### **Introduction to Collection and Audience**

The Covid-19 pandemic ushered in months of indoor isolation. Outdoor activities canceled. Parks and recreation sites closed. Furloughs and work from home mandates did bring families together: indoors. Indoors, indoors, indoors. Sarah, Susan, Jessica and I, through our mini collection *Virginia's Trails*, want to open wide the library doors to the great outdoors by providing materials to connect children pre-K through middle school, caregivers and parents, to nature. Our collection is educational and inspirational. The range of materials is pleasantly overwhelming: picture books, critter cams, guides, museum and park passes, science kits and a backpack laden with nature observing, kid friendly tools. Collectively each of us found new, diverse, serviceable materials, as well as outdated, uninspiring, tedious ones. The initial searches tended to bring forth many resources, which caused each of us to explore and dig deeper, making sure each item was relevant to our topic and the best. This was not difficult. Virginia has a lot of resources for outdoor recreation and education. As a group, we compiled 20 items. Together, with honest input from each of us, respecting each other's opinion, and sometimes setting an item aside for further consideration, we narrowed the list to 15. Interestingly, trail maps are hard to find. We decided to use the brochures and maps readily available at rest areas. Our discussion brought innovative ideas on how to use the items in ways which would most benefit the user.

## **Introduction to Resources**

There was no shortage of materials to choose from; Virginia has plenty of beautiful nature trails, state parks, and dedicated naturalists that have documented it all. The difficult aspect of this was selecting which resources to include out of the bunch. We narrowed our search to available resources that were readable and sparked interest for children. There were still plenty of solid materials, but narrowing our scope to Virginia trails resources that are appropriate for children helped us to select an interesting and interactive collection. The parameters for appropriateness in terms of this collection include elementary reading level (K-8), immersive illustrations and/or photo-accompanied content, and promotion of interactivity with the outdoors. We were looking for items that can capture and hold the attention of our younger target audience and inspire users to get outside. There weren't as many print materials catered toward a younger audience, but the few that stood out made excellent contributions to the academic aspect of our collection. A major gap in resources we struggled with was primary sources. Many of the Virginia Trail maps from the National Park Service were outdated, the most recent available was published in 2000. With our narrowed scope and the array of natural resources Virginia has to offer, we feel confident that the selected items are produced by credible sources, like state parks and renowned nature authors, and filled with pertinent information, like plant species found in Virginia and mobile ornithology aids. These resources are strong on their own, but as a collection are intended to encourage families to get out and explore the beauty and wealth of nature Virginia Trails have to offer.

## **Selection Process Summary**

Our group met together and brainstormed possible topics and audiences. We had a discussion about how families have been cooped up during the Covid-19 pandemic. We decided to curate a collection of resources that are fun, inspiring, educational, and most importantly get users of all ages out of the house and connect them to the beautiful Virginia trails and their native plants and wildlife. We selected items based on their timeliness and accuracy; some of the items we decided not to include were outdated books and government maps. We also evaluated for authority. We selected items with highly trusted and authoritative authors, recommendations, awards, and brands, as well as Virginia government websites and documents. As a group, we went through a list of individually selected resources, and narrowed them down to items that are the most unique, valuable, and relevant to the intended users. We did not include items unless they would spark the interest of the users. Therefore, we did not include magazines that were not visually appealing or apps that had poor customer reviews and are difficult to use. We selected items that are appropriate for our intended audience. We searched for items linked to Virginia SOL standards, items that would engage children and teens intellectually and emotionally, like kits, garden and museum passes, activities, games, iPads, and age appropriate books. We also selected items that are user-friendly for parents and educators guiding children through these resources and using them as educational tools. Finally, we looked at each item's value. Would it be used? This led us to eliminate resources that are not user-friendly, community resources that are too far away, and items that would be too difficult to check in and out, like camping equipment. We selected items that are convenient, easy to use, and beneficial. We also selected popular cultural attractions and technology items that otherwise may

not be accessible financially to some users. We began the process with a good sense of the resources available because several of the group members live in Virginia. However, working as a group and taking into consideration each member's thoughtfulness, creativity, and research broadened our scope of ideas, which led to a unique and innovative list of resources that will meet the needs of our users.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

4-H. (n.d.) *4-H water science kits for kids*.

<https://sites.google.com/vt.edu/water-science-kits-for-kids/home>

This website has different STEM experiments related to water conservation that include materials needed, a lesson plan, an instructional video, and steps to follow. 4-H is the largest youth development organization and is an authority on empowering young people with skills to impact the world around them. Combined with educators, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students from Virginia Tech, the group collaborated to provide STEM activities to students impacted during the Covid 19 affected school year. This website is appropriate for elementary age students and their families who would like to explore more about the world of water conservation with hands-on activities and come up with creative solutions to common problems with water conservation and pollution. The experiments are aligned to national 4-H standards, as well as Virginia Science SOL standards for fourth grade. Patrons would benefit from kits for each experiment with all materials needed, as well as a way for families to share pictures of their activities to increase interest in future users of the library.

Adkins, L. M., & Halvorsen, K. (2020). *All about the Appalachian Trail*. Blue River Press.

This print source was selected through a children's literature search. It is a Benjamin Franklin Award Finalist and a 2020 Young Reader nonfiction selection for the 8-12 age group. Leonard M. Adkins is a previous winner of the National Outdoor Book Award, *Foreword Magazine's* Book of the Year Award, and has a Virginia Literary Award nomination for other works. This selection features over 50 illustrations from Kirsten Halvorsen with facts about the history of the trail and the nature that appears along it. It is appropriate and educational for young readers. Designed to spark interest and curiosity for the future generation of caretakers and explorers of Virginia's natural resources, this makes an excellent print addition to the collection.

Alderfer, J. (2018). *National Geographic Kids bird guide of North America* (2nd ed.). National Geographic Kids.

This book is a field guide for children, featuring the 50 most-sighted birds in North America. National Geographic is a leading source in science, exploration, and education. Author, Jonathan Alderfer is one of the top avian experts in the United States. This field guide is appropriate for junior birders, ages 5-9. It features vivid photography that National Geographic is well known for and will captivate young explorers. It also includes fun facts, birding tips, and teaches children to respect wildlife. This field guide is appropriate for higher level readers to use on their own for backyard birding, or for adults and children to use together while out exploring Virginia trails. It will also be of interest to children, families, or classrooms

interested in hands-on nature activities, like building a bird feeder or drawing birds.

Avenza Systems, Inc. (2021). *Avenza maps: Offline mapping*. (Version 3.15.2). Avenza Systems Inc. <https://www.avenzamaps.com/>  
and

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (n.d.) *Virginia state parks trail quest*. <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/trail-quest>

Trail Quest invites users to explore trails located in Virginia State Parks and log them into the program to earn explorer badges. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is the official government department responsible for the Virginia State Parks department. The program is relevant and appropriate for users of all ages, particularly youth who are interested in combining the outdoors with technology. The Avenza App is the recommended program from the Virginia State Parks to download trail maps for every state park and is available for both android and Apple users. The Trail Quest program is interesting to youths and their families with the additional advantage of collecting badges after visiting 5, 10, 20, and all parks. The ease of use of the Avenza app makes it appealing for both adults and children to easily seek out new trails. The current interest in geocaching, as an additional feature of the Trail Quest program, provides an interesting and unique appeal.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. (n.d.). *eBird* [Mobile app]. Cornell University.  
<https://ebird.org/about/ebird-mobile/>

The eBird mobile app is a paperless way to log bird sightings while out exploring in the field. It is listed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology as one of the best apps for birding with kids. The Cornell Lab creates innovative resources for children to inspire a connection with habitats, biodiversity, and to build real-life scientist skills. This is a tool for families to record their sightings and contribute to bird research and conservation while out exploring the trails, with full offline functionality. This resource is appropriate for middle school students and older to use independently, as it requires the spelling of species' names, note-taking, and map navigation. Individuals interested in the outdoors, engaging in nature, and contributing to science will enjoy this app. Pre-loading this app to iPads makes Virginia bird identification, learning, and sharing available to individuals, families, or classrooms who may not have access to this technology resource.

Farrell, A. (2019). *The hike*. Chronicle Books.

*The Hike*, written and illustrated by Alison Farrell, is about three young girls from diverse backgrounds, who set out on an adventurous hike. The book is authoritative with excellent reviews by Kirkus, NYT, School Library and Booklist and was written from the author's own hiking experiences. With a glossary of terms at the end of the book, Farrell has authoritatively labeled plants and animals the girls encounter along the trail as if the book were a journal. The content is intellectually appropriate for children ages 3-9 through the author's use of short sentences and repetition. Each page is broken up into 4 rectangular panels of illustrations, giving the feel of traversing along a trail, and short sentences hold their attention, causing them to further study the action in each panel. Children



with a sense of adventure will emotionally connect through the character's excitement and enthusiasm. *The Hike* will add value to the library's Virginia Trails collection as it mirrors our intent to encourage children to have fun while investigating nature around them.

Gupton, O. W., & Swope, F. C. (1982). *Wildflowers of Tidewater Virginia*. University Press of Virginia.

Wild Flowers of Tidewater Virginia by Oscar Wand Gupton and Fred C. Swope is a print resource from the University Press of Virginia. It aims to offer information on identifying these plants without using the technical language or jargon associated with plant part structures. It can be a helpful resource for younger users that aren't experts in the field but have interest in learning about their local wildflowers. All descriptions are accompanied by photographs and ways to identify the plants, so the resource could be enjoyed by users that aren't able to grasp the concepts in the descriptions. This resource was selected through its recommendation from the Blandy Arboretum, the Virginia State Arboretum, that is funded and kept up by the University of Virginia.

IrisBG. (2021). *Garden Explorer*. Garden Explorer | Norfolk Botanical Garden, Virginia, USA. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://gardenexplorer.nbgs.org/>.

This community online resource is the Garden Explorer Plant Species Database. It allows users to search by common name, family, or genus to find out if it is located in Norfolk Botanical Gardens and gather more information about the plant. The descriptions are simple and informative, and shows users where to find what they searched for in the gardens. This resource works in tandem with the garden passes offered to patrons as part of the collection. Garden Explorer doubles as an interactive map of the gardens with information about the sections within the garden and which plants are in them. This feature allows users who may not be able to utilize the garden pass to visit the Norfolk Botanical Gardens in person to have the ability to explore it online. The information in this resource uses language that is simple enough to be understood by younger users and includes photos of each plant. This is a useful tool for learning the scientific names for plants known primarily through their common names.

Messner, K. (2017). *Over and under the pond*. Chronicle Books LLC

*Over and Under the Pond* is written by Kate Messner, a NYT bestselling author of over 50 children's books. *Over and Under the Pond* is a valuable, Kirkus reviewed, resource to spark a child's interest in the outside world around him without the weight of too much information. Messner, inspired by her own canoe trip on Barnum Pond, narrates an evening a boy and his mom paddle a boat through a pond in the mountains, while discussing the animal and plant life living over and under the pond. The non-fiction picture book, with its diverse Black characters, is perfect for a family-read aloud to emphasize the lyrical, repetitive, onomatopoeia style of writing. The 2-page mixed media illustrations in varying

blue, green and brown tones, engross readers of all ages emotionally into the story. The information given about each animal is simplistic, meeting the intellectual level of the reader ages 4-8. Children will be anxious to explore the outdoors, looking for animals they saw and learned about. Messner includes more detailed information in her author's note and section called About the Animals for advanced readers and the teacher/parent. She lists book and website suggestions to further outdoor exploration.

Norfolk Botanical Garden. (2021). *Membership*.

<https://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/support/membership/>

Norfolk Botanical Garden offers 175 acres of gardens bordered by Lake Whitehurst, featuring a total of 14 miles of paved and unpaved walking paths. The Garden is listed as a local birding site by the Virginia Beach Audubon Society, an authoritative source on birds and their habitats. Garden passes allow families to explore trails of native plants and wildlife. NBG attracts people of all ages, with miles of open space to run, play, and explore, as well as curated gardens and educational opportunities for both adults and children. NBG is a major attraction in the Hampton Roads area, and passes make the garden and the benefits of a membership more accessible to all.

Underdog Games. (2021). *Trekking the National Parks* (2nd Ed.). [Game].

This board game provides an opportunity for families and friends to explore all 60 of the National Parks from home. This game earned a Gold Award from Parents' Choice Foundation, an organization that selects games and toys based on their ability to help children grow their imaginations, physical and mental abilities, and

moral reasoning. Though this game is recommended for children ages 10 and up, it is easy enough for younger children to play. The game's park cards feature beautiful photographs to inspire players to learn more about the National Parks. *Trekking the National Parks* has surprises that keep young players engaged. This game will spark the interests of nature-loving families, National Park enthusiasts, and people who enjoy game nights, hiking, or traveling.

The Wildlife Center of Virginia (n.d.) *Critter cams*. Critter cam landing.

<https://www.wildlifecenter.org/critter-corner/critter-cam-landing>

Critter Cams features several live cams of animals in VA, such as black bear cubs, bald eagles. The Wildlife Center of Virginia has been a leading force in rehabilitating wild animals since it was established in 1982. The attraction of watching animals that are not usually able to be seen holds high appeal to both children and adults. The special live sessions from the animal hospital provide a unique insight into how animals are rehabilitated. They are relevant and interesting to children and families who love nature and are interested in a possible career working with wild animals. The library can provide televisions to show these cameras to allow access for all users.

Underwood, D. (2020). *Outside in*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Outside in* is about a girl who, after experiencing outside from within the confines of her home, steps outside to fully appreciate all it has to offer. The children's picture book for ages 3-9 is authoritatively written by New York Times best-selling author Deborah Underwood and illustrated by Cindy Derby. *Outside in* won the 2021 Caldecott Honor Award and has an outstanding Kirkus review. The book

accurately portrays a young Asian girl having to merely appreciate nature from the confines of her house. The book is current and timely as children and families, recently coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, are beginning to step back into the outside, into nature. The full page muted, child-like watercolor and ink illustrations gently captivate the reader, causing their eyes to rove and linger, searching for hidden animals and artifacts. The author's use of short sentences, phrases or one word on a page meets the intellectual level of children. They will be emotionally immersed through the relatable storyline, the little girl's pets, and their desire to explore the outdoors. The book is an excellent resource for the Virginia Trails collection, helping families to explore the outdoors again.

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2021). *Shenandoah Virtual Junior Ranger* (U.S. National Park Service). National Parks Service. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/shen-virtual-jr-ranger.htm> .

This non print resource is an activity book to become a Junior Park Ranger at Shenandoah National Park virtually and includes a downloadable badge upon completion of the activities. There are six different activities to complete, including an online scavenger hunt, quizzes, and an activity that requires participants to get outside and find traces of wild animal activity near their own homes or libraries. It is a great interactive resource that allows youth to get involved in the Shenandoah National Park from their library or home, especially during the enduring COVID-19 pandemic. The collection can offer this activity on the library computers and/or rentable iPads and provide the printing service to give participants in the activity their badge upon completion. This resource

includes a video of the park ranger pledge that the participants can learn as well.

This resource is meant to inspire users to learn about and protect the natural world throughout their lifetime.

Virginia Living Museum (n.d.) <https://thevlm.org/>

The Virginia Living Museum features plants, animals, and geology native to Virginia. The museum is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is one of the top recommendations of places certified by Virginia Green, a sustainability initiative to reduce the environmental footprint by the state tourism division. Recommended by the official Virginia is for Lovers website, the museum is appropriate for families and youth of all ages. The appeal of live animals and a planetarium with shows on plants and animals native to Virginia entices children to want to visit the museum with their families. As an animal sanctuary for injured, orphaned, or non-releasable animals, the museum boasts an authoritative and safe place to visit. The museum would be an excellent partner with the library and local schools.

Virginia's Trails Backpack Exploration Kit. (2021).

We have put together an amazing resource for families. Adding value to our collection by encouraging people to 'hit the trail', and to remove possible barriers, we have 3 hiking backpacks that can be signed out of the library. For patron's convenience a backpack may be put on hold/reservation. Through our own experience and research, we have designed the packs to include:

State parks entry/parking pass, binoculars, magnifying glass, insect net, bug container, plastic tweezers, guides: animal tracks, local wildlife, poisonous plant

identification, small first aid kit, a compass, and a hiker's journal (each family journals about their adventure, include pictures). The items are appropriate for preschoolers-adult in that they are easy to use, durable and child-friendly/safe. The backpack will encourage families to be outdoors and explore nature.





- . Display and marketing poster for the library.

When posted on social media or television screens in the library, much of it is animated through CANVA.

## **Summary**

The Virginia Trails initiative with the public library will be a way to bring the community into the library to explore all it has to offer. The books are appropriate for families to read together to learn more about the world around them and then go explore together to search for the plants and animals they learned about. The different STEM kits and exploring backpacks will entice families to explore science topics together and enhance their critical thinking and creativity to experiment with solutions to problems they discover through the STEM lessons and trail exploration. Creating a display with pictures families share of them exploring the trails, completing the experiments, and earning the badges on the Trail Quest program will create interest and allow the community to see their efforts are valued and celebrated. The opportunity to combine technology with nature in meaningful ways provides families with unique opportunities to grow and learn together while staying connected to the community. Offering device check-out opportunities allows equal access for all members of the library community. Programs offered to families, such as the Junior Explorer program will encourage families to visit the library and prompt them to explore other programs and services offered at the library. Analyzing check out patterns, data collection on numbers of attendees to programs offered, and surveys provided in both electronic and



paper formats will allow for determining the success of the program components and community input on the experience.