

OVERVIEW

The ENLIT Project - Environmental Literacy

Rockfish Valley Foundation (RVF)

Founded in 2005

The Rockfish Valley Foundation (RVF) desires to develop greater sustainability and capacity*. RVF provides and maintains three valued community facilities - the Rockfish Valley Trail System, Spruce Creek Park, and the Natural History Center. RVF undertakes formative, environment-related projects that are highly valued by those in Nelson County and beyond and are appreciated throughout Virginia and by funders.

ENLIT History

The ENLIT Project is the heart and soul of RVF's efforts to raise environmental literacy (ENLIT) in the region. RVF currently has several projects in the conception or action phase: ENLIT and preservation and development of its archaeology site. Founded in 2005, RVF's enthusiastic education committee has formed strong relationships with teachers, school children, and the community over the years.

With funds from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Department between 2012 and 2018, RVF completed improvements at facilities including the creation of Kids in Parks - a children's nature trail and the building of a bridge over Spruce Creek.

The Next ENLIT Phase – More Engaging Content Online and Off

RVF's CRC funding request will enable ENLIT to expand its environmentally-relevant programs beyond exhibits, signage, and limited school programs on water, rocks, plants, and animals. The new content will be interactive, playful, and age-appropriate and be versioned for use online, by smartphone/tablet technology along the Rockfish Valley Trail System and in Spruce Creek Park, in print form at kiosks, and at Natural History Center exhibits.

Smartphone/tablet content along trails would be accessed via Verizon and wifi provided by FireFly Fiber Broadband (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Cooperative) using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology. Trail programs will be enhanced by teaching aids and amenities such as benches and pet waste receptacles.

Content Development

RVF will build content modules through its many partnerships with the environmental community including Virginia state agency staff, teachers from local schools and colleges, Virginia Master Naturalists, Virginia Conservation Network member organizations, Garden Clubs around Virginia, members of environmental conservation groups, RVF volunteers, and the general public.

Material will be presented using best practices in graphic design, video, sound, and media so it engages visitors. To help standardize and clearly organize instruction for use in many formats, RVF staff (or contractor) will develop a content template with teaching objectives to be used by all content developers.

As RVF builds ENLIT material, we will share it with all our collaborators around Virginia and create marketing and PR opportunities that will attract visitors and students far and wide.

RVF Collaboration with Other Organizations – Examples

- **Nelson Middle School Ecology Club/Nelson Schools** Study, improvements, and content development will be undertaken for Spruce Creek and its buffer
- **Rockfish Watershed Geology Field Study** by William and Mary structural geologist Chuck Bailey Ph.D. Content development to produce signage, maps, a mountain app for phones, a video, and other deliverables is underway.
- **Blue Ridge School Rockfish Trail Work** Content development to produce an environmental story with signage is underway.
- **Spruce Creek Native Plant Walk** The Rivanna Garden Club, Piedmont Landscape Association, and others are supporting the design and fall planting for Spruce Creek Park.

* RVF's hope to use Catchafire resources to help us develop a short-term and long-term strategies to build capacity and sustainability.