



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Improved Trail Access to Devil's Bathtub Ready for Visitors

An Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Grant of \$317,000 Contributed Toward Construction

Scott County, Va. – Those making the trek to the famous Devil's Bathtub will walk there on an improved Devil's Fork Loop Trail. The Scott County Economic Development Authority received \$317,000 from the Virginia Department of Energy's (Virginia Energy) Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) grant to help cover the costs of the trail improvements. AMLER is a federally funded program and is administered by Virginia Energy.

"This AMLER grant for \$317,000 helps Scott County Economic Development Authority preserve one of Scott County's iconic natural treasures," **said U.S. Representative Morgan Griffith**. "Due to the great popularity of Devil's Bathtub, Scott County and Southwest Virginia continue to interest and garner new visitors. This increased attention and activity is good news for the region."

"Showcasing the beauty of southwest Virginia through impactful tourism projects is an essential piece to larger economic development efforts," **said Virginia Energy Director Glenn Davis**. "This agency is dedicated to using previously mined land to create new jobs and support creative tourism."

Scott County EDA partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Appalachian Conservation Corps to make safety improvements to the two-mile Devil's Fork Loop Trail. This resulted in three new trail segments and eliminated five stream crossings. Blazes are clearly marked to ensure visitors stay on the intended trail. Trailhead access is also better after improvements were made to the parking lot. Construction of the project created 15 jobs and an additional 38 jobs will be supported long-term due to the improvements.

"It is a pleasure to announce the completion of this initiative with the Devil's Bathtub which makes the trail safer to one of Scott County's premier landmarks," **said Scott County EDA Chairman Roger Fraysier.** "With the rise in popularity, we wanted to not only make the trail safer, but also improve the signage and assist with parking for a better visitor experience."

"The Devil's Bathtub has become, and will continue to be, a major tourist attraction for our beautiful Scott County," **said Scott County Board of Supervisors Chairman Michael Brickey.** "This is a greatly anticipated ribbon cutting for the trail with Congressman Morgan Griffith, members of Virginia Energy and the National Forest Service."

"The Appalachian Conservation Corps is proud to have supported this project," **said Corps Director Zach Foster.** "This partnership created an opportunity for young adult AmeriCorps members to develop professional trail building skills and a sense of stewardship and conservation while improving a community recreational resource."

In the 1940's, the area near the Devil's Bathtub was mined for coal. The AMLER funding also assisted in closing an opening that was left behind by this historic coal mining. The story of coal, however, will remain at the trailhead. An interpretive sign will be placed near a mining cart that was also left after mining was completed.

The AMLER program originated in a federal omnibus bill in 2017, Virginia Energy has received \$10 to \$11.7 million annually for economic development on abandoned mine lands. The program is administered by the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement. The grants are managed by Virginia Energy's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program.

[Virginia Energy's AML program](#) was created in 1981 and is federally funded to reclaim issues left behind by coal mining that occurred before 1977. Funding and reclamation have been limited in the past to only the highest priority problems that presented safety threats to residents or had significant negative environmental impacts.