



Principle 1: Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

County Information Sheet

Bath County

Small and mountainous, Bath County ranks last in the VCC region and 92nd in the state for agriculture. Most farming consists of cattle and hay production in the narrow valleys. In 1997, total market value of agricultural products was \$2,011,000. This 16% increase over the 15-year period was one of the smallest increases in the region. Most of this value was livestock and poultry (\$1,735,000). Crop value was \$276,000, making up only 10% of the county's agricultural total.

Between 1987 and 1997, the county had a net loss of 6 farms but a gain of 4,748 acres in farming. In addition to having considerable federal land ownership, primarily in National Forest, Bath County has a tradition of large private landholdings. The county's already very high average farm size increased in the decade, from 396 acres in 1987 to 452 acres in 1997 (nearly double the 174-acre average for the VCC region).

Bath County is not a significant county for forestry. The value of timber harvested in Bath County was \$381,823 in 2000, up from \$113,411 in 1986 (236.7 % increase). The county ranked 11th in the region in timber harvest value in 2000, down from 8th in 1986. Small-dimension hardwood declined and pine lumber was nonexistent in the period. Hardwood was increasingly dominant, moving from 80.4 percent of the harvest in 1986 to 94.1 percent in 2000.

Figure 1-6b.
Agricultural Census Statistics
Bath County

	1987	1997	Change 1987-1997
Number of Farms	135	129	(6)
Acres in Farms	53,523	58,271	4,748
Avg. Size of Farm	396	452	56
Market Value of Crops	178,000	276,000	98,000
Market Value of Livestock	1,562,000	1,735,000	173,000
Market Value Ag Products	\$1,740,000	\$2,011,000	\$271,000

Note: Rank in State: 92; in Valley: 11
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

Figure 1-6c.
Timber Harvest Volume and Value
Bath County
(in thousand board feet)

	1986	2000	Change
Volume:			
Pine Sawtimber	--	--	--
Hardwood Sawtimber	294	1,132	285%
Subtotal Sawtimber	294	1,132	285%
Small Dimension	9,334	7,469	(20%)
Total Volume :	9,628	8,601	(11%)
Value (\$):			
Pine	\$22,262	\$22,694	2%
Hardwood	91,149	359,129	294%
Total Value	\$113,411	\$381,823	237%
Percent Hardwood	80%	94%	
Rank in Region	8	11	
Rank in State	--	84	

Source: Virginia Department of Forestry, July 2002

Note: Volume is based on forest products tax receipts; value is based on average county stumpage costs. The standard measure for saw timber is thousand (mille) board feet abbreviated mbf. A tree 22 inches at breast height with 48 feet of usable stem would yield approximately 500 board feet.