

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees

Thursday, June 3, 2025

**East Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building
Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Board of Trustees took place at 1:00 p.m. on June 3, 2025, in the East Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, Virginia.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Stefanie Taillon, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Chair

Deputy Secretary Beth Green, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Chief Frank Adams

Elizabeth Andrews

Robert Beals

James Beamer

Bradley Gable

Colonel Brian Hallberg

Gabriella Hoffman

Kathleen Kilpatrick

Stewart Leeth

Michael Molina

Sonya Powell

The Honorable Ed Scott

The Honorable Richard H. Stuart

Matthew Wells, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Secretary

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Morgan Slaven, Vice Chair

Leslie Cockburn

The Honorable David W. Marsden

One Vacancy, 9th Congressional District

Jay Ford

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Rob Evans, DCR

Charles Marston, DCR

Brian Fuller, DCR

Paul Saunders, DCR

Emi Endo, DCR

Andrew Smith, DCR

Laura Ellis, DCR

Frank Stovall, DCR

Kevin Schmidt, VDACS

Kristal McKelvey, DCR

Nathan Thomson, DOF

Kellie Seaton, DCR

Allison Tillett, DCR

Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Linda Crowe, DCR

Damian Martin, DCR

Gina DiCicco, DCR

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael E. Sievers | Senior Assistant Attorney General
Ellen Shepard, VAULT
Nikki Rovner, TNC
Andrea Reese, RCC
Parker Agelasto, CRLC
Rachel Henley, Virginia Farm Bureau

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With fourteen (14) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Taillon called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and asked for introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 21, 2024, BOARD MEETING

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Scott moved that the minutes of the November 21, 2024, meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Mr. Leeth seconded, and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND – *Laura Ellis, DCR, Deputy Director for Administration and Finance*

Ms. Ellis presented financial information and a fund statement – **Attachment A**.

ANNUAL RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE DCR TO EXPEND INTEREST FROM THE VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND, PURSUANT TO § 10.1-1020 – *Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR, Land Conservation Manager*
See **Attachment B**.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Andrews moved to approve the resolution and authorize the Department of Conservation and Recreation to expend up to \$250,000 of interest generated by the Fund in FY 2026 for use consistent with the legislative authority provided by *Code of Virginia § 10.1-1020(G)* as outlined below:

FY 2026

\$250,000

Address existing administrative, web service and database-related expenses incurred by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grant management activities. Specifically, the funding will be used in support of staff assisting with the VLCF grant program, the Webgrants online Grants Management Portal, land conservation database support of the Foundation's mission, and fulfillment of statutorily required reporting requirements.

Mr. Molina seconded, and the motion carried. Senator Stuart and Gabriella Hoffman opposed the motion.

UPDATE AND PROPOSED ACTION FOR ENRICHMOND'S VLCF STEWARDSHIP FUND PAYMENT – *Gina DiCicco, DCR, Land Conservation Specialist*

Ms. DiCicco presented the Board with staff's recommendation for disbursement of VLCF Stewardship Fund to Capital Region Land Conservancy ("CRLC") – **Attachment C**.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Scott moved that \$8,317.11 in Stewardship Funds to be awarded to CRLC. Mr. Molina seconded, and the motion carried.

THE 2024 VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN– *Kristal McKelvey, DCR, Chief Recreation Grants Manager*

Ms. McKelvey and Ms. Tillett gave a presentation on the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan.

REVIEW OF VLCF GRANT PROJECTS THAT HAVE CLOSED SINCE NOVEMBER 2024– *Damian Martin,*

DCR, Land Conservation Specialist

Mr. Martin provided an update on closed projects since the last Board meeting. – **Attachment D.**

Mr. Molina requested that staff analyze the five grant categories, looking back five years, to determine if there are any patterns of returned grant funds in each category.

PROPOSED FY26 GRANT MANUAL

Ms. Andrews, as Chair of the subcommittee tasked with making recommendations for revisions to the grant manual, provided the Board with an overview of the subcommittee’s recommended revisions. – **Attachment E.**

Senator Stuart requested that staff provide a summary of how staff ensure required VLCF language is included in deeds of easement for each grant project.

PROPOSED FY26 FISCAL EXPENDITURE - *Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR, Land Conservation Manager*

See **Attachment F.**

PROPOSED FY26 TIMELINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS - *Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR, Land*

Conservation Manager

See **Attachment G.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF FY26 GRANT DOCUMENTS

BOARD ACTION

Senator Stuart moved to approve the grant manual with corrections as identified on Page 5 and section II, Item C, and the grant round materials as presented. Ms. Kilpatrick seconded, and the motion carried.

ITEMS OF OTHER BUSINESS – *Frank Stovall, DCR, Deputy Director of Operations*

Mr. Stovall provided background information regarding a project in Suffolk and detailed staff’s request for approval of an adjustment of scope. **Attachment H.**

BOARD ACTION

Senator Stuart moved to approve adjusting the scope of VLCF Grant 372 to reduce the land acquired from 1,900 acres to 870 acres +/-, should federal funding supporting the project be withdrawn by action of the federal government. Ms. Andrews seconded, and the motion carried.

Secretary Taillon requested that the following be prepared for approval at the next meeting of the Board:

- a. Develop a resolution subject to the Board’s approval to allow the Secretary to amend grant awards as requested due to uncertainties with federal funding availability.
- b. Develop a policy subject to the Board’s approval to allow the Board to meet virtually to conduct business as needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Parker Agelasto addressed the Board on behalf of the Capital Region Land Conservancy.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
June 3, 2025

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Fund Statement
As of April 30, 2025

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE - June 30, 2022 **\$16,287,778**

INCOME

FY22 Stewardship Funds	\$2,124,370
FY23 Stewardship Funds	\$1,667,123
FY24 Stewardship Funds	\$2,222,606
FY23 Appropriation - Chapter 2	\$16,000,000
FY24 Appropriation - Chapter 1	\$16,000,000
FY25 Appropriation - Chapter 2	\$16,000,000
FY23 Interest	\$506,071
FY24 Interest	\$1,485,359
FY25 Interest*	\$1,340,382
TOTAL INCOME	\$57,345,911

DISBURSEMENTS

FY23 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,124,370
FY24 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$1,667,123
FY25 Stewardship Fund Disbursements*	\$2,222,606
FY23 Grant Payments	\$5,507,148
FY24 Grant Payments	\$7,980,536
FY25 Grant Payments*	\$6,610,395
FY23 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$4,000,000
FY24 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$4,000,000
FY25 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments*	\$4,340,301
FY23 Administrative Expenses	\$122,897
FY24 Administrative Expenses	\$54,947
FY25 Administrative Expenses*	\$113,757
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$38,744,081

* Changes since last report

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE - April 30, 2025 **\$34,889,608**

ATTACHMENT B

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation June 3, 2025

Resolution: Authorization for Administrative Funding for FY 2026

Background:

Pursuant to Va. Code § 10.1-1020(G): Up to \$250,000 per year of the interest generated by the Fund may be used for the Foundation's administrative expenses, including, but not limited to, the expenses of the Board and its members, development of the Foundation's strategic plan, development and maintenance of an inventory of properties as provided in subdivision 1 b of § [10.1-1021](#), development of a needs assessment for future expenditures as provided in subdivision 1 c of § [10.1-1021](#), and fulfillment of reporting requirements. All such expenditures shall be subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.

Interest Balance on June 30, 2024	\$1,992,780
Interest Earned during FY25 through April 30	\$1,340,382
VLCF Administrative Expenses for FY25	(\$59,676)
Budgeted Natural Heritage Expenses	(\$100,000)
FY25 Grant Round	(\$1,020,910)
FY25 Grant Round to VOF (25%)	(\$340,301)
Available interest	\$1,812,275

Authorization:

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board authorizes the Department of Conservation and Recreation to expend up to \$250,000 of interest generated by the Fund in FY 2026 for use consistent with the legislative authority provided by *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-1020.G.; as outlined below:

FY 2026 \$250,000

Address existing administrative, web service and database-related expenses incurred by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grant management activities. Specifically, the funding will be used in support of staff assisting with the VLCF grant program, the Webgrants online Grants Management Portal, land conservation database support of the Foundation's mission, and fulfillment of statutorily required reporting requirements.



Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Staff Report

TOPIC: Land Conservation, VLCF Stewardship Funds

SUBJECT: Update and proposed action for Enrichmond's VLCF Stewardship Fund Payment

ACTION: Disbursement of VLCF Stewardship Funds to Capital Region Land Conservancy

DATE: June 3, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ISSUE SUMMARY:

- In accordance with § 58.1-513 C.2. of the Code of Virginia, a portion of the fees arising from the transfer or distribution of tax credits is provided to the organizations responsible for the stewardship and monitoring of easement associated with the tax credits.
- Having received a qualified land donation in 2020, the Enrichmond Foundation was slated to receive VLCF Stewardship Funds in 2021, 2022, and 2023. However, in 2022 the Foundation closed abruptly.
- The Enrichmond Foundation dissolved before receiving \$8,317.11 in Stewardship Funds.
- In light of the Foundation's dissolution, the VLCF Board voted to hold the Stewardship Funds and disburse them in the future to the conservation organization that took over management of the property.

STATUS:

- In April 2025, the property was transferred to Capital Regional Land Conservancy (CRLC).
- Before transferring ownership of the parcel to Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation for public outdoor recreational use, CRLC will record a conservation easement on the property. CRLC is responsible for enforcing the conservation and preservation purposes of the property in perpetuity.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Staff recommend issuing \$8,317.11 in Stewardship Funds to CRLC, who now owns and manages the property for which the stewardship funds are to be awarded.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS:

Subdivision C.2. of Section 58.1-513: A fee of two percent of the value of the donated interest shall be imposed upon any transfer arising from the sale by any taxpayer of credits under this article and upon the distribution of a portion of credits under this article to a member, manager, partner, shareholder or beneficiary pursuant to subsection B. The two percent fee shall not apply to a distribution of credits to a nonresident owner of a pass-through entity when such credits are applied by the pass-through entity to the withholding tax pursuant to subdivision B 2 of § ~~58.1-486.2~~. Revenues generated by such fees first shall be used by the Department of Taxation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation for their costs in implementing this article but in no event shall such amount exceed 50 percent of the total revenue generated by the fee on an annual basis. The remainder of such revenues shall be transferred to the Virginia Land Conservation Fund for distribution to the public or private conservation agencies or organizations, excluding federal governmental entities, that are responsible for enforcing the conservation and preservation purposes of the donated interests. Distribution of such revenues shall be made annually by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation proportionally based on a three-year average of the number of donated interests accepted by the public or private conservation agencies or organizations, excluding federal governmental entities, during the immediately preceding three-year period.

ATTACHMENTS:

- None

ATTACHMENT D

Status Report on VLCF Grant Projects

June 3, 2025

Recently Completed Projects

The following 15 VLCF grant projects have successfully closed since the VLCF Board meeting on November 21, 2024. One of the projects received a second grant providing supplemental funds needed to complete the project. A total of 16 grants have been closed out.

1. Capital Region Land Conservancy – Campbell’s Bridge Mills (FY2022)

Capital Region Land Conservancy received \$375,000 in grant funding in FY22 for the acquisition and protection of 3.6 acres containing historic mills at Campbell’s Bridge along the Appomattox River in Chesterfield County. A historic open-space easement is held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources protecting the archaeological, historic, ecological resources and providing daily public access. This parcel contributes to a larger partnership with the county, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Friends of Lower Appomattox River, where a larger parcel was acquired and conserved with a VOF easement. Together the property includes islands and the site of the Ettrick Mill, Northside Mill, Campbell’s Mill, Powhatan Mill, Eanes Mill and their associated mill races. The entire property is within the Cultural & Historic Preservation and Scenic Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia. The site is now part of the Appomattox River Trail and Ettrick VSU Special Area Plan.

Grant Award: \$375,000; **Payment amount:** \$375,000; **Match:** \$1,730,278; **Project closed:** December 2024

2. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Pedlar Hills Glades Natural Area Preserve Addition (FY2022)

The DCR Natural Heritage Program received a VLCF grant for \$515,000 from the FY22 grant round to acquire 156 acres adjoining the Pedlar Hills Glades Natural Area Preserve in Montgomery County, which now totals 1,257 acres. The property lies within the Pedlar Hills Conservation Site, which has a biodiversity rank of B1 – the highest rank possible – due to a suite of highly viable rare species habitats and rare woodland natural communities. Acquisition of this property helps to close a gap within the preserve, protects a sub-population of a federally endangered plants, and provides a large swath of forested land that improves access to the preserve. The Protected Landscapes Resilience, Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity, and Floodplains & Flooding Resilience layers of ConserveVirginia intersect the acquired property.

The grant was amended to acquire 80 acres of the original 156 acres in the application due to unresolvable title issues. The amount of the amended grant was reduced to \$180,000, with the remainder returned to VLCF in the FY25 grant round.

Grant Award: \$180,000; **Payment amount:** \$161,800; **Match:** \$0; **Project closed:** October 2024;
Amount Returned to Natural Area Preservation Category: \$18,201

3. Capital Region Land Conservancy – Brander Street (FY2022)

Capital Region Land Conservancy, in partnership with the City of Richmond, acquired 4.47 acres located along the south bank of the James River containing the path of the Richmond Slave Trail. The property is adjacent to Ancarrow’s Landing and across the river from Great Shiplock Park. It is within the Scenic Preservation layer of ConserveVirginia and was previously owned by Norfolk Southern and zoned for industrial use. The Richmond Riverfront Plan and James River Park Master Plan called for this property to become part of the city’s James River Park system. The property is now owned by the city and conserved by an easement held by CRLC and DCR.

Grant Award: \$150,000; **Payment amount:** \$64,953; **Match:** \$60,439; **Project closed:** May 2025; **Amount Returned to Open Spaces and Parks Category:** \$85,047

4. The Conservation Fund – Roanoke River Working Forest (FY2022)

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) in partnership with The Conservation Fund, has conserved a total of 898 acres of working forestland near Charlotte State Forest, also funded in part through a prior VLCF grant. This project partially funded open-space easements held by DOF on two tracts. A third tract was acquired in fee and conserved by DOF using alternate funding. Collectively, these properties support a critical wildlife corridor and important habitat for threatened and endangered species; maintain sustainable working forests; and safeguard clean drinking water. The project is within five layers of ConserveVirginia: Agriculture & Forestry, Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains & Flooding Resilience, Protected Landscapes Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement.

Grant Award: \$464,000; **Payment amount:** \$375,764; **Match:** \$375,764; **Project closed:** May 2025; **Amount Returned to Forestland Preservation Category:** \$88,236

5. Piedmont Environmental Council – Farmland Protection along Brook Run (FY2023)

PEC and the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District received a VLCF grant for \$500,000 to conserve a 700-acre farm along the Rapidan River in Culpeper County. The farm is a cattle operation with an average of 170 acres in pasture. Approximately 420 acres of cropland produces corn, soybeans, wheat and rye. Productive soils cover 76% of the farm. This project encompasses over 189 acres of water quality-related conservation priorities according to ConserveVirginia. Buffering approximately 3.5 miles of the Rapidan River, Brook Run, and other tributaries will help enhance water quality in the watershed. In addition to VLCF funds, this project received \$1,100,000 from NRCS.

Grant Award: \$500,000; **Payment amount:** \$500,000; **Match:** \$1,720,028; **Project closed:** December 2024

6. Department of Forestry – Taylors Mill Farm (FY2023; FY2024)

The 1,145-acre Taylors Mill Farm tract in Greensville County contains 860 acres of high conservation value forest, with 6.8 miles of perennial and intermittent streams and 640 acres of wetlands. The remaining 285 acres are in tillable cropland and contain prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance. An ecological core found on the property is ranked at the highest possible score. This is a family-owned farm that has been in the same family for three generations. A Department of Forestry open

space easement protects the sensitive bottomlands and perennial streams and ensures that future generations may continue to own and manage its farmland and forests in perpetuity.

Grant Awards: FY23: \$450,000, FY24: \$45,000; **Payment amount:** \$495,000; **Match:** \$792,500; **Project closed:** November 2024

7. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Crow’s Nest Natural Area Preserve Addition – Accokeek Bottomlands II (FY2023)

DCR’s Natural Heritage Division received a VLCF grant for \$390,000 to acquire three tracts adding 222 acres to Crow’s Nest Natural Area Preserve in Stafford County. These tracts will enhance DCR’s ability to protect natural heritage resources and key visual and ecological buffers along the main public access corridor into the preserve and prevent incompatible development. Most of the property includes forested wetlands and riparian areas along Accokeek Creek. One of the parcels supports the state endangered and federally threatened Small Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*). The property is in one of Virginia’s essential conservation sites as well as a mapped ecological core.

Grant Award: \$390,000; **Payment amount:** \$252,916; **Match:** \$0; **Project closed:** September 2024; **Amount Returned to Natural Area Preservation Category:** \$90,354

8. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve – Battlefield Addition Tract (FY2023)

The purchase of these 100 acres adjoining the Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve in Rockingham County and overlapping the core area of the Port Republic Civil War Battlefield supports two globally rare natural communities and four rare plant species. Although protected by a prior easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation, incorporation into the natural area preserve provides long-term protections for managing natural resources and creates opportunities for ecological restoration. This acquisition by DCR will improve the long-term resiliency of one of Virginia’s most outstanding B1-ranked conservation sites and protect a globally significant National Audubon Society Important Bird Area.

Grant Award: \$453,800; **Payment amount:** \$439,120; **Match:** \$0; **Project closed:** Late September 2024; **Amount Returned to Natural Area Preservation Category:** \$14,680

9. New River Soil and Water Conservation District – New River Hill Park (FY2023)

New River Soil and Water Conservation District received funding to purchase 91.24 acres in Grayson County to create New River Hill Park. The project borders the New River, an American Heritage River and will protect water quality along its 4,800 feet of streams. This project protected approximately 1,700 feet of ridgetop from development and the scenic viewshed for those utilizing river recreation and those traversing the New River Blueway. The New River Hill Park will provide a natural area for public use and passive recreation, hiking, biking, environmental education, enjoyment of diverse wildlife, fishing and water activities.

Grant Award: \$156,350; **Payment amount:** \$156,350; **Match:** \$283,440; **Project closed:** March 2025

10. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – East West Creek Farms LLC (FY2024)

Virginia Outdoors Foundation received \$610,000 in VLCF grant funds for the partial purchase of an open-space easement on a 720-acre farm in Mecklenburg County. The project protects prime soils and statewide important farmland included in ConserveVirginia's Agriculture and Forestry category. The property is part of a larger multi-generational family farm producing corn, beans, and tobacco, as well as pasture and hay. The property contains two miles of frontage on Parham Creek and Flat Creek, which will remain protected with 50-foot forested buffers benefiting water quality and wildlife habitat and corridors. The property is bounded on two sides by permanently protected lands under easement, resulting in a contiguous block of 1,417 conserved acres.

Grant Award: \$610,000; **Payment amount:** \$610,000; **Match:** \$1,072,915; **Project closed:** November 2024

11. Stafford County – AP Legacy, LLC Farm (FY2024)

Stafford County received a VLCF grant to assist in the recordation of an open-space easement held by the county under their Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program on a Century Farm known as the AP Legacy Farm. The 73-acre farm is primarily farmed for hay production and livestock. The easement protects 41 acres of prime farm soils and soils of statewide importance; 12 acres of mixed forestland; and environmental features including 7,120 linear feet of forested perennial streams, wetlands, and special flood hazard area. The property falls within an ecological core and is adjacent to two conserved parcels under easement with VOF. The property was the site of the Brunswick Parish Glebe, one of two 18th century glebes in Stafford, owned by Parson John Waugh (1630-1706). The property is located along a Virginia scenic byway, providing visual access to the traveling public.

Grant Award: \$248,450; **Payment amount:** \$248,450; **Match:** \$308,972; **Project closed:** March 2025

12. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Nottoway 186 (FY2024)

VOF now holds an open-space easement over the 186-acre farm that protects the property's agricultural fields and forests, wetlands, and more than 3,000 feet of frontage on the state scenic Nottoway River in Southampton County. The property contains working pine forest and old-growth Cypress, and mixed hardwood stands along the river. The property is listed in six ConserveVirginia categories: Agriculture and Forestry, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, Cultural and Historic Preservation, Scenic Preservation, and Water Quality Improvement. There are five species of conservation concern per DWR's Wildlife Information Service.

Grant Award: \$537,500; **Payment amount:** \$537,500; **Match:** \$132,415; **Project closed:** March 2025

13. Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia – Acquiring Rappahannock Tribe's Ancestral Homelands Phase III (FY2024)

The Rappahannock Tribe acquired 969 acres of ancestral homelands on the Rappahannock River at Fones Cliffs in Richmond County to conserve it as a natural area and for educational purposes, with funding

assistance from a FY24 VLFC grant. The property was formerly owned by the VA True Corp., who had it re-zoned for a golf resort with hundreds of residential housing units but declared bankruptcy in 2017. Pursuant to the grant, The Conservation Fund purchased the property, conveyed conservation easements to the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and USFWS, and then fee title to the Tribe. The property contains a mile of frontage along the river and was the largest of the remaining unprotected riverfront ownerships within the Refuge boundary. Its protection creates 2,454 acres of contiguous conserved habitat along three miles of riverfront. The tract is immediately adjacent to property owned by the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is in turn adjacent to land owned by the Tribe. It is an example of Northern Coastal Plain/Piedmont Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest. Larger trees are found in deep ravines bisecting the property with waterways at the bottom, all of which flow into the river, forming tidal marshes at their terminus.

Grant Award: \$1,716,166 (\$450,000 from Forestlands funding and \$1,266,166 from Historic Resources funding); **Payment amount:** \$1,716,166; **Match:** \$1,039,544; **Project closed:** April 2025

14. American Battlefield Trust –Brandy Rock Farm I Tract at Brandy Station Battlefield (FY2024)

The Trust has preserved the 100-acre Brandy Rock Farm I Tract in Culpeper County via an open-space easement held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. The Brandy Rock Farm I Tract is unimproved and located entirely within the core area of the Brandy Station Battlefield. The property includes 82 acres of open farming area, nine acres of woods, and 1,084 feet of streams. The historic easement preserves the tract's agricultural productivity, the natural and historic resources, and the viewsheds of Brandy Station Battlefield and nearby Culpeper Battlefields State Park. The property is part of a larger 539-acre tract currently in active agricultural use.

Grant Award: \$271,660; **Payment amount:** \$266,297; **Match:** \$846,714; **Project closed:** December 2024; **Amount Returned to Historic Resources Preservation Category:** \$5,363

15. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Beaver Dam Legacy, LLC (FY2025)

VOF received a grant for \$125,000 to place an easement on 138-acre farm in Loudoun County, which is adjacent to three other properties protected by VOF easements and within one mile of nearly 1,700 acres of protected land. The property fronts Beaverdam Creek, a tributary of Goose Creek, for 2,800 feet and contains several historic buildings, which are also contributing structures to the Unison Battlefield Historic District. The property is bisected by, and the historic buildings are visible from, Newlin Mill Road, part of the Beaverdam Creek Historic Roadways District.

Grant Award: \$125,000; **Payment amount:** \$125,000; **Match:** \$1,756,358; **Project closed:** February 2025

Withdrawn VLCF Grant Projects

Five grant projects have been withdrawn since the Board's last meeting.

1. Department of Forestry – Poplar Hollow (FY2022; FY2024)

The Department of Forestry sought to conserve approximately 583 acres of forestland in Shenandoah and Frederick Counties adjoining Devil's Backbone State Forest. The project was withdrawn after the landowners objected to non-negotiable forestry deed language.

Grant Awards: FY22: \$300,000; FY24: \$250,000. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Forestland Preservation Category.

2. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Chestnut Creek Wetlands Natural Area Preserve Addition (FY2022)

Natural Heritage requested a grant to acquire 11 acres as an addition to the Chestnut Creek Natural Area Preserve in Floyd County. This project was withdrawn in late October 2024 after DCR received an alternative funding source.

Grant Award: \$165,000. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Natural Areas Preservation Category

3. Department of Wildlife Resources – Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative II (FY2024)

The Department of Wildlife Resources was awarded a grant to acquire and conserve approximately 476 acres in Accomack County. Along with Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative III, this project would have consolidated ownership, removed complicated boundary and access concerns, and provided the public with opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, and hiking. DWR withdrew this project after learning that the landowners harvested timber on the target parcels in the proposal to complement their habitat goals for migratory birds in an area of hemispheric importance.

Grant Award: \$300,000. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Forestlands Category

4. Department of Wildlife Resources – Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative III (FY2024)

The Department of Wildlife Resources was awarded a grant to acquire and conserve approximately 762 acres in Accomack County in FY24 which would have complemented the recently completed VLCF-funded initiative to purchase 8,800 acres on the Eastern Shore. The landowner decided to keep their farm in the family instead of selling, following receipt of a lower-than-expected appraisal.

Grant Award: \$450,000. **Note:** \$441,300 will be returned to the Forestlands Preservation Category and \$8,700 to the Open Spaces and Parks Category

5. City of Chesapeake – City of Chesapeake Open Spaces and Parks Application (FY2025)

The City of Chesapeake requested a grant to acquire 96 acres to protect wetlands, water quality, and aquatic ecological integrity while providing public waterfront access along the southern branch of the

Elizabeth River. Upon receiving the appraisal that valued the property significantly less than anticipated, the landowner was no longer interested in selling the property.

Grant Award: \$800,000. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Open Spaces and Parks Category

Summary of Open VLCF Grants

- For the FY23 grant round, 17 of the 41 grants awarded remain open.
- For the FY24 grant round, 19 of the 29 grants awarded remain open.
- For the FY25 grant round, 26 of the 28 grants awarded remain open.
- Currently, we are managing a total of 62 open grants with a total value of \$30,221,970.

ATTACHMENT E



2025-FY26 Grant Manual (~~FY26 Program Year~~)

Adoption Date: June 3, 2025

Commented [SB1]: Changes made on May 14, 2025:

1. Add note to Due Diligence Section to reach out to staff, on page 19
2. Fixed score sheet for Forest Preservation Development Vulnerability classes, page 22
3. Add 5 points to Water Quality criterion, page 32
4. Clarified language about 2% impervious cap for Ag preservation, page 36

Administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

I. GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 1999, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (Foundation or VLCF), established under Va. Code §§ 10.1-1017 through 10.1-1026, has funded land conservation projects throughout the Commonwealth. The Foundation administers, manages, and holds competitive grant rounds from a special, nonreverting fund in the state treasury known as the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (Fund).

The Foundation administers the Fund for the purpose of providing grants to state agencies, other public bodies, qualifying nonprofits and state-recognized and federally recognized Virginia Indian Tribes. The grant funds can be used for the costs associated with permanently conserving land throughout the Commonwealth, including the purchase of development rights. VLCF grants are awarded only for acquiring interests in property that have not yet been permanently protected. There are five grant categories set out in Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (D): farmland preservation; forestland conservation; historic area preservation; natural area protection; and open spaces and parks.

The Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, serving as Administrative Secretary and assisted by an interagency task force, is charged with administering, reviewing, and making recommendations on grant applications to the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources and the Foundation. Using specific criteria defined in each grant category, grants may be awarded for up to 50 percent of total project costs. The program can pay up to 100 percent of these costs for state agencies and eligible Virginia Indian Tribes, Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2).

Guiding factors for distribution of VLCF funds are set out in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1020 and 1021.1, which specify that at least one third of the funds shall be used to secure open-space easements to be held or co-held by a public body, and that the Foundation shall seek to achieve a fair distribution of land protected throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, the state budget customarily specifies that no less than 50 percent of the VLCF funds shall be used for projects that provide public access.

The scoring criteria continue to place emphasis on providing grants to underserved communities and areas that have not previously benefited from VLCF grants. The Foundation strives to provide a fair distribution of public access and recreational opportunities, and to preserve open space, natural landscapes, and working lands across the Commonwealth. Additionally, the scoring criteria give precedence to projects that are within ConserveVirginia, as those lands are identified as conservation priorities by our state agency partners and other collaborators. There are seven different overarching categories within ConserveVirginia: (i) agriculture and forestry, (ii) natural habitat and ecosystem diversity, (iii) floodplains and flooding resilience, (iv) cultural and historic preservation, (v) scenic preservation, (vi) protected landscapes resilience, and (vii) water quality improvement. All conservation values identified by the applicant in the grant application must be protected in the easement.

Important Program Information

Note: We welcome Virginia's state and federally recognized tribes to apply for VLCF grants. As tribal participation in the VLCF program presents a new paradigm in achieving perpetual land conservation in Virginia, we ask [Virginia Indian Tribe](#) applicants to please contact staff to discuss your proposed project and planned means to conserve the land in perpetuity. [VLCF staff can](#)

provide technical support and guidance (see page 5 for contact information). Because federally recognized tribes are sovereign entities, staff will work with each tribe who receives a grant award on a case-by-case basis to incorporate appropriate language that meets required VLCF protections into the final project.

Eligible Applicants

- Applications may be submitted by state agencies, localities, other public bodies, state-recognized and federally recognized Virginia Indian Tribes and registered (tax-exempt) nonprofit organizations that qualify as a holder under Va. Code § 10.1-1009.

Eligible Projects

- Eligible projects must be for acquiring fee simple title or conservation and open-space easements for the perpetual protection of ecological, cultural or historical resources, lands for recreational purposes, and lands for threatened or endangered species, fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, agricultural and forestal lands and open space. Projects must protect land in perpetuity through recordation of a conservation easement and/or an open-space easement, or dedication under the Open-Space Land Act.
- If the proposed project seeks reimbursement for the fee acquisition of a property, then the fee acquisition cannot occur prior to the application deadline for this grant cycle.
- No application relying on eminent domain shall be considered, as Va. Code § 10.1-1023 prohibits the use of VLCF funds to acquire any property interest through eminent domain.
- Projects must be for a minimum of \$20,000 in total expense or a grant request of no less than \$10,000.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the landowners have been notified and are receptive to the proposed project. Applicants must submit, as part of their application, a signed letter from all of the landowners indicating their willingness to conserve the property.
- The proposed project must be for **specific property** that meets the criteria for one or more of the five grant categories listed below. Applications that do not identify specific property boundaries will not be considered.
- Only one application may be submitted for a specific property in each grant round.
- Applications for the acquisition of easements on lands currently permanently protected for conservation purposes are not eligible for a VLCF grant unless the project proposes to further protect the property by a more restrictive easement.

Eligible Costs

- The VLCF program can reimburse up to 50% of the appraised value of the subject property (fee simple or easement) and eligible due diligence costs for transactions involving localities or qualified nonprofit organizations, or 100% of such costs incurred by state agencies or state-recognized and federally recognized Virginia Indian Tribes, ~~Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2)~~. See Appendix A for eligible expenses.

- If the required 50% match is not determined at the time of the application, a letter confirming that the match will be met must be included with the application. See example letter in Appendix C.
- Possible sources of match funding include: (i) cash or pass-through dollars from other sources, e.g. grants awarded from sources other than VLCF; (ii) bargain sales, i.e., the monetary value of the donated portion of the property; or (iii) other conserved property acquired in fee or restricted by an easement within the previous two years, and not acquired with VLCF funds, so long as the match property is also restricted as approved by VLCF.
- When additional property is proposed as match in a grant application, the match property must be in the proximity of or ecologically connected to the property that is the subject of the grant. The match property must also be protected in the same manner as the grant property; information on the match property must be included in the application; all due diligence items are also required for the match property.
- Indirect costs cannot be reimbursed or considered as match. These ineligible costs include, without limitation, staff time, overhead, work provided pro bono, or maintenance/operating costs of lands and facilities.

Project Requirements

- If the applicant uses the landowner's surname in the name of the project, then they must first obtain the landowner's permission. VLCF will use the project name provided in the application in public reports to the Governor and the General Assembly and press releases.
- A nonprofit organization seeking to hold an easement must provide documentation in its application that it meets the holder requirements in the Virginia Conservation Easement Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017.
- All nonprofit organization projects, whether fee simple or easement, must be protected by an open-space easement in perpetuity that is held or co-held by a public body (e.g., a state agency or local governmental entity), pursuant to Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2). An acknowledgement letter from the public body stating that it is willing to consider holding the easement or owning the property in fee simple must be included as part of the application.
- VLCF requires certain property protections to further statewide environmental conservation goals, including permanent vegetated riparian buffers on all funded projects with perennial water resources. Additional points may be awarded for greater protections proffered in an application. These protections must be preserved in perpetuity by the deed associated with the project. See Appendix D for all of the required provisions and further information on riparian buffers.
- For projects awarded funding, the requisite public body holder shall include language in the fee-simple deed or in the easement deed that states that the property will be taken under the Open-Space Land Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1700 through 10.1-1705, and that the protection is perpetual in nature and not extinguishable except pursuant to the provisions of the Open-Space Land Act.
- Properties acquired in fee or made subject to an easement as a result of a VLCF grant may not be diverted or converted from the approved use for which the grant was made. If a conversion

or diversion occurs or, in the case of an easement, an extinguishment of the easement occurs, the VLCF must be reimbursed for the loss of conserved land for the proportionate amount of the then value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based. The amount of reimbursement shall be a percentage of the appraised value of the property interest acquired with VLCF funds. The following formula shall be used to calculate the percentage of reimbursement to VLCF: (full amount of the VLCF grant ÷ appraised value of the property interest at the time of the grant) × 100. As a condition of its grant, the VLCF will require that language be included in the deed of acquisition or the deed of easement to such effect.

- If a nonprofit organization is awarded a grant to acquire fee-simple property, it may be sold only if it remains under easement and the VLCF is reimbursed for the proportionate amount of the then fair market value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based for its proportionate share of the fair-market value at the time of the sale (percentage of VLCF reimbursement outlined in the deed × the fair-market value of the property at the time of the sale). The fair-market value of the property must be supported by a current appraisal. An exception to reimbursing VLCF may be granted if the property is transferred to a public agency and the recorded deed of transfer states the agency agrees to hold and manage the property for the purposes for which it was originally acquired.
- All projects awarded VLCF funds must submit the due diligence documents and invoices specified in Appendix A.
- Grant payments are made as a reimbursement and cannot exceed the amount expended by the grant recipient.

II. APPLYING TO THE GRANT PROGRAM

Applicants may apply to the program in our Grant Management Portal found here: <https://vadcr.webgrantscloud.com/index.do>. The applicant should read through this entire grant manual to become familiar with program specifics and requirements. Please contact staff with questions as you work through all of the information. We recommend that applicants contact the respective category/agency representative found on pages 6-13 below, prior to submitting their application.

Application Information and Deadline

A complete application includes all of the information and documents required by the Grant Management Portal, and as outlined in this Grant Manual. The complete application must be submitted to the Department of Conservation and Recreation by no later than 4-5 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28, 2024 12, 2025.

Questions?

- General application inquiries:
 - Larry Mikkelson Damian Martin at (804) 337-0046971-0257, larry.mikkelson@dcv.virginia.gov
 - Suzan Bulbulkaya at (804) 371-5218, suzan.bulbulkaya@dcv.virginia.gov
- Category-specific inquiries: See contact information listed under each category below
- WebGrants Management Portal, ConserveVirginia, GIS, or mapping questions:
 - Gina DiCicco at (804) 837-1819, gina.dicicco@dcv.virginia.gov

Application Categories and Additional Scoring Criteria

1. Farmland and Forestland Preservation
2. Historic Area Preservation
3. Natural Area Preservation
4. Open Spaces and Parks
5. Additional Scoring Criteria

Applicants must select one primary category for their project. A secondary category may also be chosen to increase the possibility of receiving funds, but is not required. If you choose a secondary category, make sure to contact the listed agency staff to ensure your project is also eligible under the secondary category. Multiple applications for the same project within the same grant round will not be accepted.

NOTE: The applicant is advised to review the program requirements below carefully as they prepare their application and to determine the best category for their project. See Appendix B for the scoring sheets for each category and the Additional Criteria for all categories. To get a sense for how your project will score, you may want to score your application using the scoring sheet for your chosen category **and** the Additional Criteria. **Make sure your application addresses all of the applicable category criteria and the Additional Scoring Criteria to be awarded maximum points.**

Program Requirements by Category

1. Farmland and Forestland Preservation Category – Two funding scenarios are set out in subsections C and D of Va. Code § 10.1-1020, based on the amount of funds appropriated in the state budget for VLCF. If less than \$10 million is appropriated, then there are four grant categories with farmland and forestland preservation sharing one single category (1/4 of funds). If \$10 million or more is appropriated, then there are five grant categories with farmland preservation and forestland preservation being separately funded categories (each category gets 1/5 of funds). For both scenarios, separate scoring criteria have been developed for agricultural lands and for forestal lands. The applicant should use the set of criteria that is most appropriate for the project being submitted.

A. Farmland Preservation Criteria

Contact: Virginia Department of ~~Agriculture and Consumer Services~~ Forestry, ~~(804) 786-1346~~ ~~786-1906~~ ~~(434) 282-4823~~

Genny Harris, Working Lands Conservation Specialist, Office of Working Lands Preservation,
gennette.harris@dof.virginia.gov Farmland Preservation Coordinator
genette.harris@vdaes.virginia.gov
<https://www.vdaes.virginia.gov/conservation-and-environmental-farmland-preservation.shtml>

Applications for the permanent protection of agricultural lands will be evaluated according to:

- ◆ Soil productivity. The parcel will be ranked based on the percentage that it contains of each of the following soils (as defined in § ~~10.1-1119.7 3-2-205~~ of the Code of Virginia) which can be found at <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>:

“Prime farmland” is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, nursery, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Prime farmland includes land that possesses the above characteristics but is being used currently to produce livestock and timber. It does not include land already in or committed to urban development or water storage.

“Unique farmland” is land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

“Important farmland” other than prime or unique farmland, is land that is of statewide or local importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, nursery, oilseed or other agricultural crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or local government agency and that the United States Secretary of Agriculture determines should be considered as farmland.

Please note, if these percentage numbers of soil productivity are not provided in the application, it will be presumed that none of these soils exist on the property.

- ◆ Property acreage. The size of the parcel in relation to average agricultural parcel sizes in the locality will be used as a determining factor. More information can be found at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>.
- ◆ Current and historical use of property. Priority will be given to any property that is currently being farmed and/or is a designated Century Farm. Information about this program can be found at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/conservation-and-environmental-virginia-century-farms.shtml>

~~◆ Local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. Is the application for conserving farmland under a local PDR program? The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Forestry's Office of Farmland Working Lands Preservation works with localities to help establish local PDR programs by creating model policies and practices, establishing criteria to certify programs as eligible to receive funds from public sources, and determining methods and sources of funding for localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements. In an effort to support local farmland priorities, points will be awarded to those projects using a local PDR program as match.~~

Commented [SB2]: Moved this language to the next page under Local support.

- ◆ Adjacency to conserved lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or nearby, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.
- ◆ Development vulnerability rank. Using the Virginia ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model, parcels will be evaluated according to their vulnerability ranking. The

Development Vulnerability model can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable>.

- ◆ Best Management Practices. The existence of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and farm management plans that are currently being utilized as part of the normal operation of the farm, either implemented through state and federal conservation programs or voluntarily implemented without state or federal cost-sharing or technical assistance. Best management practices may include stream fencing, buffers, conservation tillage, cover crops, or animal waste management. Examples of ~~the a~~ farm management plans ~~could~~ include, ~~but are not limited to,~~ a grazing management plan, a nutrient management plan, a conservation plan, or a resource management plan, ~~(which would include both the conservation plan and nutrient management plan).~~ **If a plan is not provided with the application, it will be presumed that no plan exists.**

- ◆ ~~Locality support.~~ **Support** for the project evidenced by local farmland protection policies, including:
 - ~~Agricultural Zoning. The property is located within an exclusive agricultural zoning district, which primarily restricts land use to farming and forestry activities.~~

 - ~~Agricultural and Forestal Districts. The project is within an Agricultural/Forestal district, a rural conservation zone that protects farm, forest, and open space lands from conversion to intensive non-agricultural or forestal uses for a defined term.~~

 - ~~Use Value Taxation. The project is subject to agricultural use-value taxation, ensuring eligible land is assessed at its value in use instead of market value. To qualify for agricultural use-value taxation, a minimum of 5 acres must be a bona fide agricultural operation.~~

 - ~~Purchase of Development Rights Programs. The Virginia Department of Forestry's Office of Working Lands Preservation works with localities to help establish local PDR programs by creating model policies and practices, establishing criteria to certify programs as eligible to receive funds from public sources, and determining methods and sources of funding for localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements. In an effort to support local farmland priorities, points will be awarded to those projects using a local PDR program as match.~~~~the comprehensive plan, agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, and use value taxation and Purchase of Development Rights projects.~~

- ◆ ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

B. Forestland Preservation Criteria

Contact: Virginia Department of Forestry, (434) 987-7102

Amanda Scheps, ~~Working Lands Conservation~~ Program Manager, [Office of Working Lands Preservation](mailto:amanda.scheps@dof.virginia.gov), amanda.scheps@dof.virginia.gov
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/conservation/index.htm>

Applications for the permanent protection of working forest lands will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Property Acreage. Larger blocks of land under single ownership are more manageable, better protect ecological communities and biodiversity, and better sustain the flow of natural goods and services over time.
- ◆ Acres of Forest on the proposed property. Larger blocks of forest under single ownership are more easily managed, better protect the productivity and sustainable flow of natural goods and services from the forest, and better protect forest conservation values (e.g., have larger less-disturbed “core” areas, protect water quality, maintain habitat connectivity, etc.). To be considered for points under this criterion, land must be devoted to forestal use as defined by the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council’s (SLEAC) technical standards for classification of real estate devoted to forestal use. Most critically, the proposed project’s acreage must qualify as “Productive Forest Land” or “Non-Productive Forest Land” as defined by SLEAC standards and contain at least 20 acres of forest.

Land devoted to forestal use that has been recently harvested of merchantable timber, is being regenerated into a new forest and not currently developed for nonforest use qualifies for points under this criterion. In addition, acreage that is under contract to be planted or afforested qualifies for points. Also, to qualify for points under this criterion, the proposed parcels must be under the same ownership (currently or anticipated after acquisition using VLFC funds) and must be “contiguous.” To be considered contiguous, the proposed parcels must either (a) directly border each other or (b) all border another block of property already owned by the proposed landowner. If multiple, non-contiguous parcels are proposed, only those that separately meet SLEAC standards will receive points.

- ◆ Acres of forest with a “high” Forest Conservation Value (FCV) based upon VDOF’s analysis and map (2020 version). See the Forest Conservation Values map on the [Natural Heritage Data Explorer](#) or download GIS data from VDOF (see link below). “High” values are those labeled on the map as “5: Outstanding” or “4: Very High”. The FCV analysis ranks the relative conservation value of forestland based on watershed integrity, size of forested blocks, forest management potential, proximity to other conserved lands, threat of conversion, and presence of diminished tree species or significant forest communities. The FCV GIS layer and associated description can be downloaded at: <https://vdof.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/embedGallery.html?displayapps=true&displayinline=true&group=f40da8804f7645de9f2298945c5d897d>

- ◆ ~~Length of intermittent and perennial watercourses (as identified by the USGS National Hydrography Dataset; (<https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/advanced-viewer/>), as well as wetlands and water impoundments, present on or bordering the property. Forested watersheds and streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users. Development vulnerability rank. Using the Virginia Conservation Vision Development Vulnerability model, parcels will be evaluated according to their vulnerability ranking. The Development Vulnerability model can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable>.~~

Commented [SB3]: Deleted points awarded for water quality in the Forest Preservation category because the Additional Scoring Criteria (ASC) points awarded for WQ were duplicative. (We are proposing to increase the ASC WQ points from 11 to 15.) Replaced the 15 points with Development vulnerability to better reflect the state forester’s prioritization.

- ◆ Adjacency to Conserved Lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or near, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.

- ◆ Management of Multiple Resources. The degree to which the property is managed according to a forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) prepared by a professional forester. Applicant should provide a copy of a current forest resource management plan and demonstrate how recommendations are being followed to achieve forest management goals. **If a plan is not provided with the application, it will be presumed that no plan exists.**
- ◆ Preservation of forest acreage. The degree to which the applicant is willing to preserve a portion of forest acreage in perpetuity to protect the working forest land base. Land that is not currently forested but that the landowner will afforest and maintain as forest in perpetuity counts. **The draft deed or term sheet accompanying the application must include language reflecting this commitment; otherwise, this acreage will be assumed to be zero.**
- ◆ ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

2. Historic Area Preservation Category

Contact: Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), (804) 482-6094
 Karri Richardson, Easement Program Specialist, Karri.Richardson@dhr.virginia.gov
<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/easements/easement-program-overview/>

Applications are encouraged for projects that conserve historic resources associated with underrepresented communities. Applications for the permanent protection of historic, archaeological, cultural, or historic landscape resources will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Historic Significance, strong proposals are likely to protect or preserve a resource that:
 - A. Is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR), found at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/>, either individually or as a contributing resource in a listed historic district; or
 - B. Is a battlefield property identified with a priority rating in one of the following reports issued by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program: "Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields" (1993, as amended), or "Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States," (2007, as amended); contact Karri Richardson at karri.richardson@dhr.virginia.gov if you need a map to confirm the location of the property within identified battlefields; or
 - C. Has been formally determined to be eligible for listing on the VLR by DHR within the previous five calendar years and remains eligible for listing in the opinion of DHR. For assistance in determining whether a property has been determined eligible for the VLR, please contact DHR Archives at (804) 482-6102. Note: listing on the VLR may be required by project completion for properties awarded funding in order to meet the Virginia Board of Historic Resources (VBHR) Easement Program eligibility requirements.

- D. Integrity. The integrity of the historic resource to be protected or preserved shall be considered. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic significance through attributes such as location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.
- E. ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Cultural and Historic Preservation category.
- ◆ Underrepresented Resources. The extent to which the application identifies and documents resources associated with Virginia’s culturally diverse history, such as properties associated with people of color (circa 1619-Civil War), the Reconstruction Era (1861-1898), the Civil Rights Movement, LGBTQ, African-American, Asian-American, Latino, Hispanic, Native American and women’s history.
 - ◆ Threat. Threatened property is defined as property (i) documented to be currently or recently on the market (within the past calendar year); (ii) threatened by development, where plans/ plats have been submitted to or approved by the locality’s planning department within the last calendar year; (iii) in an estate that is currently being settled; (iv) adjacent to property currently on the market or sold within the previous calendar year; or (v) with built or other historic, archaeological, or cultural resources that are threatened by demolition, destruction, or development. **Documentation supporting specific threats must be submitted with the application.**
 - ◆ Use and Treatment of Historic Resources on the Property. The extent to which plans for future uses of (e.g. historic site interpretation, rehabilitation of the battlefield landscape) or alterations to the property are consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection. All plans must be described in or submitted with the application and must meet the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (36 C.F.R. Part 68). Plans submitted as part of the application must be approved by DHR before the project receives final VLCF funding.
 - ◆ Historic Resource Protection. The degree to which the applicant is willing to preserve all historic resources on the property in perpetuity in accordance with the DHR’s current easement template. Applicants must attach a list or summary of proposed restrictions to be included in the easement based on DHR’s current easement template (please do **not** attach a copy of the easement template to the grant application). Contact Karri Richardson at karri.richardson@dhr.virginia.gov if you need a copy of DHR’s current easement template.
 - ◆ Adjacency to Conserved Lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or near, already conserved lands held in perpetuity.
 - ◆ Furthers Public Interests. The extent to which the project includes specific plans for programs that will further or promote public interests, such as education, research, community outreach, recreation, or heritage tourism promotion. Applications for projects that conserve historic resources associated with underrepresented communities and those that also provide public educational opportunities and share untold stories to advance social equity are particularly encouraged.
 - ◆ Applicants for funds in this category must provide original digital images no greater than 800 x 800 pixels in dimension. In the case of built cultural or historic structures, these should include images that document the exterior of the primary historic structure and any secondary

structures, significant interior spaces and features, and the setting and viewshed of the primary resource. For archaeological sites, applicants should include a general view or site plan and images documenting the condition of the site, stratigraphy (if applicable), and representative features showing the integrity of those features. For battlefields or other landscapes, images should document the overall site, its surroundings and viewshed, and all historic and non-historic structures, roads, and other features within the project.

- ◆ If funds are awarded for the purpose of acquiring fee-simple title to or an easement on eligible historic properties, the property owner shall separately offer to convey to the VBHR a perpetual preservation easement on the property to be acquired with the VLCF funds (including any match property). The VBHR shall decide whether to accept the easement offer based on established criteria and existing policies and procedures governing the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Easement Program (Chapter 22, Title 10.1 of Va. Code). DHR staff administers the easements on behalf of VBHR. The property must meet the Easement Program eligibility requirements (see <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/easements/>); if not, or if the VBHR declines acceptance of the easement offer, DHR may recommend an alternative easement holder.

All properties acquired with Historic Area Preservation funds shall be open for public access for a minimum of two days each calendar year. Public access shall not disturb any sensitive resources thereon, and may require approval by DHR to ensure that historic resources will not be affected.

3. Natural Area Preservation Category

Contact: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, (804) 371-6205
Rob Evans, Protection Manager, Virginia Natural Heritage Program, Rob.Evans@dcr.virginia.gov
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/>

All properties conserved with VLCF funds in this category shall be dedicated as natural area preserves in accordance with Va. Code § 10.1-213. Applications in this category must include land that will contribute to biodiversity values and statewide conservation significance. Applicants are encouraged to contact DCR Natural Heritage well ahead of grant submittal deadline, so that staff and project proponents have opportunities to visit the property, understand natural heritage resource values and understand the management requirements of the property, to confirm project eligibility and support success. The landowner will be required to manage the property in partnership with DCR Natural Heritage in perpetuity.

Projects/Applicants must:

- 1) address a protection need in the Virginia Natural Heritage Plan, by making a significant contribution to the permanent protection of one or more natural heritage resources, including habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species or state-significant natural communities;
- 2) qualify to be dedicated as a natural area preserve as provided in Va. Code § 10.1-213;

- 3) have been sufficiently evaluated by DCR-~~DNH~~ [Natural Heritage](#) staff (including site visit) for the extent, type, and viability of natural heritage resources present and their management requirements and constraints;
- 4) be recommended by, via a support letter from, DCR Natural Heritage based on specific criteria listed in Va. Code § 10.1-1022.1 (B);
- 5) have landowners who understand the requirements of their land being dedicated to the state natural area preserve system and who demonstrate commitment to the requirement for active and ongoing management activities for natural heritage resources on the property;
- 6) have been subject to adequate discussion between landowners and appropriate DCR-~~DNH~~ [Natural Heritage](#) representatives to develop confidence in the feasibility of carrying out necessary management requirements; and
- 7) ensure that the proposed area for acquisition and the applicant's ability to expend VLCF and matching funds can be conducted within two years of grant award.

Applications for Natural Area Preservation category funding will be evaluated based on specific scoring (Appendix B) that address these project attributes, including the percentage of the property that is included in the ConserveVirginia Natural Habitat and [Biological Ecosystem](#) Diversity category.

All properties shall be [open made available](#) for public access for a reasonable amount of time each year [when compatible with, and](#) without disturbing, the sensitive resources thereon, ~~and~~ [All properties](#) shall be available for DCR Natural Heritage approved research, associated monitoring and necessary stewardship activities. ~~Applicants shall provide a public access plan that addresses these issues and contains a minimum of one guided nature hike per year.~~

4. Open Spaces and Parks Category

Contact: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation - Planning and Recreation Resources Division, (804) ~~786-4379~~[508-8896](tel:804-508-8896)
 Kristal McKelvey, Chief Recreation Grants Manager, recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/>

Applications for the permanent protection and acquisition of public recreational lands or open-space lands will be evaluated according to the following criteria, [in accordance with the outdoor recreational priorities identified in the 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey and 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan. The VOP and survey results may be accessed at \[dcr.virginia.gov/vop\]\(http://dcr.virginia.gov/vop\). To support their narrative responses, applicants are encouraged to submit a conceptual site plan, visualization, or sketch of proposed site features that highlights possible locations for public access, recreational uses, support amenities, conservation areas, and other features.](#)

- ◆ Acquires an interest in land that provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential.

- ◆ Acquires an interest in land that creates new priority public outdoor land-based recreational opportunities ~~for underserved communities~~ or expands existing park systems or other recreational resources to protect public conservation or recreational interests.
- ◆ Protects priority viewsheds or land important to the protection of (i) any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, (ii) Virginia's Scenic Rivers, (iii) designated Scenic Roads, (iv) Virginia Byways, or (v) nationally designated scenic lands or recreational trails, including state-wide connecting trails, greenways or blueways. See the VOP Mapper at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vopmapper> ~~https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vopmapper~~
- ◆ Supports local or regional plans for parks, open space, and outdoor recreational facilities, or contributes to the protection of a state, regionally, or locally identified conservation corridor.
- ◆ ~~Addresses a need identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). The VOP may be accessed at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>~~
- ◆ ~~Degree to which~~ Makes the grant-funded land is made available for public access and use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching.
- ◆ ~~Provides an outdoor recreational resource to an underserved community. The Social Vulnerability Index created by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences may be used to identify underserved areas of the state: http://emap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html. Data from other sources may also be considered for this criterion if applicant provides the source reference.~~
- ◆ Recreation Access Need. The project will be evaluated based on whether the area is underserved by public outdoor recreation opportunities and the demonstrated recreation need of its location based on the DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model and the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe Model. Projects offering land-based recreation opportunities will be scored on whichever model demonstrates a greater need. Projects offering water-based recreation opportunities will be scored on the Nature-based Recreation Access Model's water-based recreation need rating. Information on the Nature-based Recreation Access Model can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisrec>. ParkServe can be found at: <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>. Data from other sources may also be considered for this criterion if applicant provides the source reference and link to the data justifying that the project area is underserved.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated on the amount of the total project area that is included in any ConserveVirginia category so long as the project provides daily public access.

Commented [SB4]: Underserved communities are addressed in Recreation Access Need below.

Commented [SB5]: This item is deleted because it is duplicative of the same Additional Scoring Criteria item. Underserved considerations are now included in the Recreation Access Need criterion and Public Access sections in this category, which is increased by 5 points.

5. Additional Scoring Criteria

All applications will also be scored using additional criteria that prioritize statewide conservation goals. Be sure to review Appendix B, Section VI, pages 28-30 through 303-333, for a breakdown of these criteria, which could yield 82-91 additional points for the application. Also, be sure to address each criterion in your application.

III. APPLICATION REVIEW AND GRANT AWARDS

First Application Review

Applications will be received and reviewed by DCR for completeness. Complete applications will be shared with an interagency task force of subject-matter experts for review and scoring.

Second Application Review

The interagency task force will rank the projects and consider geographic distribution, percentage of projects with public access, and those being placed under easement.

Final Review, Grant Award, Notification

Highly ranked applications will be presented to the Foundation for consideration, action, and grant approval. After Board action to approve grants, successful grant recipients will be notified of the pending grant award via an email from VLCF staff.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Grant Agreements

Within a few weeks of email notification of a grant award, a grant agreement will be emailed to the grant recipient to sign and return the document. After the Executive Secretary has signed the agreement, a scan of the fully executed agreement will be provided to the grant recipient.

Grants are made for a two-year period. Administrative extensions of up to one year may be granted upon extenuating circumstances being documented by the grant recipient. [Any additional extension requires approval from the VLCF Board.](#)

Periodic Status Reporting

Grant recipients will report the status of the project twice per year. These progress reports will provide status updates and include any changes in scope or budget for the project.

Final Steps and Closing

Certain required documents must be provided to VLCF, and approved by VLCF, prior to grant funds being disbursed. These documents are listed in Appendix A ~~and should be uploaded to WebGrants as the Grantee makes progress on their project and no later than 60 days before closing.~~

Under no circumstances will VLCF funds be disbursed until all required documents have been provided, reviewed, and approved by VLCF, and all of the required deeds have been recorded.

For projects that result in multiple easements or transactions, VLCF funding will not be disbursed until all easements are recorded and the entire property described in the application is permanently protected.

Grant payments require five business days advance notice before they can be processed for payment.

If grant funding is provided to a closing agent, then a copy of the recorded deeds must be provided to VLCF within two months after closing.

V. APPENDICES

List of Appendices:

- Appendix A VLCF Grant Specifications
- I. Required Items in an Application
 - II. Additional Recommended Items
 - III. Eligible Expenses for the Grant Program
 - IV. Documents and Due Diligence Items Required Prior to Payment of Funds for an Awarded Grant
- Appendix B Score Sheets for each Category and Additional Scoring Criteria
- I. Farmland Preservation
 - II. Forestland Preservation
 - III. Historic Area Preservation
 - IV. Natural Areas Preservation
 - V. Open Spaces and Parks
 - VI. Additional Scoring Criteria
- Appendix C Example Match Letter
- Appendix D Required Property Protections and Vegetated Riparian Buffer Information

Appendix A – VLCF Grant Specifications

I. Required Items in an Application (the grant application portal will prompt you to upload these items):

1. Minimum of two maps of the project: Aerial map and Topo map (USGS USA Topo Map), both showing any neighboring conserved lands.
2. Minimum of three photographs of the project property, representing the conservation values being protected.
3. A signed letter from all landowners stating that they are willing participants in the proposed transaction.
4. A match letter (see Appendix C) if the required 50% match is not yet in hand or a governing body resolution.
5. For easement projects, a term sheet or draft easement indicating the proposed protections of the project's conservation values.
6. For nonprofit applicants:
 - a. an acknowledgement letter from the public body willing to: hold or co-hold an easement on the property; or hold the property in fee simple, and
 - b. evidence that the nonprofit meets the holder requirements found in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017.
7. For applications in the Historic Category, additional information and documents specified on pages [109](#) through [112](#).
8. For applicants claiming more than 60% match, a preliminary appraisal is required to get points.
9. Include screenshots of your project in all intersecting layers of ConserveVirginia and any Wildlife Corridors.

II. Additional Recommended Items for an Application:

1. Letters of support and resolutions from governmental bodies for the project.
2. Forestry plan or agriculture plan, if applicable.
3. Shapefile delineating the boundary of your project (including match property, if applicable).

III. Eligible Expenses for the Grant Program are limited to the following items only:

1. The appraised value of the property or interest acquired.
2. Actual expenditures (written expense documentation is required) for:
 - Appraisal
 - Title search, binder, title insurance
 - Boundary survey
 - Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (fee acquisitions only)
 - Legal Fees; Recording Costs
 - Property Line Demarcation
 - Easement fees required by public-body holders, up to \$5,000

IV. **Documents and Due Diligence Items Required Prior to Payment of Funds for an Awarded Grant:**

1. A full appraisal report that meets USPAP Standards, or UASFLA Standards, performed within six months of closing. For any grant project wherein a fee acquisition and an easement interest are being conveyed separately, both the fee and easement interests shall be appraised separately unless the public body co-holder waives this requirement.
2. Title insurance policy within 90 days prior to closing:
 - a. must confirm that the seller or donor owns marketable fee simple title
 - b. encumbrances of record must not impair conservation purposes
 - c. encumbrances of record must be acceptable to VLCF
 - e.d. for any grant project wherein a fee acquisition and an easement interest are being conveyed separately, both the fee and easement interests shall be insured under separate policies unless the public body co-holder waives this requirement.
3. Boundary survey of the project area by a Virginia Licensed Surveyor that meets Va. Administrative Code 18 VAC 10-20-370 Minimum Standards and Procedures for Land Boundary Survey Practice in effect at the grant application deadline, and dated no more than 20 years before the grant application deadline.
4. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (fee acquisition only); prepared no more than six months prior to closing
 - a. report and findings must be acceptable to VLCF
 - b. issues revealed may require remedial action
5. The final version of the required deeds for final VLCF approval before closing.
6. Baseline Documentation Report for projects including a conservation or open-space easement.
7. A copy of the settlement statement for the transaction.
8. Invoices of the required documents listed above in Section III.2. for reimbursement.

NOTES:

- VLCF funds will not be distributed until all due diligence documents have been provided, reviewed, and approved by staff and all required deeds have been recorded.
- Please contact staff with any questions regarding the timing, requirements, and submittal of these documents.

Appendix B – VLCF Category Scoring Sheets

I. Farmland Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
<p>Category I: Land Evaluation (35 points)</p> <p>A. Soil Productivity (20 points) Calculate the percentage of project land in each soils class. Points are awarded based on the combined percentages of these three categories x 20 (e.g., 30% prime, 20% unique and 10% important = 0.60 x 20, which equals 12 points.) More information on these soil classes can be found in § 10.1-1119.73-2-205 of the Code of Virginia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Value the soils classified as “Prime farmland” Value the soils classified “Unique farmland” Value the soils classified as “Important farmland” <p>B. Parcel Size (15 points) Using data from the most recent Census of Agriculture, score the size of the farm as it compares to the average sized farm in the locality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger by 25% or more = 15 points Larger by 0% - 24% = 10 points Smaller by 1% - 24% = 7 points Smaller by 25% or more = 5 points 	
<p>Category II: Land Use (45 points)</p> <p>A. Current use and status of the land (78 points)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is the land currently being farmed? <u>5</u>4 points, if yes. Is this a Century Farm? <u>2</u>4 points, if yes. <p>B. Proximity to conserved lands (810 points) To what degree is the land adjacent to or in close proximity to other preserved lands, either in agriculture production or non-active in farming?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parcel adjoins other preserved lands = 10<u>8</u> points Parcel is within one-quarter mile but not adjoining other preserved lands = 7<u>6</u> points Parcel is within one-half mile but further than one-quarter mile of other preserved lands = 5<u>3</u> points <p>C. Development vulnerability (158 points) What is the vulnerability rank for this parcel as determined by the ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model (https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable)?</p> <p><u>Calculate the percentage of project land in Vulnerability Classes II, III, and IV. Points are awarded based on the combined percentages of these three categories x 15 (e.g. 30% Class II, 20% Class III and 10% Class IV = 0.6 x 15 = 9 points)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Each ranking from Class II to Class V is awarded 2 points (e.g., a property in Class IV = 6 points)</u> <p>D. Conservation Plan/Best Management Practices (BMPs) (710 points) Does the farm have a documented conservation plan <u>for applicable best management practices</u>, or a Nutrient Management Plan for all nutrient applications to cropland, hayland, or pastureland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The applicant has a documented conservation plan (developed by local Soil and Water Conservation District staff, NRCS, or similar) AND/OR a Nutrient Management Plan (prepared by a DCR certified planner) that outlines the implementation of BMPs = 5</u>4 points <u>Provides evidence of plan implementation = 3 points</u> 	

<p>D. Best Management Practices (BMPs) (10 points) Are best management practices Is a farm management plan that specifies (BMP)s or voluntary BMPs (e.g., stream fencing, buffers, conservation tillage, cover crops, animal waste management, etc.) or a farm management plan being utilized as part of the normal operation of this farm? Does the property have <u>either/both</u> a conservation plan or a Nutrient Management Plan for all nutrient applications made to cropland, hayland, <u>and/or</u> pastureland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has implemented applicable BMPs to protect water quality, <u>either voluntarily or through a state or federal conservation program</u> = 4 points • Applicant has a conservation plan developed by local conservation staff (Soil & Water Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service) = 3 points • Applicant has a Nutrient Management Plan prepared by a DCR-certified nutrient management planner = 3 points <p>E. Local farmland policy (4-8 points) Is the project supported by local farmland protection policies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Two points One point</u> each for: <u>comprehensive plan</u>; agricultural zoning; agricultural and forestal districts; <u>and</u> use value taxation <u>and Purchase of Development Rights projects</u>. <p>F. Is the landowner working with a local Purchase of Development Rights program to conserve their farmland? (5 points)</p>	
<p>Category III: ConserveVirginia (20 points) Is the project included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiply the percent of the property included within the Agriculture and Forestry Category layer by 20 to calculate points. (e.g. 60% of the property is in the Ag and Forestry category; .60 x 20 = 12 points) 	

Total Maximum Score 100 points

II. Forestland Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
<p>1) Property Acreage (10 points) Is the size of the tract adequate to protect and allow for management of forestal resources? Larger blocks of land under single ownership remain more manageable and functional over time. To calculate points for projects up to 999 acres, divide acreage by 1,000, then multiply by 8. For parcels larger than 999 acres, see points below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: 0-999 acres = Property Acreage / 1000 * 8 points 1000-4,999 = 8 points 5000-9999 = 9 points ≥10,000 acres = 10 points 	
<p>2) Acres of Forest (20 points) How many acres of the property are currently forested or devoted to forestal use? To be considered forested or devoted to forestal use, acreage must meet the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council (SLEAC) technical standards for classification of real estate devoted to forestal use. See the grant manual for more detail on which land can qualify as “devoted to forestal use.” For up to 999-acre projects, divide the acreage by 1,000, then multiply by 18 to calculate points. For parcels larger than 999 acres, see points below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: 0-999 acres = Forested Acreage / 1000 * 18 points 1,000-4,999 = 18 points 5,000-9,999 = 19 points ≥10,000 acres = 20 points 	
<p>3) Acres of high forest conservation value (FCV 4 and 5) (15 points) Score is based upon VDOF’s analysis and Forest Conservation Values map that ranks relative conservation value of forestland based on water quality, site productivity, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, intactness, and threat to conversion attributes. Find the map here: https://vanhde.org/content/map. To calculate points for projects up to 999 acres, divide High FCV acreage by 1,000, then multiply by 13. For larger parcels, see below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: 0-999 acres = High FCV acreage / 1000 * 13 points 1,000-4,999 = 13 points 5,000-9999 = 14 points ≥10,000 acres = 15 points 	
<p>4) Development Vulnerability (15 points) Water Quality (15 points) 5) Streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users. Scored based on the total linear feet of intermittent or perennial streams or rivers (as identified by the USGS National Hydrography Dataset: https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/advanced-viewer/), wetlands (as shown on the National Wetlands Inventory: https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands_mapper/), (as identified on the USGS 7.5” quad), or wetland or impoundment shoreline that is on or bordering the property. To calculate points, divide total length of streams or shorelines (measured in feet) by 1,000. 6) Score: 0 – 15,000 feet = feet / 1,000 points 4) ≥15,000 feet = 15 points What is the vulnerability rank for this parcel as determined by the ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model (https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable/)? Calculate the percentage of project land in Vulnerability Classes II, III, and IV. Points are awarded based on the combined percentages of these three categories x 15 (e.g. 30% Class II, 20% Class III and 10% Class IV = 0.6 x 15 = 9 points)</p>	

Commented [SB6]: Deleted points awarded for water quality in the Forest Preservation category because the Additional Scoring Criteria (ASC) points awarded for WQ were duplicative. (We are proposing to increase the ASC WQ points from 11 to 20) Replaced the 15 points with Development vulnerability to better reflect the state forester’s prioritization.

<p>5) Adjacency to Conserved Lands (5 points) Is the property is located adjacent to, or within five miles of, already conserved lands held in perpetuity? To calculate points, subtract the distance from already conserved land in miles from 5. Greater than 5 miles receives 0 points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: Within 5 miles = 5 – (miles away from conserved lands) 	
<p>6) Management of Multiple Resources (5 points) Does the landowner manage the property according to a forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) prepared by a professional forester and follow plan recommendations to achieve the forest management goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: Owner has an existing management plan, and with demonstrated plan implementation = 5 points Owner has management plan but no demonstrated plan implementation = 3 points 	
<p>7) Preservation of Forested Acreage (10 points) Landowner is willing to preserve a proportion of the property in a forested condition in perpetuity. Land that is not currently forested but that the landowner will afforest and maintain as forest in perpetuity counts. To calculate points, multiply percent forested by 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: Percent of property that the landowner is willing to retain as forest * 10 	
<p>8) ConserveVirginia (20 points) Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score: To calculate points, multiply the percent of the property included within the Agriculture and Forestry Category by 20. (e.g. 60% of the property is in the Ag and Forestry category; 0.60 x 20 = 12 points) 	

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

III. Historic Area Preservation Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) Historic Significance (Maximum score 30 points)</p> <p>1. <u>Historic Resource/Property is:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually listed on VLR or is a contributing resource in a listed historic district = 25, or • Determined by DHR to be eligible for listing on VLR = 20, or • Civil War, Revolutionary War, or War of 1812 site or battlefield designated as Priority I, II, III, or IV in the Battlefield Reports (see p. 8 of Grant manual) = 25 <p style="text-align: center;">-AND-</p> <p>2. <u>Integrity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources that retain a high degree of historic integrity = 5 		
<p>2) Underrepresented Communities & Resources (Maximum score 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property contains documented resources representing Virginia’s culturally diverse history, such as places or sites associated with people of color (circa 1619-Civil War), the Reconstruction Era (1861-1898), the Civil Rights Movement, LGBTQ, African American, Asian-American, Latino, Hispanic, Native American and women’s history = 5 <p style="text-align: center;">AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property or area has special community significance related to its history, as explained in application, <u>regardless of formal documentation</u> = 5 		
<p>3) Threat (Maximum score 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently on the market for sale, in an estate being settled, threatened by development, or in imminent danger of demolition = 10 • Recently on the market for sale or sold within the prior calendar year, resource is vacant/unoccupied, or resource is significantly deteriorated and in need of immediate preservation = 5 • No documentation of threat = 0 		
<p>4) Use & Treatment of Historic Resources & Property (Maximum score 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for future use(s) (e.g. interpretation as a historic site, subdivision, timber harvest) of the property are appropriate and consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection = 5, and • Plans for treatment, alteration, and maintenance of historic resources on the property are appropriate and consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection = 5 • No documentation of plans for uses of property or treatment of historic resources = 0 		
<p>5) Historic Resource Protection (Maximum score 10 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed easement terms and restrictions provide comprehensive protection for historic resources and are specifically consistent with VBHR easement template = 10 • Proposed easement terms and protections for historic resources are acceptable, and generally consistent with VBHR easement template = 5 • No list of easement terms provided = 0 		
<p>6) Adjacency to Conserved Land (Maximum score 5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent to existing conserved land = 5 • In viewshed of, or in close physical proximity to significant historic resources, and/or existing conserved land = 3 • Not in viewshed of, or in close physical proximity to significant historic resources or conserved land, but represents a unique cultural resource within the geographical area = 1 		

<p>7) Further Public Interests (Maximum Score 5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project includes specific plans for programs that promote research, education, community outreach, or heritage tourism = 5 • Project includes general plans for programs to be developed that would promote research, education, community outreach, or heritage tourism = 3 • Project contains no plans that would further public interests = 0 		
<p>8) ConserveVirginia (Maximum score 20 points)</p> <p>Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map)</p> <p>To calculate points, multiply the percent of the property included within the Cultural and Historic Preservation Category by 20. (e.g. 60% of the property is in the Cultural and Historic Preservation category; $0.60 \times 20 = 12$ points)</p>		

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

IV. Natural Area Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
<p>1) Biodiversity Significance (35 points)</p> <p>A. <u>Will the proposed project protect one or more of Virginia's highest quality examples of a natural heritage resource?</u> (parcel overlaid on conservation sites layer) Maximum score: 20 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within Essential Conservation Site = 20 points; • Located within conservation site = 10 points; <p>B. <u>Parcel Significance:</u> What is the number of natural heritage elements present on the subject parcel, or associated with it? Maximum score: 10 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 points per essential EO; • 1 point per viable, extant EO; • 2 points per essential EO; • 0.5 point per viable, extant EO outside parcel(s) but within conservation site that also overlaps the proposed parcel(s) for protection <p>C. <u>Does the project have global significance?</u> (biodiversity rank of conservation site) Proportion of parcel area (acres) within conservation sites, weighted by B-rank Maximum score: 5 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1 = 5 points x proportion within conservation site; • B2 = 4 x proportion within conservation site; • B3 = 3 x proportion within conservation site; • B4 = 2 x proportion within conservation site; • B5 = 1 x proportion within conservation site 	
<p>2) Ecological Integrity (20 points)</p> <p>A. <u>Regional Landscape Integrity:</u> <u>What percentage of parcel area (acres) is within one or more ecological cores, weighted by Ecological Integrity rank (i.e.C-rank)?</u> Maximum score: 10 points (points may add up to more, but 10 points is the max)</p> <p>Parcel is located in a Core ranked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1=10 points x proportion within ecological core; • C2=8 x proportion within ecological core; • C3=6 x proportion within ecological core; • C4=3 x proportion within ecological core; • C5=1 x proportion within ecological core; AND <p>Is any portion of the parcel within the Natural Land Network?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parcel intersects with the Natural Land Network (1 point) <p>B. <u>Local/Parcel Integrity:</u> How much of the parcel is in natural vegetation? Maximum score: 5 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parcel supports natural community/natural vegetation: 75% or more of parcel area = 5 points, 50-74% = 4 points, 25-49% = 3 points, 1-25% = 2 points <p>C. <u>Connectivity with Conserved Lands:</u> Is the parcel adjacent to other conserved lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? Maximum score: 5 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjoins BMI 1 = 5 points; • Adjoins BMI 2 = 4 points; • Adjoins BMI 3 = 3 points; • Adjoins BMI 4 or 5 = 2 points; • Land not adjacent to conserved land = 0 points 	

<p>3) Management Needs, Likelihood of Success, and Threat (25 points)</p> <p>A. <u>Management Needs:</u> What is the intensity of current and future management actions needed to successfully maintain/restore natural heritage resources? Maximum score: 10 points Parcel conditions require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimal natural heritage resources management = 10 points; • moderate management = 6 points; • intensive management/restoration = 3 points <p>B. <u>Management Capacity:</u> Does the applicant have proven experience and capacity in terms of staff resources and expertise to address management needs? Maximum score: 8 points Application provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a thorough description of both experience and staff capacity = 8 points; • a cursory description = 4 points; • not mentioned = 0 points <p>C. <u>Site visit & Owner contact:</u> NHP Staff have had timely opportunity to visit tract and discuss with landowner necessary conservation measures and implications of natural area preserve dedication. Maximum score: 5 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit & discussion = 5 points; • Site visit only = 3 points; • Discussion only = 2 points <p>D. <u>Threat:</u> Is there high development threat for the project area? Maximum score: 2 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tract threat is ranked Class IV or Class V in the Conservation/Vision Development Vulnerability Model = 2 points; ranked Class III = 1 point; otherwise = 0 points. Or Tract is on the market or in estate for settlement = 2 points. 	
<p>4) Conserve Virginia (20 points)</p> <p>Is the property included in the Conserve Virginia Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category? (https://vanhde.org/content/map)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To calculate points, multiply the percent of the property included within the Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category by 20. (e.g. 60% of the property is in the category; 0.60 x 20 = 12 points) 	

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

V. Open Spaces & Parks Category

Criterion	Score
<p>1) Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Priorities for Public Access to State Waters (10 points) Does the project acquire land or an easement that provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public access to state waters that provides boating, fishing, <u>and</u> beach/bank swimming opportunities = 10 pts Public access that provides <u>two</u> of those recreational opportunities = 8 pts Public access that provides <u>one</u> of those recreational opportunities = 56 pts <u>Public access that provides opportunities to view water resources while recreating = 24 pts</u> 	
<p>2) VOP Priorities for Public Access for Land-Based Recreation (10 points) Does the project acquire land or an easement that provides increased public access for land-based recreation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Project increases recreational opportunities in natural areas (maintained in a vegetated, natural condition with public facilities generally limited to parking, trails, and observation areas) = up to 4 pts</u> <u>Project increases recreational opportunities in developed parks (structured environments with amenities and facilities that serve a variety of visitors, interests, activities, and events such as play areas, campgrounds, pools and splash pads, and outdoor sports fields/courts) = up to 3 pts</u> <u>Project provides trails for hiking, cycling, and/or horseback riding = up to 3 pts</u> 	
<p>3) VOP Outdoor Recreation Priorities Plan Need (10 points) Does the project address an outdoor recreation priority need identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan? Applicant must specify VOP page #-Add all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project provides public access to natural areas = 3 pts Project provides public access to a developed park = 2 pts Project provides trails for hiking or walking OR access to water trails = 2 pts Project provides public access to historic areas = 1 up to 2 pts <u>Project provides opportunities for viewing wildlife/bicycle or equestrian trails = 1 up to 2 pts</u> <u>Provides public access to and conserves significant habitats or natural communities = up to 2 pts</u> <u>Project provides other need identified in VOP or supports dark sky conservation = 1 pt</u> <u>Project has a draft conceptual site plan, visualization, or sketch of plans to provide priority recreational support amenities within, such as: restroom, parking, drinking water, information kiosks, trash receptacles, seating, lighting, ADA accessibility features = up to 3 pts</u> 	
<p>4) Project Location and Recreational Expansion (10 points) Does the project conserve and create a new outdoor recreational opportunity? Or is it located adjacent to an existing park, protected conservation area, or other recreational resources that expands and protects public conservation or recreational interests?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserves new stand-alone facility that is critically needed to provide or support recreational activities = 10 pts <u>Conserves an in-holding or addition that allows new types of recreation to occur at the site is critical to the recreational use of an existing site = 58 pts</u> <u>Conserves a linkage between two or more existing natural areas or parks or conserves land along an existing recreational trail = 5 pts</u> <u>Conserves an in-holding or addition that does not expand recreation types offered = 3 pts</u> 	
<p>5) Scenic Resources Protection (10 points) Does the project protect scenic viewsheds or land important to the protection of any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, Virginia's Scenic Rivers, designated Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways, statewide connecting trails, or identified greenways or blueways?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of one of the listed resources = 10 pts 	

Commented [SB7]: New criterion #2 added for land-based recreational value to match criterion #1 - water-based recreational value. Priority land-based activities taken from 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey results. Access to historic areas and wildlife observation are also priorities, but those are awarded for all project types, see criterion #3.

Commented [KS8]: Changes made to this criterion to reflect results of 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey and consolidate duplicative items.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, a potential resource or a proposed statewide connecting trail identified in VOP = 7 pts • Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, <u>an existing recreational trail, water trail, passenger rail, public transit route, or another recreation area</u> = 5 pts 			
<p>4)6] Alignment with Local or Regional Plans (15 points)</p> <p>Does the project support local or regional plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, or contribute to the protection of a documented conservation corridor? Include the name and page # of plan cited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the project/acquisition is specifically mentioned by location AND purpose/features in a local or regional plan = 15 pts • If project purpose is mentioned in a local or regional plan or other documents or fulfills a specific need in a local or regional plan = 10 pts • If area of project has a general reference in local or regional plan or project meets a general goal identified in a plan = 5 pts 			
<p>5)7] Public Utilization Access (10 points)</p> <p>Availability of land for public use may include, but is not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watchingaccess. Add all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of days site open to the publicOpen for public utilization between 241 and 365 days per year = 540 pts, 181-180-364 = 2 pts, less than 181-180 days = 0 pts) • Open between 181 and 240 days per year = 5 pts • Between 121 and 180 days per year = 3 pts • Between 61 and 120 days per year = 2 pts • Between 1 and 60 days per year = 1 pt<u>No user fees required to access site or fee-free options available = 2 pts</u> • <u>Site can be safely publicly accessed by more than one method of transportation (vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian, paddlecraft, motorboat, public transportation) = 3 pts</u> 			
<p>8) Recreation Need (15)0 points)</p> <p>I. Land-based Recreation Need (Maximum score: 10)7)</p> <p>Will the property provide land-based recreation and is it located in an area of land-based recreation need as identified by either the DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model (2021) (https://vanhde.org/content/map) or the Trust for Public Land's ParkServe Model? (https://www.tpl.org/parkserve) (score will be higher of the two if data is available on both models)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>A. DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model <i>Land-based Recreation Need:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 107 pts • High: 85 pts • Moderate: 53 pts • Low: 34 pt • Very low need: 0, but other supporting evidence provided to show need: up to 35 points </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>B. ParkServe Park Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 710 • High: 57 • Moderate: 35 • No need identified in the model, but other supporting documentation provided, such as evidence of no other parks within ½ mile walk: up to 35 points </td> </tr> </table> <p>II. Water-based Recreation Need (Maximum Score: 5)3)</p> <p>Will the property provide water-based recreation and is it located in an area of water-based recreation need as identified by the DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model (2021)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 53 pts • High: 42 pts • Moderate: 34 pt • Low or very low need but other supporting evidence provided, such as new type of water recreation for area or documented overcrowding at existing nearby sites: <u>up to 3)4 pts</u> 	<p>A. DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model <i>Land-based Recreation Need:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 107 pts • High: 85 pts • Moderate: 53 pts • Low: 34 pt • Very low need: 0, but other supporting evidence provided to show need: up to 35 points 	<p>B. ParkServe Park Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 710 • High: 57 • Moderate: 35 • No need identified in the model, but other supporting documentation provided, such as evidence of no other parks within ½ mile walk: up to 35 points 	
<p>A. DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model <i>Land-based Recreation Need:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 107 pts • High: 85 pts • Moderate: 53 pts • Low: 34 pt • Very low need: 0, but other supporting evidence provided to show need: up to 35 points 	<p>B. ParkServe Park Need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very High: 710 • High: 57 • Moderate: 35 • No need identified in the model, but other supporting documentation provided, such as evidence of no other parks within ½ mile walk: up to 35 points 		

9) ConserveVirginia (10 points)

Is the property included in any category of ConserveVirginia **and** providing daily outdoor recreation access? (<https://vanhde.org/content/map>)

To calculate points, multiply the percent of the property included within any category of ConserveVirginia and providing daily access by 10. (e.g. 60% of the property is in the category; $0.60 \times 10 = 6$ points)

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

VI. Additional Scoring Criteria

1. **Public Access**

~~Zero-Up~~ to 10 points may be given dependent upon the extent of ~~public~~-access provided to the general public. Full public access means the property ~~is-will be open-available~~ for public visitation 365 days a year. Restricted or Limited Public Access means the property will only be available for public access at certain times during the year. Visual access means the applicant can demonstrate the scenic value of the property to the public and that the project will protect the integrity of the public's scenic view.

Degree to which the project provides public or visual access.

Maximum 10 points

- Full Public Access (365 days/year) = 10 points
- Restricted Public Access (180 to 364 days/year) = 5 points
- Limited Public Access (1 to 179 days per year) = 3 points
- Visual Access only = 2 points

2. **Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need**

Up to three points will be awarded to applications if a project satisfies resource conservation needs as identified in the VOP or in a local comprehensive plan. The VOP can be found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/vop>.

Maximum 3 points

- ~~Meets a resource conservation need~~Addresses an Outdoor Recreation Priority identified in the VOP **and** in a local comprehensive plan = 3 points
- ~~Meets a resource conservation need~~Addresses an Outdoor Recreation Priority identified in the VOP **or** in a local comprehensive plan = 2 points
- Not identified in VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 0 points

3. **Virginia Nature Based Recreation Access Model Identified Need**

Up to three points will be given to a project that provides public access AND is located in an area where there is at least a moderate need for recreation access identified in the Nature Based Recreation Access Model's terrestrial or aquatic layers found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisrec>

Maximum 3 points

- Demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial **and** aquatic recreational access = 3 points
- Demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial **or** aquatic recreational access = 2 points
- No demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial or aquatic recreational access = 0 points

4. **Protection of Cultural Resources**

Up to 10 points may be given to a project that identifies and protects cultural resources on the property and provides public educational opportunities. Examples include remnants of prior settlements, artifacts, evidence of unmarked burial sites of enslaved or indigenous people, former segregated schoolhouses, sites of early racial integration, historic fence lines, roadbed or railbed systems, evidence of past wharfs, pine tar industry sites, gold mining pits, tobacco barns, witness trees, caves, etc.

Provide with your application photos and documentation of the cultural resources found on site that will be protected by your project. Also, provide draft language to be used in the deed to protect the resources, and indicate whether there will be educational opportunities provided for the public. Example language for the protection of these cultural resources can be provided upon request.

~~Examples include remnants of prior settlements, artifacts, evidence of unmarked burial sites of enslaved or indigenous people, former segregated schoolhouses, sites of early racial integration, historic fence lines, roadbed or railbed systems, historic evidence of past wharfs, pine tar industry sites, gold mining pits, tobacco barns, witness trees, caves, etc.~~ Applicants should contact the Department of Historic Resources for guidance on identification and the appropriate protections for historic resources.

Maximum 10 points.

- Provide photographs and other documents to authenticate the resource = ~~8~~6 points

- Project will provide educational opportunities for the public, signage, trails, etc. = 2 points
- Provide draft language to be used in the deed to protect cultural resources = 2 points

5. Underserved Communities

Up to 10 points may be given to projects that benefit underserved communities. The Social Vulnerability Index created by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science may be used to identify underserved areas of the state. This index is found on the Adapt VA Interactive Map, see link here: https://cmap22.vims.edu/AdaptVA/AdaptVA_viewer.html. Data from other sources, ~~such as EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool or Trust for Public Land's ParkServe database~~, will also be considered for this criterion if the applicant provides their findings and the source reference. Degree to which the community where the project is located is underserved/socially vulnerable.

Maximum 10 points

- Very high social vulnerability = 10
- High social vulnerability = 8
- Moderate Social Vulnerability = 5
- Low or Very Low Social Vulnerability = 0

6. Additional ConserveVirginia Values

If the project includes conservation values other than the primary application category, then two points may be awarded for each additional identified category if the applicant demonstrates that the property is located within another ConserveVirginia category, **and** the project also protects those respective resources in perpetuity. [The ConserveVirginia Deed Review Criteria \(https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/land-conservation/document/conservevirginia-deed-review-criteria.pdf\)](https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/land-conservation/document/conservevirginia-deed-review-criteria.pdf) explains what provisions are needed to ensure each category is protected.

Maximum 12 points

ConserveVirginia Categories:

- Agriculture & Forestry = 2 points
- Cultural & Historic Preservation = 2 points
- Floodplains & Flooding Resilience = 2 points
- Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity = 2 points
- Protected Landscapes Resilience = 2 points
- Scenic Preservation = 2 points
- Water Quality Improvement = 2 points

7. Water Quality Benefit

Up to ~~4~~20 points may be given to a project that protects water quality by requiring permanent vegetated riparian buffers exceeding the mandatory 35-foot width. Points will also be awarded for forested buffers that maintain an evenly dispersed minimal 50% forested canopy. Because protecting water quality is a long-standing goal of the Commonwealth supported through many voluntary cost-share and tax-credit programs, these points are awarded to those projects that voluntarily provide greater water quality **and habitat** protections beyond the required 35-foot ~~vegetated~~ riparian buffer in perpetuity.

Maximum ~~4~~20 points

- ~~4~~5 points if the buffer is forested (at least 50% forest canopy) and protected as such in perpetuity, PLUS
- ~~Up to 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50' wide buffer = 2 points~~
- ~~1 point for every 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50' wide buffer, up to 3 points, OR~~
- ~~Up to 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100' wide buffer = 3 points~~
- ~~1 point for every 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100' wide buffer, up to 4 points~~
- 1'-2,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer = 23 points
- 2,001-4,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer = 45 points
- 4,001-6,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer = 68 points
- 6,001'+ of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer = 810 points

OR

- 1'-2,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer = 45 points
- 2,001-4,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer = 68 points
- 4,001-6,000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer = 810 points
- 6,001'+ of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer = 4013 points

8. Fish and Wildlife Values

Up to a total of 10 points may be given dependent upon the degree to which the application includes information to demonstrate that the project benefits wildlife, habitat, and human/wildlife interaction. The breakdown for this category is: zero to three points for fish and wildlife habitat protection and management (one point for identifying wildlife, one point for protecting habitat, an added point for providing public access to view, hunt, or fish wildlife). An additional three points may be awarded for the identification of Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Species of Greatest Conservation Need or a state or federal threatened or endangered species; with another four points awarded for protection of associated habitat.

For more wildlife information, see: <https://services.dwr.virginia.gov/fwis/> or contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, (804) 593-2043.

Maximum 10 points

- Identify wildlife presence = 1 point; if Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species is present = additional 3 points
- Protect wildlife habitat = 1 point; if DWR Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species habitat is protected = additional 4 points
- Provide public access for viewing or hunting wildlife, or for fishing = 1 point

9. Protection of Identified Wildlife Corridors

Zero to 10 points may be given to projects that fall within an area designated as a wildlife corridor buffer or an actual corridor in the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan. As directed in § 29.1-579 of the Code of Virginia, DWR and partners developed the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan identifying vital wildlife corridors, high quality habitat for priority species, and migration routes of native, game, and migratory species. The plan emphasizes protecting these vital wildlife habitat corridors and their buffers, as well as reducing wildlife-vehicle conflicts, such as collisions, to promote driver safety. Learn more about the 2023 plan here: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/corridors/>

Wildlife corridors and their buffers are mapped and accessible to the public on the Virginia Natural Heritage Data Explorer (www.vanhde.org). To be awarded points, an application must include a description of how the project will protect the associated wildlife buffer or corridor in perpetuity. For guidance contact the Virginia DWR, (804) 593-2043.

Maximum 10 points. If the project intersects both a corridor and a buffer the higher of the two calculated points will be used for scoring. The points are not additive.

- 1%-50% of the property occurs within a designated wildlife corridor buffer and includes deed language to maintain the integrity of the buffer = 2 points
- >50% of the property occurs within a designated wildlife corridor buffer and includes deed language to maintain the integrity of the buffer = 4 points; or
- 1%-25% of the property occurs within a designated wildlife corridor and includes deed language to maintain the integrity of the corridor = 6 points
- 26%-75% of the property occurs within a designated wildlife corridor and includes deed language to maintain the integrity of the corridor = 8 points
- >75% of the property occurs within a designated wildlife corridor and includes deed language to maintain the integrity of the corridor = 10 points

10. Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost

The amount of match provided by the applicant can add up to three points. If the applicant claims 60 percent or more of matching funds, then a preliminary appraisal of the property must be submitted with the application for verification to be awarded points.

If providing 60 percent or more match, to get points provide an appraisal or pre-appraisal with your application.

Maximum 3 points

- Eighty percent or more of total project cost is provided as match = 3 points
- Sixty to 79 percent of total project cost is provided as match = 2 points

11. Progress Reports

For Grantees with active VLCF grants: The Grantee has submitted the required semi-annual progress reports of each year for each active grant.

- Yes = 0 points
- No = -3 points

Total Maximum Score for Additional Scoring Criteria: ~~82~~91 points

Appendix C – Example Match Letter

[Date]

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
c/o Matthew Wells, Executive Secretary
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: VLCF grant application from *[organization]* for *[project]*

Dear Mr. Wells:

In the grant application submitted by our organization for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation's ~~FY25~~-FY26 grant round, our project budget included a total match amount of \$_____, of which \$_____ is to be obtained through grant funding that is not yet committed by any granting agency. We understand that VLCF will not grant funds for a project whose match is uncertain, and we agree that, if this project is funded through VLCF, we will commit our organization's resources to complete the project within the two-year time frame required by the VLCF program.

Sincerely,

[Organization representative]
[Job Title]

Appendix D – Required Property Protections and Vegetated Riparian Buffer Information

To safeguard water quality and the conservation value of land conservation projects, the following protections are to be included in all VLCF projects, whether fee simple or easement acquisitions:

1. Limitations on placement of utilities: Utilities that serve permitted structures on the subject property are allowed. Utilities that do not serve permitted structures on the subject property require the grantee's review and prior written determination that the construction and maintenance of such utilities will not impair the conservation value of the property.
2. To protect water quality, the collective footprint of all impervious surfaces (excluding roads) on the property must be limited to 1% of the area of the property. Limitations above 1% must be explained in the application to be considered. Farmland Preservation easements are limited to a 2% cap on impervious surfaces to accommodate agricultural uses.
3. Agricultural Conservation Plan: If the property contains five acres of land or more in agricultural production, then a written agricultural conservation plan shall be developed or in place that stipulates the use of best management practices for water quality protection (such as proper nutrient management, utilization of cover crops, and stabilization of highly erodible lands). This plan shall be developed in consultation with the local Soil and Water Conservation District or the Natural Resources Conservation Service and shall be implemented and periodically updated by the landowner as long as at least five acres of the property remains in agricultural production.
4. Forest Management Plans: If the property contains 20 acres or more of forest lands, then a current written forest management plan or Virginia Forest Stewardship Plan shall be in place, and a pre-harvest plan is required shall be in place prior to the commencement of timber harvesting or other significant forest management activities. Such a plan shall be developed by, or in consultation with, the Virginia Department of Forestry or a professional forester meeting the criteria in § 10.1-1181.9 of the Code of Virginia, or be consistent with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide. The pre-harvest plan shall be consistent with the Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide and include sufficient detail to protect site, soil, and water quality.

An exception to the requirement of a pre-harvest plan may be provided for the following non-commercial, de minimis cutting of trees so long as the activities are consistent with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide: (1) for trail clearing or daylighting of approved roads not to exceed ten feet on either side of the road; (2) for Grantor's domestic uses, such as firewood or carpentry activities; (3) that pose an imminent hazard to human health or safety; (4) of less than three acres of forest when constructing buildings and structures as allowed in the easement; and (5) removal of invasive species.
5. Vegetated Riparian Buffers and Wetland Areas: An area of land where natural vegetation shall be maintained at least 35-feet to 100-feet or more in width along a river, shoreline, perennial stream (as depicted on the USGS National Hydrography Dataset: <https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/advanced-viewer/>), or body of water that has perennial outflow and within wetland areas stated in the VLCF application or highlighted in the recitals of the deed of acquisition or easement.

4. ~~Additional requirements for~~ Within vegetated riparian buffers and wetlands are:
- a. Livestock shall be excluded from the buffers and associated watercourses and bodies of water.
 - b. Mowing shall be limited to three times per calendar year.
 - c. Earth-disturbing activities, plowing, and dumping are prohibited (however, tree planting; streambank restoration; forest management in accordance with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide; archaeological investigations; and restoration, reconstruction, and maintenance of documented historic landscapes on historic properties are permissible).

The following structures, activities, and landscapes are allowed within the required vegetated riparian buffers and wetland areas on VLCF funded projects:

- a. Buildings, structures, roads or other impervious surfaces existing in the buffer prior to the grant award are permissible and may be maintained but cannot be enlarged within the buffer.
- b. A limited number and size of water dependent structures such as docks or boat launches.
- c. A limited number of stream crossings for livestock, pedestrians, or vehicles. Livestock crossings must be addressed in a written conservation plan that specifies the use of riparian buffers for water quality protection.
- d. Access points to reach the water and structures permitted in the buffer.
- e. Lawns (up to 50 feet of frontage) associated with a primary residence, if the site is not subject to severe erosion and the diminished buffer is offset by nearby buffers that are wider than 35-feet.
- f. Forest management including timber harvesting in accordance with a pre-harvest plan and compliance with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide.

ATTACHMENT F

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Proposed GRANT FUNDING PLAN FOR FY26
 June 3, 2025

FUNDING CATEGORIES	FY25 Budget Bill Chapt. 2, Item 360 A.1. \$16,000,000	Interest through June 1, 2025 \$1,000,000	Unspent Grant Funds to be Approved & Reallocated	TOTALS Available
I. VOF Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (25% per § 10.1-1020 C.)	\$4,000,000	\$250,000	N/A	VOF PTF: \$4,250,000
II. Grant Program				VLCF Grant Round
(i) Farmland Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$2,550,000
(ii) Forestland Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$150,000	\$1,379,536	\$3,929,536
(iii) Historic Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$150,000	\$5,363	\$2,555,363
(iv) Natural Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$150,000	\$288,235	\$2,838,235
(v) Open Spaces and Parks	\$2,400,000	\$150,000	\$893,747	\$3,443,747
TOTAL for Grant Round	\$12,000,000	\$750,000	\$2,566,881	\$15,316,881
Summary of Additional Unspent Grant Funds				
Farmland Preservation	\$0	N/A		
Forestland Preservation	\$1,379,536	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY22 DOF, Poplar Hollow \$300,000 . FY24 DWR, Eastern Shore Initiative Ph. III \$441,300 . FY24 DOF, Poplar Hollow (Supplemental Funding) \$250,000 . FY24 DWR, Eastern Shore Initiative Ph. II \$300,000 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY22 The Conservation Fund, Roanoke River Working Forest \$88,236 .		
Historic Area Preservation	\$5,363	<u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY24 American Battlefield Trust, Brandy Rock Farm I Tract at Brandy Station Battlefield \$5,363 .		
Natural Area Preservation	\$288,235	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY22 DCR-DNH, Chestnut Creek \$165,000 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY22 DCR-DNH, Pedlar Hills \$18,201 . FY23 DCR-DNH, Crow's Nest (Accokeek Bottomlands) \$90,354 . FY23 DCR-DNH, Deep Run Ponds (Kaylor) \$14,680 .		
Open Spaces and Parks	\$893,747	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY24 DWR, Eastern Shore Initiative Ph. III \$8,700 (funded from two categories). FY25 City of Chesapeake, City of Chesapeake OSP \$800,000 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY22 CRLC, Brander Street \$85,047 .		

Chapter 725, Item 360 of the Budget Bill, 2025

A.1. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$16,000,000 the first year and \$16,000,000 the second year from the general fund to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, § 10.1-1020, Code of Virginia. No less than 50 percent of the appropriations remaining after the transfer to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust fund has been satisfied are to be used for grants for fee simple acquisitions with public access or acquisitions of easements with public access. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of § 2.2-1509.4, Code of Virginia. **[Grant Funds]**

2. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$1,500,000 the first year and \$1,500,000 the second year from nongeneral funds to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be distributed by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation pursuant to the provisions of § 58.1-513, Code of Virginia. **[Stewardship Funds]**

ATTACHMENT G

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Proposed GRANT TIMELINE FOR FY26
June 3, 2025

<i>Proposed</i> FY26 VLCF Grant Schedule	
April 17, 2025	VLCF Subcommittee meeting to discuss draft grant manual.
April 18 to May 9, 2025	Public comment period for the draft grant manual.
June 3, 2025	VLCF Board meeting to approve grant manual and initiate the grant round request for proposals (RFP).
Week of June 3, 2025	Announce official opening of grant round (update website and send emails).
June 17, 2025	Virtual Grant Workshop: orientation and program information for grant applicants.
August 12, 2025	Deadline for application submittal. (<i>10 weeks</i>)
Weeks of September 8 and 22, 2025	Interagency taskforce meetings to score projects and finalize recommendations – usually takes two meetings.
Early October 2025	SNHR and Director's review of applications and recommendations of IAT.
Late October 2025	VLCF Board meeting. Approval of grant awards.
Early November 2025	Grant agreements sent to grant recipients. Projects have two years to close.

ATTACHMENT H



DCR OPERATIONS: STAFF REPORT / DECISION BRIEF

Division: Land Conservation

Staff Contact: Frank Stovall

Report Type: ACTION – VLCF Grant Approval
Scope Change by SoNHR / VLCF Board Chair

Date: May 29, 2025

TOPIC: Request for VLCF Grant Scope Change – Approval Required

SUBJECT: VLCF Grant 372 – South Quay Natural Area Preserve Expansion / Chowhan River Project.

NOTE: **Expedited Review Requested**

Agency staff request an expedited review of this project because the agency's acquisition partner, The Nature Conservancy, has determined that they cannot proceed with the project after June 3, 2025, without an approved scope adjustment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In November 2024, the Division of Natural Heritage was awarded a VLCF grant for \$1,300,000 to purchase 1,900 acres in the City of Suffolk as an addition to South Quay NAP. This money was needed to supplement a federal grant for \$5,631,150 that DNH obtained from NOAA on April 23, 2024. The expected purchase price was \$5,700,000. The grants also cover due diligence costs.
- Due to the need to move quickly to acquire the property, The Nature Conservancy has agreed to serve as the conservation buyer for the property. They will purchase the property in fee, and then resale the property to DCR. DCR will then utilize the federal and state grants to purchase the property from TNC.
- Due to uncertainty with federal grant awards, TNC wants to purchase the property in phases to reduce the financial risk they may have to accept should reimbursement funds not be available.
- DCR is requesting a change in scope to allow for the full VLCF grant to be utilized to acquire a smaller portion of property, thereby reducing the risk to the agency and the agency's partner if the federal funds that are matching this project are not made available. The agency and its partners cannot confirm that the grant will not be affected by federal action during or after the execution of the acquisition process.
- In practice, adjustments of this scope require approval of the VLCF Board Chair. Agency staff assigned to support VLCF recommend approval of the change in scope.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

Agency staff assigned to manage and support the administration of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation recommend the approval of a change in scope to VLCF Grant 372 to DCR to reduce the land acquired from 1,900 acres to 870 acres +/-, should federal funding supporting this project be withdrawn by action of the federal government.

STAFF REPORT / DECISION BRIEF

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BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

- *VLCF Grant 372:* In November 2024, the Division of Natural Heritage was awarded a VLCF grant for \$1,300,000 to purchase 1,900 acres in the City of Suffolk as an addition to South Quay NAP. This money was needed to supplement a federal grant for \$5,631,150 that DNH obtained from NOAA on April 23, 2024. The expected purchase price was \$5,700,000. The grants also cover due diligence costs.
- *TNC Acting as Conservation Buyer for the Project:* The Nature Conservancy is acting as a conservation buyer for DNH so that the property can be acquired in a timeline that is acceptable to the property owner, as the state and agency land acquisition process often stretches beyond 12 months per transaction. TNC will purchase the property and hold it until DCR can work through the state acquisition process. When DCR takes title to the property, they will request reimbursement from NOAA and VLCF.
- *Challenges and Risks Associated with Federal Match Funds:* Because it is uncertain as to whether the NOAA grant funds will be available upon request or not, DNH is seeking a conditional change of scope from VLCF. If the federal funds are available, then no change of scope is needed. If the federal funds are not available when requested, then a change of scope is required to cover the acquisition costs.
- *Proposed Change of Scope:* Due to the current uncertainty of the availability of federal funds, TNC has changed the plan of acquisition. They will now acquire the property in two phases. For the first phase, TNC will acquire 870 of the 1,900 acres at a purchase price of \$2,750,000. If federal funds are not available, DNH is seeking VLCF approval to apply the entire VLCF grant of \$1,300,000 for the 870 acres. DNH will also apply to the FY26 VLCF grant round to seek the remaining balance of \$1,450,000 to purchase the Phase I property from TNC. If federal funds are available, then DNH will not need to exercise this change of scope and will first seek to draw down the federal funding for Phase I.

Phase II, consisting of the remaining acreage, is dependent upon federal funding availability. If the federal funds are available, then TNC will move forward with the acquisition of Phase II and soon thereafter transfer ownership to DNH. If not, then TNC and DCR will focus solely on accomplishing Phase I.

- *Recommendation:* VLCF staff recommend approving this request for a conditional change of scope to acquire at least 870 acres as an addition to South Quay NAP. While we anticipate that federal funds will still be available and that the change of scope will not have to be exercised, and the total 1,900 acres are conserved as an addition to South Quay as originally proposed in the FY25 grant, we are recommending this authorization because the conservation buyer will not proceed without assurances that they will not be required to purchase the property without some reassurance that we can adjust the project to mitigate their risk. Mitigating their risk also reduces the risk to the DCR and DNH.
- *Scope Change Process:* There is no formal process for grant scope adjustments, since adjustments are often due to unique and unpredictable circumstances associated with complex land conservation projects. In practice, changes in scope that are significant, in this case there exists a risk that the second phase of the project will not be completed, are referred to the VLCF Board Chair for review and approval.

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- Scope Change Precedents: In the past few years there have been three other large scale scope changes similar to this one.
 - In one case, the City of Charlottesville requested a scope change to swap out an approved property for a different property. This change was denied, and Charlottesville was instructed to reapply for the second parcel.
 - In a more recent case, a significant scope change for a grant to acquire the Falkland Farms property was approved by the SoNHR because property that was scheduled for purchase was ultimately donated to the state by the property owner.
 - In August, 2024, a scope change was authorized for Grant 269 to reduce the acquisition of property to expand Pedlar Hills Glade Natural Area Preserve. The reduced scope resulted in the project only achieving 50% of its goals, but was authorized due to unforeseen circumstances related to the property's title.

FISCAL IMPACT:

- DCR Fiscal Impact: If federal funds are not available, DCR will need to apply for additional VLCF funds as part of a future round to complete the acquisition of the property from TNC, or utilize funding currently available in the Department of Natural Heritage's fund to cover the difference between the grant and the purchase price, which is \$1.45M. If federal funds remain available, there is no fiscal impact to the agency. DNH does have alternate funding opportunities to support the project.
- VLCF Fiscal Impact: Approval of the requested scope change results in no fiscal impact to VLCF. It should be noted, that should federal funds be withheld from the project, DCR intends to apply for additional VLCF funds in a future grant round to complete the acquisition of Phase I and possibly continue with Phase II. DCR acknowledges that applying for the funds does not guarantee that the project will be awarded funding by the VLCF Board in the future.

OPTIONS:

- Take No Action: Taking no action would result in DCR and TNC withdrawing the grant and cancelling the project in its entirety. **Not recommended.**
- Deny Scope Change and Cancel Grant: Denial of the requested scope change would result in DCR and TNC withdrawing the grant and cancelling the project in its entirety. **Not recommended.**
- Approve Scope Change: Authorize the change in scope as requested to allow for the property to be acquired in phases and to utilize VLCF funds to acquire 870 acres instead of the originally planned 1900 acres. **Recommended.**

RECOMMENDED ACTION AUTHORIZATION:

The request to adjust the scope of VLCF Grant 372 to DCR to reduce the land acquired from 1,900 acres to 870 acres +/-, should federal funding supporting this project be withdrawn by action of the federal government is:

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Approved Denied

Signature
Stefanie Taillon
Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources / Chair, Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

Date: _____