

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building

Richmond, VA

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Board of Trustees, took place at 11:02 a.m. on June 9, 2026, in the West Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, VA.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable David L. Bulova, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Chair

The Honorable Katie K. Frazier, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Morgan Slaven

Chief Frank Adams

Elizabeth Andrews

James Beamer

Bradley Gable

Colonel Brian Hallberg

Gabriella Hoffman

Kathleen Kilpatrick

Lauren Martin

Robert Beals

The Honorable Ed Scott

The Honorable David Marsden

Nikki Rovner, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Secretary

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Michael Molina

The Honorable Richard Stuart

Sonya Powell

Stewart Leeth

The Honorable Katie Lamb

Ryan Horsley

VLCF INTERAGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Damian Martin, DCR

Gina DiCicco, DCR

Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Linda Crowe, DCR

Kevin Shmidt, VDACS

Genny Harris, DOF

Amanda Sheps, DOF

Lesley Starke, DCR

Kristal McKelvey

Kellie Seaton, DCR

Elizabeth Tune, DHR

Megan Melinat, DHR

Becky Gwynn, DWR

Emily White, VOF

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Rob Evans, DCR
 Lisa McGee, DCR
 Laura Ellis, DCR
 Breanne Lindsey, DCR
 Richard Mahevich, OAG
 Maribel Castaneda, Deputy Secretary
 Grayson Shultz, Executive Assistant and Program Manager

Brian Fuller, DCR
 Paul Saunders, DCR
 Emi Endo, DCR
 Frank Stovall, DCR

OTHERS PRESENT

Ellen Shepard, VAULT
 Bettina Ring, TNC
 Meg Short, TNC

Parker Agelasto, CRLC
 Mike Gerel, CBF
 Brad Kreps, TNC

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Bulova called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Secretary Bulova then requested introductions from the Board members and staff.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 3, 2025, BOARD MEETING**BOARD ACTION**

Mr. Scott moved to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2025, meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Board of Trustees as amended. Ms. Slaven seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

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

Ms. Ellis presented financial information and a fund statement, provided below:

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Fund Statement
As of April 30, 2026

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
FY25 Stewardship Funds	\$979,432
FY23 Appropriation – Chapter 2	\$16,000,000

FY24 Appropriation – Chapter 1	\$16,000,000
FY25 Appropriation – Chapter 2	\$16,000,000
FY26 Appropriation – Chapter 725	\$16,000,000
FY23 Interest	\$506,071
FY24 Interest	\$1,485,359
FY25 Interest	\$1,665,087
FY26 Interest*	\$1,298,741
TOTAL INCOME	\$75,948,789

DISBURSEMENTS

FY23 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,124,370
FY24 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$1,667,123
FY25 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,222,606
FY26 Stewardship Fund Disbursements*	\$979,432
FY23 Grant Payments	\$5,507,148
FY24 Grant Payments	\$7,980,536
FY25 Grant Payments	\$6,810,796
FY26 Grant Payments*	\$16,804,734
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
FY26 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments*	\$4,000,000
FY23 Administrative Expenses	\$122,897
FY24 Administrative Expenses	\$54,947
FY25 Administrative Expenses	\$151,724
FY26 Administrative Expenses*	\$139,538
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$60,906,153

*Changes since last report

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE – April 30, 2025**\$31,330,414****ANNUAL RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE DCR TO EXPEND INTEREST FROM THE VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND, PURSUANT TO § 10.1-1020** – *Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, DCR***BOARD ACTION**

Ms. Slaven 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 FY2027 for use consistent with the legislative authority provided by Code of Virginia § 10.1-1020(G) as outlined below:

FY 2027 **\$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.

Ms. Andrews seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

ANALYSIS OF RETURNED VLCF GRANT FUNDS BY CATEGORY – *Damian Martin, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR*

Mr. Martin provided an overview of the data regarding VLCF grant funds that have been returned by category.

The Board reviewed the information provided and asked about the Natural Area Preservation category, which had the highest number of withdrawn projects in the FY2020 to FY2024 VLCF grant rounds. Agency staff explained that these projects are generally estimated at higher costs to ensure sufficient funding, as no alternative funding source is available. This approach can sometimes result in a portion of the awarded funds not being utilized for the specific project it was meant to fund.

GRANTEE REQUESTS FOR BOARD APPROVAL OF EXISTING VLCF AWARDED PROJECTS

A. Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources request to extend their FY23 grant to acquire and conserve 244 acres in Chesapeake beyond the three-year limitation due to delays associated with federal match funding – *Becky Gwynn, Executive Deputy Director, Department of Wildlife Resources*

Ms. Gwynn provided an overview of DWR's request for the Board to extend their FY23 grant.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Kilpatrick moved to approve the request and authorize the grant extension to December 31, 2026, to allow for the property to be acquired and to utilize VLCF funds to acquire 244 acres. Ms. Slaven seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

B. The Nature Conservancy request to change the scope of their FY24 grant to acquire and conserve 680 acres in Washington County due to severed mineral rights – *Meg Short, Land Protection Manager, and Brad Kreps, Program Director, Clinch Valley Program, The Nature Conservancy*

Ms. Short and Mr. Kreps provided an overview of TNC's request for the Board to change the scope of their FY24 grant.

The Board asked for clarification regarding the original application that led to the mineral rights issue for the property. Mr. Kreps explained that, at the time of the application, TNC did not yet hold title to the property and therefore could not verify the status of the mineral rights. He noted that, moving forward, TNC applicants should consult with VLCF staff during the application process to help identify and avoid similar issues in future submissions.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Beamer moved to approve the request and authorize the grant change of scope to allow for the less than fee simple property to be acquired and to utilize VLCF funds to acquire 680 acres. There is a risk that the conservation values and conditions promised in the VLCF application will not be protected or fulfilled. Ms. Slaven seconded the

motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

DISCUSSION OF HOUSE BILL 846, REGARDING PUBLIC-BODY COHOLDER REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITED LAND TRUSTS – *Nikki Rovner, Director, DCR*

Ms. Rovner provided an overview of House Bill 846 and its implications for land acquisition. She explained that the legislation applies when a private land trust seeks to acquire a conservation easement. Under the current process, the land trust must identify a public body, such as a state agency, to serve as a co-holder of the easement. The Bill allows the Board, at its discretion, to grant a waiver removing the requirement for a public body to serve as a co-holder and instead hold a third party right of enforcement. Proponents of the legislation have offered suggestions regarding which categories may be appropriate for such waivers and under what circumstances a co-holder may not be necessary. Those proponents of the bill will be tasked to put forth recommendations on how to implement these changes. Agency staff will review their proposal and the Bill in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General over the coming months. A recommendation will be presented to the Board, with an update planned for the November 2026 meeting.

BREAK

The Board recessed at 12:01 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting reconvened and was called to order by the Chair at 12:33 p.m.

REVIEW OF VLCF GRANT PROJECTS THAT HAVE CLOSED SINCE NOVEMBER 2025 – *Damian Martin, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR*

Mr. Martin provided an overview of the 26 VLCF grant projects that have closed since November 2025.

UPDATE ON THE DOMINION SURRY-SKIFFES CREEK GRANT FUNDING AND APPROVAL OF THE 2026 GRANT ROUND – *Linda Crowe, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR*

Ms. Crowe provided an update regarding the Dominion Surry-Skiffes Creek grant funding and sought approval of the 2026 grant round. VLCF held the first Surry-Skiffes restricted fund grant round in 2017 and a second grant round in 2020 to award the full \$12.5M of restricted funds provided by Dominion Energy. However, one project was ultimately unsuccessful, leading VLCF to announce this 2026 grant round to award the remaining \$250,000. All of the original approved criteria in the first grant manual remain in place and are outlined within materials provided to the Board.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Kilpatrick moved to approve Grant Round 2026 for Dominion Surry-Skiffes Creek grant funding. Ms. Slaven seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE VLCF FY27 GRANT ROUND – *Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, DCR*

Ms. Bulbulkaya provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the Grant Manual, including updates to improve readability and to align dates. She summarized the public comments considered during the revision process and outlined changes made to the scoring criteria, offering rationale for why certain elements were modified or left unchanged. She also presented an overview of the proposed FY27 Fiscal Expenditure Plan and the proposed FY27 timeline for applications and awards.

The Board discussed the information provided focusing on the Expenditure Plan, and noted that the state budget has not yet been finalized by the General Assembly. Funding for the grant round includes a minimum of \$5,211,768 from accrued interest and returned grant funds, to a maximum of \$17,211,768 including proposed general funds. Agency staff explained that this situation is unusual, as a budget is typically in place by this stage. Staff further advised that, if additional funding for the program is approved in the final budget, the Board will reconvene in November to review and approve any resulting adjustments to the grant round.

VLCF FY27 Grant Round Public Comment

Mr. Mike Gerel addressed the Board on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Beamer moved to approve the Grant Manual as presented with the addition of specific language received during the public comment period concerning awarding two points for migrating wetlands. Ms. Slaven seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Adams, Andrews, Beals, Beamer, Bulova, Frazier, Gable, Hallberg, Hoffman, Kilpatrick, Martin, Marsden, Scott, and Slaven.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

THANK YOU BOARD AND STAFF

Secretary Bulova thanked the Board and staff for their work and support of conservation efforts that has resulted in conserving thousands of acres within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.