

Approval for Use of VACS Funds to Implement Living Shoreline Practices

§ 10.1-505. Duties of Board.

In addition to other duties and powers conferred upon the Board, it shall have the following duties and powers:

1. To give or loan appropriate financial and other assistance to district directors in carrying out any of their powers and programs.
3. To oversee the programs of the districts.
11. To provide, from such funds appropriated for districts, financial assistance for the administrative, operational and technical support of districts.

§ 10.1-546.1. Delivery of Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program.

Districts shall locally deliver the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program described under §10.1-2128.1, under the direction of the Board, as a means of promoting voluntary adoption of conservation management practices by farmers and land managers in support of the Department's nonpoint source pollution management program.

Background Information

On August 9, 2021, the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District entered into a Partner Agreement with the James River Association. Earlier this year, the James River Association was a grant award recipient for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds; the funds will be used to create water quality improvements in the James River through a living shoreline collaborative. These grant funds will accelerate the implementation of living shorelines along the James River.

Currently, the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program Manual (VACS Manual) allows “[d]istricts, federal agencies, or other conservation organizations may choose to combine resources to fund mutually high priority practices up to a maximum state and federal cost-share rate as listed in the VACS BMP specifications.” (Page II-31) While the VACS Manual states “[o]ther sources of funding, including funding from local and private sources, may provide additional reimbursement opportunities,” it does not specifically allow nonprofit conservation organizations to contribute financial resources to fund practices up to 100% of the practice cost.

Recommended Motion:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board authorizes Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District (District) to utilize Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program cost-share funds to fund living shoreline practices up to the maximum allowable VACS Program cost-share rate. The District is also authorized to utilize funds awarded through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to the James River Association to provide additional financial resources to producers, up to 100% of the cost of the living shoreline practice.