

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 – 11:00 a.m.



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Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 – 11:00 a.m.

East Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad St, Richmond, VA 23219

AGENDA

Welcome

1. Secretary Call to Order, Introduction of Members, and Opening Remarks
2. Recognizing the 25th Anniversary of the VLCF Grant Program

Business and Financial Matters

3. Approval of Minutes from November 13, 2023, Board Meeting
4. Virginia Land Conservation Fund Financial Report
5. Authorization to expend interest from Virginia Land Conservation Fund, pursuant to § 10.1-1020

VLCF Grant Program

6. Review of VLCF Grant Projects that have closed since November 2023
7. Discussion and Approval of the VLCF FY25 Grant Round
 - a. Proposed Grant Fiscal Expenditure Plan
 - b. Proposed Timeline for Applications and Awards
 - c. Proposed Grant Manual
 - d. Public Comment
 - e. Board Discussion and Adoption of FY25 Grant Round Documents

Other Business

8. Public Comment
9. Adjourn

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees

Chairman: The Honorable Travis Voyles, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources

Vice Chair: Mary-Carson Stiff

Member Ex Officio: The Honorable Matthew Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

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

The Honorable David W. Marsden	Glenda C. Booth	Samantha Vargas Poppe	Morgan Slaven
The Honorable Richard H. Stuart	Leslie Cockburn	Sonya Powell	Bruce Vlk
Elizabeth Andrews	Jay C. Ford	Lisa Kestner Quigley	Woodie Walker
James Beamer	Stuart Leeth	Ed Scott	Krystina E. White

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees
Monday, November 13, 2023
West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees took place at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, November 13, 2023, in the West Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, Virginia.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Travis Voyles, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources
Deputy Secretary Beth Green for The Honorable Matthew Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
The Honorable David W. Marsden
Mary-Carson Stiff, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Andrews
Glenda C. Booth
Leslie Cockburn
Jay Ford
Samantha Vargas Poppe
Lisa Kesner Quigley
Bruce Vlk
Krystina E. White
Matthew S. Wells, DCR Director, *ex officio*

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

The Honorable Richard H. Stuart
Susan E. Donner
Dr. James F. Casey
ONE VACANCY
Andrew C. Jennison
Sonya Powell
Woodie Walker

STATE AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Ryan Brown, DWR
Derrick Bolen, DCR
Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR
Sherry Buttrick, VOF
Linda Crowe, DCR
Lore De Astra, VTAX
Gina DiCicco, DCR
Laura Ellis, DCR
Emi Endo, DCR
Michael Fletcher, DCR
Brian Fuller, DCR
Becky Gwynn, DWR
Rich Mahevich, OAG
Charles Marston, DCR
Larry Mikkelsen, DCR
Karri Richardson, DHR
Andrew Smith, DCR
Frank Stovall, DCR

OTHERS PRESENT

Parker Agelasto, CRLC
Kathy Baker, Stafford County
Jamie Craig
Bill Kittrell, TNC
Nikki Rovner, TNC
Mikaela Ruiz-Ramón, TNC

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With twelve (12) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

WELCOME

Secretary Voyles called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m. and asked for introductions.

BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2023

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Cockburn moved that the minutes of the May 16, 2023, meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Ms. Stiff seconded and the motion carried.

Financial Update, Virginia Land Conservation Fund, Sharon Partee, Director of Finance, DCR

Ms. Partee gave the financial update.



Fund Statement

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Fund Statement
As of October 31, 2023

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

INCOME	
FY22 Stewardship Funds	\$2,124,370
FY23 Stewardship Funds*	\$1,667,123
FY23 Appropriation - Chapter 2	\$16,000,000
FY24 Appropriation - Chapter 1*	\$16,000,000
FY23 Interest*	\$506,071
FY24 Interest*	\$354,124
TOTAL INCOME	\$36,651,688

DISBURSEMENTS	
FY23 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,124,370
FY24 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$0
FY23 Grant Payments*	\$5,507,148
FY24 Grant Payments*	\$1,225,937
FY23 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$4,000,000
FY24 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments*	\$0
FY23 Administrative Expenses*	\$122,897
FY24 Administrative Expenses*	\$10,677
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$12,951,029

* Changes since last report

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE- October 31, 2023 \$39,948,437

LAND PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Update from Department of Taxation – Lore DeAstra, Land Preservation Tax Credit Analyst, Virginia Department of Taxation

REVISED: 11/14/2023 1:17 PM

Ms. De Astra gave the updated on the Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC) Program. She noted that the Virginia Department of Taxation (VTAX) continues to work with public and private organizations for land conservation initiatives.

Ms. De Astra reported that the Virginia Tax LPTC program exceeded a monumental milestone in December 2022.

Ms. De Astra reviewed three components of the program.

1. Donations
2. Transfer Free Revenues
3. Litigation

Donations

Donations History Data				5
Tax Year	# of Credits	# of Acres	Credit Amt Issued	
2000-2008	2,035	414,574	\$939,125,062	
2009-2014	1,296	312,618	\$504,623,179	
2015	182	42,362	\$48,625,672	
2016	162	30,981	\$59,968,175	
2017	200	49,127	\$75,000,000	
2018	165	35,384	\$50,533,208	
2019	193	34,677	\$75,000,000	
2020	156	37,975	\$75,000,000	
2021	183	41,859	\$75,000,000	
2022	160	31,365	\$75,000,000	
2023	99	18,124	\$40,360,059	
Grand Total	4,831	1,049,046	\$2,018,235,355	

• Through October 19, 2023

Virginia Tax

Transfer Fee Revenue

Transfer Fees FY22

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Land Preservation Transfer Fees

Revenue	FY 2023	FY 2022
Revenue Collected - Cardinal VGLR001 - fund 0216 RSC 02740	3,304,034	3,736,966
Less: Transfer to GF, Chapter 2, Item 3 -101 paragraph 5	-466,600	-466,600
Net Revenue	2,837,434	3,270,366
Expenses		
Less: DCR Expenses	434,400	482,949
Less: TAX Expenses	686,911	633,047
Total Expenses	1,170,311	1,115,996
Revenue Less Expenses	1,667,123	2,124,370
Transfer Amount	1,667,123	2,124,370



Transfer Fee Revenue

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Virginia Tax Expenses

Description	Amount
Staff Salary and Benefits	404,692
Office of the Attorney General-Salary and Benefits	237,653
Non-personal Services (Appraisal etc.)	44,566
Total	686,911



Litigation

Ms. De Astra advised that she was happy to report no pending litigation.

LPTC Program Transfer Fee Revenues – Gina DiCicco, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR

Ms. DiCicco reviewed the LPTC Program Transfer Fee Revenues.

2023 Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Stewardship Fund				
	AGENCY NAME	NUMBER OF DONATIONS	% OF TOTAL DONATIONS	AMOUNT OF FUNDS
1	Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
2	Broad Water Innovations	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
3	Capital Region Land Conservancy Inc	9	2.03%	\$33,869.32
4	Central Virginia Battlefields Trust	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
5	Chesapeake Conservancy	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
6	City of Chesapeake	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
7	City of Franklin	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
8	City of Hampton	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
9	County of Albemarle	19	4.29%	\$71,501.89
10	County of Chesterfield	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
11	County of Clarke	2	0.45%	\$7,526.51
12	County of Fauquier	10	2.26%	\$37,632.57
13	County of Loudoun	0.5	0.11%	\$1,881.63
14	County of Stafford	2	0.45%	\$7,526.51
15	County of Warren	3	0.68%	\$11,289.77
16	Eastern Shore Land Trust	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
17	Enrichmond Foundation	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
18	Ever Green Team	71	16.03%	\$267,191.27
19	Friends of Dragon Run	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
20	Historic Virginia Land Conservancy	15	3.39%	\$56,448.86
21	Land Savers United	21	4.74%	\$79,028.40
22	Land Trust of Virginia	37.5	8.47%	\$141,122.15
23	Living River Restoration Trust	2	0.45%	\$7,526.51
24	Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
25	New River Conservancy	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
26	New River Land Trust	2	0.45%	\$7,526.51
27	Northern Neck Land Conservancy	5	1.13%	\$18,816.29
28	Northern Virginia Conservation Trust	8.5	1.92%	\$31,987.69
29	Old Dominion Land Conservancy, Inc.	50	11.29%	\$188,162.87
30	Outdoors Preservation Foundation	3	0.68%	\$11,289.77
31	Piedmont Environmental Council	5	1.13%	\$18,816.29

32	Potomac Conservancy	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
33	Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation	3.5	0.79%	\$13,171.40
34	The 500-Year Forest Foundation	7	1.58%	\$26,342.80
35	The Conservation Fund	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
36	The Nature Conservancy	5	1.13%	\$18,816.29
37	The Town of Lovettsville	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
38	Valley Conservation Council	23	5.19%	\$86,554.92
39	Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	2	0.45%	\$7,526.51
40	Virginia Department of Forestry	7	1.58%	\$26,342.80
41	Virginia Department of Historic Resources	3	0.68%	\$11,289.77
42	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	1	0.23%	\$3,763.26
43	Virginia Outdoors Foundation	110	24.83%	\$413,958.31
TOTALS		443	100.00%	\$1,667,123.00

* US Navy co-holds ½ interest in one easement, but is ineligible to receive payment, per §58.10513 of the Va. Code.

Ms. DiCicco advised that staff recommendation was to hold the payment to the Enrichment Foundation until such time that the ownership of the parcel is settled, and the parcel is placed under a conservation easement. She noted that staff recommended the issue be revisited in 2024.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Quigley moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Stewardship Funds be approved as submitted by staff. Mr. Ford seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VLCF GRANT PROGRAM

FY24 Grant Round

Grant Round Overview – Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, DCR

Secretary Voyles called on Ms. Bulbulkaya to present the grand round overview. He noted that one application, the Department of Wildlife Resources' Highlands Lonesome Pine application would be considered as a separate action item due to the complexity of the grant proposal to place an open-space easement on more than 44,000 acres of reclaimed coalfields.

Ms. Bulbulkaya introduced the Grant Round. She noted that there were forty project applications and staff was recommending twenty-nine for the Board to consider. She also noted that, since the Board approved the fiscal plan in May 2023, there were a few grants that were withdrawn and additional projects that were completed under budget. She noted no separate action was needed as the adjustment would be considered as part of the final approval.

Ms. Bulbulkaya presented the Proposed Revised GRANT FUNDING PLAN FOR FY24 as follows:

FUNDING CATEGORIES		FY23 Budget Bill Chapter 2, Item 375 A.1. \$16,000,000	Approved May 16, 2023 Reallocation of Unspent Grant Funds	Subtotal	Additional Unspent Grant Funds to be Approved & Reallocated	TOTAL Available for Grant Round
1.	I. VOF Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (25% per § 10.1-1020 C)	\$4,000,000				
2.	II. Grant Program					
3.	(i) Farmland Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$300,000	\$2,700,000	\$278,750	\$2,978,750
4.	(ii) Forestland Conservation	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$2,400,000
5.	(iii) Historic Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$69,075	\$2,469,075	\$242,170	\$2,711,245
6.	(iv) Natural Area Protection	\$2,400,000	\$1,756,314	\$4,156,314	\$177,788	\$4,334,102
7.	(v) Open Spaces and Parks	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$2,400,000	\$0	\$2,400,000
TOTAL		\$16,000,000	\$2,125,389	\$14,125,389	\$698,708	\$14,824,097
<i>Summary of Additional Unspent Grant Funds</i>						
Farmland Preservation		\$278,750	<i>Withdrawn:</i> FY21R1I Piedmont Environmental Council, Protected Farmland along the Rappahannock River \$208,000 ; FY21R1I Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Morse Brothers Farm \$70,750 .			
Forestland Conservation		\$0				
Historic Area Preservation		\$242,170	<i>Withdrawn:</i> FY21 Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, Stoner Keller \$242,170 .			
Natural Area Protection		\$177,788	<i>Unexpended Remainder:</i> FY21R1I DCR-DNH, Crow's Nest NAP Addition – Accokeek Bottomlands \$68,921 ; FY22 DCR-DNH, Poor Mtn. NAP – NE Addition \$54,703 ; FY23 Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Bull Run Mtns Eastern Overlook \$54,164 .			
Open Spaces and Parks		\$0				

Presentation of Recommended Grant Applications from the Interagency Task Force

Farmland Preservation: Genette Harris, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Ms. Harris presented the recommendations for the Farmland Preservation category:

Amount of funding available: \$2,978,750.

1. Piedmont Environmental Council; Farmland Protection near Barboursville; easement on 545 acres in Orange County; **total project cost:** \$2,300,000; **grant request:** \$605,000; **recommend:** \$605,000
2. The Trust for Public Land; Lower Potomac River Corridor; easement on 320 acres in Westmoreland County; **total project cost:** \$2,955,000; **grant request:** \$585,000; **recommend:** \$585,000
3. Virginia Outdoors Foundation; East West Creek Farms LLC; easement on 720 acres in Mecklenburg County; **total project cost:** \$1,536,500; **grant request:** \$610,000; **recommend:** \$610,000
4. Stafford County; AP Legacy, LLC Farm; easement on 73 acres in Stafford County; **total project cost:** \$496,900; **grant request:** \$248,450; **recommend:** \$248,450

5. Piedmont Environmental Council; Farmland Protection along Rapidan River Tributaries; easement on 229 acres in Greene County; **total project cost:** \$1,010,000; **grant request:** \$282,500; **recommend:** \$282,500

6. Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Nottoway 186; easement on 186 acres in Southampton County; **total project cost:** \$1,362,000; **grant request:** \$537,500; **recommend:** \$537,500

7. Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Panamint Farm; easement on 533 acres in Louisa County; **total project cost:** \$1,017,500; **grant request:** \$550,000; **recommend:** \$110,300

Ms. Stiff asked if additional points were awarded for projects that fall withing a PDR (Purchase of Development Rights) program.

Ms. Bulbulkaya advised that issue could be addressed in the next revision of the grant manual.

Director Wells asked Ms. Stiff to email concerns to DCR staff for consideration at the next meeting.

Forestland Preservation: Terry Lasher, Assistant State Forester, Department of Forestry

Mr. Lasher presented the recommendations in the Forestland Preservation category.

Amount of funding available: \$2,400,000.

1. The Nature Conservancy, Clinch Mountain, Pinnacle Rock; fee acquisition of 680 acres in Washington County; **total project cost:** \$1,134,500; **grant request:** \$567,250; **recommend:** \$567,250.

2. Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources, Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative III; fee acquisition of 762 acres in Accomack County; **total project cost:** \$1,637,300; **grant request:** \$450,000; **recommend:** \$450,000 (\$441,300 from Forestland Conservation and \$8,700 from Open Spaces & Parks).

3. Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia, Acquiring Rappahannock Tribe's Ancestral Homelands Phase III; fee acquisition of 964 acres in Richmond County; **total project cost:** \$3,752,850; **grant request:** \$2,000,000; **recommend:** \$1,716,166 (\$450,000 from Forestland Conservation and \$1,266,166 from Historic Preservation).

4. Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Taylors Mill Farm Conservation Easement, Additional Funding; easement on 1,145 acres in Greensville County; **total project cost:** \$1,352,000; **grant request:** \$45,000; **recommend:** \$45,000.

5. Land Trust of Virginia, Huff Rock; easement on 660 acres in Wise County; **total project cost:** \$383,000; **grant request:** \$182,000; **recommend:** \$182,000.

6. Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Poplar Hollow Conservation Easement, Additional Funding; easement on 611 acres in Shenandoah County; **total project cost:** \$1,163,500; **grant request:** \$250,000; **recommend:** \$250,000.

7. Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources, Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative II; fee acquisition on 476 acres in Accomack County; **total project cost:** \$1,081,150; **grant request:** \$300,000; **recommend:** \$300,000.

8. Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Southampton 900; easement on 900 acres in Southampton County; **total project cost:** \$1,603,500; **grant request:** \$750,000; **recommend:** \$164,450.

Historic Areas Preservation: Karri Richardson, Easement Program Specialist, Department of Historic Resources

Ms. Richardson presented the recommendations in the Historic Areas Preservations category.

Amount of funding available: \$2,711,245.

1. American Battlefield Trust; Whitby Tract at Second Deep Bottom Battlefield; fee acquisition of 8.87 acres in Henrico County; **total project cost:** \$605,615; **grant request:** \$300,215; **recommend:** \$300,215.
2. American Battlefield Trust; Welch-Penden Tract at Glendale Battlefield; fee acquisition of 12.46 acres in Henrico County; **total project cost:** \$441,550; **grant request:** \$219,433; **recommend:** \$219,433.
3. American Battlefield Trust; Brandy Rock Farm I Tract at Brandy Station Battlefield; an easement on 100 acres in Culpeper County; **total project cost:** \$1,048,255; **grant request:** \$271,660; **recommend:** \$271,660.
4. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Stanley Hall at New Market Battlefield; fee acquisition of 9.54 acres in Shenandoah County; **total project cost:** \$607,543; **grant request:** \$303,771; **recommend:** \$303,771.
5. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; French Tract at Fisher's Hill Battlefield; fee acquisition of 146 acres in Shenandoah County; **total project cost:** \$1,648,518; **grant request:** \$350,000; **recommend:** \$350,000.

Historic Area Preservation Totals: **acres:** 277; **project costs:** \$4,351,481; **recommend:** \$1,445,079.

*Remaining Historic Preservation funds: \$1,266,166 are recommended for the Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia project in the Forestland Conservation category.

Natural Heritage Protection – Jason Bulluck, Director, Virginia Natural Heritage Program, DCR

Mr. Bulluck presented the recommendations in the Natural Heritage Protection category.

Amount of funding available: \$4,334,102.

1. Dept. of Conservation & Recreation - Div. of Natural Heritage (DCR - DNH), Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve – LCI Addition, fee acquisition of 1,000 acres in Floyd County; **total project cost:** \$3,617,677; **grant request:** \$3,617,677; **recommend:** \$3,617,677.
2. DCR – DNH, Pedlar Hills Addition – Supplemental Funding, fee acquisition of 156 acres in Montgomery County; **total project cost:** \$65,000; **grant request:** \$65,000; **recommend:** \$65,000.
3. DCR – DNH, Grassy Hill Natural Area Preserve – Anderson Addition, fee acquisition of 48 acres in Franklin County; **total project cost:** \$250,000; **grant request:** \$250,000; **recommend:** \$250,000.

4. DCR – DNH, Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve – Browne Farm Easement, easement over 45 acres in Halifax County; **total project cost:** \$250,000; **grant request:** \$250,000; **recommend:** \$250,000.

Open Spaces and Parks: Kelly McClary, Director of Planning and Recreation Resources, DCR

Ms. McClary presented the recommendations in the Open Spaces and Parks category.

Amount of funding available: \$2,400,000

1. Washington County, Abrams Creek Property Addition to Mendota Trail, fee acquisition of 220 acres in Washington County; **total project cost:** \$1,295,200; **grant request:** \$241,100; **recommend:** \$241,100.

2. Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, Bushy Park Farm Acquisition, fee acquisition of 118 acres in Middlesex County; **total project cost:** \$2,448,255; **grant request:** \$750,000; **recommend:** \$750,000.

3. Franklin Parks Foundation, Deer Creek, a fee acquisition of 96 acres in Southampton County; **total project cost:** \$1,178,300; **grant request:** \$180,000; **recommend:** \$180,000.

4. Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources, Highlands-Lonesome Pine, easement on 44,327 acres in the Dickenson County; **total project cost:** \$7,024,275; **grant request:** \$1,000,000; **recommend:** \$1,000,000.

5. Wildlife Foundation of Virginia, Marshland on the Mattaponi River, fee acquisition of 482 acres in King William County (Town of West Point); **total project cost:** \$480,200; **grant request:** \$220,200; **recommend:** \$220,200.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Ford moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees approve the list of project recommendations as presented by staff with the exception of the Highlands Lonesome Pine application from the Department of Wildlife Resources.

Ms. Carson seconded, and the motion carried with Ms. Cockburn abstaining from voting on any project associated with the Piedmont Environmental Council.

Secretary Voyles noted that, with regard to the Highlands Lonesome Pine project for a conservation easement on 44,327 acres, the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) was seeking a waiver of boundary right survey requirements and severed subsurface mineral rights.

Ms. Bulbulkaya advised that the Nature Conservancy, the current landowner only owns the surface rights while subsurface rights are owned by a coal company. The DWR easement would not encumber any subsurface rights for mining. Additionally, there are currently some active mining permits.

Ms. Gwynn noted that while the property in question contains 44,000 acres, about 3,000 are being used for active mining.

Ms. Andrews inquired about timber rights.

Mr. Brown noted that the surface owner of the property retains the timber rights.

Ms. Stiff asked if fracking might possibly occur on the site.

Mr. Kittrell noted that the type of gas extraction on the property is coal-based methane which does not use fracking.

BOARD ACTION

Senator Marsden moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees award the grant to DWR consistent with the recommendation of the inter-agency task force, waving the required boundary survey in lieu of a boundary exhibit that meets the requirements of the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of General Services, and acknowledging that the open-space easement required by the grant will not include limitations on the sub-surface mining rights of the property, and that the grant be approved as recommended by staff.

Ms. Green seconded, and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Andrews, Booth, Cockburn, Ford, Poppe, Quigley, Vlk, Marsden, Green, Voyles

NAY: Stiff, White

The motion carried.

RECENTLY COMPLETED VLCF GRANT PROJECTS – *Larry Mikkelson, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR*

Mr. Mikkelson gave an overview of recently completed projects:

The following six VLCF grants successfully closed since the last VLCF Board meeting on May 16, 2023.

1. Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority – Hoskins Creek Waterfront Land Acquisition in Tappahannock (FY2021 Round II)

The Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority was awarded a grant for \$200,000 to assist the Town of Tappahannock in the fee acquisition of seven acres on Hoskins Creek for a public access project. The project provides public access to the creek and the nearby Rappahannock River, increases passive outdoor recreation opportunities (walking, fishing, wildlife viewing and bird watching), conserves an undeveloped coastal area, and protects a wetland marsh. Plans are in place to construct a kayak/boat launch and raised interpretive walkways through the marsh - all part of a new family outdoor gathering area.

Grant Award: \$200,000. **Payment Amount:** \$200,000. **Match:** \$351,270 Town of Tappahannock.
[Project closed: September 2023]

2. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation – Natural Heritage Division – Difficult Creek North Addition – Life Estate (FY2022)

The Natural Heritage Division received a FY22 VLCF grant for \$50,153 to acquire a 1.5-acre inholding within the Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve in Halifax County near Scottsburg. The parcel is within the Protected Landscapes Resilience and Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity ConserveVirginia layers. The Difficult Creek preserve supports a high number of significant natural heritage resources, many of which are fire-adapted. Acquisition of this inholding improves the ability to implement prescribed fires that are necessary to adequately restore and manage the vegetation and habitat. DCR acquired the property with the current owners/residents retaining a life estate.

Grant Award: \$50,153. **Payment amount:** \$50,153. **Match:** \$30,064 DCR-DNH. **[Project closed:** June 2023]

3. Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe – **Conservation of Ancestral Lands – Upper Mattaponi Tribe’s Return to the River (FY2023)**

The Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe was awarded a VLCF grant in November 2022, to help enable its acquisition of an 853-acre property in King William County. The property has more than 12,000 feet of shoreline along the Tribe’s namesake River, the Mattaponi. With additional financial assistance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Tribe was able to purchase the property that includes a former sand & gravel mine. The Va. Dept. of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will help the Tribe develop a comprehensive vision for restoring habitat of culturally significant fish, wildlife and plant populations and establishing a fish hatchery. A forest stewardship plan will guide future restoration efforts and limited site development for the fish hatchery, retention of 550 acres of forestland, and nature-based public recreational opportunities, including access to the river and a trail network.

With significant assistance from the OAG, a notice of grant agreement document was agreed upon with the tribe and recorded immediately after the deed of acquisition. The notice includes acknowledgements by the tribe that “the property was acquired for the purpose of perpetual conservation of land and natural resources, culturally significant species restoration, passive recreational usage, and ecotourism consistent with the Tribe’s indigenous knowledge and practices (the “Conservation Purposes”) and agrees not to undertake activities that would impair the Conservation Purposes, such as dividing, subdividing, or partitioning the Property for sale, or engaging in commercial, residential, or industrial development.”

Grant Award: \$310,000. **Payment amount:** \$310,000. **Match:** \$3,164,923 NOAA. **[Project closed:** July 2023]

4. Clarke County – **Newfound Farm (FY2023)**

Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority was awarded a FY2023 VLCF grant for \$100,150 to help acquire an open space easement on 60 acres of primarily forested land in Berryville. The dominant forest stand on the property encompassing 95% of the property, is oak and hickory. The easement prohibits subdivision of the property and protects more than half a mile of frontage on Opequon Creek, a designated impaired waterway, by requiring 100-foot-wide forested riparian buffers. The buffers also provide suitable habitat for wood turtles. Approximately five acres of land in the floodplain will remain as open space and the landowner is in the process of removing invasive species including autumn olive and Ailanthus from the area.

Grant Award: \$100,150. **Payment amount:** \$100,150. **Match:** \$116,636 Landowner donation. **[Project closed:** August 2023]

5. Capital Region Land Conservancy. – **Haskins Farm at New Market Heights (FY2023)**

Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC) acquired and conserved 49 acres of critically-threatened battlefield land in the core area of the 1864 Battle of New Market Heights in Henrico County utilizing a VLCF FY2023 grant for \$600,000. An historic preservation and open-space easement held by the Va. Board of Historic Resources now protects the property's 650 linear feet of the "New Market Line" earthworks that the US Colored Troops (USCT) seized in their victory for which 14 Medal of Honors were awarded. The county's comprehensive plan had identified the property as future "concentrated commercial use" threatening the battlefield that Preservation Virginia had designated as one of the most threatened historic sites in Virginia. CRLC is working with local and national partners to establish an area of approximately 350 acres within the New Market Heights Battlefield to be interpreted and open for public access. Many have placed an even greater emphasis on preserving the few sites pertinent to the USCT. Several descendants of USCT enlisted men are also engaged in these preservation efforts.

Grant Award: \$600,000. **Payment amount:** \$600,000. **Match:** \$624,725 American Battlefield Protection Program. **[Project closed:** August 2023]

6. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – **Bull Run Mountains NAP Addition – Eastern Overlook (FY2023)**

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), in collaboration with DCR's Division of Natural Heritage, received a VLCF grant to cover the fee-simple purchase of 10.13 acres as an addition to Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve (BRMNAP) in Prince William County. This preserve is owned by VOF and managed in partnership with DCR-DNH as a Natural Area Preserve. Situated atop the eastern-most ridge of the Bull Run Mountains adjacent to BRMNAP, this new addition enhances VOF and DCR's protection of key visual and ecological buffers overlooking the heavily developed Piedmont towards Washington, DC. Conservation of this parcel prevents incompatible development on a fragile ecosystem and protects critical habitat benefitting BRMNAP's biodiversity hotspots and wetlands. This area provides critical food and habitat for numerous species of conservation concern. The property falls within two categories of *Conserve Virginia*: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Protected Landscapes Resilience.

Grant Awards: \$500,000. **Payment amount:** \$445,836. **Match:** \$0. **[Project closed:** May 2023]

Mr. Mikkelsen noted that the three grant projects were withdrawn since the Board's last meeting. He noted that in the action above, these funds were redistributed to current applicants.

1. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation – **Stoner-Keller (FY2021)**

This project was destined to place an easement over the 120-acre Stoner-Keller property in Shenandoah County held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. The property is entirely within the core of the Fisher's Hill Battlefield and the study area of the Cedar Creek Battlefield. This project intersected with ConserveVirginia in the Cultural and Historic Preservation and Water Quality Improvement layers.

Grant Award: \$242,170. **Note:** This project is no longer viable because the landowner changed their mind. They did however agree to donate a conservation easement over 103-acres of agricultural land

with the historic structures excluded to Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation without the use of state funds.

2. Piedmont Environmental Council – **Protected Farmland along the Rappahannock River (FY2021 Round II)**

Piedmont Environmental Council sought grant funds to help secure a conservation easement to protect a family farm, comprised of 732 acres in Culpeper County, and located along over 1-mile of the Rappahannock River, a Virginia Scenic River. The property intersected the Cultural and Historic, Scenic Preservation, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$208,000. **Note:** This project was withdrawn because the landowners changed their mind after undergoing estate planning. They were not ready to move forward with a conservation easement and requested the grant be withdrawn.

3. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – **Morse Brothers Farm (FY2021 Round II)**

Two brothers, third-generation African American farmers in Nelson County, had planned to place an open-space easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation in partnership with the US NRCS Agricultural Land Easement program on 111 recently purchased acres adjacent to their family farm. They also envisioned a venue where people from the Capital region could enjoy the out-of-doors and visit a working farm. The brothers have been working with the US Natural Resources Conservation Service to establish pastures and fence the streams so that they can showcase livestock production best-management practices.

Grant Award: \$70,750. **Note:** The landowners withdrew their grant due to different factors, including challenges with their lender and loan subordination together with increasing interest rates for future farm plans, and timing issues and delays with the NRCS easement process.

Mr. Mikkelsen gave the following summary of Open VLCF Grants.

- There are five open grants in each of the FY21 and FY21 Round II grant rounds.
- For the FY22 grant round, 18 of the 30 grants originally awarded are still open.
- For the FY23 grant round, 33 of the 40 grants awarded are open.
- Currently, we are managing a total of 61 open grants with a total value of \$18,527,567.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Secretary Voyles called for public comment.

Mr. Craig of the Beechtree Group thanked the Board for approving the projects. He expressed concerns over the survey method for grant applications. He noted that the current requirements were costly and advised that there were few available surveyors in the Commonwealth. He asked that the staff take this issue under consideration and bring it back to the spring meeting for possible revisions to the grant manual.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**Fund Statement****As of April 30, 2024**

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

FY22 Stewardship Funds	\$2,124,370
FY23 Stewardship Funds	\$1,667,123
FY23 Appropriation - Chapter 2	\$16,000,000
FY24 Appropriation - Chapter 1	\$16,000,000
FY23 Interest	\$506,071
FY24 Interest*	\$1,098,433
TOTAL INCOME	\$37,395,997

DISBURSEMENTS

FY23 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,124,370
FY24 Stewardship Fund Disbursements*	\$1,667,123
FY23 Grant Payments	\$5,507,148
FY24 Grant Payments*	\$6,130,299
FY23 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$4,000,000
FY24 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments*	\$4,000,000
FY23 Administrative Expenses	\$122,897
FY24 Administrative Expenses*	\$49,590
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$23,601,427

* Changes since last report

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE - April 30, 2024	\$30,082,348
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Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
June 5, 2024
Resolution: Authorization for Administrative Funding for FY 2025

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, 2023	\$562,389
Interest Earned during current year (FY24)	\$1,098,433
VLCF Administrative Expenses for FY24	(\$31,000)
Budgeted Natural Heritage Expenses	(\$100,000)
Available interest	\$1,529,822

Authorization:

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board authorizes the Department of Conservation and Recreation to expend up to \$250,000 in FY 2025 for use consistent with the legislative authority on the use of interest generated by the Fund, *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-1020.G.; as outlined below:

FY 2025 \$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.

Report on VLCF Grant Projects - June 5, 2024

Recently Closed / Completed Projects

The following 19 VLCF grants have successfully closed since the November 13, 2023, VLCF Board meeting.

1. Piedmont Environmental Council – Farmland Protection along the Blue Ridge Turnpike (FY2021)

Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) received a FY2021 grant for \$315,000 to protect the M&W Farm and Willis properties in Madison and Orange Counties - totaling 447 acres. This project has two separate easements and closings. Farming operations include beef cattle and mowing hay, with 193 acres of prime and statewide significant soils. The two properties have a prominent viewshed identified in the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Corridor Management Plan. The project protects over 2.3 miles of streams in the Rapidan River watershed. One mile of buffers are located within the Rapidan River-Blue, Cedar, Barbour Runs Stream Conservation Unit, where the federally threatened Yellow Lance mussel is found. The project includes 298 acres of conservation priorities identified in ConserveVirginia, intersecting the Agriculture and Forestry, Cultural and Historic Preservation, Scenic Preservation, and Water Quality Improvement categories. The project leveraged VLCF funds with matching federal NRCS Agricultural Land Easement funds. PEC now co-holds the conservation easement with the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District.

Grant Award: \$315,000. **Payment amount:** \$315,000. **Match:** \$1,690,431. **Grant closed:** April 2024.

2. Piedmont Environmental Council – Farmland Protection along the Robinson River (FY2021)

A FY2021 VLCF grant for \$106,875, along with matching federal Agricultural Land Easement funds, were utilized by The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) to protect the 596-acre Goodall Family Farm with an open space easement. This large working Century Farm along the Robinson River in Madison County encompasses high-quality farmland, with 332 acres of prime and statewide significant soils and 143 acres identified in the Water Quality Improvement category of ConserveVirginia. The farm borders 4.5 miles of streams, as well as two miles along the Robinson River. The Goodall family began acquiring the farm in 1906. Today, farming operations include beef cattle and mowing hay. The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) awarded the Goodalls its forestry award for their outstanding forest management and reforestation efforts in 2019. The SWCD is a co-holder of the easement conserving the farmland in perpetuity.

Grant Award: \$106,875. **Payment amount:** \$106,875. **Match:** \$2,123,304. **Project closed:** April 2024.

3. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Southside Virginia Conservation and Recreation Complex (Phase I) (FY2021)

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) received a grant for \$843,750 to acquire Phase 1 of its first ever joint State Parks Division and Natural Heritage Division project: the Southside Virginia Conservation & Recreation Complex in Halifax County. This acquisition of 2,010 acres adjoining Staunton River State Park, intersects three conservation sites, and includes natural heritage resources as well as cultural resources. This project intersects two ConserveVirginia categories: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Protected Landscapes Resilience. The total project was scheduled to be a 7,400-acre multi-phase transaction to create a protected corridor connecting Kerr Lake, Staunton River State Park, and Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve.

After the grant was awarded for the first phase to acquire 2,010 acres, the entire 7,400 acres was donated to DCR. The VLCF grant funds were used to cover due diligence expenses required by the Commonwealth to accept the donation and ensured 2,010 acres were placed under a recorded Natural Areas Deed of Dedication.

Grant Award: \$843,750, revised to \$240,000 to cover due diligence at May 2023 Board Meeting. **Payment amount:** \$207,418. **Match:** \$0. **Project closed:** May 2024. **Amount to be returned to Natural Area Preservation Category:** \$32,582.

4. Friends of the Lower Appomattox River – Appomattox River Trail – Critical Petersburg Gap Connection (FY2021)

Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) was awarded \$28,943 by VLCF in the FY21 grant round to acquire an eight-acre tract with 2,112 feet of river frontage along the Appomattox River, a state designated Scenic River. Acquisition of this parcel in Petersburg will help complete the Appomattox River Trail, closing a critical gap in the 25-mile greenway trail system. The trail spans the Tri-Cities Region, linking neighborhoods, vibrant areas of commerce, and tranquil forested riparian greenspace. The trail provides daily public access for biking, walking and access to the river for fishing, bank swimming and an informal rest site for paddlers. Increasing public greenspace and access to recreation and alternative transportation is invaluable in a region that ranks among the lowest in the state for health outcomes and is socially vulnerable. Project partners include the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (who holds the open space easement on the property), The Cameron Foundation, and the City of Petersburg. The project intersects two layers of ConserveVirginia: Cultural and Historic Preservation and Scenic Preservation.

Grant Award: \$28,943. **Payment amount:** \$28,943. **Match:** \$70,971. **Project closed:** April 2024.

5. Stafford County – Kevin Jones Farm (FY2021 Round II; FY2022)

Two VLCF grants, totaling \$166,500, were awarded to Stafford County to place an open-space easement on Kevin Jones Farm, through the county's Purchase of Development Rights program. The 70-acre farm intersects both the Cultural and Historic Preservation and the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity categories of ConserveVirginia. The property, used for crop production and the keeping of livestock, is located along a scenic, rural road providing visual access to the traveling public. The easement protects 36 acres of prime farm soils and soils of statewide importance; 15 acres of mixed forestland; and various environmental features, including 2,430 feet of a forested perennial stream and 4.8 acres of wetlands. The property falls within an ecological core and contains an element occurrence of a threatened and endangered species. Additionally, the easement preserves and protects on-site Civil War trenches within the wooded portion of the property. The farm is adjacent to land under conservation easement with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and is located 200 feet from another county-held PDR easement.

Grant Awards: FY2021 Round II: \$46,250; FY2022: \$120,250. **Payment amount:** \$166,500. **Match:** \$243,290. **Project closed:** November 2023.

6. American Battlefield Trust – Fussell's Mill Tracts at Second Deep Bottom Battlefield (FY2021 Round II)

The American Battlefield Trust received a VLCF grant for \$282,000 in FY21 Round II to acquire and preserve the 50-acre Fussell's Mill Tracts in eastern Henrico County. Open-space easements held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources now conserve the two tracts in perpetuity. The tracts are in the Core and Study Areas of the Second Deep Bottom, First Deep Bottom, Glendale, and Fair Oaks & Darbytown Road Battlefields. The property includes 106 feet of Bailey Creek and 48 acres of forest. The property is in the Cultural and Historic Preservation and Water Quality Improvement categories of ConserveVirginia. The Trust has executed a written Rehabilitation and Management Plan for demolition and removal of the

non-historic residential improvements on the 2.3-acre tract along with rehabilitation of the battlefield landscape. The Trust intends to interpret the Property for its historic battlefield significance through a publicly accessible roadside pull-off and signs.

Grant Award: \$282,000. **Payment amount:** \$282,000. **Match:** \$490,644. **Project closed:** May 2024.

7. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Pierces Lowgrounds – Meherrin River Conservation Easement (FY2022; FY2023)

Virginia Outdoors Foundation was awarded \$650,000 over the FY22 and FY23 VLCF grant rounds to place an easement on the Pierces Lowgrounds tract. The property consists of 2,860 acres of multigenerational family-owned and operated forest and farmland along the Meherrin River in Greensville County. The property contains high conservation value forest with bottomlands, buffers, and sloughs along the river. The open grounds consist of 450 acres of prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance. An ecological core blankets the tract from the river to the road. The open-space easement protects the sensitive bottomlands, buffers, and wildlife habitat along on the river, and ensures that future generations may continue to own and manage its forests in perpetuity. The property is within four categories of ConserveVirginia: Agriculture & Forestry, Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains & Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement.

Grant Award: FY2022: \$350,000; FY2023: \$300,000. **Payment amount:** \$650,000. **Match:** \$2,774,908. **Project closed:** April 2024.

8. Virginia Department of Forestry – Over the River and Point Beach (FY2022)

Two properties along the State Scenic Nottoway River in Southampton County, under the same family ownership for almost 100 years, have been placed under easement with the Department of Forestry with the assistance of a VLCF FY22 grant for \$250,000. Over the River consists of approximately 300 acres, including 25 acres of Cypress bottomlands and high bluffs overlooking 3,200 feet of river. This property is contiguous to the General Vaughn Wildlife Management Area and contains the historic Smith Ferry landing and roadbed. Point Beach is a 20-acre peninsula of Cypress bottomland with more than one mile of frontage on the Nottoway River. Scenic values along the Nottoway River are protected and the cypress stands will be managed to encourage the long-term health of the forest and to improve wildlife habitat. The two properties intersect five layers of ConserveVirginia: Agriculture & Forestry, Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity, Scenic Preservation, Protected Landscapes Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement.

Grant Award: \$225,000. **Payment amount:** \$225,000. **Match:** \$620,699. **Project closed:** May 2024.

9. The Germanna Foundation – Siegen Forest (FY2022)

The Siegen Forest project is now protected under an open-space easement held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. A VLCF grant, awarded in FY22 for \$647,370, helped to advance the preservation of important archaeological artifacts and assist in preserving this undeveloped park land in Orange County, which provides daily public access. The easement encompasses 164 acres of both floodplain and upland mature forest and preserves 200-foot forested buffers along the Rapidan River for 1.4 miles.

Archaeological artifacts found on the property include rifle pits from the Civil War, remains of an early 19th century mill, along with the mill race, a cemetery, and a 1920s navigational marker. The property was part of the advance/retreat portion of the Wilderness Battlefield and includes seven miles of walking trails, along with a visitor center telling the story of the diverse people who lived and worked this land from the 18th and 19th centuries. The Germanna Foundation worked in partnership with the American Battlefield Trust, Department of Historic Resources, and the Piedmont Environmental Council to make

this project possible. The property is located within the Cultural & Historic Preservation, Floodplains & Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$647,370. **Payment amount:** \$628,910. **Match:** \$628,910. **Project closed:** December 2023. **Amount to be returned to Historic Preservation Category:** \$18,460.

10. American Battlefield Trust – Pegrams Battery Tract at Cedar Mountain (FY2022)

An FY2022 VLCF grant in the amount of \$249,876 assisted in the American Battlefield Trust's purchase and conservation of the 44-acre Pegram's Battery Tract, located in Culpeper County. The Trust also received grant funds from the American Battlefield Protection Program. The Trust placed an open-space easement held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources on the property, which protects the historic, agricultural, and forested resources on the property. The tract is entirely within the Core Area of the Cedar Mountain Battlefield and falls within the Cultural & Historic Preservation and Scenic Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia. The Trust will steward the tract and incorporate it into its existing Cedar Mountain Park, which is open to the public year-round.

Grant Award: \$249,876. **Payment amount:** \$249,876. **Match:** \$265,763. **Project closed:** March 2024.

11. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Difficult Creek South Addition (FY2022)

DCR's Natural Heritage Division received a FY22 VLCF grant for \$30,000 to acquire a two-acre addition to the 819-acre Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve (DCNAP) in Halifax County. Located near Scottsburg, this southern addition expands connectivity between DCNAP and DCR's newly acquired Southside Virginia Conservation and Recreation Complex. This small tract supports intact hardwood forest that likely represents a significantly rare community type and will complement DCR's long term management and restoration goal. The property intersects the Protected Landscapes Resilience, the Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity, and the Scenic Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$30,000. **Payment amount:** \$24,862. **Match:** \$0. **Project closed:** May 2024. **Amount to be returned to the Natural Area Protection Category:** \$5,137.

12. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve Land Donation (FY2022)

The Division of Natural Heritage received a FY22 VLCF grant for \$20,000, to complete the due diligence necessary to accept the fee simple donation of a one-acre parcel adjoining the 905-acre Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve in Rockingham County. The property lies within the priority Deep Run – Madison Run Pond Conservation Site. This acquisition expands the preserve and prohibits encroachment of incompatible development. The tract intersects the Protected Landscapes Resilience and Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity layers of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$20,000. **Payment amount:** \$13,511. **Match:** \$0. **Project closed:** November 2023. **Amount to be returned to the Natural Area Protection Category:** \$6,489.

13. Tadpole Land and Trail Conservancy – Ballenger Creek Nature Preserve (FY2022)

Tadpole Land & Trail Conservancy (TLTC) purchased 76 acres along Ballenger Creek in Fluvanna County to create Ballenger Creek Nature Preserve. The land is covered in forest, with a diversity of hardwood trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and ferns and contains several attractive cliffs blanketed with mountain laurel. In FY22, TLTC received a VLCF grant for \$65,084 to place 73 acres of this property in a conservation easement with Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The easement conserves the land, protects the forest, and provides public access. TLTC plans to build trails, conserve the habitat, and install interpretive signs. The property is not within ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$65,084. **Payment amount:** \$65,084. **Match:** \$186,513. **Project closed:** February 2024.

14. Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Harris Farm (FY2023)

A VLCF grant award of \$400,000 to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) helped to purchase an open-space easement on the WD Harris farm in Spotsylvania County. Located near the headwaters of Lake Anna, the 327-acre farm includes crop production of corn and soybeans. The land is farmed by its owner and is part of a larger operation, which the landowner operates with his brother. The property is within an agricultural and forestry district, enrolled in land use taxation, and is adjacent to farmland (275-acres) also under easement with VOF. Protection of Harris Farm bolsters agricultural viability and protects water quality. Agricultural best management practices will continue, and a 50-foot-wide forested buffer will be maintained along the length of Beverly Run, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, which drains immediately into Lake Anna.

Grant Award: \$400,000. **Payment amount:** \$400,000. **Match:** \$425,470. **Project closed:** April 2024.

15. Downtown Greens, Inc. – Downtown Greens Expansion (FY2023)

Downtown Greens, Fredericksburg's oldest community garden, was awarded a \$400,000 grant by VLCF in FY23 to conserve a 56-acre parcel under an open-space easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The property provides daily public access and is adjacent to Braehead Farm, the last working farm in the City of Fredericksburg. Its 23 acres of active, prime farmland provide significant community benefits that include addressing the mission of Downtown Greens to produce local food that enhances nutritional security for the City's underserved communities. The parcel shares a boundary with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, helping buffer both Braehead Farm and the adjacent Lee Drive from encroaching industrial development. Its 30 acres of bottomland forest, wetland and vernal pool habitat help generate clean water for the nearby lower Rappahannock River. About 2,000 feet of streams on the property will remain protected by 100-foot forested riparian buffers.

Grant Award: \$400,000. **Payment amount:** \$400,000. **Match:** \$1,823,634. **Project closed:** November 2023.

16. Department of Forestry – Hornet Swamp (FY2023)

The Dept. of Forestry (DOF) received an FY23 VLCF grant of \$400,000 to acquire an open-space easement on two separate tracts totaling 608 acres, in Southampton and Sussex Counties. The properties contain two miles of frontage on Hornet Swamp, and include 526 acres of forest, with the remainder of the property in agricultural use. The landowner has been recognized by DOF for their forest stewardship of the property, including Longleaf Pine restoration as part of DOF's efforts to re-establish this diminished species across its native range in southeast Virginia. The DOF easement will protect sensitive

bottomlands and more than 20,000 feet of 50-foot-wide forested buffers along Hornet Swamp and the perennial streams that transect the property.

Grant Award: \$400,000. **Payment amount:** \$400,000. **Match:** \$503,125. **Project closed:** April 2024.

17. Capital Region Land Conservancy – 5270 New Market Road (FY2023)

Capital Region Land Conservancy received an FY23 VLCF grant for \$588,250 to match funding from the American Battlefield Protection Program, to acquire and conserve 41 acres at Willis Church and New Market Roads in eastern Henrico County. The property is within the core area of the Battles of Glendale, Malvern Hill, Deep Bottom I and II. The Board of Historic Resources holds an open-space easement over the property that allows for the restoration of the landscape to its agricultural uses and prior battlefield conditions. The property will be open to the public daily and is adjacent to Richmond National Battlefield Park with significant frontage along scenic Route 5. The project has the support of local neighborhood groups, many of which have placed an emphasis on preserving sites pertinent to the U.S. Colored Troops (the Battles of Deep Bottom I and II) and greater connectivity of conserved lands around Malvern Hill.

Grant Award: \$588,250. **Payment amount:** \$582,485. **Project closed:** January 2024. **Amount to be returned to the Historic Preservation Category:** \$5,765.

18. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation – Shiflett Tract at Piedmont Battlefield (FY2023)

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation was granted \$253,433 from VLCF in FY23 to acquire a historic preservation and open-space easement held by the Board of Historic Resources on the 141-acre Shiflett Tract in Augusta County. The property makes up the heart of the Piedmont Battlefield along the Middle River and remains active farmland as it has been since the Civil War. The Union victory at the Battle of Piedmont led to the fall of Staunton and the burning of the Virginia Military Institute. The farm contains cropland and pasture for cattle, with 68 acres of prime farmland and 24 acres of farmland of statewide importance. The farm has 2,700 feet of river frontage with a 35-foot vegetated riparian buffer and a small intermittent stream that feeds into the Middle River. The project intersects the Agricultural and Forestal, Cultural and Historic Preservation and Watershed Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$253,433. **Payment amount:** \$253,433. **Match:** \$645,303. **Project closed:** November 2023.

19. Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation – Red Hill (FY2023)

The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, utilizing a FY2023 VLCF grant for \$602,830, conserved the 600-acre historic Red Hill property under an open-space easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The property, in both Charlotte and Campbell Counties, was the home of Patrick Henry, Virginia's first Governor. The Red Hill property remained in the ownership of Henry family descendants until 1944 when it was purchased by the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, which has since developed the property as a museum. It is open to the public year-round and is the site of an annual U.S. Naturalization ceremony held on May 29th, the birthday of Patrick Henry. The property includes numerous reconstructed buildings and Henry's simple law office remains intact. Red Hill also includes prime farmland, hardwood forests, and an enslaved-persons cemetery. It fronts on the Falling River for almost one mile, and the state scenic Staunton River for 1,800 feet – both will have 50-foot vegetated riparian

buffers. Red Hill was named a National Memorial in 1986 by then President Reagan and is listed on both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Grant Award: \$602,830. **Payment amount:** \$602,830. **Match:** \$1,047,571. **Project closed:** December 2023.

Withdrawn VLCF Grant Projects

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

1. American Battlefield Trust – James Jackson Tract at the Wilderness Battlefield (FY2021)

The American Battlefield Trust sought to acquire and conserve the historic 36-acre James Jackson Tract in Orange County. The trust was able to acquire the property in April 2022, but was unable to record a conservation easement on the property within the three-year timeframe allotted due to complications with title.

Grant Award: \$221,023. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Historic Preservation Category.

2. City of Waynesboro – Basic Park (FY2022)

The City of Waynesboro requested a grant to acquire 44 acres adjacent to Basic Park and the South River. The project would have created a natural area for the public to enjoy nature and wildlife along forested walking trails. The landowner, however, received an offer from another entity at nearly twice what the City had offered, and sold the land to them. City official's inquiries with the new owner have been unsuccessful.

Grant Award: \$87,500. **Note:** Funds will be returned to the Open Spaces and Parks Category

Summary of Open VLCF Grants

- There are three open grants from the FY21 Round II grant round.
- For the FY22 grant round, nine of the 30 grants originally awarded are open.
- For the FY23 grant round, 26 of the 40 grants awarded are open.
- The 29 grants awarded in the FY24 grant round remain open.
- Currently, we are managing a total of 67 open grants with a total value of \$26,888,197.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Proposed GRANT FUNDING PLAN FOR FY25
June 5, 2024

FUNDING CATEGORIES	FY25 Budget Bill Chapt. 2, Item 360 A.1. \$16,000,000	Interest through 4/30/24 \$1,361,211	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	\$340,301		VOF PTF: \$4,340,301
II. Grant Program				VLCF Grant Round
(i) Farmland Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$0	\$2,604,182
(ii) Forest Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$0	\$2,604,182
(iii) Historic Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$245,248	\$2,849,430
(iv) Natural Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$195,514	\$2,799,696
(v) Open Spaces and Parks	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$87,500	\$2,691,682
TOTAL for Grant Round	\$12,000,000	\$1,020,910	\$528,262	\$13,549,172
Summary of Additional Unspent Grant Funds				
Farmland Preservation	\$0			
Forest Preservation	\$0			
Historic Area Preservation	\$245,248	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY21 American Battlefield Trust, James Jackson Tract at the Wilderness Battlefield \$221,023 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY22 The Germanna Foundation, Siegen Forest \$18,460 . FY23 Capital Region Land Conservancy, 5270 New Market Road \$5,765 .		
Natural Area Preservation	\$195,514	Unallocated FY24 Grant Funds: \$151,425 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY21 DCR-DNH, Southside VA Conservation & Recreation Complex \$32,582 . FY22 DCR-DNH, Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve Land Donation \$6,489 . FY22 DCR-DNH, Difficult Creek South Addition \$5,018 .		
Open Spaces and Parks	\$87,500	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY22 City of Waynesboro, Basic Park - Natural Area \$87,500 .		

Chapter 2, Item 360 of the Budget Bill, 2024 Special Session I

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 non-general 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]**

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Proposed FY 24 Grant Schedule FY24
June 5, 2024

Proposed FY24 VLCF Grant Schedule	
June 5, 2024	VLCF Board meeting to approve grant manual and initiate the grant round request for proposals (RFP).
Week of June 5, 2024	Announce official opening of grant round (update website and send emails).
June 27, 2024	Virtual Grant Workshop: orientation and program information for grant applicants. <u>Date set for June 27 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.</u>
Wednesday, August 28, 2024	Deadline for application submittal. (12 weeks)
Weeks of September 16 and 30, 2024	Interagency taskforce meetings to score projects and finalize recommendations- usually takes two meetings.
Mid-October 2024	SNR and Director's review of applications and recommendations of IAT.
Late October/Early November 2024	VLCF Board meeting. Approval of grant awards.
By end of November 2024	Grant agreements sent to grant recipients. Projects have two years to close.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Proposed Grant Manual Adjustments

June 5, 2024

Proposed VLCF Grant Manual for Calendar Year 2024 / Fiscal Year 2025

Proposed Changes to the Grant Manual – Minor and Technical Changes (included in redline draft grant manual draft)

- Page 2: Added “All conservation values identified by the applicant in the grant application must be protected in the easement.” to ensure that all conservation values are protected in accordance with the intent of the program and legislation.
- Page 3: This page was reformatted to improve readability and organization, and to add clarifying language based on the Code of Virginia. Changes include adding language from the Code of Virginia § 10.1-1020 to clarify eligible projects for the grant program and the addition of a cutoff date to address prior fee acquisitions and requests for reimbursement. The Code is prospective – stating the purpose of the grant program is for “acquiring and conserving” interests in land. This language clarifies that funds cannot be used for purchases completed prior to the awarding of the grant.
- Page 4: Changes were made to improve document organization, grammar, and to clarify existing requirements.
- Page 5: Changes to application dates and referenced page numbers were made but are not highlighted. In addition, the requirement of applicants to submit invoices to all for records to show proof of expenditures was added to reduce the opportunity for clerical error in processing payments.
- Page 6: Added language suggesting that applicants who apply under a secondary category confirm the applicability of the secondary category.
- Page 11: Clarifying language was added to aid applicants and make them aware of programmatic requirements that appear in the grant agreement for the Natural Areas Category.
- Page 13: A statement was added allowing additional source material for applicants. Clarifying language was added to the section regarding additional scoring criteria and all detail on the scoring criteria was removed from this page and added to pages 29 through 33 to remove redundant language.
- Page 15: Language regarding status reports was expanded to provide clarity. Language regarding close-out requirements was expanded to provide instructions for using the agency’s WebGrants portal. This language also ensures that the program is in compliance with the state’s CAPP Manual, which sets accounting standards and practices for all state agencies.
- Page 16: Includes an expanded table of contents.

- Page 17: Includes additional language for clarity. Also includes survey standards as recommended by the OAG.
- Page 18: Changes include BDR requirements and invoice requirements. Both changes are designed to reduce the chances of financial errors or inappropriate use of funds.
- Pages 29-30: These pages combine additional scoring criteria that is traditionally presented in the both the scoring appendix and the grant manual in a single are of the document in an effort to avoid confusion regarding scoring criteria that has occurred in previous rounds. There is no change to scoring criteria.

Proposed Changes to the Grant Manual – Application Scoring for Certain Projects (not included in redline draft)

- **Support Local Purchase of Development Rights Programs:** In the Farmland Preservation category, we propose adding new criterion to award up to five (5) points for projects working with local purchase of development (PDR) programs. This was requested by Board members at the November 2023 meeting, where seven of the 13 applications in the Farmland Preservation category were submitted by local PDR programs, but only one scored high enough to get funding. The funded projects were larger acreage projects submitted by other entities. **The proposed additional points would not have changed the scoring outcome recommendations in this instance.**

The Code of Virginia 10.1-1020 A.2. specifically includes purchase of development rights programs as a purpose for the grant program. VLCF has recognized these programs and has awarded grants to localities but hasn't awarded points specifically for these projects. The only concern from staff regarding this proposal is tied to the multiple easement application issue (mentioned above) which would ensure that no local PDR program could apply to VLCF to cover their entire program across multiple areas of their jurisdiction.

Local PDR programs are voluntary programs that pay landowners to conserve the farmland and natural resource assets of their property. Local PDR programs protect priority farmland and preserve the rural and agricultural areas critical to maintaining the viability of the agricultural industry. Currently 21 counties have PDR programs.

If the board wishes to add points to support PDR programs, then the following language would be added in Section 1. A. on page 7:

Local Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Office of Farmland 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.

Further, the scoring criteria for Farmland applications would be amended to add 5 points for applicants who are working in partnership with local purchase of development rights programs. In

order to keep the total available points in the Farmland Preservation category at 100, the maximum points for soil productivity would be reduced from 25 points to 20 points.

- **Wildlife Corridors:** 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.

To support this important work and leverage VLCF resources to properly protect wildlife, land preservation efforts in wildlife corridors should receive additional points to improve their competitiveness. To accomplish this objective, the following language would be added to the additional scoring criteria section on page 32, bringing the maximum additional points that could be awarded to an application to 82 points from 72 points.

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

- *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*
- *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*

Recommendations

- The agency recommends that the board consider these recommended adjustments for the CY24 / FY25 grant cycle, as recommended by the Interagency Task Force

Potential Changes to the VLCF Grant Manual for Calendar Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026

The following changes were reviewed and suggested by the Inter-agency Task Force to address known issues with the program. However, due to the significant nature of the changes, DCR is recommending additional review and public comment prior to implementing these changes in next year's grant manual.

- **Multiple Easements:** New language and requirements are needed to limit each application to only one easement and one closing. A model for this adjustment exists in the federal FY24 Forest Legacy Guidance to address situations where multiple tracts are combined into one application and require multiple easements, due diligence documents, and closings. Staff and the IAT are requesting this new language for the following reasons:
 1. This requirement will **provide a level playing field for all applications**. Points are awarded for entire applications. Sometimes one portion of a project may close, but not another, where possibly many of the points were located, resulting in a project that does not meet the conservation level for which it was awarded.
 2. Two of the grant categories award points for total property acreage (Farmland and Forestland Preservation) and are designed **to support large property protection**. By bundling separate parcels that are not contiguous and that require separate easements, these projects are scoring higher than single landowners with large contiguous acreage, which defeats the priority of the current Farmland and Forestland acreage criteria.
 3. Currently, we do not have the ability to define an acceptable boundary area for an application that bundles multiple projects that are not contiguous. We believe this could allow for the bundling of multiple projects to increase scores artificially and seek changes to **provide guidelines for defining acceptable boundaries**.
 4. When reviewing the draft due diligence documents and easements, staff must determine what points were awarded for what resources and protections on which parcels. This amendment would help **eliminate confusion** over how restrictions are applied to different parcels.
 5. Finally, we seek to avoid staggered closings and reduce partial disbursements in order to **maintain program efficiencies**.
- **Outdoor Recreation Criteria:** The outdoor recreation criteria are based on data gathered from the Virginia Outdoors Plan Survey and the Virginia Outdoors Plan. While changes were drafted to accommodate the data, recommendations, and priorities outlined in new versions of these documents, it was not included in the final version of the grant manual because those plans have not been publicly released, reviewed, and adopted as of June 5, 2024. This will need to be addressed in future cycles.

Recommendations

- The agency recommends that a public comment period should be opened regarding the CY25/FY26 manual, after the conclusion of the application period for the CY24/FY25 grant round. During this public comment period, feedback would be specifically solicited on the conceptual change proposed above. This feedback would be shared with the Board prior to the adoption of a revised CY25/26 manual.



2024 Grant Manual (FY25 Program Year)

Adoption Date: June 5, 2024

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.

Eligible Applicants

- Applications may be submitted by state agencies, localities, 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. ~~Projects must protect land in perpetuity through acquisitions of property in fee simple, or recordation of a conservation easement and an open-space easement, or dedicated under the Open-Space Land Act.~~

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 ~~acquisitions of property in fee simple, or~~ 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 not site-specific will not be considered.~~ 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 ~~other~~ 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 ~~their~~ its application that ~~they meet~~ 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 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. 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. The fair-market value of the property must be supported by a current appraisal. An exception 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 p.m. on Friday, August 28, 2024.**

Questions?

- General application inquiries:
 - Larry Mikkelson at (804) 337-0046, 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, (804) 786-1906
Genny Harris, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, genette.harris@vdacs.virginia.gov
<https://www.vdacs.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 § 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 United States Secretary 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, either or both, 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>
- ◆ 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 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).
- ◆ Locality support. The support for the project evidenced by local farmland protection policies, including, the comprehensive plan, agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, and use value taxation.
- ◆ 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,
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 VLCF 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.
- ◆ 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 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 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 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 Diversity category.

All properties shall be ~~open~~ available for public access for a reasonable amount of time each year without disturbing the sensitive resources thereon, and shall be ~~open~~ 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

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:

- ◆ Acquires an interest in land that provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential.
- ◆ Acquires an interest in land that creates new public outdoor recreational opportunities for underserved communities or expands existing park systems or other recreational resources to protect public conservation or recreational interests.
- ◆ Protects 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>
- ◆ 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>
- ◆ Makes the grant-funded land 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://cmap2.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 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.

5. Additional Scoring Criteria

All applications ~~are~~ will also be scored ~~on the following~~ using additional criteria that prioritize statewide conservation goals ~~criteria~~. See Be sure to review Appendix B, pages 28 through 30, for a breakdown of these criteria, which could yield 72 additional points for the application. Also, be sure to address each criterion in your application ~~addresses these criteria~~.

- ◆ ~~Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need: Zero to three points will be awarded if a project satisfies resource conservation needs identified in the VOP or a local comp plan. Information can be found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>.~~
- ◆ ~~Nature Based Recreation Access Model Identified Need: Zero 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. Information can be found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisrec>.~~
- ◆ ~~Water Quality Benefit: Zero to 11 points may be given for projects that protect 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 protections beyond the 35-foot riparian buffer in perpetuity.

- ◆ ~~Protection of Cultural Resources: Zero to 10 points may be given for projects that identify and protect local cultural resources on the property and provide public educational opportunities. 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. See page 28 for examples.~~
- ◆ ~~ConserveVirginia Value-added (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>): Zero to 12 points may be awarded for those projects that demonstrably address more than one of the seven ConserveVirginia categories (listed on page 28). Two points may be awarded for each additional ConserveVirginia category identified by the applicant that is protected in perpetuity by the project, e.g., a farmland project that falls within the Agriculture and Forestry category that also includes an historic building or site located within the Cultural and Historic Preservation category and is protected in the easement.~~
- ◆ ~~Fish and Wildlife: Zero to 10 points may be given; with 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 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.~~
- ◆ ~~Public Access: Zero to 10 points may be given dependent upon the extent of public access provided. Full public access means the property is open for public visitation 365 days a year. Visual access means the applicant can demonstrate the scenic value of the property and that the project will protect the integrity of the public's scenic view.~~
- ◆ ~~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 Sciences may be used to identify underserved areas of the state: https://emap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html. Data from other sources will also be considered for this criterion if the applicant provides the source reference.~~
- ◆ ~~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 must be submitted with the application for verification to be awarded points.~~

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.

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.

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
	1. <u>Required Items in an Application</u> 2. <u>Additional Recommended Items</u> 3. <u>Eligible Expenses for the Grant Program</u> 4. <u>Documents and Due Diligence Items Required Prior to Payment of Funds for an Awarded Grant</u>
Appendix B	Score Sheets for each Category and Additional Scoring Criteria
	1. <u>Farmland Preservation</u> 2. <u>Forestland Preservation</u> 3. <u>Historic Area Preservation</u> 4. <u>Natural Areas Preservation</u> 5. <u>Open Spaces and Parks</u> 6. <u>Additional Scoring Criteria</u>
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 9 through 11.
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 .

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 Closing 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.
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
3. Boundary survey of the ~~proposed~~ 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.

NOTE: 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.

Appendix B – VLCF Category Scoring Sheets

Farmland Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
<u>Category I: Land Evaluation (40 points)</u> A. Soil Productivity (25 points) Calculate the percentage of project land in each soils class. Points are awarded based on the combined percentages of these three categories x 25 (e.g., 30% prime, 20% unique and 10% important = 0.60 x 25, which equals 15 points.) More information on these soil classes can be found in § 3.2-205 of the Code of Virginia. 1. Value the soils classified as “Prime farmland” 2. Value the soils classified “Unique farmland” 3. Value the soils classified as “Important farmland” 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. • 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	
<u>Category II: Land Use (40 points)</u> A. Current use and status of the land (8 points) 1) Is the land currently being farmed? 4 points, if yes. 2) Is this a Century Farm? 4 points, if yes. B. Proximity to conserved lands (10 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? • Parcel adjoins other preserved lands = 10 points • Parcel is within one-quarter mile but not adjoining other preserved lands = 7 points • Parcel is within one-half mile but further than one-quarter mile of other preserved lands = 5 points C. Development vulnerability (8 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) • Each ranking from Class II to Class V is awarded 2 points (e.g., a property in Class IV = 6 points) D. Best Management Practices (BMPs) (10 points) Is a farm management plan that specifies BMPs or voluntary BMPs (e.g., stream fencing, buffers, conservation tillage, cover crops, animal waste management, etc.) being utilized as part of the normal operation of this farm? Does the property have either/both a conservation plan or a Nutrient Management Plan for all nutrient applications made to cropland, hayland, and/or pastureland? • Applicant has implemented applicable BMPs to protect water quality, either voluntarily or through a state or federal conservation program = 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	

E. Local farmland policy (4 points) Is the project supported by local farmland protection policies? • One point each for: comprehensive plan; agricultural zoning; agricultural and forestal districts; and use value taxation.	
Category III: ConserveVirginia (20 points) Is the project included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map) • 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; $.60 \times 20 = 12$ points)	

Total Maximum Score 100 points

Forestland Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
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. Score: 0-999 acres = Property Acreage / 1000 * 8 points 1000-4,999 = 8 points 5000-9999 = 9 points ≥10,000 acres = 10 points	
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. 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	
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. 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	
4) Water Quality (15 points) 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 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. Score: 0 -15,000 feet = feet / 1,000 points ≥15,000 feet = 15 points	
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. Score: Within 5 miles = 5 – (miles away from conserved lands)	

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? - 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	
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. Score: Percent of property that the landowner is willing to retain as forest * 10	
8) ConserveVirginia (20 points) Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map) 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; $0.60 \times 20 = 12$ points)	

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Historic Area Preservation Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
1) Historic Significance (Maximum score 30 points) 1. <u>Historic Resource/Property is:</u> - 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 -AND- 2. <u>Integrity:</u> - Resources that retain a high degree of historic integrity = 5		
2) Underrepresented Communities & Resources (Maximum score 10 points) - 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 AND/OR - Property or area has special community significance related to its history, as explained in application, regardless of formal documentation = 5		
3) Threat (Maximum score 10 points) - 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		
4) Use & Treatment of Historic Resources & Property (Maximum score 10 points) - 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		
5) Historic Resource Protection (Maximum score 10 points) - 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		
6) Adjacency to Conserved Land (Maximum score 5 points) - 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		

7) Further Public Interests (Maximum Score 5 points) • 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		
8) ConserveVirginia (Maximum score 20 points) Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map) 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)		

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Natural Area Preservation Category

Criterion	Score
1) Biodiversity Significance (35 points) 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 - Located within Essential Conservation Site = 20 points; - Located within conservation site = 10 points; 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 1 point per viable, extant EO; 2 points per essential EO; 0.5 point per viable, extant EO outside parcel but within conservation site that also overlaps the proposed parcel for protection 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 - 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	
2) Ecological Integrity (20 points) A. <u>Regional Landscape Integrity:</u> What percentage of parcel area (acres) is within one or more ecological cores, weighted by Ecological Integrity rank (i.e.C-rank)? Maximum score: 10 points (points may add up to more, but 10 points is the max) Parcel is located in a Core ranked: - 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 Is any portion of the parcel within the Natural Land Network? - Parcel intersects with the Natural Land Network (1 point) B. <u>Local/Parcel Integrity:</u> How much of the parcel is in natural vegetation? Maximum score: 5 points - 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 C. <u>Connectivity with Conserved Lands:</u> Is the parcel adjacent to other conserved lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? Maximum score: 5 points - 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	

3) Management Needs, Likelihood of Success, and Threat (25 points) 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: • minimal natural heritage resources management = 10 points; • moderate management = 6 points; • intensive management/restoration = 3 points 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: • a thorough description of both experience and staff capacity = 8 points; • a cursory description = 4 points; • not mentioned = 0 points 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 • Site visit & discussion = 5 points; • Site visit only = 3 points; • Discussion only = 2 points D. <u>Threat:</u> Is there high development threat for the project area? Maximum score: 2 points • Tract threat is ranked Class IV or Class V in the ConservationVision 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.	
4) ConserveVirginia (20 points) Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? (https://vanhde.org/content/map) • 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 _____

Open Spaces & Parks Category

Criterion	Score
1) 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? - 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 = 5 pts - Public access that provides opportunities to view water resources while recreating = 2 pts	
2) Project Location (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? - Conserves new stand-alone facility that is critically needed to provide or support recreational activities = 10 pts - Conserves an in-holding or addition that is critical to the recreational use of an existing site = 5	
3) 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? - Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of one of the listed resources = 10 pts - 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, a recreational trail = 5 pts	
4) Alignment with Local or Regional Plans (15 points) 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. - 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	
5) Virginia Outdoors Plan Need (10 points) Does the project address a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i>? Applicant must specify VOP page #. Add all that apply: - 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 pt - Project provides bicycle or equestrian trails = 1 pt - Project provides other need identified in VOP = 1 pt	
6) Public Utilization (10 points) Availability of land for public use may include, but is not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching. Add all that apply: - Open for public utilization between 241 and 365 days per year = 10 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	
7) Benefit Underserved Community (15 points) Does the project provide a recreational resource to an underserved population? Use the VIMS Social Vulnerability Index (https://cmap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html) to determine if the project benefits an underserved community: - Very High Social Vulnerability = 15 pts - High Social Vulnerability = 10 pts - Moderate Social Vulnerability = 5 pts - Low or Very Low Social Vulnerability = 0 pts <i>Applicant must provide a reference source if not using the VIMS Social Vulnerability Index.</i>	
8) Recreation Need (10 points) I. Land-based Recreation Need (Maximum score: 7) 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) A. <i>DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model Land-based Recreation Need:</i> - Very High: 7 pts - High: 5 pts - Moderate: 3 pts - Low: 1 pt - Very low need: 0, but other supporting evidence provided to show need: up to 3 points B. <i>ParkServe Park Need:</i> - Very High: 7 pts - High: 5 pts - Moderate: 3 pts - No need identified in the model, but other supporting documentation provided, such as evidence of no other parks within ½ mile walk: up to 3 points II. Water-based Recreation Need (Maximum Score: 3) 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)? - Very High: 3 pts - High: 2 pts - Moderate: 1 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: 1 pt	
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 x 10 = 6 points)	

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Additional Scoring Criteria

1. Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need

~~Degree to which~~ 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/recreational-planning/vop>.

Maximum 3 points

- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP **and** in a local comprehensive plan = 3 points
- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP **or** in a local comprehensive plan = 2 points
- Not identified in VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 0 points

2. 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>

~~If the project includes public access AND there is at least a moderate need for recreation access identified in the Nature Based Recreation Access Model, based on the terrestrial or aquatic layers, then up to 3 points may be awarded.~~

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

3. Water Quality Benefit

Up to 11 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 protections beyond the required 35-foot riparian buffer in perpetuity.

~~Extent to which the project will protect water quality beyond the required 35' wide vegetated buffers on perennial streams, rivers, shorelines, and waterbodies with perennial outflow.~~

Maximum 11 points

- 4 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

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. 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.

~~Is there a cultural resource on the property that will be protected by this project?~~ 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 roadbed or railbed systems, historic wharfs, pine tar industry sites, gold mining pits, tobacco barns, 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 points
- Project will provide educational opportunities for the public, signage, trails, etc. = 2 points

5. Additional ConserveVirginia Values

~~Does the application include information to support 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.

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

6. Fish and Wildlife Values

~~Degree to which~~ 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

7. Public Access

Zero to 10 points may be given dependent upon the extent of public access provided. Full public access means the property is open for public visitation 365 days a year. Visual access means the applicant can demonstrate the scenic value of the property 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

8. 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

9. 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

Total Maximum Score for Additional Scoring Criteria: 72 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 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. 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.
3. 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, and a Pre-Harvest Plan 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 be consistent with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide.
4. Vegetated Riparian Buffers: 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. Additional requirements for vegetated riparian buffers are:
 - Livestock shall be excluded from the buffers and associated watercourses and bodies of water.
 - Mowing shall be limited to three times per calendar year.
 - 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 on VLCF funded projects:

- a. Buildings, structures, roads or other impervious surfaces existing in the buffer prior to the grant award are permissible 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.

