

# Virginia Recreational Trails Program 2022 Application Manual



RTP grant information produced by the Virginia Recreational Trails Program is guidance. This document can be updated or changed at any time pending review/comment from the Federal Highway Administration.

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The following documents, available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd>, should be referenced or used along with this manual:

- **2022 RTP Procurement Procedures**
- **2022 RTP Environmental Review and Public Comment Requirements**
- **2022 Recreational Trails Program Grant Application**
- **2022 RTP Scoring Criteria**

# I. Virginia Recreational Trails Program Overview

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an 80%-20% matching reimbursement program established for the purposes of developing and maintaining recreational trails and trail-related facilities. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) allocates funds to each state and provides oversight to state agencies who administer the program within each state. The agency responsible for administering the program in Virginia is the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The RTP program requirements mandate that each year's funds be divided among three categories: 30% for motorized trail uses, 30% for non-motorized trail uses, and 40% for multi-use/ diversified trail uses.

Entities eligible to receive funding include town, city, and county governments, tribes, recreation agencies and authorities, and state agencies. Non-profit organizations, with support from the local governmental body, are also eligible to compete for funding.

The RTP is a reimbursement program, meaning that the applicant must be capable of financing the project upfront while requesting periodic reimbursements. The program will reimburse up to 80% of eligible project costs. Recipients are responsible for at least 20% of project costs. Selected applicants enter into a grant agreement with DCR that outlines the maximum funding amount, scope of work, and project requirements for their project.

Projects are selected and recommended for funding through a competitive call for proposals. All proposals are reviewed and scored by the Virginia Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee.

Projects recommended for funding must complete an environmental analysis prior to construction in accordance with federal and state regulations. Projects must also be undertaken in accordance with the Buy America Act and Presidential Executive Order 14005.

The application deadline for the 2022 RTP grant cycle is **4:00PM on Thursday, May 26, 2022**. All applications must be submitted electronically via email to [recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov) by this deadline. Applicants are responsible for delivery by the deadline; late submissions will not be accepted.

## **Programmatic Changes for 2022**

Applicants should familiarize themselves with this manual in its entirety, however the following list outlines the most significant changes to the RTP program from the 2021 RTP grant round. Each of these points is discussed in further detail within this manual:

- Non-profit organizations do not need to be partnered with a local government body to apply, but must have documented support from the property owner and local government body.
- Entities that are already underway with a current RTP grant are eligible only if their project is nearing completion in both the diversified and non-motorized single use categories.
- Updated guidance documents on procurement and environmental review procedures.
- Updates have been made to the application questions and scoring criteria.

## II. Eligibility

**Eligible Entities** - RTP funding may be awarded to any of the following\*:

- Municipalities (cities, towns, counties, etc.);
- Tribes;
- State agencies (Dept. of Forestry, Wildlife Resources, etc.);
- Federal government agencies (combined total of RTP funds and matching federal agency funds cannot exceed 95% of project cost in certain circumstances);
- Other government entities (regional park authorities, etc.);
- Non-profit organizations [requires letters of support from landowner (if property not owned by applicant) and local government body].
  - If selected, non-profit organizations may be asked to provide additional financial records and documentation on land use agreements.

\*For the 2022 grant cycle, **entities with ongoing RTP grants awarded in previous grant rounds must be on track to complete the project by the end of 2022 to be eligible to apply in either the diversified or non-motorized single use categories.** If this applies, please contact Recreation Grants staff to determine eligibility based on specific timeline and progress to date. This limitation does not apply to motorized project applicants due to historically few applications being received.

**Eligible Projects** - RTP funding may be used for:

- Construction of new recreational trails (with certain limitations for trails on federal lands);
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages;
- Provision of features that facilitate access and use of trails by persons with disabilities;
- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails;
- Lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment;
- Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors; and
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance.

Recreational trails are defined in the RTP regulations as a thoroughfare or track across land or snow used for recreational purposes. These recreational purposes can include:

- traditional pedestrian-oriented activities such as hiking and jogging;
- skating and skateboarding;
- equestrian activities;
- bicycling and mountain biking;
- activities on water trails such as kayaking and canoeing; and
- motorized recreational activities such as all-terrain, utility-terrain, or other off-road vehicle riding, motorcycling, motor boating on water trails, and electric biking.

**Uses Not Permitted** - RTP funding may not be used for:

- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property.
- Upgrading, expanding, or otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to trails that prior to May 1, 1991, were predominantly used by non-motorized trail users, and on which motorized use was either prohibited or had not occurred.
- Planning proposals, gap analysis, and feasibility studies.
- RTP funds cannot be used to provide sidewalks along or adjacent to public roads or streets. The Virginia Department of Transportation may have funding available to assist with these types of facilities.

### III. Project Categories and Available Funding

**Categories**

RTP Legislation (23 U.S.C. 206) dictates categorical requirements for the use of each state's RTP apportionment: 40 percent of funds apportioned be used for diverse recreational trail use, 30 percent for motorized recreation, and 30 percent for non-motorized recreation.

- **Diversified use project:** A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of recreational use such as: walking, bicycling, and skating; or both pedestrian and equestrian use; or pedestrian and mountain biking. A diverse use project may also include both motorized and non-motorized uses where motorized use is not the predominant use or when the motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and snow sports use in winter.
- **Non-motorized project for a single use:** A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian only, or equestrian only, or mountain biking only. RTP projects serving various pedestrian uses (such as walking, hiking, running, bird-watching, nature interpretation, backpacking, etc.) constitute a single use for the purposes of this category.
- **Motorized use project:** A project primarily intended to benefit motorized use. A project may be classified in this category if the project serves only one mode of motorized recreational use or more than one mode of motorized recreational use. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

**DCR staff can aid applicants to determine the category their project fits into.**

**Available Funding by Category**

The approximate funds available for the 2022 grant round are as follows:



- **Diversified category** - \$604,756
  - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$350,000
- **Non-motorized single use category** - \$453,567
  - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$300,000
- **Motorized category** - \$453,567
  - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$453,567

It is anticipated that 2-3 grants may be awarded in the diversified category, 2-3 grants in the non-motorized category, and 1-3 grants in the motorized category. **The actual number of grants awarded and dollar value of the award is contingent upon the amount of RTP funding available to Virginia at the time of grant award selections.**

## IV. Application Procedures and Selection Process

### Application Procedures

1. Read this manual in its entirety. It reflects the most recent guidance on the RTP program and supersedes previous guidance materials distributed by DCR.
2. Review the scoring criteria and application resources posted with this manual.
3. Download the RTP application and certification form via the DCR website at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd>. The application is a fillable Microsoft Word document. Questions are answered by typing or pasting into the space provided. The certification form is a fillable PDF.

*If you are unable to download or use the documents, please contact [recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov) or 804-786-1119 to obtain an alternative format of the application.*

4. Complete the application. All questions should be answered in the space available. Be clear and concise. Only attach additional pages when instructed to do so (listed at the end of each section of the application). Failure to follow these instructions may disqualify the application.
5. Submit the certification form, application, and attachments as a single PDF via email (max email size 25MB) to [recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov) by **Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 4:00 pm**.

*If your email with attachments exceeds 25 MB, contact [recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov) at least two business days prior to the deadline to discuss using an alternative submission method.*

*If you do not receive a reply acknowledging receipt of your electronic submission within one business day of submission, please contact DCR at the email or phone number listed above to ensure your application was received.*

## **Selection Process**

1. Applications received by the deadline undergo a preliminary review by DCR staff to verify application completeness and project eligibility.
2. All eligible and complete applications are sent to the Virginia Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee for review and scoring.
3. The Virginia Recreational Trails Advisory Committee meets to review all scores and recommend projects for funding.
4. Applicants of projects recommended for funding are contacted by DCR and a site inspection is scheduled.
  - a. Applicants not recommended for funding will be also be notified at this time.
5. DCR staff conduct a site inspection to ascertain field conditions and suitability for recommendation to FHWA.
6. DCR staff work with the applicant to prepare the necessary forms to submit the project for FHWA approval and authorization.
7. Projects authorized by FHWA are issued a project agreement that allows 3 years to complete the required environmental review process, design plans, and permitting, and project construction.

## **V. Award Timeline**

The anticipated timeline for the 2022 grant cycle is as follows:

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| March 28, 2022      | Grant round opens   |
| May 26, 2022 4:00PM | Application deadline  |
| June 2022           | Applications reviewed by DCR and Advisory Committee                     |
| Early July 2022     | Applicants of projects recommended for funding are contacted            |
| Late July 2022      | Applicants not recommended for funding are notified                     |
| July - August 2022  | Site inspections and preparing documents for FHWA authorization request |
| September 2022      | Project authorizations and release of grant agreements                  |

## VI. Programmatic Requirements

### Right of Way

Applicants should have the right of way secured (deed, easement, license agreement, etc.) or commitments (purchase agreement, option, letter from owner indicating willingness to sell to applicant, etc.) for the right of way in place *prior* to applying for RTP funding. Evidence to support this must be included in the RTP application. The preference for federal-aid investments is that access to the trail should be in perpetuity, however DCR will prioritize projects with legal access to the project right of way for at least a 20 year period.

- **Work on Public Lands**

Applicants submitting proposals for work on lands owned by another public entity are required to enter into a separate legal agreement with that public entity to undertake the work described in the RTP application. A copy of this agreement, or a draft if the agreement is pending, must be included with the RTP application.

- **Work on Private Lands**

Public access to private lands must be secured at the time of application. Applicants submitting proposals for work on privately owned land must submit a copy of the recorded deed, easement, license, or agreement with the RTP application. There must be a right of way agreement in place prior to application.

### Property Acquisition

RTP funding may be used to purchase trail easements across private property and property acquisition for trail corridors or trail systems. The 2022 RTP competitive cycle will only consider fee simple or easement acquisition on tracts of land that will have trail system development within 18 months of acquisition. Acquisition of any kind must be from a willing landowner or seller.

The value of property to be acquired must be established by an appraisal performed in accordance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (UASFLA) which is commonly referred to as the “yellow book” standards. That appraisal must be reviewed and certified by an independent appraisal reviewer. Both of these must be available at the time of application. **However, the purchase or acquisition cannot occur before the project is authorized.** Acquisition projects will require both an ASTM Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and the environmental review process discussed in the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document posted on the [DCR RTP website](#).

Condemnation (eminent domain) is not allowed under the RTP program. All RTP projects must comply with the limited requirements for Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Relocation Act) found in 49 CFR 24.101(b)(2). As such, prior to making an offer for the property, the applicant must clearly advise the owner that it is unable to acquire the property if negotiations fail to result in an agreement. Also the applicant must provide documentation that the property owner has been made aware of the market value of the property.



The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended is available online at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/USCODE-2010-title42/USCODE-2010-title42-chap61>.

### **Access for People with Disabilities**

Recipients of federal financial assistance, including subgrantees, must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794). This legislation states that:

*No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of...disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, service, or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*

There is also a nearly identical mandate in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which applies to state and local governments and public accommodations of businesses and non-profit organizations. Most entities applying for RTP funding must follow both this provision and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

While there currently are no minimum standards for trails and related outdoor recreation amenities in the ADA standards, entities must not discriminate against people with disabilities in the programs and activities they offer, which includes trails. The best available guidance is to follow, at a minimum, the federal outdoor accessibility standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). The ABA Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) can be found at <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>. In most cases, ABAAS are identical to the 2010 ADA Standards. However, ABAAS includes additional provisions for outdoor recreation areas including trails, trailheads, campgrounds, picnic areas, and viewing areas. A guide for these standards can be found at <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/>. Exceptions are only permitted in limited circumstances. For technical assistance on the ABA Standards, contact the U.S. Access Board at 800-872-2253 (voice), 800-993-2822 (tty), or [ta@access-board.gov](mailto:ta@access-board.gov). For technical assistance on the ADA, contact the Department of Justice at 800-514-0301 (voice) or 800-514-0383 (tty).

The ADA and ABA standards primarily address access for people with disabilities that impact mobility. Entities will also need to demonstrate how their project provides equitable experiences for users with sensory, cognitive, neurological and/or mental health disabilities.

Additional accessibility resources can be found in Appendix B.

Note that these requirements do not preclude any state or local accessibility laws or standards that provide greater accessibility than those discussed above.

**Project applications must describe *how* a project will provide access for people with disabilities, not simply state that the project will comply with all legal requirements.**

## **Facility Life**

The preference for federal-aid investments is that the public interest in and access to the trail should be in perpetuity. However, it is understood that facilities and features will have associated life expectancies/ lifespans. The greater the amount of federal funding involved, the greater expectation for a long facility life. All RTP projects should be designed and built for longevity.

## **Environmental Review**

All projects must complete an environmental analysis prior to construction in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and at a minimum compliance with the Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Orders 11988 and 11990: Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. A Federal Consistency Determination in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act may also be required. Additional information is provided in the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document posted on the [DCR RTP website](#).

# **VII. Eligible Project Costs and Applicant Share**

## **Eligible Project Costs**

The following list represents costs that *may* be eligible for reimbursement on a project. All project costs must be approved and outlined in the project agreement.

- Costs to conduct required environmental review for NEPA and Section 106 compliance
- Costs associated with project engineering and design
- Construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance work on trails
- Construction of bridges, railings, ramps, fences, and retaining structures
- Bank stabilization, re-vegetation (excluding ornamental landscaping), erosion control
- Trailhead development including parking, restrooms, and related facilities
- Signs and interpretive aids
- Consultant/ contractor services
- Acquisition of land or permanent easements essential to trail development or access
- Equipment rental
- Bid advertisements for contracted work
- Employee salary for on-the-ground project work in the field
- Administrative costs to administer the project and the grant when agreed upon up front and documented correctly (does not include general overhead costs)
- Environmental review and engineering costs incurred less than 18 months prior to FHWA authorization *may* be counted towards the applicant's 20% share in limited circumstances. These services must have been procured following the procurement requirements outlined in the RTP Procurement Procedures document, and require documentation including invoicing and proof of payment specific to the project to prove this. Discuss with the DCR grant administrator if you wish to include these costs. **No other costs incurred prior to authorization are eligible.**

## **20% Share Requirement**

Of the eligible project costs, the RTP program will reimburse 80% of approved costs. The other 20% remains the responsibility of the applicant. This 20% contribution from the applicant is referred to as the non-federal share.

The simplest way for entities to provide their 20% share is to directly pay for eligible items, and the program will then reimburse the entity at 80%, leaving the 20% share. However, many other items can be used to cover the 20% share with appropriate documentation, including:

- Force account labor (employees of entity working on the project, either in-field or in project/grant administration);
  - Timesheets, proof of salary, and proof of payment to the employee are required.
- Donation of private funds;
- Value of volunteer and/or in-kind labor, donated and/or in-kind equipment, donated and/or in-kind materials, and donated land at fair market value;
  - These items may only be used to cover recipient's 20% share and are never a reimbursable expense, i.e. cannot receive cash reimbursement for item that was not actually spent in cash. Volunteer, in-kind, and donation values exceeding the 20% share will not be reimbursed.
  - General volunteer labor rate calculated using current independentsector.org rate for Virginia.
  - In kind equipment costs will require a time log, land donation requires an appraisal, other items require proof of fair market value determination.
- Other federal, state, local, and private grants;
  - Eligible as long as the requirements are not in conflict RTP regulations.
  - In some cases, combined federal funds cannot exceed 95% of the total project costs. Any projects planning to use federal funds for more than 95% of the total project costs should consult with DCR prior to submission.

**All volunteer or in-kind labor; donated or in-kind materials, equipment, and services; donated land; and in-house or consultant administrative costs must meet three primary requirements to be eligible:**

- 1. They must be clearly outlined in the project application narrative and proposed budget.**
- 2. They must be included in the FHWA authorization and signed agreement, and**
- 3. They must have proper documentation.**

**The value of donations and in-kind items cannot be added to the budget after authorization.**

The two examples below illustrate how donated labor and materials can be used to cover the non-federal share:

|    |  |                 |
|----|--|-----------------|
| #1 | <u>Total Project Cost</u>                  | <u>\$40,000</u> |
|    | Cost of materials                          | \$20,000        |
|    | Cost of county work forces (Force Account) | \$12,000        |
|    | Value of private volunteer labor           | \$8,000         |

Maximum RTP reimbursement on the above project is \$32,000. The sponsor actually spend \$32,000 on materials, services, and work forces, and then added the volunteer labor to the local match. The recipient would receive a grant reimbursement of \$32,000 cash cost which is also the full 80% of overall project cost.

|    |  |                 |
|----|--|-----------------|
| #2 | <u>Total Project Cost</u>                  | <u>\$40,000</u> |
|    | Cost of materials                          | \$8,000         |
|    | Cost of county work forces (Force Account) | \$8,000         |
|    | Value of donated materials                 | \$12,000        |
|    | Value of private volunteer labor           | \$12,000        |

Maximum RTP reimbursement on the above project is \$16,000. The total paid expenditures on the project equal \$16,000. The total value of donated materials and labor is \$24,000. Therefore, the maximum allowable reimbursement amount is \$16,000 or the cost of materials and work forces. The recipient does not receive the full 80% of the project cost because only \$16,000 of the costs were paid in cash.

## VIII. Procurement

All RTP projects must comply with [2 CFR 200.317-327](#), the [Virginia Public Procurement Act](#) (VPPA), and local entity procurement standards, as well as other applicable state and federal procurement regulations. Please review the **RTP 2022 Procurement Procedures** document available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd> for additional details on required procurement procedures. Important points include:

- **Small, Women-owned and Minority-owned Businesses (SWaM) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)** - all RTP recipients must take appropriate and reasonable steps to provide SWaM and DBE with the maximum opportunity to compete for and perform contracts for trail projects receiving aid through the program. RTP recipients shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin, in the awarding of RTP funded projects.

- **Construction Bidding** - At least two bids must be received for construction contracts, otherwise the project must be re-bid. Documentation of this and bidders DBE/SWaM status must be submitted.
- **Buy America** - Iron and steel components for the project must comply with Buy America requirements. If any components of the project are iron or steel, material certification documentation must be provided to prove it was sourced and manufactured in the U.S. These requirements generally make equipment purchases ineligible for RTP funding.
- **DCR Administrative Review** - Select procurement documents must be submitted for DCR administrative at various steps of the procurement process.
- **Recordkeeping** - The subgrantee must maintain records sufficient to detail the history of all procurements, and is responsible for submitting certain procurement records to DCR. These records should include: final solicitation/advertisement, final Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposals, bid/response spreadsheet listing all bids/responses received, executed contract, and summary of the RTP recipient's efforts to comply with the RTP DBE and SWaM Policy.

**Recipients are responsible for ensuring that all contracts are in compliance with federal and state laws concerning the solicitation of supplies, equipment, and services. When conflicts exist, DCR must be contacted for consultation with the FHWA. If any project components or services are not procured per the applicable standards, those expenses will not be eligible for RTP reimbursement and the project may be withdrawn and any previous payments returned to FHWA.**

## **IX. Reimbursement Procedures**

RTP is a reimbursement program; therefore, the RTP recipient must pay 100% of the cost of any item before submitting a request for reimbursement of 80% of costs. The recipient must have either the cash on hand or other financing available to incur all project expenses.

Reimbursement requests can be submitted as soon as documentation of the payment (cleared check, ACH statement, bank statement) is available. However, since banks sometimes only release that documentation monthly, there can be a 1-3 month delay between incurring the expense, the availability of payment verification documentation, document submission to DCR, DCR and FHWA processing, and receiving reimbursement.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted via email. You must submit a reimbursement request at least once every three months to maintain the project in active status.

### **Reimbursement request submissions must include:**

1. Signed certification cover sheet (template provided);
2. The following summary sheet/s, as applicable (templates provided):
  - a. Data sheet summarizing invoices,
  - b. Data sheet summarizing employee labor,
  - c. Data sheet summarizing volunteer labor,
  - d. Data sheet summarizing in-kind equipment records;



3. Documentation of each expense specific to the RTP project (invoice, billing statement, signed timesheets, signed daily volunteer work log, documentation of value determination for donated materials, volunteer time, etc.);
4. Proof of payment for each expense (cleared check- front and back, or other document confirming vendor receipt of payment such as: ACH statement, bank statement, or payroll ledger);
5. Additional documentation as requested by DCR.

Once received, DCR reviews the request and follows up with the recipient if any additional documentation is needed. DCR then prepares the forms and submits to FHWA to process the reimbursement. Once approved, FHWA releases the funds to DCR, and then DCR sends the reimbursement to the recipient.

Additional guidance on reimbursement procedures and templates of forms used in the reimbursement process can be found under “Documents and forms for grant recipients” on the DCR RTP website: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/traifnd>.

## X. Project Administration

### **FHWA Authorization and Grant Agreements**

DCR will collect the necessary information from applicants to submit a project to FHWA for approval and authorization. FHWA will review the project and if found to meet all program requirements, will authorize the project and project scope for a specific amount of funding.

Once a project is authorized by FHWA, a grant agreement between DCR and the applicant (now called the *subgrantee*) is created and signed by both parties. This agreement outlines program rules and regulations, approved scope of work, approved budget, approved non-federal share items, and reporting requirements. **Do not incur costs that you are submitting for reimbursement until project is authorized by FHWA and a DCR-subgrantee agreement is signed.**

RTP projects have two phases. The first phase is preliminary engineering (PE). The preliminary engineering phase provides time and funding to assist in completing the required environmental review, final design plan specifications, and permitting.

- **Preliminary Engineering Phase** – the PE phase assists with the cost associated with performing the studies and analysis needed to address the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. PE phase grants also assist with the completion of design plans and specifications, and obtaining required permits. A completed environmental review and supporting documents, including all agency correspondence, must be submitted to DCR for a NEPA pathway recommendation to FHWA. Directions and coordination instructions for completing the NEPA analysis and environmental review will be provided to subgrantees when the project is authorized. Additional information about the environmental review process can be found in the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document posted on the [DCR RTP website](#).

Once the PE phase is complete, then construction may proceed. **No bidding or on-the-ground work may begin before the NEPA pathway document is signed by FHWA** and the other PE requirements are complete.

- **Construction Phase** – the construction phase is for the cost of bid advertisement for construction, construction costs, and may assist with obtaining permits if the permits were not included in the PE phase. Bid documentation must be reviewed by DCR prior to advertisement. In limited cases, if a project has already completed all the necessary environmental reviews they will be issued only a construction agreement.

The PE phase should be complete within the first 18 months of the project period, based on project timeline. Overall project period for completion is a maximum of three years from initial project authorization. Projects unable to complete both PE and Construction in three years may be terminated and funds returned for reauthorization to other projects.

### **Project Management**

One person should be assigned as the project coordinator. This person will then have the overall responsibility for all aspects of the project for construction, accounting, and for submitting reimbursement requests to DCR. All deliverables should be submitted to [recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov).

### **Quarterly Reports**

Recipients of RTP funding must submit quarterly reports providing the status of the trail project. A template is provided that also indicates the required information. Reports are due via email every three months. The first report due date will be identified in the project agreement. It is the responsibility of the recipient to submit the status reports to DCR.

### **Administrative Review of Project Documentation**

Plans, environmental analysis documents, and bid documentation must be administratively reviewed by DCR prior to the start of construction on the project. Administrative review is defined as a review of bidding documents, construction plans, specifications and/or contractual documents to determine consistency with the approved Recreational Trail Program scope of work. DCR's administrative review of these items and permission to proceed shall not be considered a professional architectural, engineering or legal review, or an endorsement of design practices and standards.

Plans which include the design of structural components, such as trail bridges, tunnels, or scenic overlooks, must be stamped, signed and dated by a Licensed Professional Engineer. RTP recipients may be required to state and defend the design standards they will use.

### **Record Retention**

All program and financial records shall be retained by the subgrantee for state and federal audit purposes during and following completion of the project for a minimum of 3 years.

### **Changes to Approved Scope of Work**

Requests for changes to the project scope outlined in the project agreement must be submitted in writing to DCR. Changes in scope must be approved by DCR and FHWA; FHWA has final authority on any modifications or amendments to the project. If approved, an amendment to the project agreement will be prepared and forwarded to the subgrantee for signature.

### **Phase and Project Completion**

Two requirements must be met to close out the PE phase. First, all PE deliverables must be sent to DCR, including the environmental analysis documents. These will be forwarded to FHWA who must approve them before construction is authorized. Second, DCR must be notified in writing that no more reimbursements will be sought for the PE phase. Once both of these are complete, construction activities can begin.

To close out the construction phase, a DCR staff site inspection of the completed work is required. The last reimbursement request should be submitted prior to the project end date that includes a written statement of project completion and notice of final reimbursement request. The project completion statement must describe the actual work accomplished, how it differed, if at all, from the original scope of work, and the percentage and dollar value of volunteer, in-kind, donated, and cash contributions. It should also include a report on the total DBE and SWaM, if any, involvement in the project.

**Note that if a project is not able to be constructed as agreed upon, RTP funds provided for the project may need to be returned to FHWA. If the subgrantee has any reason to believe construction cannot be completed DCR must be notified immediately.**

### **Extension Policy**

RTP project agreement extensions may be considered, on a case by case basis, based on the following conditions:

1. Unforeseeable *severe* weather conditions prevented project implementation as scheduled; please contact DCR promptly when the project is delayed.
2. Unexpected staff turnover during the project period and after beginning construction, which resulted in new personnel being hired or trained to meet project deliverables; DCR must be notified immediately when the primary contact for RTP project administration changes to ensure proper contact and procedures can be established.
3. Delays due to unexpected environmental concerns.

Conditions that do not warrant an extension include, but are not limited to:

1. Project delays resulting from lack of attention;
2. Extension request on projects where program reporting requirements have not been met;
3. Failure to complete project deliverables in accordance with the project schedule established in grant application and project agreement scope of work;

### ***Administrative Procedure for Extensions***

At least **90 days prior** to the agreement expiration date, the RTP recipient must provide a written request to DCR that specifies the reason for the project extension, supporting documentation, and the necessary time period needed to complete the project. Only one extension request per project agreement will be considered. If an extension is approved by DCR, then DCR will request an extension for the project from the FHWA. Final approval of extensions or project modifications are at the discretion of the FHWA. Updates to DCR and FHWA RTP program guidelines may also result in an extension request being denied.

# **XI. Appendices**



## **Appendix A - Application Guidance**

This appendix is provided as a supplement to the 2022 VA RTP Application. Please refer to this information while completing the application. It provides instructions on answering specific questions, including directions on how to access web-based mapping software referenced in the application and source links for other data-based questions.

### **Application Certification Form**

#### **Question 2**

Provide the contact name and title of the person who will be responsible for direct communication with DCR.

#### **Question 11**

If you do not know your organization's Federal Information Processing Standards code, you can use the Virginia Department of Taxation Locality Code Lookup feature at <https://www.business.tax.virginia.gov/fips/index.cfm>.

### **Application Form**

#### **Section A**

#### **Question 3**

Category maximum requests are listed in Section III. of this manual.

#### **Question 5**

RTP project categories are defined in Section III. of this manual.

#### **Question 10**

Please provide the address of the closest road access point that could be used to conduct a site visit of the trail.

#### **Question 11**

Provide latitude and longitude in decimal degrees, for example: 37.539701, -77.438768

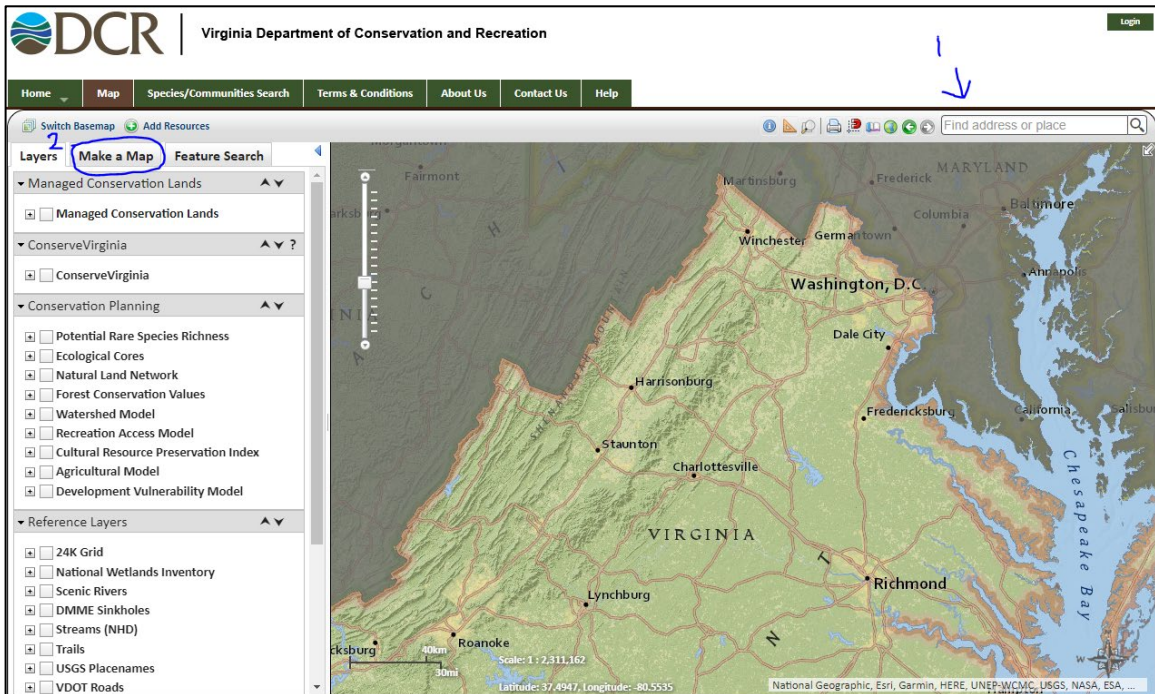
#### **Section A attachments**

County and locality maps can be simple Google Maps or similar screen captures with a pin or arrow identifying the location. If you do not have a zoomed in map of the trail layout or feature location within the park or property, you can make one using DCR's Natural Heritage Data Explorer:

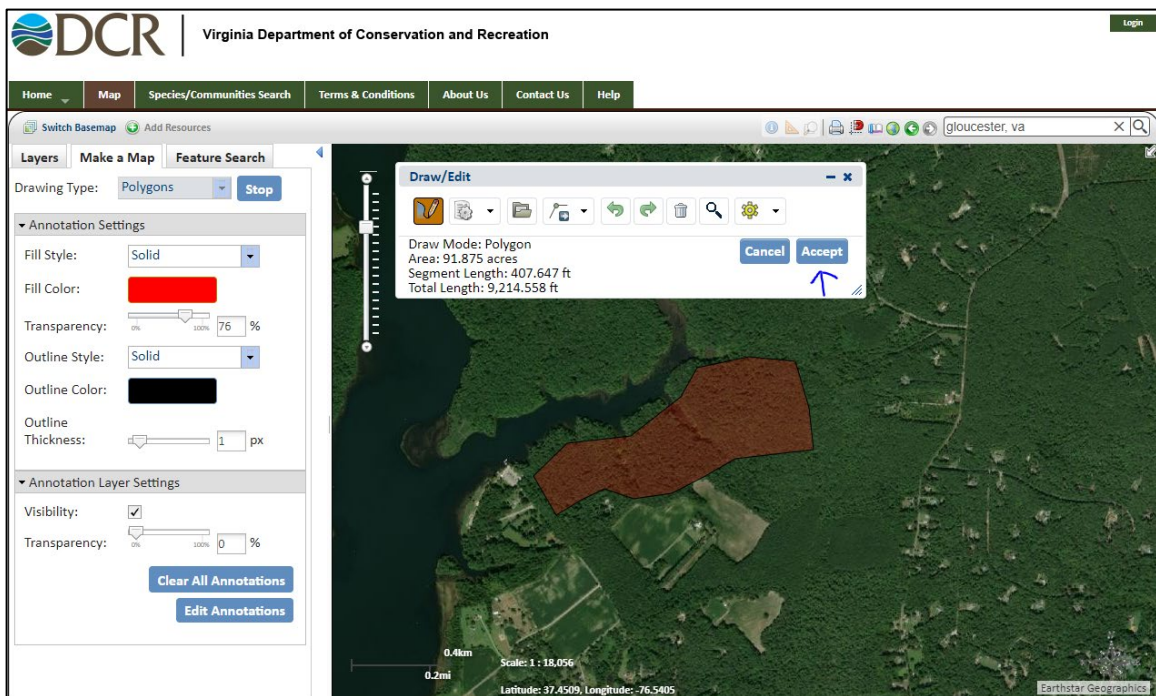
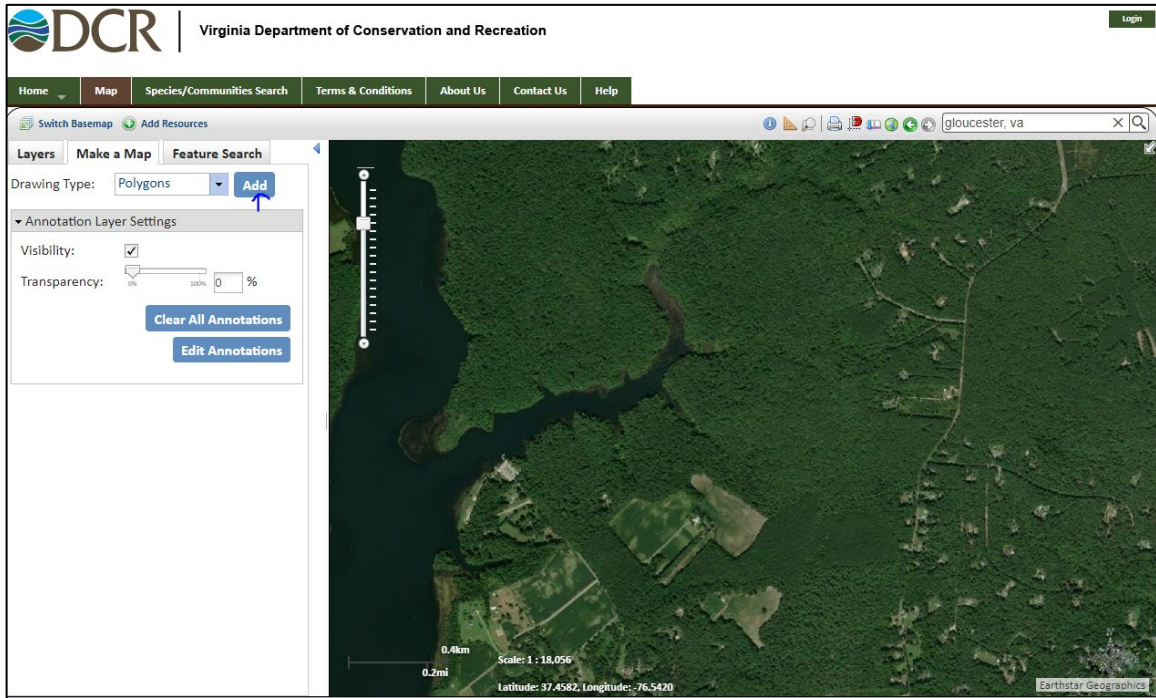
1. To access the Natural Heritage Data Explorer, visit: <https://vanhde.org/> and click on the "Map" tab. A separate browser tab will open. Please read and accept the Terms of Use.



- Once your area is located, select the "Make a Map" tab. Note you can switch the basemap to an aerial view by clicking "Switch Basemap" directly above the "Layers," "Make a Map," and "Feature Search" tabs.

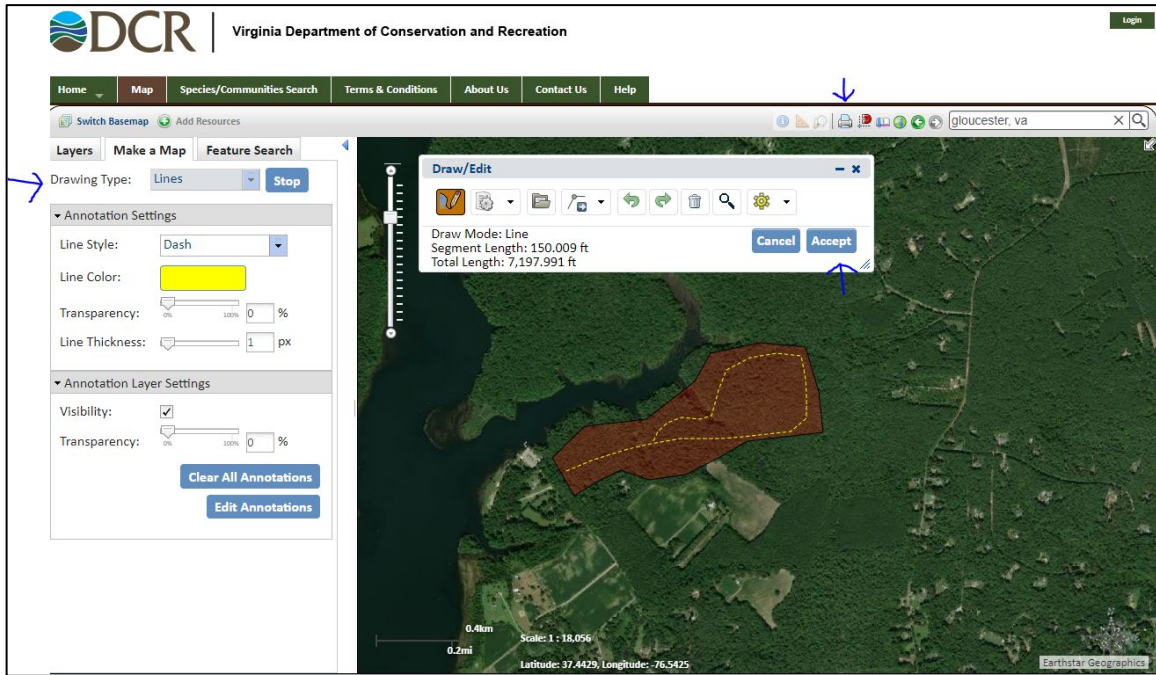


- To create a polygon that defines the subject property, select “Polygons” from the Drawing Type drop-down and click “Add.” A drop-down Annotation Settings menu will appear allowing you to adjust the color and transparency of the polygon shape.

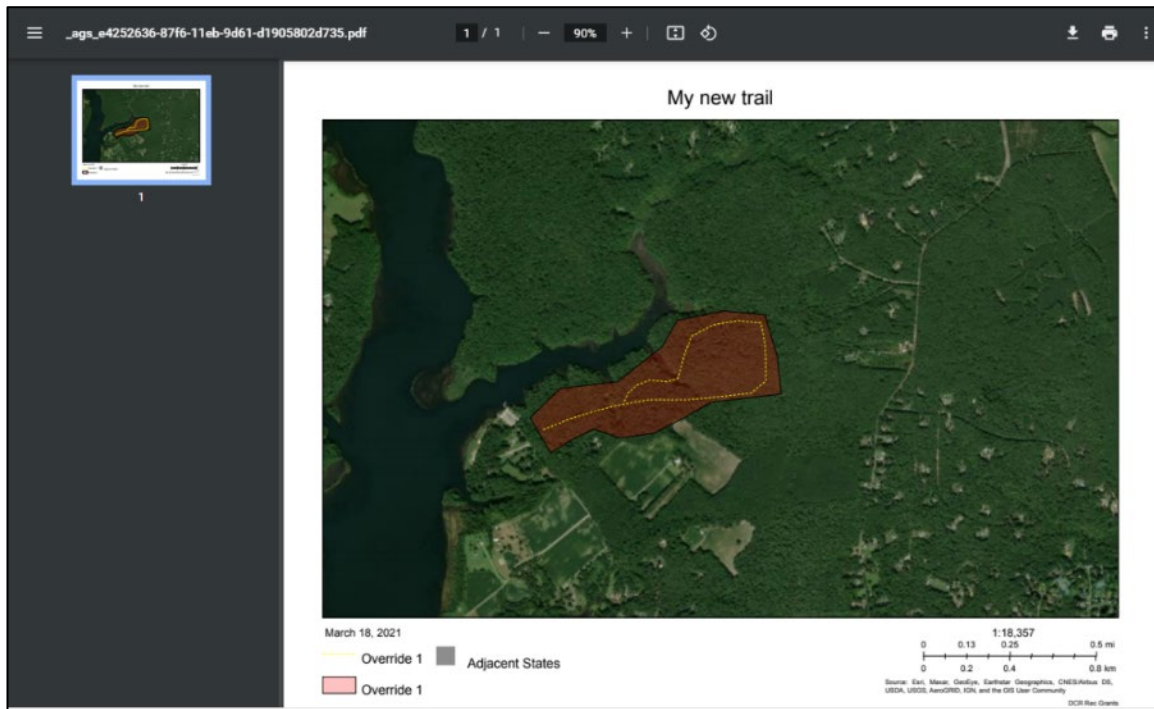




using the “Print” option on the top right side of the screen, or using your computer’s “Snip” tool.



7. If you use the “Print” feature, enter your project details and click “Print.” When the map is ready, the “Print” box will change to “Printout.” Click this and a new window with your map will open. This can be attached to your application.



## Section B

### Question 13

The regional feature projects are listed within your region’s section of Chapter 13. The state-wide and state connecting trails are identified in Chapter 8 (Trails).

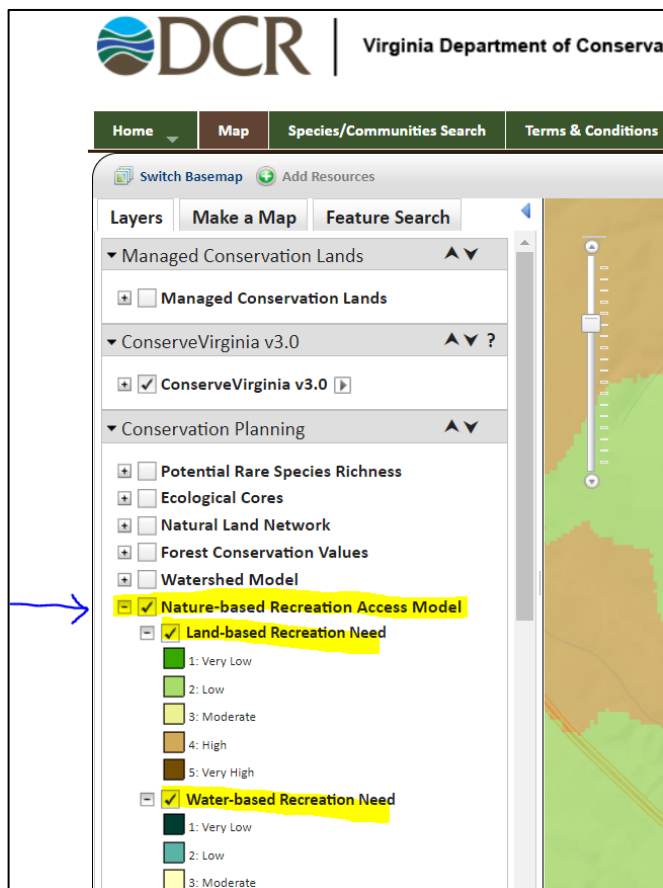
### Question 14

The project will be evaluated based on the demonstrated recreation need of its location based on the DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model (2021) and the Trust for Public Lands ParkServe Model. Projects offering land-based trail opportunities will be scored on whichever model demonstrates a greater need. Projects offering water-based (water trail) recreation opportunities will be scored on the Nature-based Recreation Access Model’s water-based recreation need rating.

ParkServe can be found at: <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>.

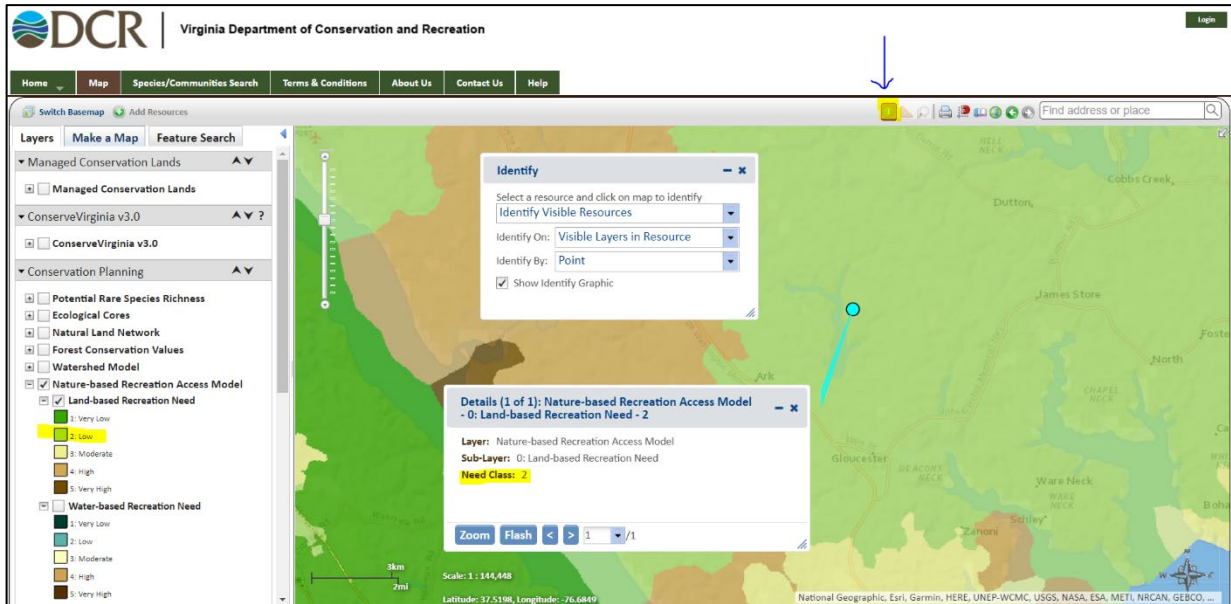
The Nature-based Recreation Access Model maps can be accessed through DCR’s Natural Heritage Data Explorer. Follow steps 1 and 2 outlined for Section A attachments above to access the mapper. Once you have located your area on the map, follow these steps to view the Nature-based Recreation Access Model need rating:

1. Under the Conservation Planning Category on the left side of the screen, check the box next to “Nature-based Recreation Access Model”
2. Expand that drop down and check the box next to “Land-based Recreation Need” (Question 14a) or “Water-based Recreation Need” (Question 14b)





3. To find the score you have selected, click the “identify” icon in the top right of the map, next to the triangle and the magnifying glass.

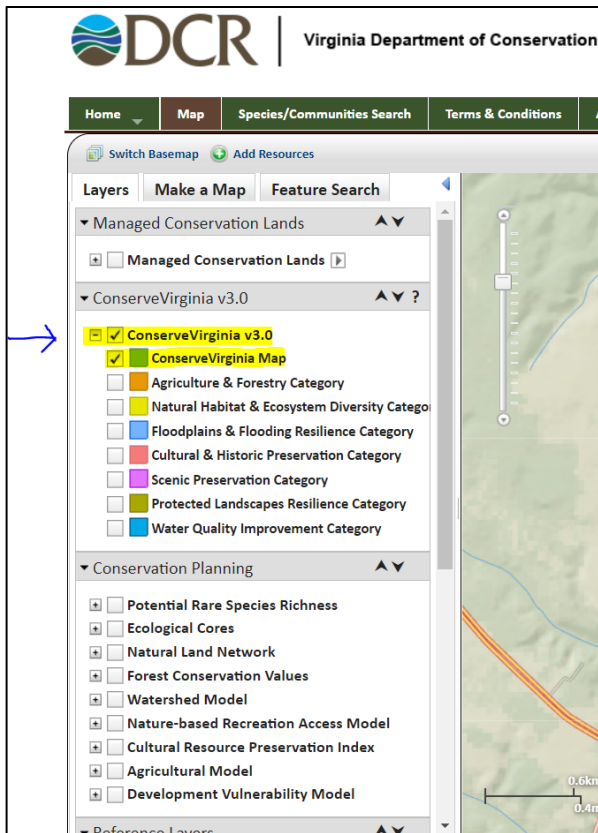


4. Two windows will pop up. Within the “Details” window, the “Need Class” will be listed. This corresponds to one of the five need classes listed in the legend.

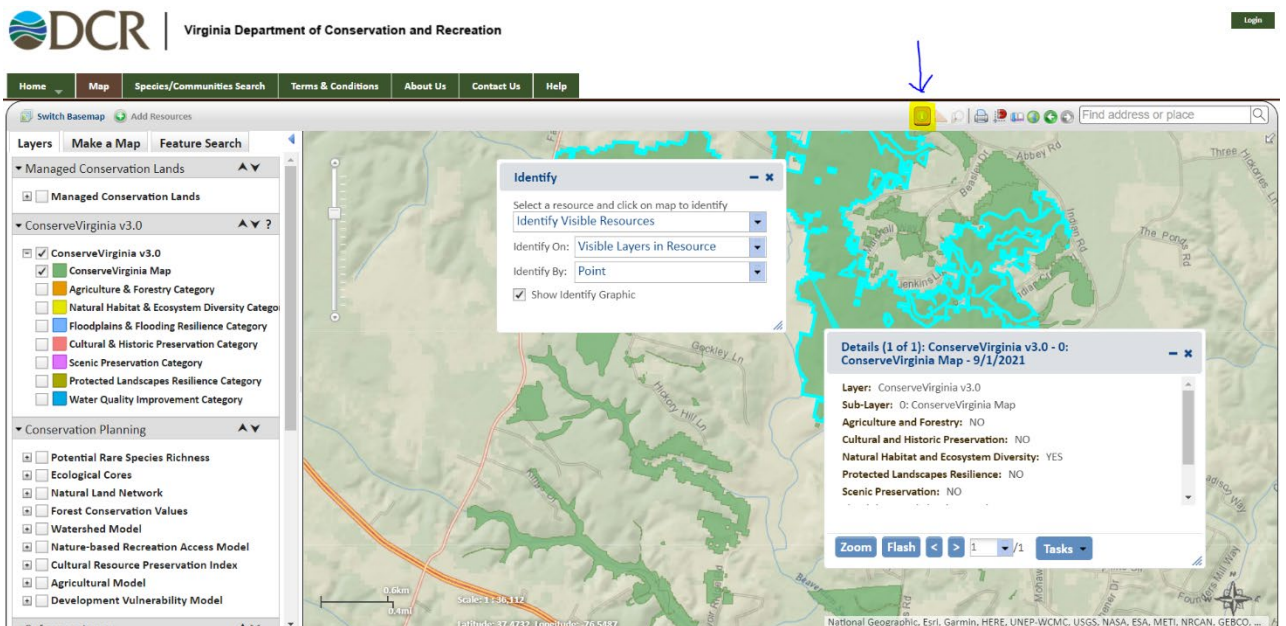
### Question 15

The ConserveVirginia map can also be accessed through DCR’s Natural Heritage Data Explorer. Follow steps 1 and 2 outlined for Section A attachments above to access the mapper. Once you have located your area on the map, follow these steps to view the ConserveVirginia map:

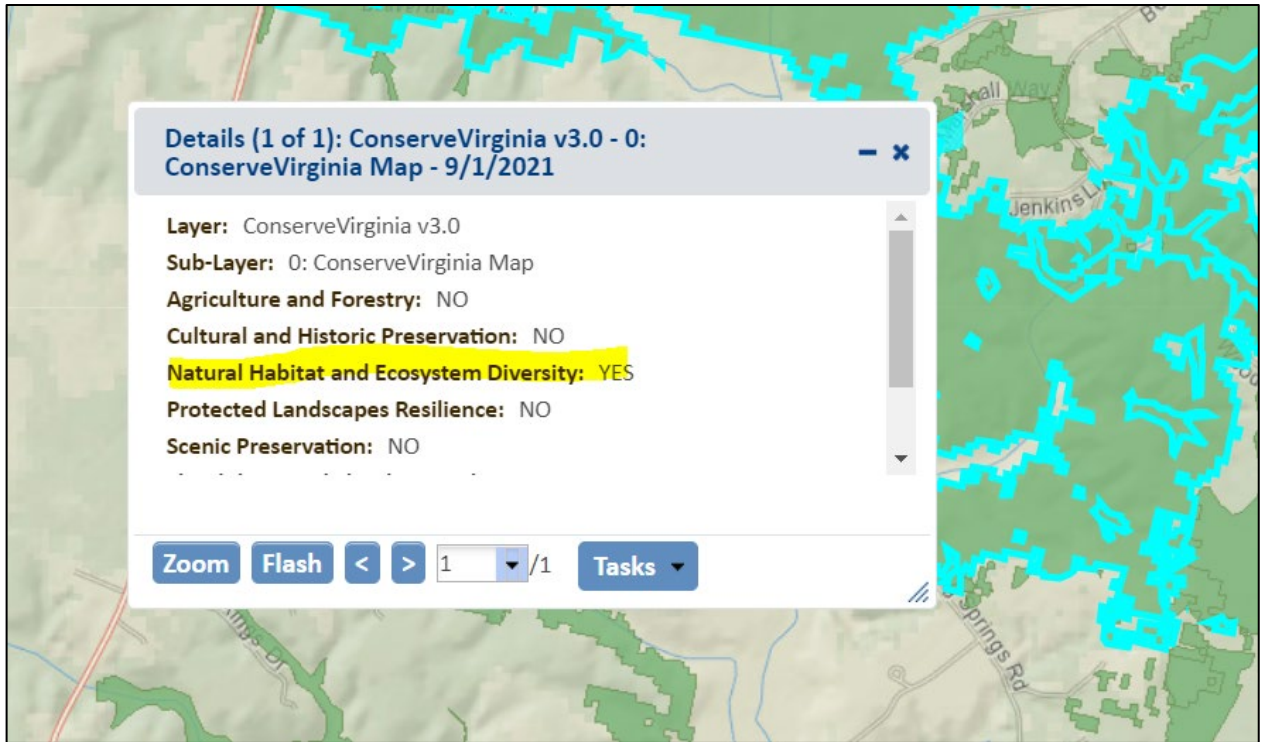
1. Under the ConserveVirginia Category on the left side of the screen, check the box next to “ConserveVirginia v3.0”
2. Expand that drop down and check the box next to “ConserveVirginia Map.”



- To find whether your parcel is within ConserveVirginia, click the “identify” icon in the top right of the map, next to the triangle and the magnifying glass.



- Two windows will pop up. Within the “Detail” window, it will say “Yes” next to any sub-layer/ category that is within ConserveVirginia. In this case, the identified location is within the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity layer.

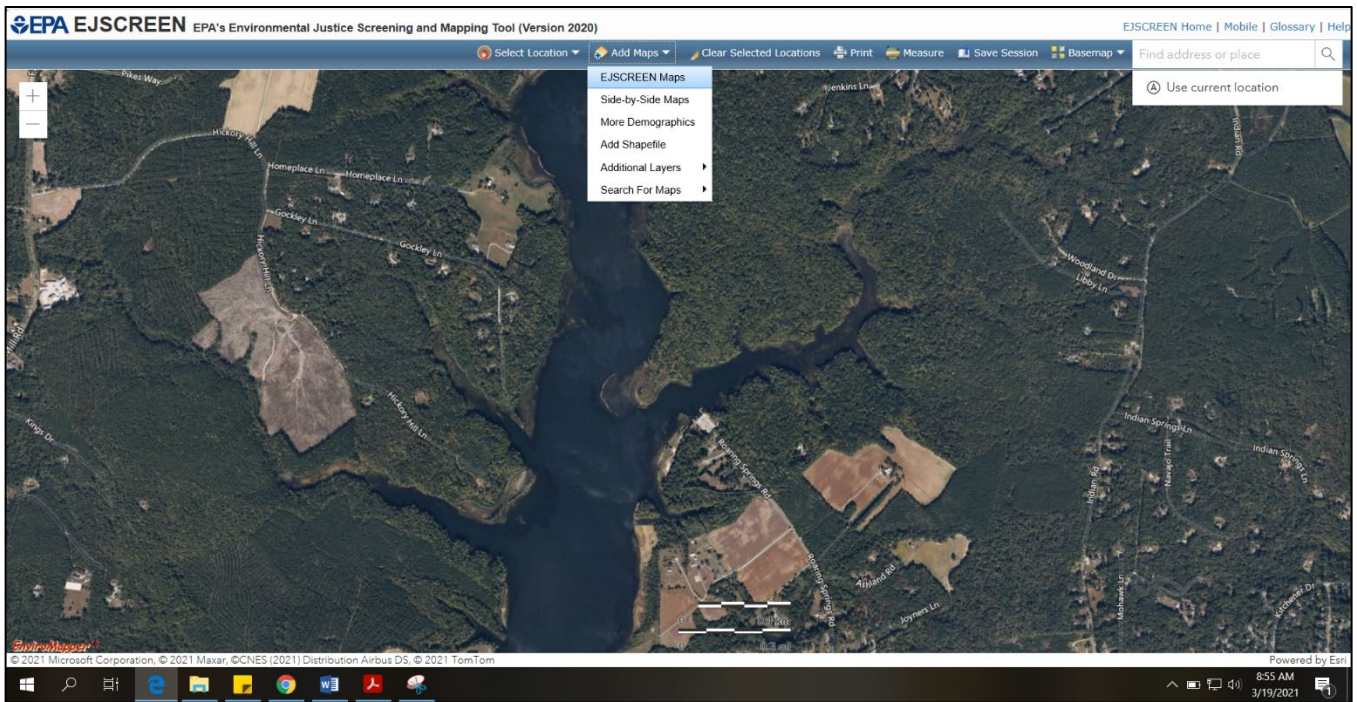


## Question 20

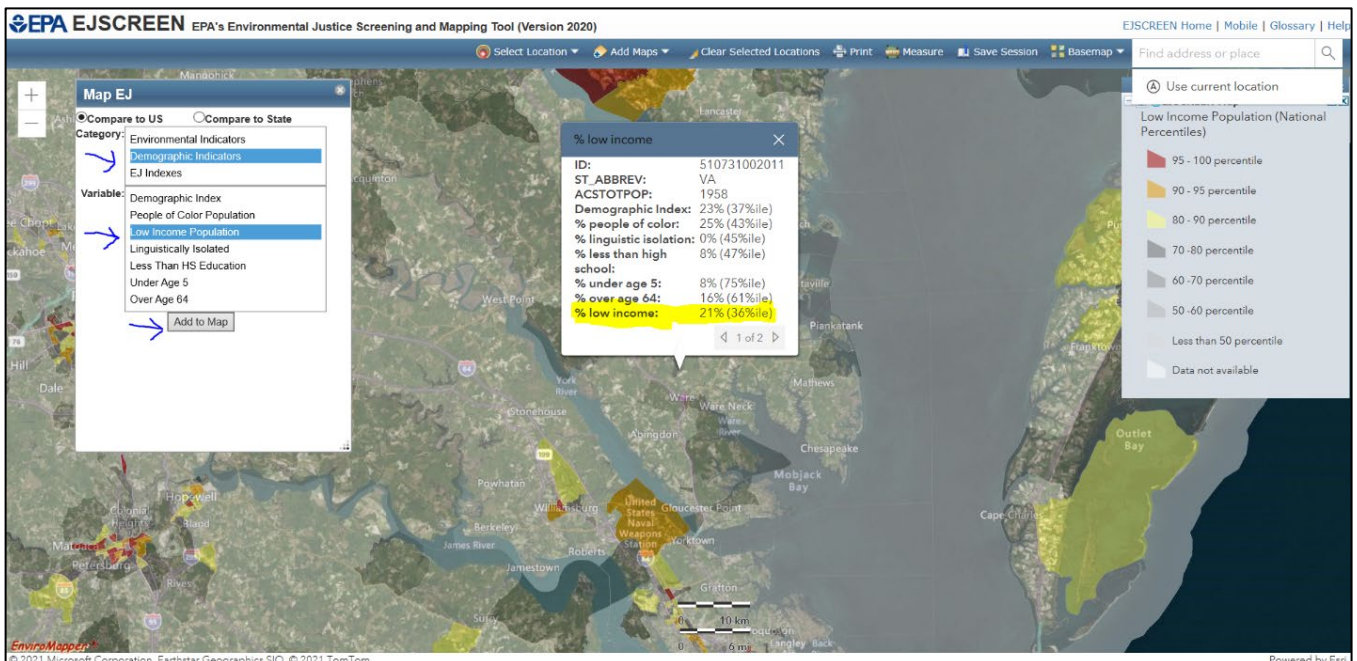
One resource that can be used to identify the percentage of local population considered low income is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN) found at <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>. If you use other sources, please provide a website link, if available, or attach source documents to your application. To use the EJSCREEN tool:

1. Navigate to your trail location using either the zoom tools or the “Find address or place” search bar in the top right corner of the screen. Note you can adjust the basemap by clicking on the “Basemap” button to the left of the search bar.
2. Click “Add Maps” and then select “EJSCREEN Maps” from the drop-down menu.





3. A pop-up window will appear. Note you can select either “Compare to US” or “Compare to State.” Either value will be accepted.
4. In the Category box, select “Demographic Indicators.” In the Variable box, select “Low Income Population” and then click “Add to Map.”
5. Click on the location of your trail. A second pop up labeled “% low income” will appear. Highlighted in the screen capture below shows that 21% of residents in the area of this trail are considered low income.

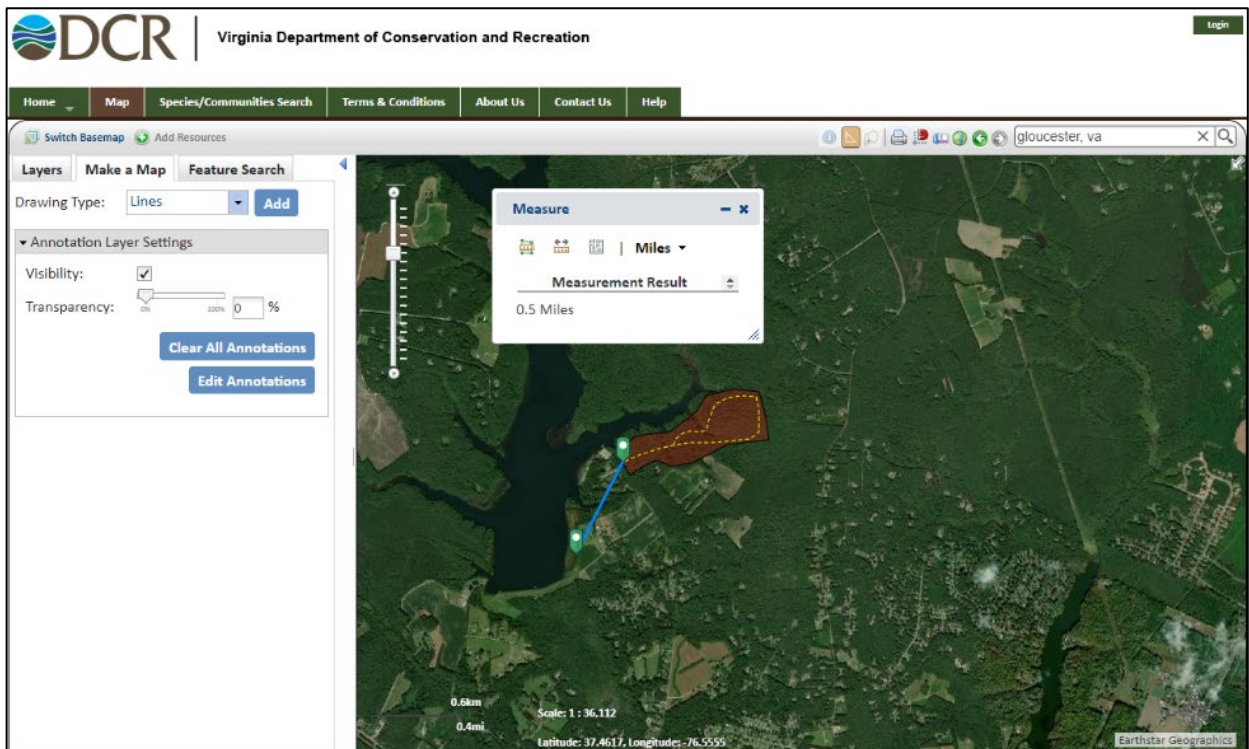


## Section C

### Question 22

Many mapping applications allow users to draw a line or circle at a specific distance or radius from a location. The Natural Heritage Data Explorer can also be used for this purpose. Follow steps 1 and 2 outlined for Section A attachments above to access the mapper. Once you have located your area on the map, follow these steps to identify ½ mile or 10 mile distance from your trail location.

1. Click on the measure tool in the upper right side of the mapper (next to the identify icon and magnifying glass). A popup window will emerge.
2. Change the units to “Miles.”
3. Click on your trail location on the map. As you move your mouse away from that point, the distance in miles will be displayed in the popup window.



If you answer “yes” to this question, please explain and provide a website address to verify data source or attach source documents to your application. Due to discrepancies in data collection and reporting, there are no one-stop locations to access this data for the entire state. Some links are provided below, but they may not include data for your community. If you can provide a different reputable source indicating the prevalence of one of the diseases listed, it will be accepted. While there are most likely overlaps between the prevalence rates of these diseases, points will be awarded for this item as long as the prevalence of one of the diseases is greater than the state-wide average. The following sources may provide data for your community:

- Cancer data by health district <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/data/virginia-cancer-dashboards/cancer-incidence-and-mortality-in-virginia/>
- CDC Data Explorer <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer/>
- VDH Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/brfss/data/>.
- VDH data website <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/healthy-communities/data/>
- EJSCREEN, as outlined in question 20 above

### **Question 25**

Historically underrepresented groups could include, but are not limited to: people with disabilities, people of color, indigenous peoples and tribes, LGBTQ people, immigrants, youth organizations or representatives, senior organizations or representatives, neighborhood groups.

### **Section D**

#### **Question 29**

Review the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfund> for overview of agency correspondence and procedures required.

### **Section F**

#### **Question 31**

The project budget should include two components: a budget table to provide itemized budget information and a narrative of the how the budget was created and matching fund source details.



## **Appendix B - Accessibility Resources**

The following resources may aid entities in planning for inclusive trail experiences and understanding legal obligations. As you plan your trail project, consider how your entity will provide equitable experiences for all users, including people with mobility, sensory, cognitive, and mental health disabilities.

### **2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design** <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/>

Full text of the technical standards that apply to state and local governments, non-profits, and businesses.

### **ABA Accessibility Standards** <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>

Full text of the technical standards that apply to federal government agencies and some recipients of federal funds.

### **U.S. Access Board Guide to the ABA Accessibility Standards (Outdoor)**

<https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/>

Illustrated guide to the technical requirements of the ABA Outdoor Developed Area standards, which include trails, viewing areas, picnic areas and camping areas.

### **U.S. Forest Service Accessibility Resources Website**

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/national-forests-grasslands/accessibility/resources>

Contains links to numerous documents, including the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines, and other guides, summaries, and best practices.

### **American Trails Accessible Trail Resources Library**

<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/query/?trails%5B%5D=665>

Summary collection of accessible land and water trail articles, webinars, guides, bulletins from a variety of sources.

### **AccessibilityOnline Webinar Archives**

<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/query/?trails%5B%5D=665>

Archive of recorded webinars presented by the U.S. Access Board on ADA and ABA standards, including Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas.

### **Massachusetts Audubon Accessible Trails Manual**

<https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/accessibility/accessible-projects-and-partners/accessible-trails-manual>

Summary and recommendations from Mass Audubon detailing their experiences in creating multisensory and inclusive trail environments.

### **Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and Inclusive Design**

<https://conservationtools.org/guides/115>

Guide from WeConservePA with overview of legal requirements and summary of best practices.