

Virginia Recreational Trails Program 2024 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 input or program changes by the Federal Highway Administration.

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

- **RTP Procurement Procedures**
- **RTP Environmental Review and Public Comment Requirements**
- **2024 Recreational Trails Program Application**
- **2024 Recreational Trails Program Application Certification Form**
- **2024 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. The agency responsible for administering the program in Virginia is the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The RTP requirements mandate that each year's apportioned funds be specifically 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 regional recreation authorities, and state agencies. Non-profit organizations, with support from the local governmental body, are also eligible to receive 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 included in the project authorization request. 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 other requirements for their project.

Projects are selected and recommended for funding through an annual open grant round. All proposals are reviewed and scored by the Virginia RTP Advisory Committee.

Projects recommended for funding must complete an environmental analysis prior to construction in accordance with federal and state regulations. These costs can be included in the grant proposal.

The application deadline for the 2024 RTP grant cycle is **4:00PM on Tuesday, May 7, 2024**. All applications must be submitted electronically via email to recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov by this deadline. Applicants are responsible for delivery by the deadline; late submissions will not be accepted.

Programmatic Changes for 2024

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 2023 RTP grant round. Each of these points is discussed in further detail within this manual:

- **Both construction of new trails and water trail access points and maintenance and amenity projects on existing trails are eligible for funding this year.**
- Most projects will qualify for exemption of Buy America requirements for iron, steel, construction materials, and manufactured products. This makes equipment purchases now eligible for funding.
- Updated guidance documents on procurement and environmental review procedures.
- Changes 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.

Eligible Projects – RTP funding may be used for:

- Construction of new recreational trails and trail linkages;
- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails;
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and/or amenities on land and water trails;
- Provision of features that facilitate access and use of trails by persons with disabilities;
- Lease or purchase* of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment;
*Applicants should discuss proposed equipment purchases with DCR Recreation Grants staff to verify eligibility prior to application submission.
- 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 2024 grant round as per the fiscal year 2024 FHWA apportionment and remaining funds from completed project underruns are as follows:

- **Diversified category** - \$945,000 available
 - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$350,000
- **Non-motorized single use category** - \$435,000 available
 - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$250,000
- **Motorized category** - \$630,000 available
 - Minimum request - \$50,000, maximum request - \$630,000*

*There is no maximum request in the motorized category due to historically few applications being received. However if multiple competitive applications are received, award amounts may be less than requested. Note grant awards of \$500,000.00 and up do not qualify for the Build America, Buy America materials waiver discussed in under procurement heading.

It is anticipated that 3-5 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 committee evaluation and 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 form and certification form from the [DCR RTP website](#). 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 and requires a signature.

If you are unable to download or use the documents, please contact 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 by **Tuesday May 7th, 2024 at 4:00 pm.**

If your email with attachments exceeds 25 MB, contact 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 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 gather information and 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 (if applicable), permitting, and project construction.

V. Award Timeline

The anticipated timeline for the 2024 grant cycle is as follows:

March 12, 2024	Grant round opens
April 2, 2024 1:00PM	Informational webinar (registration information available at and post-webinar recording posted to DCR RTP website)
May 7, 2024 4:00PM	Application deadline
May – June 2024	Applications reviewed by DCR and Advisory Committee
Late June 2024	Applicants of projects recommended for funding are contacted
July 2024	Applicants not recommended for funding are notified
July 2024	Site inspections and preparing documents for FHWA authorization request
August 2024	Project authorizations and release of grant agreements
September 2024	Agreement execution

VI. Programmatic Requirements

Right of Way

Applicants should have the right of way secured (deed, easement/s, license agreement, etc.) *prior* to applying for RTP funding. 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. A right of way agreement must already be in place prior to application. Applicants submitting proposals for work on privately owned land must submit a copy of the relevant recorded deed, easement, license, or agreement with the RTP application.

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 202-272-0080 or ta@access-board.gov. For

technical assistance on the ADA, contact the Department of Justice at 800-514-0301 (voice) or 1-833-610-1264 (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.

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](#).

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 Procurement Procedures** document available at the [DCR RTP website](#) 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. Documentation of SWaM and DBE outreach efforts must be submitted.
- **Construction Bidding** – All construction contracts must be competitively bid, unless the procurement qualifies under the locality's established small purchase procedures in accordance with the Virginia Public Procurement Act. Additionally, at least two bids must be received for construction contracts, otherwise the project must be re-bid.
- **Buy America** – Projects authorized after August 2023 utilizing less than \$500,000 of federal funding are exempt from Build America, Buy America requirements for iron, steel, construction materials, and manufactured products. Projects with \$500,000 or more in federal funding or those authorized prior to this date are not exempt. Material certification documentation proving the material was sourced and manufactured in the U.S may be required.

- **Equipment Purchases** – In accordance with 2 CFR 200.313, recipients are limited in how equipment purchased with RTP funds can be used and must report on the status of equipment every two years following grant closeout. Applicants should discuss proposed equipment purchases with DCR Recreation Grants staff prior to application submission. If grant-purchased equipment is sold or disposed before the value falls below \$5,000 a portion of grant funds may require repayment to FHWA.
- **DCR Administrative Review** – Drafts of select procurement documents must be submitted for DCR administrative review before proceeding 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 received returned to FHWA.

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 and must submit maintenance plans with the application.

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 outlined in the project proposal and budget and approved 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

- Motorized boat launches and non-motorized paddle launches on water trails
- Signs and interpretive aids
- Features that facilitate trail use by people with disabilities
- Consultant/ contractor services
- Equipment rental or purchase
- Bid advertisements for project-related work
- Employee salary for on-the-ground project work in the field
- 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.**

Matching Share Requirement

Of the eligible total 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 or matching share. Another way to determine the required match amount is to calculate 25% of the grant award amount.

Example: If a grant is awarded for \$100,000, applicants must provide \$25,000 in match, making the total project cost \$125,000. The 80% RTP share is \$100,000 and the 20% matching share is \$25,000.

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 towards the matching 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, 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. As of February 2024, the posted rate was \$32.59 per hour.
 - In kind equipment costs will require a time log, 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; 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 spent \$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 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. 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 cash on hand or other financing available to cover all project expenses until reimbursement is received.

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. Regular reimbursements requests must be submitted to maintain the project in active status. Specific deadlines will be provided in the grant agreement.

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](#).

IX. 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 or subrecipient*) 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.**

Project Management

One person should be assigned as the project coordinator, with at least one additional person designated as backup. The project coordinator will have the responsibility for all coordination with DCR. All grant communication and deliverables should be submitted to recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov NOT to individual DCR staff email addresses.

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 (reporting periods end on last day of March, June, September, December). 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.

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.

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.

Grant Phases

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. **No bidding or on-the-ground work may begin before the PE Phase is complete and the NEPA pathway document is signed by FHWA.**

- **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. Additional information about the environmental review process can be found in the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document posted on the [DCR RTP website](#).
- **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.

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 Completion and Closeout

To close out the grant, 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, and photos of the completed work.

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.

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 eligibility issues and modifications or amendments. If approved, an amendment to the project agreement will be prepared and forwarded to the subgrantee for signature.

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.

X. Appendices

Appendix A - Application Guidance

This appendix is provided as a supplement to the 2024 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 I

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.

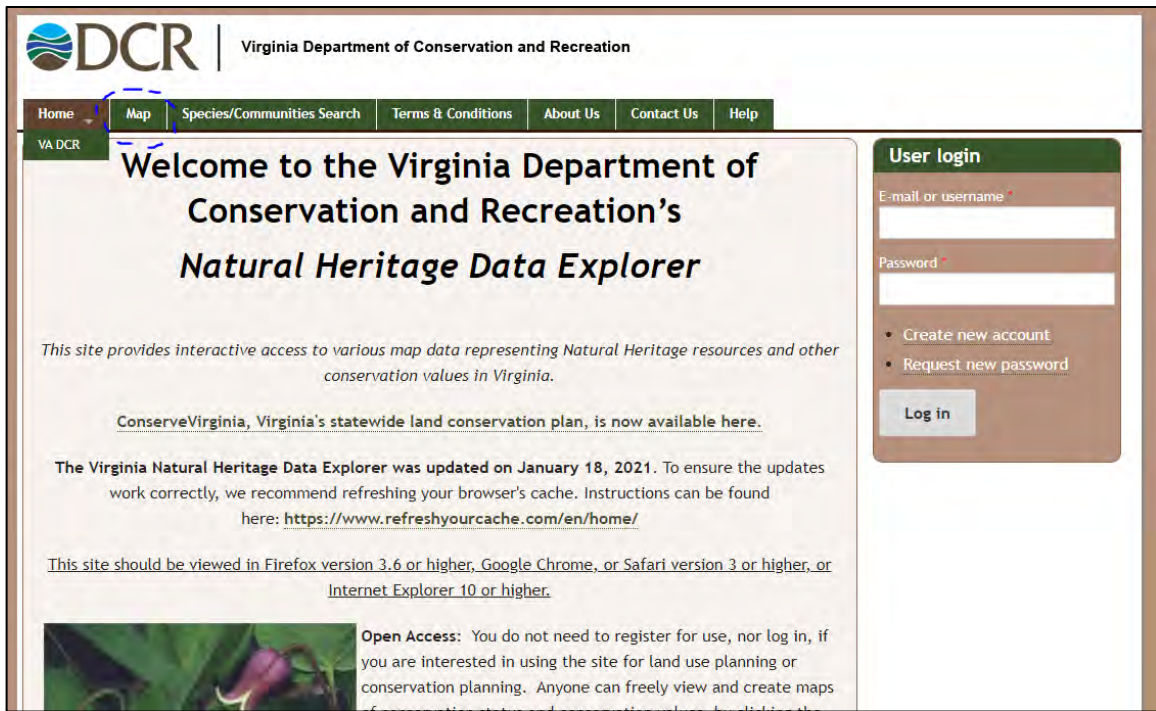
Question 13

If applicant is a non-profit organization, a letter of support from the locality in which the project is located in must be provided. This letter should indicate the locality's support for the project and its willingness to advise the project sponsor, if needed, on required permitting and public procurement procedures.

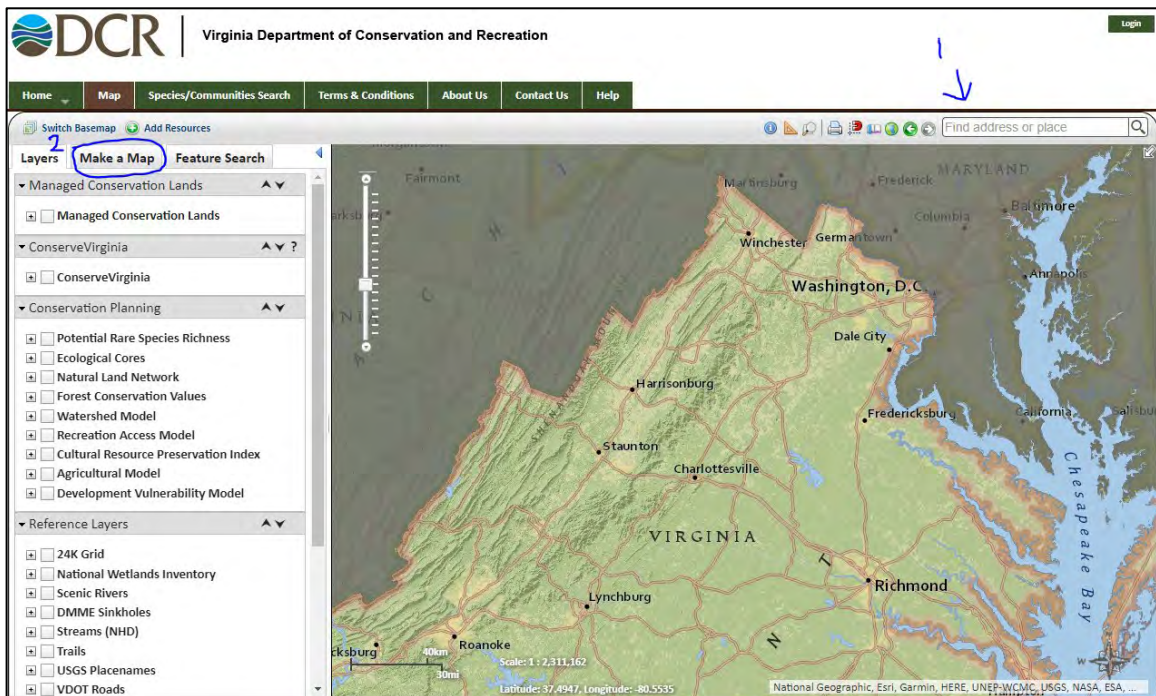
Section I Attachments

Location maps can be generated using Google Maps or similar screen captures with pins or arrows identifying the project location. If you do not have an existing trail map, you can make one using DCR's Natural Heritage Data Explorer:

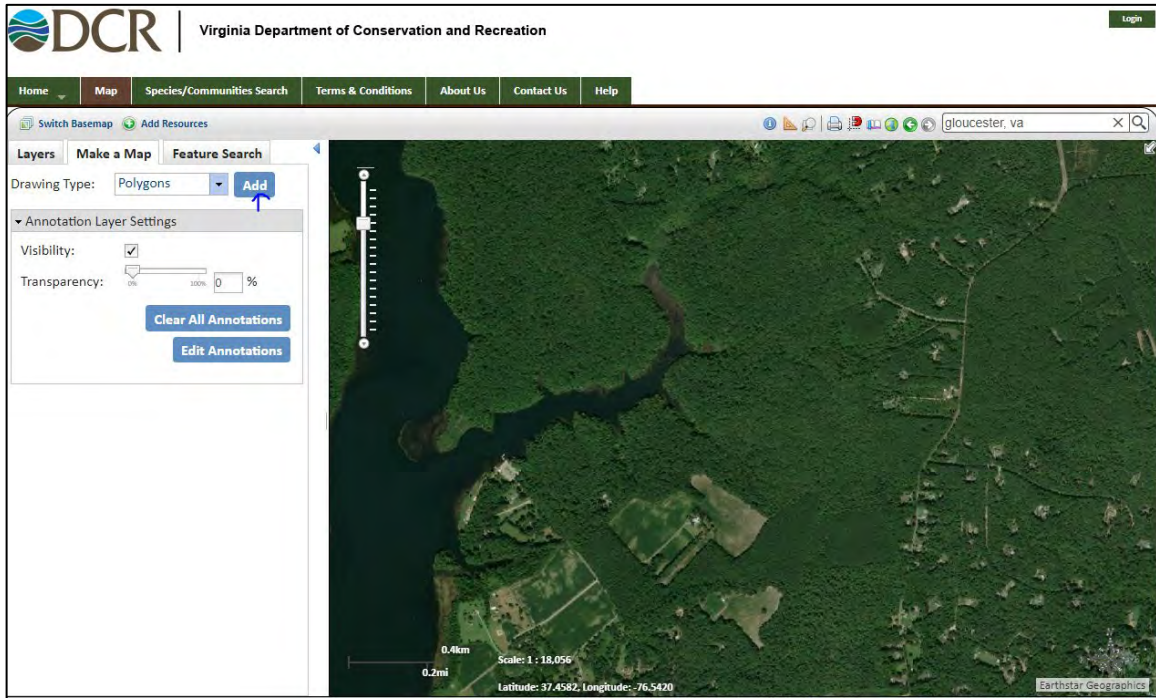
1. To access the Natural Heritage Data Explorer, visit: <https://vanhde.org/> and click on the "Map" tab. A separate browser tab will open. Please read and accept the Terms of Use.



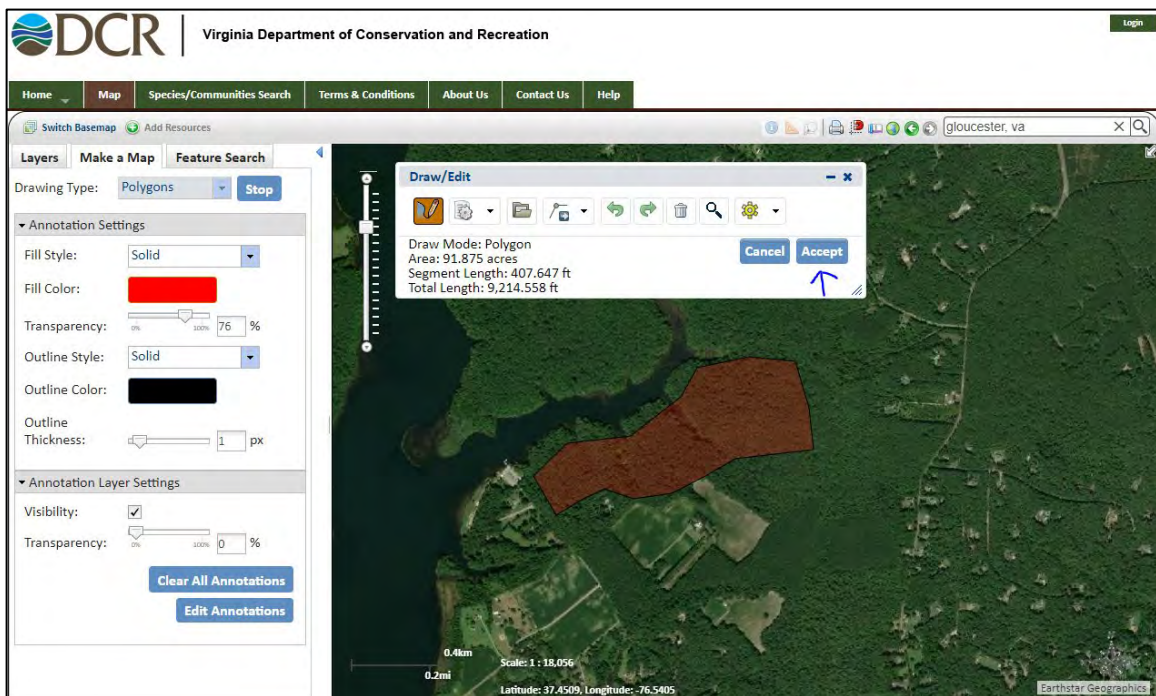
2. Navigate to your location by either using the map's zoom feature, or entering an address into the box in the upper right side of the screen labeled "find address or place."
3. Once your area is located, select the "Make a Map" tab. Note you can switch the basemap to an aerial view by clicking "Switch 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.

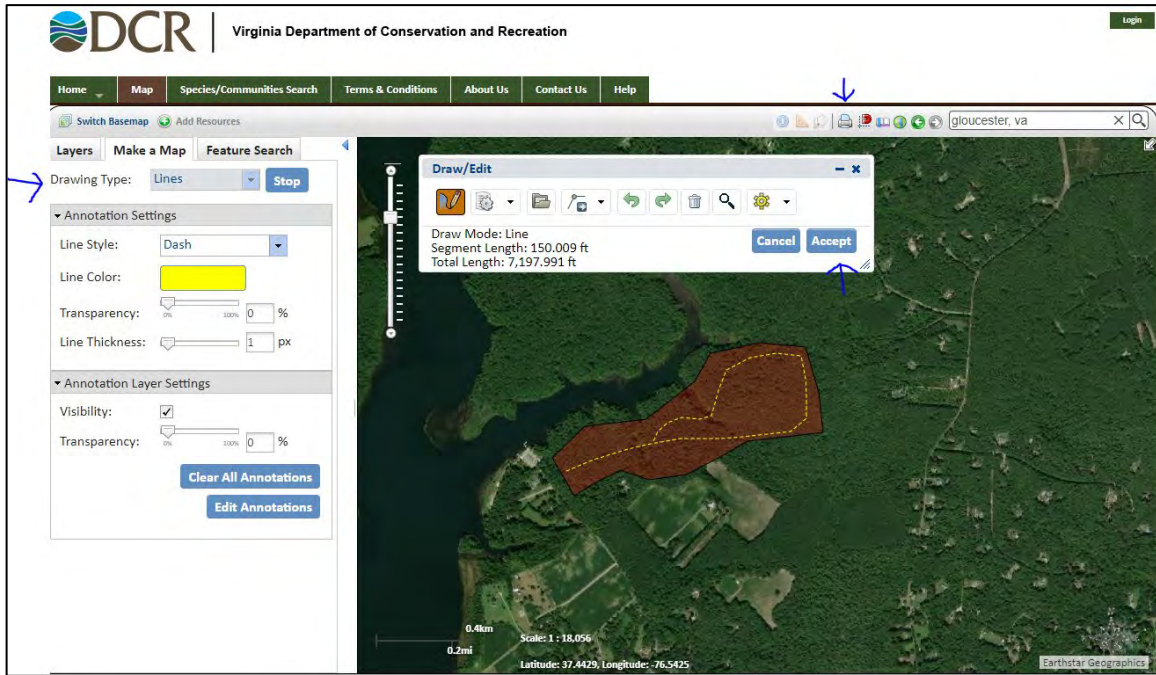


- Draw your polygon by clicking around the edge of your parcel on the map. When the shape is complete, double-click and then click “Accept.”

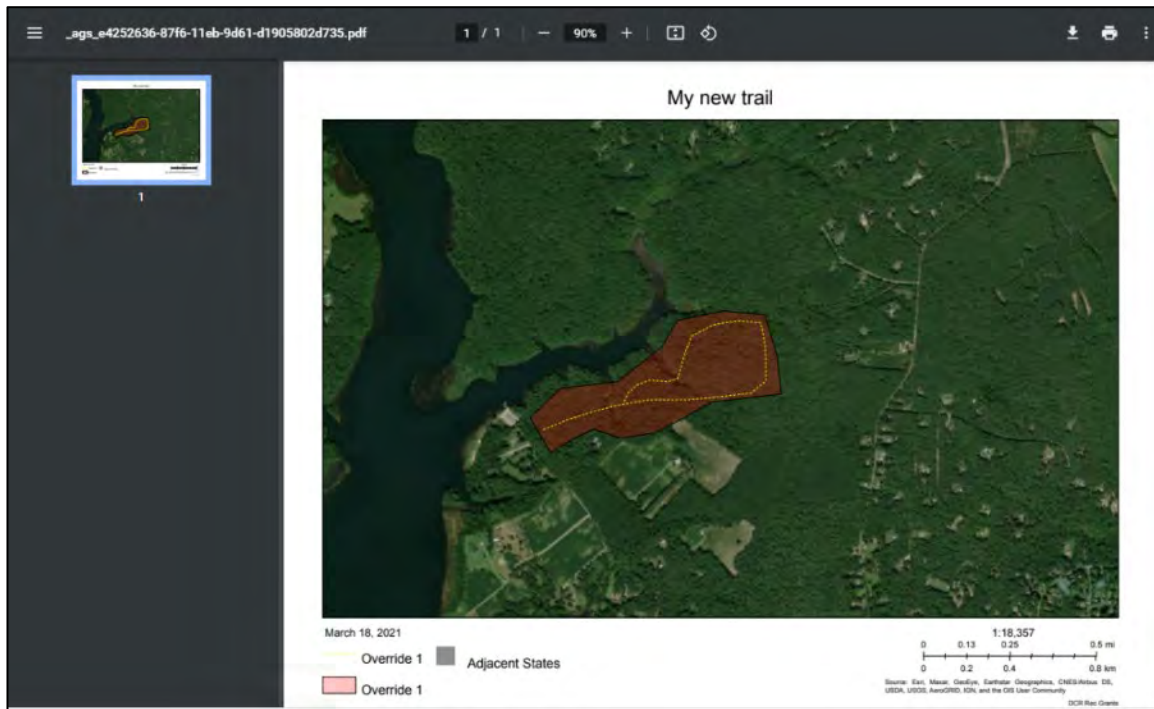


- If you wish to also add a line to indicate the trail layout, select “Line” from the Drawing Type drop-down menu and click “Add.” You can select from the same options to change the color and transparency of the line. Once you have drawn the line, double click to complete the line and click “Accept.” You can then print your map by either

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 II.A and II.B – Answer the Section II.A questions if your project includes construction of a new trail or trail segment or construction of a new water trail access point. Answer the Section II.B questions if your project includes maintenance or repairs to an existing trail, or construction of new amenities on an existing trail. The unused section may be deleted. If your project includes both new trail construction and additional amenities on an existing trail, answer both parts and the project will be awarded the higher score of the two. If in doubt, contact DCR Recreation Grants staff or complete both A and B and the review committee will determine and score the appropriate section.

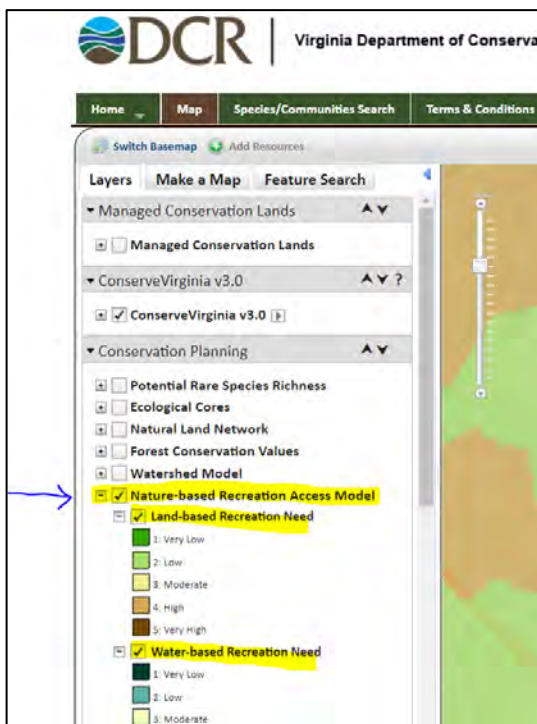
Question 15

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.

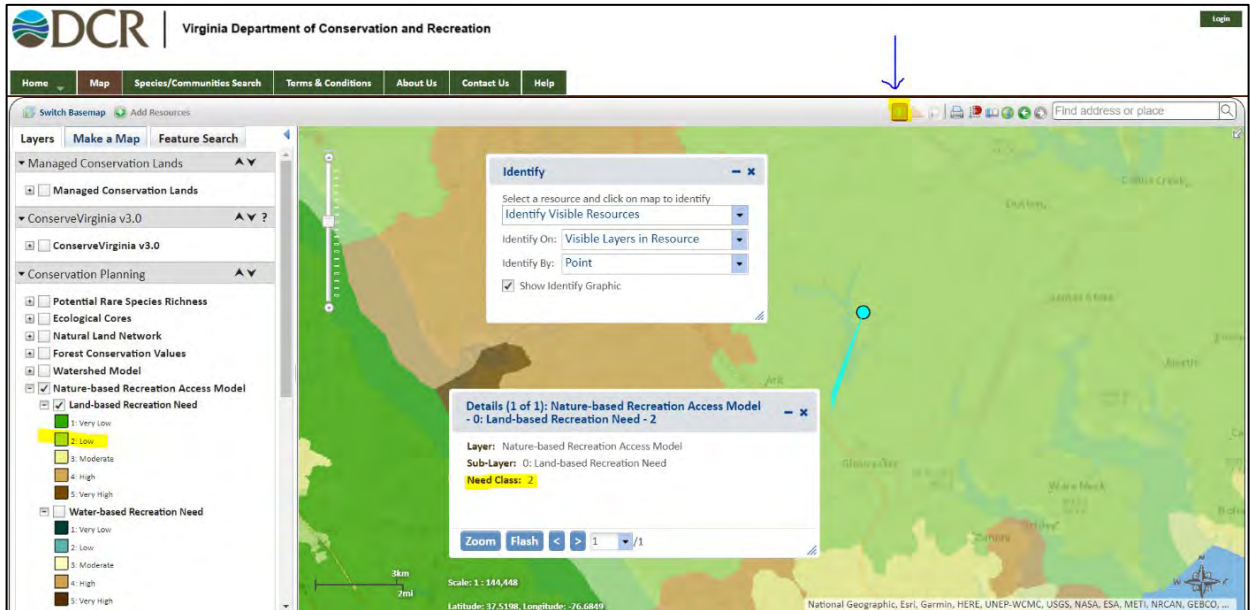
ParkServe can be found at: <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>.

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 I 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 15a) or “Water-based Recreation Need” (Question 15b)



- To find the score for your project area, click the “identify” icon in the top right of the map, next to the triangle and the magnifying glass, and then click on your project location.

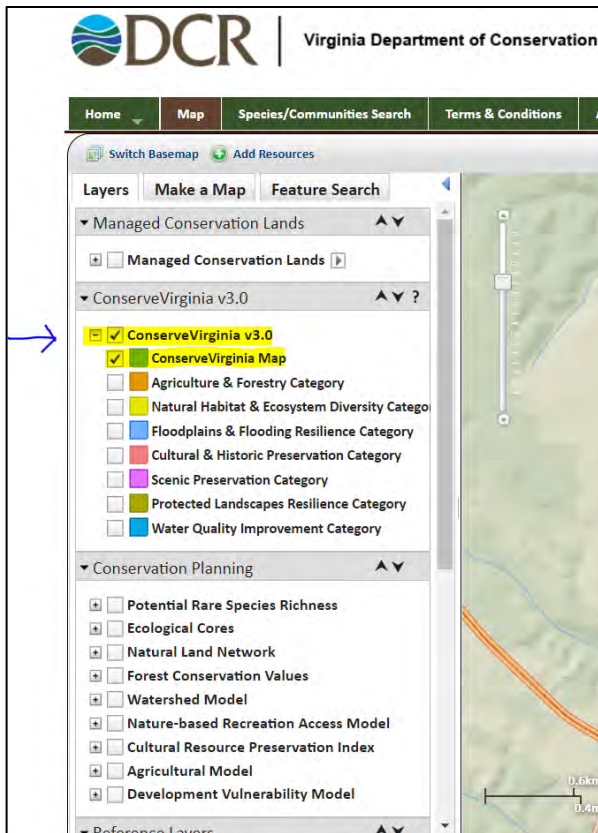


- Two windows will pop up. Within the “Details” window, the “Need Class” number will be listed. This corresponds to one of the five need classes listed in the legend.

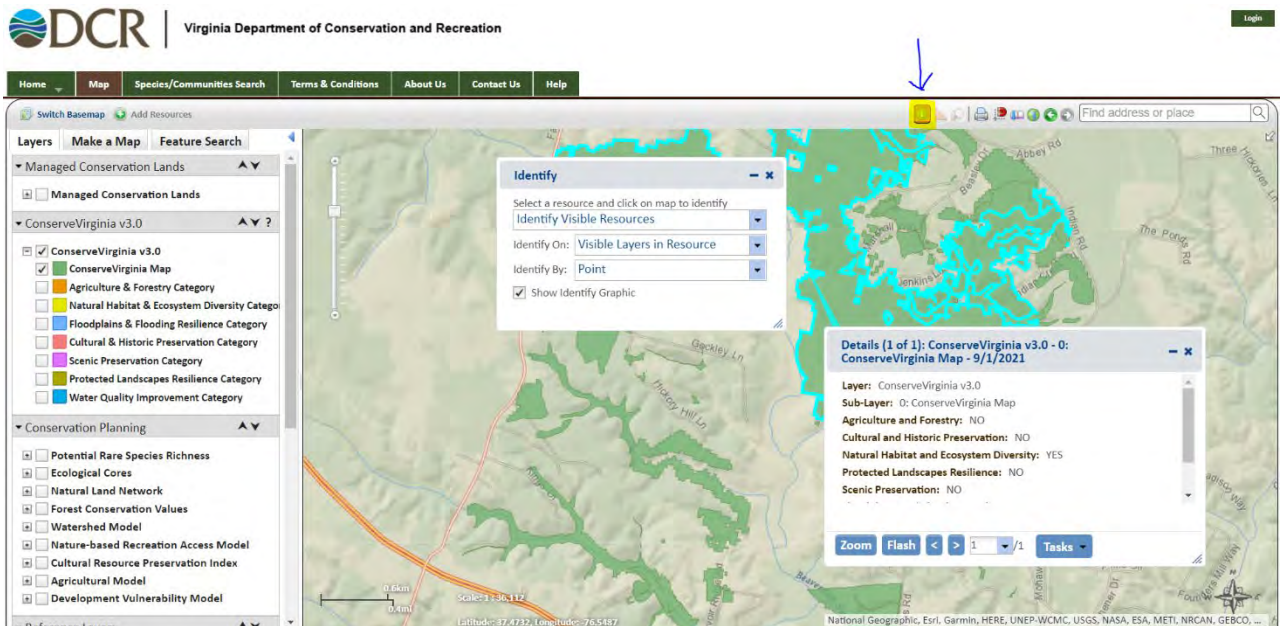
Question 16

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

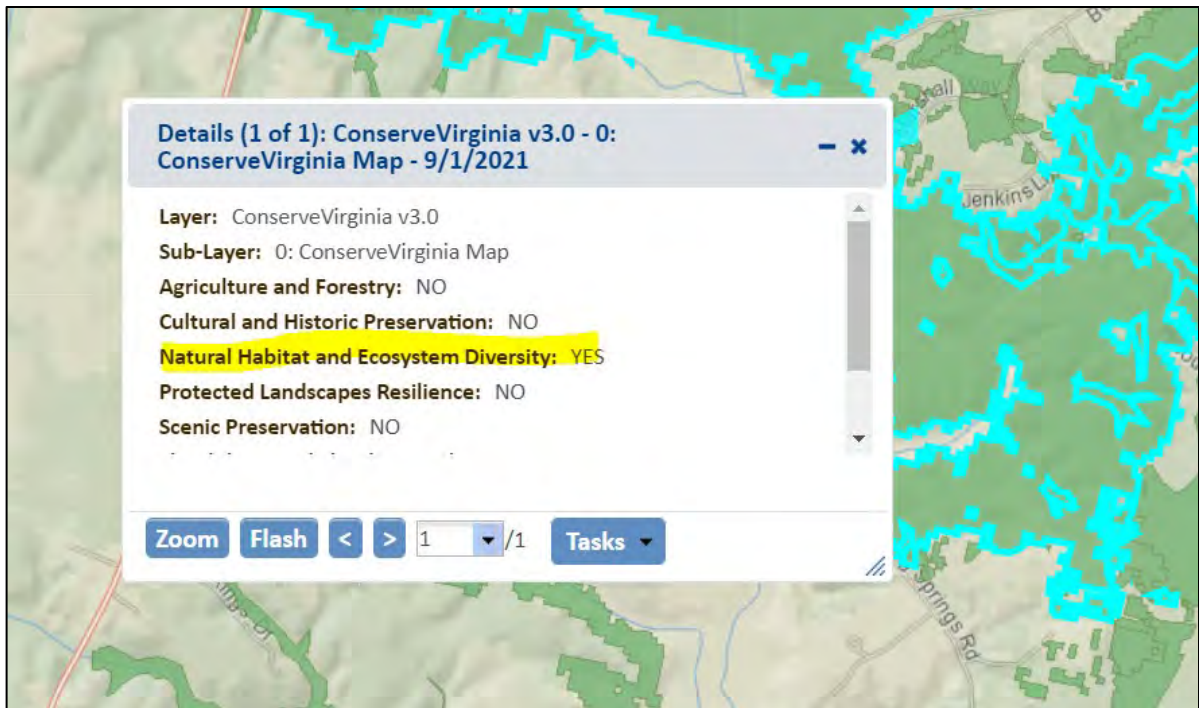
- Under the ConserveVirginia v3.0 Category on the left side of the screen, check the box next to “ConserveVirginia v3.0”
- Expand that drop down and check the box next to “ConserveVirginia Map.”



- 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 17

The 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>. A link to the VOP Mapper for identifying blueways and scenic rivers is also on this page.

Section III

Question 27

See Appendix B of this manual for a list of online accessibility resources.

Section IV

Question 31

Review the RTP Procurement Procedures document available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd> for overview of procurement procedures required for RTP projects and a description of Buy America applicability to specific projects.

Section V

Question 33

Review the RTP Environmental Review Guidance document available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd> for overview of agency correspondence and procedures required to comply with NEPA and Section 106 requirements.

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 Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines.

<https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/>

Recently published guidelines for pedestrian facilities in the public right of way, included shared use paths designed for transportation and recreation purposes.

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 Trail Accessibility Hub

<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessibility-hub>

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

AccessibilityOnline Webinar Archives <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ao/archives>

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.