

# **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation**

## **2019 Grant Manual (FY20 Program Year)**

**Adoption Date: June 19, 2019**

**Administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation**

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## **I. GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (the “Foundation” or “VLCF” intermittently) was established in 1999 under Va. Code §§ 10.1-1017 through 10.1-1026. A major function of the Foundation is to “establish, administer, manage, including the creation of reserves, and make expenditures and allocations from a special, nonreverting fund in the state treasury to be known as the Virginia Land Conservation Fund,” Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (the “Fund”).

The Foundation administers the Fund for the purpose of providing grants to state agencies, other public bodies, and qualifying nonprofits to reimburse them for the costs associated with conserving land throughout the Commonwealth, including the purchase of development rights. Grants are awarded only for acquiring interests in property that has not yet been permanently protected. The grant categories set out in Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (C)(2) are: farmlands and forest preservation; historic area preservation; natural area protection; and open spaces and parks.

The Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation is charged with administering, reviewing, and making recommendations on grant applications to the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Foundation. The Director, who serves as Administrative Secretary to the Foundation, is assisted in this process by an inter-agency task force with representatives from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Historic Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Department of Forestry, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Using specific criteria defined in each application category, grant awards may be made for up to 50 percent of total project costs and 50 percent of the appraised value of the subject property. The program can pay up to 100 percent of these costs for state agencies.

Guiding factors for distribution of VLCF funds are set out in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1020 and 1021.1, which specify that at least one third of the funds shall be used to secure open-space easements to be held or co-held by a public body, and that the Foundation shall seek to achieve a fair distribution of land protected throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, Item 363 A.1. of the 2019 Budget Bill (Chapter 854 of the 2019 Virginia Acts of Assembly) specifies that no less than 50 percent of the grant funds shall be used for projects that provide public access.

In April 2018, Governor Ralph Northam announced a new approach to land conservation in Virginia: *"I believe that we need a land conservation strategy that is focused and targeted toward making measurable progress on our natural resource goals...Through this data-driven process, we will prioritize the most important targeted lands and direct limited resources toward those conservation projects that provide the greatest benefit in the most cost-effective manner."* *ConserveVirginia* is a key component in this strategy and represents a new, data driven approach to land conservation that builds upon work already underway here and in other states. Virginia’s first-in-the-nation strategy takes the next step in identifying how and where to achieve the best conservation outcomes, and meets the Governor’s directive to prioritize the most important lands from a statewide perspective, target limited resources toward those areas, and measure the progress we make toward achieving multiple conservation goals.

To help advance Governor Northam’s vision of *ConserveVirginia*, this grant manual’s scoring criteria have been revised to place emphasis on funding projects identified in the strategy.

## **II. APPLYING FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM**

Applicants may apply for the program by submitting the Grant Application beginning on page 16 of this Grant Manual. The applicant should read through the entire Grant Manual to become familiar with the program specifics. The Grant Manual has been significantly reorganized and revised this year to reflect changes in the program and provide greater clarity about the requirements for participation. The manual and the application contain additional statements about program requirements and a revised budget and match section.

A hardcopy and an electronic version of the application must be received as described below. Electronic submissions without the associated paper applications **cannot be accepted**.

The application should include letters of support from individuals and organizations, as well as resolutions from governmental bodies and others whose interest in the project proposal reflects wide community-based support for the application. As a means of raising the profile of the VLCF grant program, applicants are also encouraged to inform their public officials, such as state legislators and locally elected officials, of the applicant's participation in the VLCF grant round. **These letters shall be submitted as part of the application, not sent separately.**

### **Application Information and Deadline**

The necessary items for a complete application are **one (1) original application on paper**, plus a CD or USB drive containing an **electronic version of the application** (in PDF format that is searchable), and three high quality reproducible representative photos of the project and all letters of support, compiled into one file. These must be delivered to the Department of Conservation and Recreation at the address below, and must arrive **no later than 4 p.m. on Thursday, August 29, 2019.**

*Address:*

**Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Attention: Virginia Land Conservation Fund Grant Program  
Office of Land Conservation  
600 East Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219**

The paper original of the application should be firmly attached with staples or binder clips, or placed in a soft-sided folder. **Please do not use hard binders. All pages must be 8.5" x 11".** Additional photographs above the three required photos are encouraged. **Note:** see specific photo requirements on page 9 for applications in the Historic Area Preservation category. All photos and images and their captions must be mounted or printed on 8.5 x 11 paper and be of quality suitable for reproduction by photocopier. Images and photos will not be returned.

**General Application Inquiry:** contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Office of Land Conservation, (804) 371-5218 or (804) 225-3010. For specific category inquiries see contacts starting on page 5 in the Program Requirements by Category section.

## **Important Program Information**

- Applications may be submitted by state agencies, localities, public bodies, and registered (tax-exempt) nonprofit organizations that qualify as a holder under Va. Code § 10.1-1009. Projects may be either acquisitions of property in fee simple or conservation or open-space easements.
- No application relying on eminent domain shall be considered, as Va. Code § 10.1-1023 prohibits the use of VLCF funds to acquire any property interest through eminent domain.
- Projects must be for a minimum of \$10,000 in total expense or a grant request of no less than \$5,000.
- The VLCF program can pay up to 50% of eligible costs for transactions involving localities or qualifying nonprofit organizations, or 100% for transactions by state agencies. Eligible expenses include: the purchase price of the transaction based on the appraised value of the land or the easement, plus the costs to acquire the property (e.g., due diligence costs). Grant payments cannot exceed the amount actually expended by the grant recipient or the amount of the grant award.
- VLCF grant funds will not be distributed to the grant recipient until all due diligence documents have been provided and the deed of fee-simple purchase and/or open-space easement have been recorded.
- Indirect costs cannot be reimbursed and will not be considered as match contribution. These types of ineligible costs include, without limitation, staff time, overhead, work provided pro bono, or maintenance/operating costs of lands and facilities.
- The reported value of any property, whether a fee-simple acquisition or an easement, must be substantiated by an appraisal. A full appraisal is not required at the time of submission of the application but may be submitted. If a full appraisal is not available, an applicant may submit a preliminary appraisal or other evidence of the value of the property to substantiate the requested grant amount.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the landowners have been notified and are receptive to negotiation on the proposed project. Applicants must submit, as part of their application, a signed letter from all of the landowners indicating their willingness to participate in the proposed project.
- The proposed project must be for **specific property** that meets the criteria for one or more of the four application categories listed below. Applications that are not site-specific will not be accepted and ranked.
- The applicant must provide the conditions (restrictions) to be included in any proposed conservation or open-space easement. This includes, but is not limited to, the number of division rights to be retained, amount of development permitted, riparian buffer requirements, historic-resource protections, preservation of forest acreage, any allowed or disallowed land use or land-management practices, or other easement terms. A draft deed of easement or term sheet will satisfy this requirement.

- To align with statewide efforts to protect water quality, VLCF now requires permanent vegetated riparian buffers on all funded projects. These buffers must be preserved in perpetuity by the deed associated with the VLCF project that protects the property. Any potential or existing public, private, farm or forest-related accessways that may affect, cross, or interrupt the required permanent vegetated buffers must be described and mitigated in the application. If approved by the VLCF Board and a grant is awarded, in some cases further remedial action to protect water quality may be required and will be included in the formal grant agreement. Allowed structures and activities within the buffer are listed below in Appendix C. VLCF defines a vegetated buffer as: an area of land at least 35-feet in width along a perennial stream, river, shoreline, or body of water that has perennial outflow where natural vegetation is maintained, mowing is limited to no more than three times per calendar year, and livestock are excluded. Livestock must be excluded from vegetated buffers and associated watercourses and bodies of water.
- A nonprofit organization seeking to hold easements funded by VLCF must provide documentation in their application that the organization meets the holder requirements in the Virginia Conservation Easement Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017, including having a mission statement pertaining to land conservation activities and maintaining an office in Virginia.
- All properties presented in an application by a nonprofit organization, whether fee simple or easement, must be protected by an open-space easement in perpetuity that is held or co-held by a public body (state agency or local governmental entity), pursuant to Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2). The nonprofit organization must provide an acknowledgement letter from the public body stating that it is willing to consider holding or co-holding the easement.
- Applications for the acquisition of easements on lands currently permanently protected for conservation purposes are not eligible for VLCF Grant Program assistance.
- When additional property is proposed as match in a grant application, the match property must be in the proximity of or ecologically connected to the property that is the subject of the grant. The match property must also be protected in the same manner as the grant property. The applicant must, in its application, provide the same information on the match property as for the grant property so that the match property can be included in the overall evaluation of the project. The reported value of any match property must be substantiated by an appraisal.
- All applicants should be aware that project names will be included in reports to the Governor and General Assembly and may be included in press releases. Because some landowners prefer not to have their names published, please consider that when naming the project in the VLCF application. Please obtain the landowner's permission to use their name. VLCF will use the project name that is provided in the application in public grant announcements.
- All projects awarded VLCF funds will require that certain due diligence documents be submitted, as specified below in the section entitled Required Support Documents (Due Diligence). These include: an appraisal, a survey, a title commitment, and a proforma title policy. A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment is required for all fee-simple acquisition projects.

## **Application Categories and Additional Scoring Criteria**

1. Farmlands and Forest Preservation
2. Historic Area Preservation
3. Natural Area Preservation
4. Open Spaces and Parks
5. Additional Scoring Criteria

**NOTE: The grant applicant is advised to review the program requirements below carefully as they prepare the application and to determine the best category for their project. It is also wise to score the application using the scoring sheets provided in Appendix A.**

### **Program Requirements by Category**

**1. Farmlands and Forest Preservation Category** – While this is a single funding category, separate funding criteria have been developed for agricultural lands and for forestal lands. Applicant should use the set of criteria that is most appropriate for the project being submitted.

**A. Agricultural (Farmlands) Criteria** –contact the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, (804) 786-1906, with questions. The Department website is <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/conservation-and-environmental-farmland-preservation.shtml>. For specific scoring criteria for this category, please see Appendix A.

Applications for purchasing fee-simple title to or a conservation easement on property for the protection and preservation of agricultural lands will be evaluated according to:

- ◆ Soil productivity. The parcel will be ranked based on the percentage that it contains of each of the following soils (as defined in § 3.2-205 of the Code of Virginia):

“Prime farmland” is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, nursery, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Prime farmland includes land that possesses the above characteristics but is being used currently to produce livestock and timber. It does not include land already in or committed to urban development or water storage.

“Unique farmland” is land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, as determined by the United States Secretary of Agriculture. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

“Important farmland” other than prime or unique farmland is land that is of statewide or local importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, nursery, oilseed or other agricultural crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or local government agency, either or both, and that the United States Secretary of Agriculture determines should be considered as farmland.

**Please note, if these percentage numbers of soil productivity are not provided in the application it will be presumed that none of these soils exist on the property.**

- ◆ Property acreage. The size of the parcel in relation to average agricultural parcel sizes in the locality will be used as a determining factor. More information can be found at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).
- ◆ Current and historical use of property. Priority will be given to any property that is currently being farmed and/or is a designated Century Farm.
- ◆ Adjacency to conserved lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or nearby, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.
- ◆ Development vulnerability rank. Using the Virginia Conservation Vision Development Vulnerability model, parcels will be evaluated according to their vulnerability ranking. The Development Vulnerability model can be found at <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable>.
- ◆ Best Management Practices. The existence of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and farm management plans that are currently being utilized as part of the normal operation of the farm, either implemented through state and federal conservation programs or voluntarily implemented without state or federal cost-sharing or technical assistance. Best management practices may include stream fencing, buffers, conservation tillage, cover crops, or animal waste management. Examples of the farm management plans could include, but are not limited to, a grazing management plan, a nutrient management plan, a conservation plan, or a resource management plan (which would include both the conservation plan and nutrient management plan).
- ◆ Locality support. The support for the project evidenced in local farmland protection policies, including, the comprehensive plan, agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, and use value taxation.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia. The project will be evaluated based on the amount of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

**B. Forest Lands Criteria** –contact the Virginia Department of Forestry, (434) 220-9182, with questions. The Department website is [www.dof.virginia.gov/conserves/index.htm](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/conserves/index.htm). For specific scoring criteria for this category, please see Appendix A.

Applications for purchasing fee-simple title to or a conservation easement on property for the protection and preservation of working forest lands will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Property Acreage. Larger properties under single ownership better protect the potential for the management of forest resources and the sustainable flow of natural goods and services from them.
- ◆ Percent of the property that is in a forested condition, including acreage that is under contract to be planted or afforested. To be considered forested, acreage must meet the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council (SLEAC) technical standards for classification of real estate devoted to forestal use.

- ◆ Percent of forested area on the property that is high forest conservation value (FCV 4 and 5), based upon the VDOF Forest Conservation Value GIS analysis that ranks the relative conservation value of forestland based on watershed integrity, size of forested blocks, forest management potential, proximity to other conserved lands, threat of conversion, and presence of diminished tree species or significant forest communities.
- ◆ Length of intermittent and perennial watercourses as defined by USGS 7.5” topographic maps, as well as wetlands and water impoundments, present on or bordering the property. Forested watersheds and streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users.
- ◆ Adjacency to Conserved Lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or near, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.
- ◆ Management of Multiple Resources. The degree to which the property is managed according to a forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) prepared by a professional forester. Applicant should provide a copy of a current forest resource management plan and demonstrate how recommendations are being followed to achieve forest management goals. **If plan is not provided with the application, it will be presumed that no plan exists.**
- ◆ Preservation of forest acreage. The degree to which the applicant is willing to preserve a portion of the existing forest acreage in perpetuity to protect the working forest land base. **The draft deed or term sheet accompanying the application must include language reflecting this commitment; otherwise this acreage will be assumed to be zero.**
- ◆ ConserveVirginia. The project will be evaluated based on the amount of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

**2. Historic Area Preservation Category** –contact an Easement Program staff member at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), (804) 367-2323, with questions. Additional information may be found on DHR’s website, [www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov). We encourage applications for projects that conserve historic lands associated with underserved populations. Those projects that also provide public educational opportunities and share untold stories to advance historic equity are particularly encouraged. For specific scoring criteria for this category, please see Appendix A.

Applications for purchasing fee simple title to or a conservation easement on property for the protection of historic, archaeological, cultural or historic landscape resources will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Historic Significance

Strong proposals are likely to protect or preserve a resource that:

- A. Is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR), either individually or as a contributing resource in a listed historic district; or
- B. Is a battlefield property identified with a priority rating in one of the following reports issued by the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program: ‘Report on the

Nation’s Civil War Battlefields” (1993, as amended), available at the following web link: <http://www.nps.gov/abpp/battles/tvii.htm>, or “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States,” (2007, as amended), available at the following web link: [http://www.nps.gov/abpp/Rev1812\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/abpp/Rev1812_Final_Report.pdf); or

- C. Has been formally determined to be eligible for listing on the VLR by DHR within the previous five calendar years and remains eligible for listing in the opinion of DHR. **Note: official listing on the VLR will be required by project completion for properties awarded funding under this criterion in order to meet the Virginia Board of Historic Resources (VBHR) Easement Program eligibility requirements.**
- D. ConserveVirginia. The project will be evaluated based on the amount of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Cultural and Historic Preservation category.

Proposals for a property or resource that is not listed on the VLR but that contributes to the integrity, enhances the setting, or provides a buffer for a historic property meeting the criteria above may be considered and may be required to be listed on the VLR to meet the VBHR Easement Program eligibility requirements.

- ◆ Integrity: The rarity, quality, and integrity of the historic resource to be protected or preserved shall be considered.
- ◆ Threat: Threatened property is defined as property (i) documented to be currently or recently on the market (within the past calendar year); (ii) threatened by development, where plans have been submitted to the locality’s planning department for rezoning within the last calendar year; (iii) in an estate that is currently being settled; (iv) adjacent to property currently on the market or sold within the previous calendar year; or (v) a property with built or other historic, archaeological, or cultural resources that are threatened by demolition, destruction, demolition by neglect, or development. Specific threats must be documented.
- ◆ Use and Treatment of Historic Resources on the Property. The extent to which plans for future uses of (e.g. historic site interpretation, change in land cover) or alterations to the property are consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection. All plans must meet the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (36 C.F.R. Part 68). All plans submitted as part of the application must be approved by DHR before the project receives final VLCF grant funding.
- ◆ Historic Resource Protection. The extent to which the proposed easement terms and restrictions are consistent with the current VBHR easement template and offer comprehensive protection for all historic resources identified on the subject property. Consideration will be given to projects that include proposed easement terms for protection of historic resources that are generally (rather than specifically) consistent with the current VBHR easement template.
- ◆ Proximity to Conserved Lands. The extent to which preservation of the resource complements or enhances other historic, cultural, or archaeological resources or open-space land already protected through a conservation easement.

- ◆ **Further Public Interests.** The extent to which the project includes specific plans for programs that will further or promote public interests, such as education, research, community outreach, recreation, or heritage tourism promotion.
- ◆ Applicants for funds in this category must provide original digital images no greater than 800 x 800 pixels in dimension. In the case of built cultural or historic structures, these should include images that document the exterior of the primary historic structure and any secondary structures, significant interior spaces and features, and the setting and viewshed of the primary resource. For archaeological sites, applicants should include a general view or site plan and images documenting the condition of the site, stratigraphy (if applicable), and representative features showing the integrity of those features. For battlefields or other landscapes, images should adequately document the overall site, its surroundings and viewshed, and all historic and non-historic structures, roads, and other features within the battlefield or landscapes.
- ◆ If funds are awarded under this category for the purpose of acquiring fee-simple title to or an easement on eligible historic properties, the property owner shall separately offer to convey to the Virginia Board of Historic Resources (VBHR) a perpetual preservation easement on the property to be acquired with the grant funds (including match property). The VBHR shall decide whether to accept the easement offer based on established criteria and existing policies and procedures governing the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Easement Program (Chapter 22, Title 10.1 of Virginia Code). DHR staff administers the easements on behalf of VBHR. The property must meet the Easement Program eligibility requirements (see [www.dhr.virginia.gov/easement/easement.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/easement/easement.htm)) or DHR may recommend an alternative easement holder. In order to hold an easement on non-battlefield lands, the VBHR requires that the property be listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register as noted above. Failure to achieve such listing will disqualify the project and funds will not be distributed.

**All properties acquired with Historic Area Preservation funds shall be open for public access for a minimum of two days each calendar year.** Public access shall not disturb any sensitive resources thereon, and may require approval by DHR to ensure that historic resources will not be affected.

**3. Natural Areas Protection Category** – contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage, (804) 371-6205, with questions. Additional information may be found at: [www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/). The proposed project must support natural heritage resources and qualify to be dedicated as a natural area preserve as provided in Va. Code § 10.1-213. The application must include a recommendation from Natural Heritage based on specific criteria listed in Va. Code § 10.1-1022.1 (B). For specific scoring criteria for this category, please see Appendix A.

Application for Natural Areas Protection funds may be made for projects that make a significant contribution to the protection of one or more natural heritage resources, including habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species or state-significant natural communities. Applications will be evaluated according to the specific criteria listed in Appendix A. In general, the evaluation of an application will consider the following:

- ◆ If the project addresses a protection need identified in the Virginia Natural Heritage Plan.
- ◆ Overall biodiversity values and statewide conservation significance of the project.

- ◆ Ecological integrity of the project site and location.
- ◆ The management needs and long-term likelihood of success associated with the project, including the applicant's experience and demonstrated capability and capacity to adequately protect the site from short-term and long-term stresses and threats.
- ◆ The viability of the proposed area for acquisition and the applicant's ability to expend grant and matching funds within two (2) years of grant award.
- ◆ Timely coordination by the applicant to ensure DCR Natural Heritage Program staff has the opportunity to visit the property and meet with landowner and applicant prior to scoring the grant application.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia. The project will be evaluated based on the amount of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity category.

All properties acquired with natural area funds shall be dedicated as natural area preserves in accordance with Va. Code §10.1-213, shall be open for public access for a reasonable amount of time each year without disturbing the sensitive resources thereon, and shall be open for DCR Natural Heritage approved research and associated monitoring. Applicant shall provide a public access plan that addresses these issues and contains a minimum of one guided nature hike per year.

**4. Open Spaces and Parks Category** – contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation, (804) 786-1119, with questions. Additional information may be found on the Department web site: [www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov). For specific scoring criteria for this category, please see Appendix A.

Applications for purchasing fee-simple title to or an easement on property for the development of public recreational and/or open space purposes will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Acquires land, or an easement on land, which provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential.
- ◆ Acquires lands or easements adjacent to existing park systems or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests.
- ◆ Protects viewsheds or land important to the protection of (i) any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, (ii) Virginia's Scenic Rivers, (iii) designated Scenic Roads, (iv) Virginia Byways, or (v) nationally designated scenic lands or recreational trails, including greenways or blueways.
- ◆ Supports local or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and outdoor recreational facilities, or contributes to the protection of a state, regionally, or locally identified conservation corridor.
- ◆ Addresses a need identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP). The VOP may be accessed at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/vop.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml).

- ◆ Makes the grant-funded land available for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching.
- ◆ Conserves land in areas that are densely populated or rapidly developing. Densely populated is defined as a locality with population of 90,000 or more, or a locality designated by the Commonwealth as an incorporated City, regardless of size. Rapidly developing is defined as property that is identified as Class V in the Virginia ConservationVision Development Vulnerability Model. Class IV and III areas are developing slower but are also recognized in this criterion. **Please note: if this number ranking is not provided in the application it will be presumed that the rank is 0.** That model is at [www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable). For more information about ConservationVision, visit [www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvision.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvision.shtml), or call the Natural Heritage Information Manager at (804) 371-6203.
- ◆ Protects land that is threatened by development. Threatened property is defined as property documented to be currently or recently on the market, in an estate that is currently being settled, or adjacent to property currently on the market or sold within the previous year.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia. The project will be evaluated based on the demonstrated recreation need of its location in the Recreation Access Model's terrestrial and aquatic layers. Information on the Recreation Access Model can be found at: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisrec>. Additionally, the project will be evaluated on the amount of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Scenic Preservation or Protected Landscapes Resilience categories.

## 5. Additional Scoring Criteria

Projects are also scored on the following seven criteria, based on information supplied by the applicant.

- ◆ Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need: Zero to three points will be awarded if a project satisfies resource conservation needs identified in the VOP or a local comp plan.
- ◆ Recreation Access Model Identified Need: Zero to three points will be given to a project that includes public access and is located in an area where there is at least a moderate need for recreation access identified in the Recreation Access Model's terrestrial or aquatic layers. Information can be found at: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisrec>.
- ◆ Water Quality Benefit: Zero to 11 points may be given for projects that protect water quality through the use of permanent vegetated riparian buffers exceeding the required 35-foot width. Points will also be awarded for forested buffers that maintain an evenly dispersed minimal 50% forested canopy. Because protecting water quality is a long-standing goal of the Commonwealth supported through many voluntary cost-share and tax-credit programs, these points are awarded to those projects that voluntarily provide greater water quality protections beyond the 35-foot riparian buffer in perpetuity.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia Value-added: Zero to ten points may be given for those projects that demonstrably address more than one of the six ConserveVirginia categories (listed on page 30). Two points may be awarded for each additional ConserveVirginia category identified by the applicant that is protected in perpetuity by the project, e.g., a farmland project that falls within the Agriculture and Forestry category that also includes an historic building or site located within the Cultural and Historic Preservation category and is protected in the easement.

- ◆ Fish and Wildlife: Zero to ten total points may be given; with zero to three points for fish and wildlife habitat protection and management, a defined purpose of the Foundation (one point for identifying wildlife, one point for protecting habitat, an added point for providing public access to view, hunt, or fish wildlife). An additional three points may be awarded for the identification of Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Species of Greatest Conservation Need or a state or federal threatened or endangered species, with another possible four points awarded for protection of associated habitat. For more wildlife information, see: <http://vafwis.dgif.virginia.gov/WAP2/> or contact the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, (804) 367-2212.
- ◆ Public Access: Zero to ten points may be given to reward projects that provide public access. The Budget Bill specifies that at least 50 percent of VLCF's grant funds shall be used for projects that provide public access and points are awarded dependent upon the extent of public access provided. Full public access means the property is open for public visitation more than 50 percent of the calendar year. Visual access means the applicant can demonstrate the scenic value of the property and that the project will protect the integrity of the public's scenic view.
- ◆ Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost: Finally, the amount of match provided by the grant applicant can add up to three points. If the applicant claims 60 percent or more of matching funds to get three points, then a preliminary appraisal must be submitted with the application. The demonstrated match amount should be substantiated by a preliminary appraisal, and validated by a final appraisal at the conclusion of the project.

### **Required Match for the Program**

The VLCF grant program is designed to pay up to half of the appraised value of the property or easement that is acquired under a grant project and up to half of the actual documented costs to acquire the property or easement. The other half of project funding is considered match and may be derived in a variety of ways as described below.

#### **Eligible Match Contributions:**

- ◆ VLCF grants and match may be used only for acquisition costs and associated due diligence expenses. Expenses necessary for the acquisition of the grant property/easement; i.e., appraisal, title insurance, survey, environmental survey, and other necessary due diligence may be paid by the grant or are eligible as match. An allocation of employee salary, rent or other similar overhead expenses, or services provided pro bono, are not eligible match.
- ◆ "Pass-through" dollars from other sources, *e.g.*, other grants, are eligible match.
- ◆ Bargain sales, *i.e.*, the donation of a portion of the acquisition price of the land or easement to be acquired with VLCF grant funds, are eligible match.
- ◆ Property used as match must have been acquired within the two years prior to the commencement of the current grant round and must include VLCF required language in the deed of acquisition, an open-space easement, or a declaration of restrictions recorded for the property.
- ◆ Applicants may use the value of currently-owned land as match as long as it was not purchased with VLCF funds and will be permanently protected under the Open-Space Land Act (Va. Code §§ 10.1-1700 to 10.1-1705) as part of the project by recording a declaration of restrictions for the property.

- ◆ The match contributions must be received by the applicant no later than the receipt of the VLCF grant funds. This does not preclude the applicant from using funds that will be reimbursed by other non-state funding.

## **VLCF Property Protection Requirements**

VLCF invests in the permanent protection of important land resources across the Commonwealth, either through fee-simple acquisition or conservation or open-space easements. Properties acquired in fee or made subject to an easement as a result of a VLCF grant may not be diverted or converted from the approved use for which the grant was made. If a conversion or diversion occurs or, in the case of an easement, an extinguishment of the easement occurs, the VLCF must be reimbursed for the proportionate amount of the then value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based. As a condition of its grant, the VLCF may require that language be included in the deed of acquisition or the deed of easement to such effect.

**Public Bodies.** A public body seeking to use VLCF funds to protect lands will be required to include language in the fee-simple deed or in the easement deed that states that the property will be taken under the authority of the Open Space Land Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1700 through 10.1-1705, and that the protection is perpetual in nature and not extinguishable at the option of the property owner or the local government, except pursuant to the provisions of the Open Space Land Act.

**Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3).** Organizations should consider carefully whether to apply for a fee-simple acquisition project or an easement project, as fee-simple acquisition projects will be subject to the following conditions:

- Property acquired in fee-simple by a nonprofit organization and property offered by a nonprofit organization as a match must also be encumbered by an easement held or co-held by a state or local government agency and will be subject to the Open Space Land Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1700 through 1705.
- Fee-simple property may be sold only if it remains under easement and the VLCF is reimbursed for the proportionate amount of the then fair market value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based. The fair-market value of the property must be supported by a current appraisal.
- An exception to the reimbursement requirements set forth above may be granted if the property is transferred to a public agency and the recorded deed of transfer states that the agency agrees to hold and manage the property in fee for the purposes for which it was originally acquired.

## **III. APPLICATION REVIEW AND GRANT AWARDS**

### ***First Application Review***

Applications will be received and reviewed by DCR for completeness. Complete applications will be forwarded to the interagency task force for review and assignment to the responsible

agency (category) for scoring. The agencies will conduct the initial review and scoring of all assigned applications (see Program Requirements by Category section beginning on page 5).

### ***Second Application Review***

Following completion of the First Review, the interagency task force will meet to discuss and review scoring of projects and discuss commonality of interests between scoring categories, resource protection urgency, the applicant's ability to finance (match) and manage the project proposal, and overall significance of the proposal to the citizens of the Commonwealth. During this review, geographic distribution of the projects is considered, as is the percentage of projects with public access and those being placed under easement. The interagency task force may also meet a second time to finalize the scoring.

### ***Final Review, Grant Award, Notification***

Applications will be presented to the VLCF Board for review, action, and grant approval. After Board action to approve grants, successful grant recipients will be notified of the pending grant award via an email from VLCF staff.

## **Grant Agreements**

Grant Agreements will specify the stipulations of the program as described in this Grant Manual, and include required legal statements. Within a few weeks of email notification of a grant award, a Grant Agreement will be emailed to the grant recipients with a request to review, print, and have the appropriate authority sign and return the document. Subsequently, after the Executive Secretary of the VLCF Board has signed the agreement, a scan of the fully-executed agreement will be provided to the grant recipient. Also, a W-9 form will be provided to be filled out by the party who will be receiving the grant payment. This party must be registered as a vendor in the state's vendor payment system prior to payment, a process that can take up to five weeks.

## **IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS**

### **Periodic Status Reporting**

Grant recipients will report the status of the project (progress toward acquisition/closing) twice per year as noted in the Grant Agreement. A narrative description of the progress that has been made, the status of the due diligence tasks, and any issues that have arisen should be part of the report. VLCF staff will provide to the grant recipient a template document prompting the information that is needed for this report.

### **Required Support Documents (Due Diligence)**

The following documents shall be provided to VLCF staff before any grant funds can be disbursed:

- A final appraisal of the fair-market value of the fee property or of the easement, performed by a Virginia licensed appraiser, that conforms with Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) standards and meets the requirements of Va. Code § 58.1-512.1, prepared within six months of closing.
- A survey prepared by a Virginia licensed surveyor:
  - Fee-simple acquisitions – a land title survey to ALTA/NSPS standards

- Easements - a boundary survey that meets the requirements of the Virginia Administrative Code 18VAC10-20-370 Minimum Standards and Procedures for Land Boundary Survey Practice
- A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for all fee-simple acquisition projects effective within six months of the acquisition. (Not required for easement projects). If the Phase I Environmental Assessment reveals the presence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs), the VLCF program reserves the right to require a Phase II report. If the Phase II report reveals issues of concern to VLCF, VLCF may withhold grant funds. In addition, if the environmental assessment report reveals trash, debris, or hazards on the subject site that appear to be in conflict with the purpose of the grant funds (e.g. public recreation), VLCF reserves the right to require a statement from an appropriate official associated with the grant recipient that the site will be cleaned and the hazards addressed prior to public access.
- A title commitment (binder) and pro forma title policy insuring the interest to be acquired by the applicant/recipient effective within ninety days of the acquisition. For fee-simple acquisition projects, the title commitment (binder) provided prior to acquisition must confirm that the seller owns good and marketable fee-simple title in the property. If reimbursement is requested post-acquisition, the applicant's/recipient's title policy must confirm that the applicant/recipient holds unencumbered fee-simple title in the acquired property. For easement projects, the title commitment (binder) and title policy must confirm that the donor owns good and marketable fee-simple title in the property. Encumbrances of record revealed by the title work must not impair the conservation purposes of the project and must be acceptable to the VLCF program.
- Written verification of eligible expenditures including, but not limited to: copies of invoices, bills of sale, payment vouchers, cancelled checks, etc.
- A final execution version of all deeds before recordation. VLCF staff will work with grant recipients to incorporate required VLCF language and approve the final version of all required deeds prior to recordation.

**NOTE:**

1. VLCF grant funds will not be distributed to the grant recipient until all due diligence documents have been provided and the deed of fee-simple purchase and/or open-space easement have been recorded.
2. If grant funding is provided to a closing agent, then a copy of the recorded deeds must be provided to VLCF within **two months** after closing.

**Grant Completion**

Projects that have been awarded grants by VLCF must be completed within two years from the date that the VLCF Board approves the grant awards. If a project cannot be completed within that timeframe, an administrative extension of up to twelve months may be granted if there is adequate justification for the delay and reasonable assurances are provided that the project will be completed as approved. Should the project not be completed by the end of the administrative extension, upon action of the VLCF Board the grant funds will revert to the VLCF category under which they were awarded.

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Program**  
**Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources**  
**GRANT APPLICATION 2019 (FY2020)**

**(Please provide the information requested below in the space provided)**

**The maximum application length is 50 PAGES excluding additional required documents,  
such as a Forest or Agricultural Management Plan**

Applicant:

Contact Person:

Title:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Type of Applicant:  Locality  State agency  Nonprofit

For nonprofit entity, number of years office maintained in Virginia:

If a nonprofit, name of confirmed public entity willing to be easement holder/co-holder:

Project Name:

*(Reminder: do not use landowner's name without their permission as a press release will be issued listing all projects by name)*

Street address of the Project (No P.O. Box):

Project Specifics: *(click to place an X in the box for all statements below that apply)*

- Fee-simple acquisition by the grant applicant
- Fee-simple acquisition by entity other than the grant applicant  
Name of entity acquiring land:
- Easement to be held by the grant applicant
- Easement to be held by an entity other than the grant applicant  
Name of entity holding easement:
- Other *(describe briefly here)(additional info can be provided later in the application):*

Total acres to be protected:

Project location (county/city/town):

Virginia House District #:

Virginia Senate District #:

Congressional District #:

Primary Category: *(choose only one)*

- Farmlands  Forestlands
- Historic
- Natural Area
- Open Space & Parks

Secondary Category: (*choose only one*) (2<sup>nd</sup> category is not required, but recommended. Please provide a brief explanation of how the project meets the criteria of the secondary category in the narrative section below.)

- Farmlands    Forestlands
- Historic
- Natural Area
- Open Space & Parks

Total Project Cost (\$\$):                      (minimum is \$10,000) (itemize budget on page 20)

Total VLCF Grant Request (\$\$):

Anticipated Project Completion Date:

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Narrative Section of Application**

### **1. Brief Project Description (250 words or less)**

Please provide a brief summary of your proposed land conservation project. Include project name, grant category, locality, acreage, land use, conservation values and partners, etc. This summary will be used to provide an introduction of your project to the interagency task force and the VLCF Board. (*Not to exceed 250 words. The opportunity for a more in-depth description of the project is provided later in the application in the Detailed Description of the Project section.*)

### **2. Proposed Project Timeline**

How far along is the project? Briefly describe the expected timeline for the project:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Month(s), Year</u>
Negotiations with landowner:	
Due Diligence Items:	
Deed/Easement language:	
Final steps/Recording:	

Provide narrative information below as needed to explain the expected process of completing the project in a timely manner:

### **3. Additional Project Information:**

A. Public Access (*may check more than one*):

- Public access will be allowed more than 50% of the year
- Limited public access (less than 50% of the year) will be allowed
- Property provides demonstrated visual access (e.g., adjacency to scenic rivers)
- No public access

Define the level of public access allowed on the property. Where applicable, describe the scenic value of the property and how the project will protect the integrity of the existing scenic qualities. If public access will be allowed less than 50% of the year, explain what public access is planned.

B. Has the landowner presented evidence of sufficient legal and physical access to the property adequate for the intended use of the property and for site monitoring?

Yes  No

If yes, describe the access:

C. Landowners have been notified and are receptive to negotiation on proposed project and a letter from the landowners is attached (**required with the application**):

Yes  No

D. If application is being made by a nonprofit organization, provide documentation that a public body is aware of the project and willing to work with the landowner towards holding or co-holding an easement on the property.

Is this information attached to the application? (**required with the application**)

Yes  N/A (applicant is not a nonprofit organization)

E. Is the property adjacent to other protected conservation lands, including land under conservation easement or publicly-owned land? Please provide an aerial photo or topo map to illustrate.

Yes  No

F. State below the length of all shorelines, rivers, intermittent and perennial streams, wetlands, and water bodies with perennial outflow that are present on or border the property and provide an aerial photo or USGS 7.5' topo map of the property.

Intermittent stream linear footage:

Perennial stream linear footage:

Wetlands:

Other:

G. Does the proposal meet a specific recreational or resource conservation need identified in the *2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan*?

Yes  No

Recreational need?

Yes  No

If yes, provide the *VOP* page number:

Resource conservation need?

Yes  No

If yes, provide the *VOP* page number:

H. Does the proposal meet a specific goal in the local comprehensive plan?

Yes  No

If yes, please attach a copy of the relevant pages from the local comprehensive plan - *only the relevant pages, **not the entire comprehensive plan.***

**Information for Farmland category projects only:**

I. Does the property have, or has the owner begun the process of obtaining, a farm-management plan that specifies Best Management Practices (BMP) that will be implemented in the normal operation of this farm?

Yes     No

If yes, please list the type of farm management plan or plans that will be followed (examples: soil conservation plans, nutrient management plan, pest management plan, resource management plan, etc.) and include either a summary of each management plan or a full copy of each management plan as an attachment.

J. State the percentage of the property that contain the following soils:

Prime farmland:

Unique farmland:

Important farmland:

K. Is the property currently being farmed?

Yes     No

L. Is the property a designated Century Farm?

Yes     No

If so, what year was it certified?

**Information for Forestland category projects only:**

M. Forested acreage of the property:

N. State the percentage of the forested portion of the property the project will preserve in perpetuity. \_\_\_%

**Note: The fee or easement deed for the property must include language requiring this percentage of the property to remain in forest use in perpetuity.**

O. Is there a written forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) for the property?

Yes     No

If you answered yes above, include a copy of the plan as an attachment and describe below how the recommendations of the plan are being implemented to achieve forest management goals.

**4. Budget Proposal**

Expected appraised value of the property/easement [**Appraised Value (AV)**]:

Expected costs for acquisition (Due Diligence) (itemize each item below):

Legal Fees:

Survey Fee:

Appraisal Fee:

Title Search and Title Insurance:

Recordation Fee:

Environmental Site Assessment:

Other Fees (explain):

TOTAL DUE DILIGENCE COSTS (DD):

TOTAL BUDGET AMOUNT (AV+DD):

**Note: The VLCF grant program can pay up to 50% of the AV plus up to 50% of the DD, up to the amount of the grant award, and not to exceed the actual expenditures to acquire the property (purchase price + due diligence costs). (State agencies may receive 100% funding with no matching requirement.)**

### **5. Amount of Grant Requested**

Amount of grant requested (50% of Total Budget Amount, or less)	\$
Amount of Matching Funds ( <i>itemize below</i> )	\$
Total Project Cost ( <i>Total Budget Amount</i> )	\$

### **6. Applicant Matching Funds Breakdown**

**Please identify each match source and the amount applied to this project for each of the following categories:**

Cash:	\$
Land/Real Property Donations:	\$
Other ( <i>describe below and include a detailed cost breakdown</i> ):	\$
<b>Total Matching Contributions:</b>	<b>\$</b>

**Note:** If any portion of the applicant's matching amount is from other grants that may have restrictions on such funds, please identify the source of this match and give as much information as possible below.

Describe here other sources of match that have been committed to the project:

***Please note that applicant must have grant match in hand or provide a letter of matching-funds commitment in the form shown in Appendix B.***

### **7. Location/Area of the Project (Maps)**

Provide maps to show geographic location of the project (must include USGS 7.5 minute topographic map suitable for 8½" x 11" reproduction and an aerial photograph). (Please do not insert the maps here, but rather attach at the end of the application.)

### **8. Applicant's Required Documents**

#### **Nonprofit Tax-Exempt Status/Holder Designation**

Grant applicants that are nonprofit organizations must include documentation in the application that gives proof of tax-exempt status under § 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Additionally, these applicants must meet the holder requirements as described in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017.

## **9. Detailed Description of the Project**

In this section, the applicant may provide more details of their project and fully describe how elements of the project meet the VLCF grant criteria. This will assist the review panel in understanding the scope of the project and in scoring the application.

- Describe the objectives and need for grant assistance.
- Give a ten-year history of the subject property.
- Provide a detailed description of how the project meets specific criteria of the grant category under which the application is made.
- If applicable, state how the project provides significant benefits in any of the following areas that are different from the project's primary category: farmland; forestland; historic resources; natural heritage resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species and significant natural communities); wildlife habitat protection and/or management; recreation/parks.
- Include an assessment of property market value to substantiate the project cost and grant request. **Although full appraisals are not required at the time of application submittal, submission of a full or preliminary appraisal is helpful.**
- Identify specific match funds that are available or expected to be acquired.
- Identify the expected results and benefits the proposal will have.
- Describe how the project is consistent with or complements local and regional plans.
- Describe any significant contributions of the project in meeting the purposes of this grant program.
- Show how the proposal acts on a risk that there will be a loss of natural, recreational, or significant open space lands.
- Show how approval of this proposal will have a positive economic impact, if any, on the locality or region.
- If possible, provide quantitative and qualitative projections on the benefits of the proposal.
- For easement projects (or fee-acquisition projects with an associated required easement), provide a list or summary of the restrictions that will be included in the easement, including riparian buffer requirements, historic-resources protections, preservation of forest acreage, limitations on allowed development, etc.
- List the names of organizations, cooperators, consultants, and others that will work on the project, and state what role each partner will play.
- Discuss the landowner's short-term and long-term management plans for the site.
- State the length of time that will be required to complete the project once the grant is approved.
- Identify any factors that might accelerate or delay the project.

## Application Checklist to Confirm a Complete Application

- All applicants must provide: a) one (1) paper copy of the application, b) three (3) representative photos of the project area, and c) letters of support for the project, all compiled into one electronic (searchable) PDF file and contained on a CD or USB drive. **Do not include more than one complete application document on the CD or USB**
- Letter of transmittal
- All applications from nonprofit organizations must meet specific criteria described in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017
- Select one Primary application category and one Secondary category (if applicable)
- Brief project description (250 words or less)
- Letter from landowners indicating their willingness to protect their property
- For all nonprofit applicants, a letter from a public body willing to hold or co-hold the required easement
- For farmland-category applications, attach the farm management plan, if any
- For forestland-category applications, attach the forest resource management plan, if any
- For the historic area preservation category, contact Dept. of Historic Resources Easement Program staff to discuss the project and arrange for a site visit
- Required site visit for natural areas protection category
- Include budget proposal, grant amount requested, scope of the project, matching funds breakdown, and description of any other match
- Geographic location with maps (must include an aerial photograph and a USGS 7.5-minute topographic map; all maps must be suitable for 8½" x 11" reproduction)
- For easement projects and fee-simple projects by a nonprofit organization, provide a draft deed of easement or a summary of restrictions that will be included in the easement
- Support documentation (letters, resolutions of government bodies) with the application (not sent separately)
- Substantiation of the value of the property to be protected
- Appraisal, title commitment/insurance, boundary or ALTA/NSPS survey, and other reports if available
- Tax Exempt Status (if nonprofit application)
- Detailed narrative of the project providing information listed under item 9 on page 21

# **APPENDICES**

## **List of appendices:**

Appendix A – Example Score Sheets for each Category and Additional Scoring  
Criteria

Appendix B – Example Match Letter

Appendix C – Riparian Buffer Allowed Structures and Activities

## Appendix A – Example Score Sheets

Scoring Criteria For: \_\_\_\_\_

### Agricultural (Farmlands) Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p><b>Category I: Land Evaluation (40 points)</b></p> <p><b>A. Soil Productivity (25 points)</b> Using soil classes prime, unique or important farmland, score the percentage of project land in each soils class. Value the soils classified as “Prime farmland.” Value the soils classified “Unique farmland.” Value the soils classified as “Important farmland.”</p> <p><b>B. Parcel Size (15 points)</b> Using data from the most recent Census of Agriculture, score the size of the farm as it compares to the average sized farm in the locality.</p>		<p>A. Points will be awarded based on the combined percentages of these three categories x 25. (e.g., 30% prime, 20% unique and 10% important = .60 x 25, or 15 points.) More information on these soil classes can be found in §3.2-205 of the Code of Virginia</p> <p>B. Larger by 25% or more – 15 points Larger by 0% - 24% – 10 points Smaller by 1% - 24% - 7 points Smaller by 25% or more – 5 points</p>
<p><b>Category II: Land Use (40 points)</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> 1) Is the land currently being farmed; 2) is this a Century Farm? <b>Maximum score: 8 points</b></p> <p><b>B.</b> To what degree is the land adjacent to or in close proximity to other preserved lands, either in agriculture production or non-active in farming? <b>Maximum score: 10 points</b></p> <p><b>C.</b> What is the vulnerability rank for this parcel as determined by the ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model? <b>Maximum score: 8 points</b></p> <p><b>D.</b> Is the property currently utilizing, as part of the normal operation of this farm, either a farm management plan that specifies Best Management Practices (BMPs) or voluntary BMPs (e.g., stream fencing, buffers, conservation tillage, cover crops, animal waste management, etc.)? Does the property have either/both a conservation plan or a Nutrient Management Plan for all nutrient applications made to cropland, hayland, and/or pastureland? <b>Maximum score: 10 points</b></p> <p><b>E.</b> Is the project supported by local farmland protection policies (agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, use value taxation, etc.)? <b>Maximum score: 4 points</b></p>		<p>A. 4 points for each Yes in A.</p> <p>B. Parcel adjoins other preserved lands = 10 Parcel is within one-quarter mile but not adjoining other preserved lands = 7 points Parcel is within one-half mile but further than one-quarter mile of other preserved lands = 5 points</p> <p>C. 2 points for each ranking from Class II to Class V based on the Virginia ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model, (e.g., a property in Class IV = 6 points). The model can be found at <a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable</a></p> <p>D. Applicant has implemented applicable BMPs to protect water quality, either voluntarily or through a state or federal conservation program = 4 points Applicant has a conservation plan developed by local conservation staff (Soil and Water Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service) = 3 points Applicant has a Nutrient Management Plan prepared by a DCR certified nutrient management planner = 3 points</p> <p>E. One point each for comprehensive plan, ag zoning, ag and forestal districts, and use value taxation.</p>
<p><b>Category III: ConserveVirginia (20 points)</b></p> <p>Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? <b>Maximum score: 20 points</b></p>		<p>50 to 100% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry Category = 20 points 1 to 49% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry Category = 10 points</p>

**Total Maximum Score 100 points** \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Criteria For: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Forest Lands Category**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1) <b>Property Acreage</b> – Is the size of the tract adequate to protect and allow for management of forestal resources? Larger blocks of forestland under single ownerships remain more manageable and functional over time. <b>Maximum score: 10</b>		Score = One-half (.5) point for every 50 acres, up to 10 points.
2) <b>Percent forested</b> – Percent of the property that is in a forested condition. To be considered forested, acreage must meet the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council (SLEAC) technical standards for classification of real estate devoted to forestal use. <b>Maximum score: 20</b>		Score = Percent forested X 20. [e.g. A property that is 80% forested would receive a score of 16. (.8 *20)].
3) <b>Percent of forestland that is high forest conservation value (FCV 4 and 5)</b> – Based upon the VDOF <i>Forest Conservation Value</i> GIS analysis that ranks relative conservation value of forestland based on water quality, site productivity, terrestrial and aquatic habitat, intactness, and threat to conversion attributes. <b>Maximum score: 15</b>		Score = Percent of the forestland that is high FCV X 15 [e.g. A property on which 40% of the forestland is rated FCV 4 and 20% is rated FCV 5 would receive a score of 9. (.4 + .2 * 15)].
4) <b>Water quality</b> – Streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users. <b>Maximum score: 15</b>		Score = One-half (.5) point for every 500 feet of intermittent or perennial stream (as identified on the USGS 7.5” quad) or river, or wetland or impoundment shoreline, up to 15 points.
5) <b>Adjacency to Conserved Lands</b> – The property is located adjacent to, or nearby, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. <b>Maximum score: 5</b>		Adjacent to conserved land = 5 points w/i 1 mile of conserved land = 4 points w/i 2 miles of conserved land = 3 points w/i 3 miles of conserved land = 2 points w/i 5 miles of conserved land = 1 points >5 miles = 0 points
6) <b>Management of Multiple Resources</b> – The landowner manages the property according to a forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) prepared by a professional forester and is following plan recommendations to achieve their forest management goals. <b>Maximum score: 5</b>		Owner has an existing management plan, and exhibits a demonstrated implementation of the plan = 5 points Owner has management plan but no demonstrated implementation of the plan = 3 points Owner does not have a management plan = 0 points
7) <b>Forest Land Base Preservation</b> – Landowner is willing to preserve a portion of the existing forest acreage in perpetuity to protect the working forest land base <b>Maximum score: 10</b>		Score = Percent forest land base willing to be preserved X 10. [e.g. A property on which a landowner is willing to protect 80% of the forested acreage in perpetuity would receive a score of 8. (.8 * 10)].
8) <b>ConserveVirginia</b> Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? <b>Maximum score: 20 points</b>		50 to 100% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry Category = 20 points 1 to 49% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry Category = 10 points

**Total Maximum Score 100 points** \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Criteria For: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Historic Area Preservation Category**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p><b>1) Historic Significance</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 35</b></span></p> <p>1. <u>Historic Resource/Property is:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individually listed on VLR or is a contributing resource in a listed historic district = <b>25</b></li> <li>○ Determined by DHR to be eligible for listing on VLR = <b>10 -OR-</b></li> </ul> <p>2. <u>Historic Resource/Property is:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Civil War, Revolutionary War, or War of 1812 site or battlefield designated as Priority I, II, III, or IV in the Battlefield Reports (see page 7 of Grant Manual) = <b>25 -AND-</b></li> </ul> <p>3. <u>Other (more than one may apply):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resources that do not meet the criteria above = <b>5</b></li> <li>○ Resources with high degree of historic integrity = <b>5</b></li> <li>○ Designated a National Historic Landmark = <b>5</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>2) Threat</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 15</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently on the market for sale, in an estate being settled, threatened by development, or in imminent danger of demolition = <b>15</b></li> <li>• Recently on the market for sale, resource is vacant/unoccupied, or resource is significantly deteriorated and in need of immediate preservation = <b>10</b></li> <li>• Adjacent to similar property currently on the market for sale or sold within the previous calendar year = <b>5</b></li> <li>• No documentation of threat = <b>0</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>3) Use and Treatment of Historic Resources and Property</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 10</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans for future use(s) (e.g. interpretation as a historic site, subdivision, timber harvest) of the property are appropriate and consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection = <b>5</b></li> <li>• Plans for treatment, alteration, and maintenance of historic resources on the property are appropriate and consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection = <b>5</b></li> <li>• No documentation of plans for uses of property or treatment of historic resources = <b>0</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>4) Historic Resource Protection</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 10</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed easement terms and restrictions provide comprehensive protection for historic resources and are specifically consistent with VBHR easement template = <b>10</b></li> <li>• Proposed easement terms and protections for historic resources are acceptable, and generally consistent with VBHR easement template = <b>5</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>5) Proximity to Conserved Land</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 5</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjacent to existing conserved land = <b>5</b></li> <li>• In viewshed of, or in close physical proximity to significant historic resources, and/or existing conserved land = <b>3</b></li> <li>• Not in viewshed of, or in close physical proximity to significant historic resources or existing conserved land, but represents unique cultural resource within the geographical area = <b>1</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>6) Further Public Interests</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum Score: 5</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project includes specific plans for programs that promote research, education, community outreach, or heritage tourism = <b>5</b></li> <li>• Project includes general plans for programs to be developed that would promote research, education, community outreach, or heritage tourism = <b>3</b></li> <li>• Project contains no specific plans that would further public interests = <b>0</b></li> </ul>		
<p><b>7) ConserveVirginia</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Maximum score: 20</b></span></p> <p>Is the property included in ConserveVirginia?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 to 100% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Cultural and Historic Preservation Category = <b>20 points</b></li> <li>• 1 to 49% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Cultural and Historic Preservation Category = <b>10 points</b></li> </ul>		

**Total Maximum Score 100 points** \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Criteria For: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Natural Areas Category**

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p><b>Biodiversity Significance (35 points)</b></p> <p><u>Will the proposed project protect one or more of Virginia’s highest quality examples of a natural heritage resource?</u> (parcel overlaid on conservation sites layer) <b>Maximum score: 20 points</b></p> <p><u>Parcel Significance:</u> The number of heritage elements present on the subject parcel, or associated with it? <b>Maximum score: 10 points</b></p> <p><u>Does the project have global significance?</u> (biodiversity rank of conservation site) <b>Maximum score: 5 points</b></p>		<p>Located within Essential Conservation Site = 20 points, Located within conservation site = 10 points, Located outside conservation site = 0 points</p> <p>1 point/EO, 2 points/essential EO, 0.5 point/EO outside parcel but within conservation site B1 = 5 points, B2 = 4, B3 = 3, B4 = 2, B5 = 1 Located outside conservation site = 0</p>
<p><b>Ecological Integrity (20 points)</b></p> <p><u>Regional Landscape Integrity:</u> (location of parcel relative to ecological cores) <b>Maximum score: 10 points</b></p> <p><u>Local/Parcel Integrity:</u> How much of the parcel is in natural vegetation? <b>Maximum score: 5 points</b></p> <p><u>Connectivity:</u> Is the parcel adjacent to other conservation lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? <b>Maximum score: 5 points</b></p>		<p>Parcel located in C1=10 points, C2=8, C3=6, C4=3, C5=1</p> <p>Parcel supports natural community/natural vegetation, 75% of parcel area = 5 points, 50-74% = 4 points, 25-49% = 3 points, 1-25% = 2 points</p> <p>Adjoins BMI 1 = 5, adjoins BMI 2 = 4, adjoins BMI = 3, BMI 4 or 5 = 2 points, land not adjacent to conserved land = 0 points</p>
<p><b>Management Needs, Likelihood of Success, and Threat (25 points)</b></p> <p><u>Management Needs:</u> To what extent are current and future management actions needed to successfully maintain/restore natural heritage resources? <b>Maximum score: 10 points</b></p> <p><u>Management Capacity:</u> Does the applicant have proven experience, capacity in terms of staff resources and expertise to address management needs? <b>Maximum score: 8 points</b></p> <p><u>Site visit &amp; Owner contact:</u> NHP Staff have timely opportunity to visit tract and discuss with landowner necessary conservation measures and implications of natural area preserve dedication. <b>Maximum score: 5 points</b></p> <p><u>Threat:</u> Is there high development threat for the project area? <b>Maximum score: 2 points</b></p>		<p>Parcel conditions require minimal management = 10 points, moderate management = 6 points, intensive management/restoration = 3 points, unmanageable for heritage resources = 0</p> <p>Application provides thorough explanation of both factors = 8 points, cursory discussion = 4 points, not mentioned = 0 points</p> <p>Site visit &amp; discussion = 5 points, site visit only = 3 points, discussion only = 2 points, neither = 0 points</p> <p>Tract threat is ranked Class IV or Class V in the Conservation Vision Development Vulnerability Model = 2 points, ranked Class III = 1 point, otherwise = 0, Or Tract is on the market or in estate for settlement = 2 points.</p>
<p><b>Conserve Virginia (20 points)</b></p> <p>Is the property included in Conserve Virginia? <b>Maximum score: 20 points</b></p>		<p>50 to 100% of the project is included in Conserve Virginia Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity Category = 20 points</p> <p>1 to 49% of the project is included in Conserve Virginia Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity Category = 10 points</p>

**Total Maximum Score 100 points** \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Criteria For: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Open Space & Parks Category**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1) <b>Public Access to State Waters:</b> Acquires land or an easement on land which provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential. <b>Maximum score: 15</b>		Public access to state waters that provides boating, fishing, and beach/bank swimming opportunities = 15 Public access that provides two of those recreational opportunities = 10 Public access that provides one of those recreational opportunities = 5
2) <b>Adjacency to Parks and Conserved Lands:</b> Acquires lands or easements adjacent to existing parks, protected conservation areas, or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests. <b>Maximum score: 10</b>		Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area that will allow full public use on the new property = 10 Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area, with limited public use = 7 Acquisition or easement contiguous to park or conservation area, with no public use = 5
3) <b>Scenic Resources Protection:</b> Protects scenic viewsheds or land important to the protection of any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, Virginia's Scenic Rivers, designated Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways, or recreational trails, including greenways or blueways. <b>Maximum score: 10</b>		Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of one of the listed resources = 10 Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, a potential resource identified in VOP = 7
4) <b>Alignment with Regional or Local Plans:</b> Supports local or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, or contributes to the protection of a regionally or locally identified conservation corridor. Include the name and page # of plan cited. <b>Maximum score: 5</b>		If project site/corridor is specifically mentioned in regional/local plan = 5 If area of project has general reference in regional/local plan = 2
5) <b>Virginia Outdoors Plan Need:</b> Addresses a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i> . Applicant must specify VOP Page #. <b>Maximum score: 9</b>		Land-conservation and recreation need from regional section of VOP = 9 General Need = 5
6) <b>Public Utilization:</b> Availability of land for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching. <b>Maximum score: 12</b>		Open for public utilization between 241 and 365 days per year = 12 Open between 181 and 240 days per year = 8 Open between 121 and 180 days per year = 6 Open between 61 and 120 days per year = 4 Open between 1 and 60 days per year = 2
7) <b>Densely Populated or Developing Areas:</b> Conserves land in a densely populated or rapidly developing area. Densely populated is defined as a locality with population of 90,000 or more, or a locality designated by the Commonwealth as an incorporated City, regardless of size. Rapidly developing is defined as property identified as Class V in the ConservationVision Development Vulnerability Model. <b>Maximum score: 9</b>		Densely populated locality = 9 Class V in ConservationVision model = 5 Class IV in ConservationVision model = 4 Class III in ConservationVision model = 3  URL for ConservationVision: <a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable">http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable</a>
8) <b>Degree of Threat:</b> Site is threatened by development. A threatened site is defined as property where plans have been submitted to locality's planning office for rezoning within the last year, documented to be on the market currently or recently, in an estate that is currently being settled, or adjacent to similar property which is on the market or sold in the past year. <b>Maximum score: 10</b>		Currently on the market or in an estate = 10 Recently on the market = 8 Adjacent to similar property on the market or sold within the previous year = 5 No documentation of threat = 0
9) <b>ConserveVirginia</b> • Does the property fall within an area with demonstrated		<u>Terrestrial:</u> High or Very High Need = 5; Moderate Need = 4; Low Need = 2; or Very

<p>recreation need, based on both the terrestrial and aquatic layers of the Recreation Access Model?  <b>Maximum score: 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the property included in ConserveVirginia's Scenic or Protected Landscapes Resilience categories?  <b>Maximum score: 10</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Maximum score: 20 points</b></p>	<p>Low Need = 1  <u>Aquatic:</u> High or Very High Need = 5;  Moderate Need = 4; Low Need = 2; or Very Low Need = 1</p> <p>50 to 100% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Scenic or Protected Landscapes Resilience categories = 10 points  1 to 49% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia Scenic or Protected Landscapes Resilience categories = 5 points</p>
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**Total Maximum Score 100 points** \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Scoring Criteria

### 1. Scoring Criteria for Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need

Degree to which a project satisfies resource conservation needs as identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* or in a local comprehensive plan.

#### Maximum 3 points

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

### 2. Scoring Criteria for Virginia Recreation Access Model Identified Need

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

#### Maximum 3 points

- Demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial **and** aquatic recreational access = 3 points
- Demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial **or** aquatic recreational access = 2 points
- No demonstrated moderate, high, or very high need for terrestrial or aquatic recreational access = 0 points

### 3. Scoring Criteria for Water Quality Benefit

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

#### Maximum 11 points

- 4 points if the buffer is forested (at least 50% forest canopy) and protected as such in perpetuity, PLUS
- Up to 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer = 2 points
- 1 point for every 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 50'-wide buffer, up to 3 points, OR
- Up to 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer = 3 points
- 1 point for every 1000' of water frontage that is buffered by a 100'-wide buffer, up to 4 points

### 4. Scoring Criteria for Additional ConserveVirginia Values

Does the application include information to support additional ConserveVirginia values? If the project includes conservation values other than the primary application category, then two points may be awarded for each additional identified category if the applicant demonstrates that the property is located within another ConserveVirginia category and the project also protects those respective resources in perpetuity.

#### Maximum 10 points

ConserveVirginia Categories:

- Agriculture & Forestry = 2 points
- Cultural & Historic Preservation = 2 points
- Floodplains & Flooding Resilience = 2 points
- Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity = 2 points
- Protected Landscapes Resilience = 2 points
- Scenic Preservation = 2 points

### 5. Scoring Criteria for Wildlife Value

Degree to which the application includes information that benefits wildlife, habitat, and human/wildlife interaction

#### Maximum 10 points

- Identify wildlife presence = 1 point; if DGIF Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species is present = additional 3 points
- Protect wildlife habitat = 1 point; if DGIF Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species habitat is protected = additional 4 points
- Public access to view, hunt, or fish wildlife = 1 point

**6. Public Access**

Degree to which the project has public or visual access.

**Maximum 10 points**

- Full Public Access (50% of the year or more) = 10 points
- Limited Public Access (less than 50% of the year) = 5 points
- Visual Access = 2 points
- No Access = 0 points

**7. Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost**

**Maximum 3 points**

- Eighty percent or more of total project cost = 3 points
- Sixty percent or more of total project cost = 2 points
- Fifty percent of total project cost = 0 points

**Total Maximum Score for Additional Scoring Criteria: 50 points**

## **Appendix B – Example Match Letter**

*[Date]*

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation  
C/o Mr. Clyde E. Cristman, Executive Secretary  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
600 East Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: VLCF grant application from *[organization]* for *[project]*

Dear Mr. Cristman:

In the grant application submitted by our organization for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation's FY20 grant round, our project budget included a total match amount of \$\_\_\_\_.\_\_\_\_, of which \$\_\_\_\_.\_\_\_\_ is to be obtained through grant funding that is not yet committed by any granting agency. We understand that VLCF will not grant funds for a project whose match is uncertain, and we agree that, if this project is funded through VLCF, we will commit our organization's resources to complete the project within the two-year time frame required by the VLCF program.

Sincerely,

*[Organization representative]*  
*[Job Title]*

## **Appendix C – Listing of Allowances within a Vegetated Riparian Buffer**

The following structures, activities, and landscapes are allowed within the required 35-foot vegetated riparian buffers on VLCF projects:

Buildings, structures, roads or other impervious surfaces (in whole or in part) existing on the property prior to the grant award.

A limited number and size of water dependent structures such as docks or boat launches.

A limited number of stream crossings for livestock, pedestrians, or vehicles. Livestock crossings must be addressed in a written conservation plan that specifies the use of riparian buffers for water quality protection.

Access points to reach the water and structures permitted in the buffer.

Mowing (or haying) up to 3 times per calendar year.

Lawns (up to 50 feet of frontage) associated with a primary residence, if the site is not subject to severe erosion and the diminished buffer is offset by nearby buffers that are wider than 35-feet.