

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

2020 Grant Manual (FY21 Program Year)

Adoption Date: September 22, 2020

Administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

I. GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (Foundation or VLCF) 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 (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 permanently conserving land throughout the Commonwealth, including the purchase of development rights. Grants are awarded only for acquiring interests in property that have 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, serving as Administrative Secretary and assisted by an interagency task force, is charged with administering, reviewing, and making recommendations on grant applications to the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Foundation. Using specific criteria defined in each grant category, grants may be awarded for up to 50 percent of total project costs 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 374 A.1. of the 2020 Budget Bill (Chapter 1289 of the 2020 Virginia Acts of Assembly) specifies that no less than 50 percent of the VLCF funds shall be used for projects that provide public access.

To help advance Governor Northam’s vision of *Conserve Virginia*, first introduced in April 2018, this year’s scoring criteria continue to place emphasis on funding projects that support the Governor’s initiative. Additionally, the scoring criteria have been amended to place more emphasis on providing grants to underserved communities as well as areas of the Commonwealth that have not previously benefited from VLCF grants to provide public access and recreational opportunities, and to preserve open space, natural landscapes, and working lands.

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 must protect land in perpetuity through acquisitions of property in fee simple, or recordation of a conservation easement and an open-space easement.
- No application relying on eminent domain shall be considered, as Va. Code § 10.1-1023 prohibits the use of VLCF funds to acquire any property interest through eminent domain.

- Projects must be for a minimum of \$20,000 in total expense or a grant request of no less than \$10,000.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the landowners have been notified and are receptive to 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 sell or conserve the property.
- The proposed project must be for **specific property** that meets the criteria for one or more of the four grant categories listed below. Applications that are not site-specific will not be considered.
- Applicants should be aware that the project names provided in the application will be included in reports to the Governor and the General Assembly and may be included in press releases. Therefore, if using the landowner's name as part of the project name, the applicant should first obtain the landowner's permission. VLCF will use the project names in public grant announcements.
- A nonprofit organization seeking to hold an easement must provide documentation in their application that they meet the holder requirements in the Virginia Conservation Easement Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017.
- All nonprofit organization projects, whether fee simple or easement, must be protected by an open-space easement in perpetuity that is held or co-held by a public body (e.g., a state agency or local governmental entity), pursuant to Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2). An acknowledgement letter from the public body stating that it is willing to consider holding the easement must be included as part of the application.
- Applications for the acquisition of easements on lands currently permanently protected for conservation purposes are not eligible for a VLCF grant unless the property can be further protected by a more restrictive easement.
- 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, Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (A)(2). See Appendix A for eligible expenses. If the required match is not determined at the time of the application, a letter confirming the match must be included with the application (see example in Appendix C). Grant payments are made as a reimbursement and cannot exceed the amount actually expended by the grant recipient or the amount of the grant award.
- Indirect costs cannot be reimbursed or considered as match. These ineligible costs include, without limitation, staff time, overhead, work provided pro bono, or maintenance/operating costs of lands and facilities.
- The reported value of any project must be substantiated by an Appraisal Report. A final appraisal is not required at the time of application, but may be submitted.
- VLCF now requires certain property protections to further statewide environmental conservation goals, including permanent vegetated riparian buffers on all funded projects with perennial water resources. These protections must be preserved in perpetuity by the

deed(s) associated with the project. See Appendix D for all of the provisions and further information on riparian buffers.

- When additional property is proposed as match in a grant application, the match property must be in the proximity of or ecologically connected to the property that is the subject of the grant. The match property must also be protected in the same manner as the grant property; information on the match property must be included in the application; all due diligence items are required on the match property.
- All projects awarded VLCF funds must submit certain due diligence documents as specified in Appendix A.
- Properties acquired in fee or made subject to an easement as a result of a VLCF grant may not be diverted or converted from the approved use for which the grant was made. If a conversion or diversion occurs or, in the case of an easement, an extinguishment of the easement occurs, the VLCF must be reimbursed for the proportionate amount of the then value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based. As a condition of its grant, the VLCF will require that language be included in the deed of acquisition or the deed of easement to such effect.
- A public body seeking VLCF funds 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 Open Space Land Act, Va. Code §§ 10.1-1700 through 10.1-1705, and that the protection is perpetual in nature and not extinguishable except pursuant to the provisions of the Open Space Land Act.
- If a nonprofit organization is awarded a grant to acquire fee-simple property, it may be sold only if it remains under easement and the VLCF is reimbursed for the proportionate amount of the then fair market value of the property equal to the proportion of the value of the property on which the grant was based. The fair-market value of the property must be supported by a current appraisal. An exception may be granted if the property is transferred to a public agency and the recorded deed of transfer states the agency agrees to hold and manage the property for the purposes for which it was originally acquired.

II. APPLYING FOR THE GRANT PROGRAM

Applicants may apply for the program by submitting a grant application, available at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia-land-conservation-foundation/>. The applicant should read through this entire grant manual to become familiar with program specifics and requirements.

A hardcopy and an electronic file of the application must be received as specified in Appendix A. Electronic submissions without the associated paper applications cannot be accepted.

The application may include letters of support from individuals and organizations, as well as resolutions from governmental bodies that express support for the project.

Application Information and Deadline

A complete application (50 page maximum) includes the required items listed in Appendix A. DO NOT include the grant manual with the application. The required items must be delivered to the Department of Conservation and Recreation at the address below by **no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, November 30, 2020.**

Address:

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

All applications require photos. See specific photo requirements on pages 8-9 for applications in the Historic Area Preservation category.

Questions?

General application inquiries: Larry Mikkelson at (804) 225-3010

Category-specific Inquiries: See contact information listed under each category

GIS and mapping questions: Gina Dicicco at (804) 786-5056

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 applicant is advised to review the program requirements below carefully as they prepare the application and to determine the best category for their project. See Appendix B for the scoring sheets for each category and the additional criteria for all categories. Score your application using the scoring sheet for your chosen category and the additional criteria. Make sure your application addresses all of the applicable criteria to be awarded maximum points.

Program Requirements by Category

1. Farmlands and Forest Preservation Category – Two funding scenarios are set out in subsections (C) and (D) of Va. Code § 10.1-1020, based on the amount of funds appropriated for VLCF. If less than \$10 million is appropriated, then there are four grant categories with farmlands and forest preservation sharing one single category (1/4 of funds). If \$10 million or more is appropriated, then there are five grant categories with farmland preservation and forestland preservation being separately funded categories (each category gets 1/5 of funds). For both scenarios, separate scoring criteria have been developed for agricultural lands and for forestal lands. The applicant should use the set of criteria that is most appropriate for the project being submitted.

A. Agricultural (Farmlands) Criteria

Contact: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, (804) 786-1906
Jennifer Perkins, Program Coordinator, jennifer.perkins@vdacs.virginia.gov
<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/conservation-and-environmental-farmland-preservation.shtml>

Applications for the permanent 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) which can be found at <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>:

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

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

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

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

- ◆ Property acreage. The size of the parcel in relation to average agricultural parcel sizes in the locality will be used as a determining factor. More information can be found at 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. Information about this program can be found at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/conservation-and-environmental-virginia-century-farms.shtml>
- ◆ Adjacency to conserved lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or nearby, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.

- ◆ Development vulnerability rank. Using the Virginia 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.
- ◆ Conserve Virginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the Conserve Virginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

B. Forest Lands Criteria

Contact: Virginia Department of Forestry, (434) 220-9095
 Terry Lasher, Assistant State Forester, terry.lasher@dof.virginia.gov
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/conservation/index.htm>

Applications for the permanent 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 at the time of application, 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 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. FCV information can be downloaded at: http://www.dof.virginia.gov/resources/gis/FCV_statewide.zip
- ◆ Length of intermittent and perennial watercourses as identified by the USGS National Hydrography Dataset (<https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/advanced-viewer/>), as well as wetlands and water impoundments, present on or bordering the property. Forested

watersheds and streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users.

- ◆ Adjacency to Conserved Lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or near, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Larger blocks of unbroken forest and agricultural lands including forest potentially provide the greatest value and range of benefits from and protection of rural land uses.
- ◆ Management of Multiple Resources. The degree to which the property is managed according to a forest stewardship management plan (or equivalent) prepared by a professional forester. Applicant should provide a copy of a current forest resource management plan and demonstrate how recommendations are being followed to achieve forest management goals. **If plan is not provided with the application, it will be presumed that no plan exists.**
- ◆ Preservation of forest acreage. The degree to which the applicant is willing to preserve a portion of forest acreage in perpetuity to protect the working forest land base. **The draft deed or term sheet accompanying the application must include language reflecting this commitment; otherwise this acreage will be assumed to be zero.**
- ◆ ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Agriculture and Forestry category.

2. Historic Area Preservation Category

Contact: Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), (804) 367-2323
Wendy Musumeci, Easement Program Coordinator, Wendy.Musumeci@dhr.virginia.gov
<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/easements/easement-program-overview/>

Applications are encouraged for projects that conserve historic resources associated with underrepresented communities. Applications for the permanent protection of historic, archaeological, cultural or historic landscape resources will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Historic Significance, strong proposals are likely to protect or preserve a resource that:
 - A. Is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR), found at <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/>, either individually or as a contributing resource in a listed historic district; or
 - B. Is a battlefield property identified with a priority rating in one of the following reports issued by the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program: “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields” (1993, as amended), or “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States,” (2007, as amended); contact DHR Archives to confirm the location of the property within identified battlefields at (804) 482-6102; or
 - C. Has been formally determined to be eligible for listing on the VLR by DHR within the previous five calendar years and remains eligible for listing in the opinion of DHR. For assistance in determining whether a property has been determined eligible for the VLR, please contact DHR Archives at (804) 482-6102. **Note: listing on the VLR 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. Conserve Virginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the Conserve Virginia Cultural and Historic Preservation category.

Note: 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 integrity of the historic resource to be protected or preserved shall be considered. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic significance through attributes such as location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.
- ◆ Threat. Threatened property is defined as property (i) documented to be currently or recently on the market (within the past calendar year); (ii) threatened by development, where plans/plats have been submitted to or approved by the locality's planning department within the last calendar year; (iii) in an estate that is currently being settled; (iv) adjacent to property currently on the market or sold within the previous calendar year; or (v) a property with built or other historic, archaeological, or cultural resources that are threatened by demolition, destruction, demolition by neglect, or development. Documentation supporting specific threats must be submitted with the application.
- ◆ Use and Treatment of Historic Resources on the Property. The extent to which plans for future uses of (e.g. historic site interpretation, rehabilitation of the battlefield landscape) or alterations to the property are consistent with historic resource stewardship and protection. All plans must meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (36 C.F.R. Part 68). Plans submitted as part of the application must be approved by DHR before the project receives final VLCF funding.
- ◆ Historic Resource Protection. The degree to which the applicant is willing to preserve all historic resources on the property in perpetuity in accordance with the DHR's current easement template. The draft deed of easement or term sheet accompanying the application must include language reflecting this commitment.
- ◆ Adjacency to Conserved Lands. The degree to which the property is located adjacent to, or near, already conserved lands held in perpetuity.
- ◆ Furthers Public Interests. The extent to which the project includes specific plans for programs that will further or promote public interests, such as education, research, community outreach, recreation, or heritage tourism promotion. Applications for projects that conserve historic resources associated with underrepresented communities and those that also provide public educational opportunities and share untold stories to advance social equity are particularly encouraged.
- ◆ Applicants for funds in this category must provide original digital images no greater than 800 x 800 pixels in dimension. In the case of built cultural or historic structures, these should

include images that document the exterior of the primary historic structure and any secondary structures, significant interior spaces and features, and the setting and viewshed of the primary resource. For archaeological sites, applicants should include a general view or site plan and images documenting the condition of the site, stratigraphy (if applicable), and representative features showing the integrity of those features. For battlefields or other landscapes, images should document the overall site, its surroundings and viewshed, and all historic and non-historic structures, roads, and other features within the project.

- ◆ If funds are awarded 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 VBHR a perpetual preservation easement on the property to be acquired with the VLCF funds (including any match property). The VBHR shall decide whether to accept the easement offer based on established criteria and existing policies and procedures governing the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Easement Program (Chapter 22, Title 10.1 of 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); if not, or if the VBHR declines acceptance of the easement offer, 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 VLR 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: DCR Natural Heritage, (804) 371-6205
Rob Evans, Protection Manager, Virginia Natural Heritage Program,
Rob.Evans@dcr.virginia.gov, 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 DCR Natural Heritage based on specific criteria listed in Va. Code § 10.1-1022.1 (B).

Application for Natural Areas Protection funds may be made for projects that make a significant contribution to the permanent protection of one or more natural heritage resources, including habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species or state-significant natural communities. 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 VLCF and matching funds within two 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 (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>). The project will be evaluated based on the percentage of the total project area that is included in the ConserveVirginia Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity category.

All properties acquired with VLCF funds in this category 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: DCR - Planning and Recreation Resources Division, (804) 786-4379
 Kristal McKelvey, Program Planner, kristal.mckelvey@dcr.virginia.gov
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/>

Applications for the permanent protection and acquisition of public recreational lands or open space lands will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

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

- ◆ Makes the grant-funded land available for public access and use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching.
- ◆ Provides an outdoor recreational resource to an underserved community. The Social Vulnerability Index created by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences may be used to identify underserved areas of the state: http://cmap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html. Data from other sources may also be considered for this criterion if applicant provides the source reference.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/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 any ConserveVirginia category so long as the project provides daily public access.

5. Additional Scoring Criteria

Projects are also scored on the following seven criteria, based on information supplied by the applicant. See Appendix B for breakdown of potential points.

- ◆ Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need: Zero to three points will be awarded if a project satisfies resource conservation needs identified in the VOP or a local comp plan. Information can be found at: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Protection of Cultural Resources: Zero to 10 points may be given for projects that identify and protect local cultural resources on the property and provide public educational opportunities. Provide with your application photos and documentation of the cultural resources found on site that will be protected by your project. Also, provide draft language to be used in the deed to protect the resources, and indicate whether there will be educational opportunities provided for the public. See page 23 for examples.
- ◆ ConserveVirginia Value-added (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/conservevirginia/>): Zero to twelve points may be awarded for those projects that demonstrably address more than one of the seven ConserveVirginia categories (listed on page 23). 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 (one point for identifying wildlife, one point for

protecting habitat, an added point for providing public access to view, hunt, or fish wildlife). An additional three points may be awarded for the identification of Department of Wildlife Resources Species of Greatest Conservation Need or a state or federal threatened or endangered species; with another four points awarded for protection of associated habitat. For more wildlife information, see: <http://vafwis.dgif.virginia.gov/WAP2/> or contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, (804) 593-2043.

- ◆ **Public Access:** Zero to ten points may be given dependent upon the extent of public access provided. Full public access means the property is open for public visitation 365 days a year. Visual access means the applicant can demonstrate the scenic value of the property and that the project will protect the integrity of the public's scenic view.
- ◆ **Underserved Communities:** Up to ten points may be given to projects that benefit underserved communities. The Social Vulnerability Index created by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences may be used to identify underserved areas of the state: http://cmap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html. Data from other sources will also be considered for this criterion if applicant provides the source reference.
- ◆ **Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost:** 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, then a preliminary appraisal must be submitted with the application.

Required Match for the Program

The VLCF grant program may reimburse up to half of the appraised value and up to half of the eligible documented costs to acquire the property or easement. See Appendix A for eligible expenses. **Other sources of funding to cover required match contributions may be:**

- ◆ Cash or “pass-through” dollars from other sources, *e.g.*, other grants
- ◆ Bargain sales, *i.e.*, the donation of a portion of the value of the property or interest.
- ◆ Properties acquired in fee or restricted by an easement within the previous two years, and not acquired with VLCF funds, so long as the match property is also restricted as approved by VLCF.

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 an interagency task force of subject matter experts for review and scoring.

Second Application Review

Following completion of the first review, the interagency task force will rank the projects and consider geographic distribution, percentage of projects with public access, and those being placed under easement.

Final Review, Grant Award, Notification

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

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Grant Agreements

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 to sign and return the document. After the Executive Secretary has signed the agreement, a scan of the fully-executed agreement will be provided to the grant recipient.

Grants are made for a two year period. Administrative extensions of up to one year may be granted upon extenuating circumstances being documented by the grant recipient.

Periodic Status Reporting

Grant recipients will report the status of the project twice per year as noted in the Grant Agreement. VLCF staff will provide to the grant recipient a template document prompting the information that is needed for this report.

Final Steps and Closing

Certain required documents must be provided to VLCF, and approved by VLCF, prior to grant funds being disbursed. These documents are listed in Appendix A.

Under no circumstances will VLCF funds be disbursed until all required documents have been provided, reviewed, and approved by VLCF, and all of the required deeds have been recorded.

If grant funding is provided to a closing agent, then a copy of the recorded deeds must be provided to VLCF within **two months** after closing.

V. APPENDICES

List of Appendices:

Appendix A	VLCF Grant Specifications
Appendix B	Score Sheets for each Category and Additional Scoring Criteria
Appendix C	Example Match Letter
Appendix D	Required Property Protections and Vegetated Riparian Buffer Information

Appendix A – VLCF Grant Specifications

I. Required Items in an Application (incomplete applications will not be considered):

1. A fully-completed application printed on 8.5” x 11” paper firmly attached with staples or binder clips, or placed in a soft-sided folder. Please do not use hard binders.
2. Minimum of two maps of the project: Aerial map and Topo map (USGS USA Topo Map)
3. Minimum of three photographs of the project, representative of the conservation values being protected.
4. A signed letter from all landowners stating that they are willing participants in the proposed transaction.
5. If the required 50% match is not yet determined, a match letter (see Appendix C)
6. For easement projects, a term sheet or draft easement indicating the proposed protections of the project’s conservation values.
7. For nonprofit applicants:
 - a. an acknowledgement letter from the public body willing to hold or co-hold an easement on the property, and
 - b. evidence that the nonprofit meets the holder requirements found in Va. Code §§ 10.1-1009 to 10.1-1017.
8. For applications in the historic category, additional information and documents specified on pages 7 through 9.
9. For applicants claiming more than 60% match, a preliminary appraisal.
10. Make sure the application has page numbers.
11. An electronic file on a CD or USB drive that includes items 1-10 above combined into one file, in searchable pdf format.

II. Additional Recommended Items:

1. Letters of support for the project
2. Forestry plan or agriculture plan

III. Eligible Expenses for the Grant Program:

1. The appraised value of the property or interest acquired.
2. Actual expenditures (written expense documentation is required) for:
 - Appraisal
 - Title search, binder, title insurance
 - Boundary survey
 - Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (fee acquisitions only)
 - Legal Fees; Recording Costs
 - Property Line Demarcation

IV. Documents and Due Diligence Items Required Prior to Closing:

1. A full appraisal report that meets USPAP Standards, or UASFLA Standards, and Va. Code § 58.1-512.1, performed within six months of closing.

2. Title insurance policy within 90 days prior to closing:
 - a. must confirm that the seller or donor owns marketable fee simple title
 - b. encumbrances of record must not impair conservation purposes
 - c. encumbrances of record must be acceptable to VLCF
3. Boundary survey by a Virginia Licensed Surveyor that meets Va. Administrative Code 18VAC10-20-370 Minimum Standards and Procedures for Land Boundary Survey Practice.
4. Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (fee acquisition only); within six months of closing
 - a. report and findings must be acceptable to VLCF
 - b. issues revealed may require remedial action
5. Draft deeds for VLCF review and insertion of required VLCF language.
6. The final version of the required deeds for final VLCF approval before closing.

NOTE: VLCF funds will not be distributed until all due diligence documents have been provided, reviewed, and approved by staff and all required deeds have been recorded.

Appendix B – VLCF Category Scoring Sheets

Applicant: _____

Agricultural (Farmlands) Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>Category I: Land Evaluation (40 points)</p> <p>A. Soil Productivity (25 points) 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. Parcel Size (15 points) Using data from the most recent Census of Agriculture, score the size of the farm as it compares to the average sized farm in the locality.</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>Category II: Land Use (40 points)</p> <p>A. 1) Is the land currently being farmed; 2) is this a Century Farm? Maximum score: 8 points</p> <p>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? Maximum score: 10 points</p> <p>C. What is the vulnerability rank for this parcel as determined by the ConservationVision Development Vulnerability model? Maximum score: 8 points</p> <p>D. 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? Maximum score: 10 points</p> <p>E. Is the project supported by local farmland protection policies (agricultural zoning, agricultural and forestal districts, use value taxation, etc.)? Maximum score: 4 points</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 http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/vaconvisvulnerable</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>Category III: ConserveVirginia (20 points)</p> <p>Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? Maximum score: 20 points</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 _____

Applicant: _____

Forestland Preservation Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
1) Property Acreage – 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. Maximum score: 10		Score = One-half (.5) point for every 50 acres, up to 10 points.
2) Percent forested – 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. Maximum score: 20		Score = Percent forested X 20. [e.g. A property that is 80% forested would receive a score of 16. (.8 *20)].
3) Percent of forestland that is high forest conservation value (FCV 4 and 5) – 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. Maximum score: 15		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) Water quality – Streamside forests provide considerable water quality, filtration, nutrient retention, and flood attenuation to downstream users. Maximum score: 15		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) Adjacency to Conserved Lands – The property is located adjacent to, or nearby, already conserved lands held in perpetuity. Maximum score: 5		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 point >5 miles = 0 points
6) Management of Multiple Resources – 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. Maximum score: 5		Owner has an existing management plan, and with demonstrated plan implementation = 5 points Owner has management plan but no demonstrated plan implementation = 3 points Owner does not have a management plan = 0 points
7) Forest Land Base Preservation – Landowner is willing to preserve a proportion of the property in a forested condition or use to protect the working forest land base Maximum score: 10		Score = Percent of property to be retained as forest X 10. [e.g. A property on which a landowner is willing to protect 80% of the acreage as forest in perpetuity would receive a score of 8. (.8 * 10)].
8) ConserveVirginia Is the property included in ConserveVirginia? Maximum score: 20 points		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 _____

Applicant: _____

Historic Area Preservation Category

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

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Applicant: _____

Natural Areas Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>Biodiversity Significance (35 points)</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) Maximum score: 20 points</p> <p><u>Parcel Significance:</u> The number of heritage elements present on the subject parcel, or associated with it? Maximum score: 10 points</p> <p><u>Does the project have global significance?</u> (biodiversity rank of conservation site) Maximum score: 5 points</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 that also overlaps the proposed parcel for protection</p> <p>B1 = 5 points; B2 = 4; B3 = 3; B4 = 2; B5 = 1 Located outside conservation site = 0</p>
<p>Ecological Integrity (20 points)</p> <p><u>Regional Landscape Integrity:</u> (location of parcel relative to ecological cores) Maximum score: 10 points</p> <p><u>Local/Parcel Integrity:</u> How much of the parcel is in natural vegetation? Maximum score: 5 points</p> <p><u>Connectivity:</u> Is the parcel adjacent to other conserved lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? Maximum score: 5 points</p>		<p>Parcel located in Core ranked C1=10 points, C2=8, C3=6, C4=3, C5=1</p> <p>Parcel supports natural community/natural vegetation: 75% or more of parcel area = 5 points, 50-74% = 4 points, 25-49% = 3 points, 1-25% = 2 points</p> <p>Adjoins BMI 1 = 5 points; adjoins BMI 2 = 4; adjoins BMI = 3; BMI 4 or 5 = 2 points; land not adjacent to conserved land = 0 points</p>
<p>Management Needs, Likelihood of Success, and Threat (25 points)</p> <p><u>Management Needs:</u> To what extent are current and future management actions needed to successfully maintain/restore natural heritage resources? Maximum score: 10 points</p> <p><u>Management Capacity:</u> Does the applicant have proven experience and capacity in terms of staff resources and expertise to address management needs? Maximum score: 8 points</p> <p><u>Site visit & 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. Maximum score: 5 points</p> <p><u>Threat:</u> Is there high development threat for the project area? Maximum score: 2 points</p>		<p>Parcel conditions require minimal natural heritage resources management = 10 points; moderate management = 6 points; intensive management/restoration = 3 points; unmanageable for heritage resources = 0</p> <p>Application provides thorough description of both experience and staff capacity = 8 points; cursory description = 4 points; not mentioned = 0 points</p> <p>Site visit & 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 points. Or Tract is on the market or in estate for settlement = 2 points.</p>
<p>Conserve Virginia (20 points)</p> <p>Is the property included in Conserve Virginia? Maximum score: 20 points</p>		<p>50 to 100% of the project area is included in Conserve Virginia Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category = 20 points; 1 to 49% of the project is included in Conserve Virginia Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity Category = 10 points</p>

Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Applicant: _____

Open Space & Parks Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) Public Access to State Waters: Acquires land or an easement that provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential. Maximum score: 10</p>		<p>Public access to state waters that provides boating, fishing, <u>and</u> beach/bank swimming opportunities = 10 Public access that provides <u>two</u> of those recreational opportunities = 8 Public access that provides <u>one</u> of those recreational opportunities = 5</p>
<p>2) Project Location: Does the project conserve a new outdoor recreational opportunity to benefit underserved communities? Adjacency to Parks and Conserved Lands: Is the project located adjacent to existing parks, protected conservation areas, or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests. Maximum score: 10</p>		<p>Project will conserve a stand-alone facility that is critically needed to provide or support recreational activities = 10 Project is an in-holding or addition that is critical to the recreational use of an existing site = 5</p>
<p>3) Scenic Resources Protection: 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. Maximum score: 10</p>		<p>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</p>
<p>4) Alignment with Local or Regional Plans: Project supports local or regional plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, or contributes to the protection of a documented conservation corridor. Include the name and page # of plan cited. Maximum score: 10</p>		<p>If project site/corridor is specifically mentioned in a local or regional plan or other documents = 10 If area of project has a general reference in local or regional plan = 5</p>
<p>5) Virginia Outdoors Plan Need: Addresses a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i>. Applicant must specify VOP Page #. Maximum score: 10</p>		<p>Project provides trails for hiking or walking, OR access to state waters for fishing, swimming, or beach use OR both trails and recreational water access = 10 Recreational access to natural areas or, historic areas, provision of bicycle trails = 8 Access for non-motorized boating, trails for wildlife watching and nature study=6 Other outdoor recreational need identified in the VOP= 5</p>
<p>6) Public Utilization: Availability of land for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, or wildlife watching. Maximum score: 15</p>		<p>Open for public utilization between 241 and 365 days per year = 15 Open between 181 and 240 days per year = 8 Between 121 and 180 days per year = 6 Between 61 and 120 days per year = 4 Between 1 and 60 days per year = 2</p>
<p>7) Benefit Underserved Community: Does the project provide a recreational resource to an underserved population? <i>Applicant must provide a reference source if not using the VIMS Social Vulnerability Index.</i> Maximum score: 15</p>		<p>Use the VIMS Social Vulnerability Index to determine if the project benefits an underserved community – Very High Social Vulnerability = 15 High Social Vulnerability = 10 Moderate Social Vulnerability =5 Low or Very Low Social Vulnerability =0</p>
<p>8) Conserve Virginia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the property fall within an area with demonstrated recreation need, based on both the terrestrial and aquatic layers of the Recreation Access Model? Maximum score: 10 		<p><u>Terrestrial:</u> High or Very High Need = 5 points; Moderate Need = 4; Low Need = 2; or Very Low Need = 1 point <u>Aquatic:</u> High or Very High Need = 5 points; Moderate Need = 4; Low Need = 2; or Very Low Need = 1 point</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the property included in any category of ConserveVirginia and providing daily outdoor recreation access? Maximum score: 10 <p>Maximum score: 20 points</p>	<p>50 to 100% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia and providing daily outdoor recreation access = 10 points; 1 to 49% of the project is included in ConserveVirginia and providing daily outdoor recreation access = 5 points</p>
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Total Maximum Score 100 points _____

Additional Scoring Criteria

1. 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. 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. 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. Protection of Cultural Resources

Is there a local cultural resource on the property that will be protected by this project? Examples include remnants of prior settlements or burial sites of enslaved or indigenous people, former segregated schoolhouses, or sites of early racial integration.

Maximum 10 points.

- Provide photographs and other documents to authenticate the resource = 8 points
- Provide educational opportunities for the public, signage, trails, etc. = 2 points

5. Additional ConserveVirginia Values

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

Maximum 12 points

ConserveVirginia Categories:

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

6. Fish and Wildlife Values

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

Maximum 10 points

- Identify wildlife presence = 1 point; if Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species is present = additional 3 points
- Protect wildlife habitat = 1 point; if DWR Species of Greatest Conservation Need or State or Federally listed threatened or endangered species habitat is protected = additional 4 points
- Provide public access for viewing or hunting wildlife, or for fishing = 1 point

7. Public Access

Degree to which the project provides public or visual access.

Maximum 10 points

- Full Public Access (365 days/year) = 10 points
- Restricted Public Access (180-364 days/year) = 5 points
- Limited Public Access (less than 180 days per year) = 3 points
- Visual Access = 2 points

8. Underserved Communities

Degree to which the community where the project is located is underserved/socially vulnerable.

Maximum 10 points

- Very high social vulnerability = 10
- High social vulnerability = 8
- Moderate Social Vulnerability = 5
- Low or Very Low Social Vulnerability = 0

9. Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost

Maximum 3 points

- Eighty percent or more of total project cost is provided as match = 3 points
- Sixty percent or more of total project cost is provided as match = 2 points

Total Maximum Score for Additional Scoring Criteria: 72 points

Appendix C – Example Match Letter

[Date]

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

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

Dear Mr. Cristman:

In the grant application submitted by our organization for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation's FY21 grant round, our project budget included a total match amount of \$____.____, of which \$____.____ is to be obtained through grant funding that is not yet committed by any granting agency. We understand that VLCF will not grant funds for a project whose match is uncertain, and we agree that, if this project is funded through VLCF, we will commit our organization's resources to complete the project within the two-year time frame required by the VLCF program.

Sincerely,

[Organization representative]
[Job Title]

Appendix D – Required Property Protections and Vegetated Riparian Buffer Information

To safeguard water quality and the conservation value of land conservation projects, the following protections are to be included in all VLCF projects, whether fee simple or easement acquisitions:

1. Limitations on placement of utilities: Utilities that serve permitted structures on the subject property are allowed. Utilities that do not serve permitted structures on the subject property require the grantee's review and prior written determination that the construction and maintenance of such utilities will not impair the conservation value of the property.
2. Agricultural Conservation Plan: If the property contains five acres of land or more in agricultural production, then a written agricultural conservation plan shall be developed or in place that stipulates the use of best management practices for water quality protection (such as proper nutrient management, utilization of cover crops, and stabilization of highly erodible lands). This plan shall be developed in consultation with the local Soil and Water Conservation District or the Natural Resources Conservation Service and shall be implemented and periodically updated by the landowner as long as at least five acres of the property remains in agricultural production.
3. Forest Management Plans: If the property contains 20 acres or more of forest lands, then a current written forest management plan or Virginia Forest Stewardship Plan, and a Pre-Harvest Plan shall be in place prior to the commencement of timber harvesting or other significant forest management activities. Such a plan shall be developed by, or in consultation with, the Virginia Department of Forestry, or be consistent with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide.
4. Vegetated Riparian Buffers: An area of land where natural vegetation shall be maintained at least 35-feet to 100-feet or more in width along a river, shoreline, perennial stream as depicted on the USGS National Hydrography Dataset (<https://viewer.nationalmap.gov/advanced-viewer/>), or body of water that has perennial outflow . Additional requirements for vegetated riparian buffers are:
 - Livestock shall be excluded from the buffers and associated watercourses and bodies of water.
 - Mowing shall be limited to: once per calendar year for buffers that are 35-feet wide; or three times per calendar year for buffers that are 100-feet wide.
 - Earth-disturbing activities, plowing, and dumping are prohibited (however, tree planting; streambank restoration; forest management in accordance with Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide; archaeological investigations; and restoration, reconstruction, and maintenance of documented historic landscapes on historic properties are permissible).

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

- a. Buildings, structures, roads or other impervious surfaces existing in the buffer prior to the grant award are permissible but cannot be enlarged within the buffer.
- b. A limited number and size of water dependent structures such as docks or boat launches.

- c. A limited number of stream crossings for livestock, pedestrians, or vehicles. Livestock crossings must be addressed in a written conservation plan that specifies the use of riparian buffers for water quality protection.
- d. Access points to reach the water and structures permitted in the buffer.
- e. Lawns (up to 50 feet of frontage) associated with a primary residence, if the site is not subject to severe erosion and the diminished buffer is offset by nearby buffers that are wider than 35-feet.
- f. Forest management including timber harvesting in accordance with a forest stewardship management plan and Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Guide.