

2014-16 Strategic Plan

Department of Conservation and Recreation [199]

Mission

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provides opportunities that encourage and enable people to enjoy, protect, and restore Virginia's natural and cultural resources.

Vision

DCR, with the cooperation of our partners and customers, is a leader in: 1) providing tangible and lasting improvements to the quality of Virginia's resource lands and waters and the many species which they support; 2) serving as trusted stewards of the outdoor natural and recreational resources placed under our care; 3) promoting the conservation and enjoyment of Virginia's diverse and unique environment and rich cultural legacy for future generations; 4) protecting the public's safety through conservation law enforcement efforts; and 5) recognizing the value of its dedicated and committed workforce.

Values

DCR is committed to the highest ideals in the stewardship of the Commonwealth of Virginia's natural resources.

Finance

Financial Overview

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) financial resources come from a mixture of funds. For fiscal year 2016, approximately 42 percent of the department's budget came from the state's General Fund, 7 percent from the federal government, and 51 percent from nongeneral funds from other sources.

DCR provides financial assistance to 47 soil and water conservation districts to support agricultural water quality improvements, provides financial assistance in the form of grants and loans from the Dam Safety and Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund, which is administered by the Virginia Resources Authority, and provides land conservation grants and stewardship payments from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. DCR also manages a capital budget for improvements to and acquisitions of state parks and natural area preserves.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	67,547,331	64,422,726	43,748,501	59,774,242
Changes to Initial Appropriation	1,590,886	-8,000,000	15,247,677	20,185,417

(Changes to Initial Appropriation will be 0 when the plan is created. They will change when the plan is updated mid-biennium.)

Customers

Anticipated Changes to Customer Base

DCR's Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management expects the number of property owners protected by dam safety action, to increase with time as additional high hazard dams as are located throughout the state and become managed under dam safety program requirements. DCR has been using "Dam Dagnet" to locate dams not currently in the inventory since June of 2013, resulting in the identification of additional high hazard dams.

The number of local governments coordinated with by DCR under the National Flood Insurance Program is expected to increase. Under this program, DCR assists localities with floodplain ordinances in order to help them achieve compliance with Federal Emergency Management Agency standards and guidelines related to floodplains.

Current Customer List

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Recreationalist	Recreational Users (campers, picnickers, hikers, etc.)	8,997,661	10,500,000	Increase
Farm/Forest Owner	Agricultural Producers Participating in Cost-Share and nutrient management planning	5,000	47,000	Increase
Property Owner	Dam Owners	2,100	3,000	Increase

Natural Resources and Earth Science	Users of Environmental Databases and Tools	500	2,000	Increase
Taxpayer	Land Preservation Tax Credit Applicants	222	400	Stable
Local or Regional Government Authorities	Local Governments and PDCs including 21 PDCs, 95 counties, 38 cities, 191 towns, and 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts	392	392	Stable
Property Owner	Downstream Owners Protected by Dam Safety Actions	43,000	65,000	Increase
Organization	Conservation Organizations and Land Trusts	50	100	Increase
Non-Profit Agency (Boards/Foundation),	Stakeholder Groups	30	75	Increase
State Government Employee	Employees of the DCR	1,093	1,500	Stable
Volunteer	Park and Natural Area Volunteers	2,500	10,000	Increase
General Assembly	Legislators and Support Services Staff	100	300	Increase
Organization	Media Outlets	626	626	Stable
Interstate Entity	Breaks Interstate Park	1	1	Stable
Interstate Entity	Chesapeake Bay Program (US EPA, CBC, VA, MD, PA, NY, WV, DE, DC)	1	1	Stable
Interstate Entity	Chesapeake Bay Commission	1	1	Stable
Higher Education Institutions	Colleges and Universities	40	60	Increase
State Agency(s),	State Agencies	40	50	Increase
Federal Agency	Federal Agencies	12	12	Stable
Governor	Administration	1	1	Stable
Governor	State Boards and Foundations	9	9	Stable
Attorney General	Office of the Attorney General	1	1	Stable

Partners

Name	Description
Regional Planning District Commissions	Virginia Planning District Commissions, Municipalities, Park Authorities, Middle Peninsula Public Access Authority
Federal Agencies	U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Department of Defense; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Natural Resources Conservation Service; National Park Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Environmental Protection Agency; Federal Highway Administration; Bureau of Land Management. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Farm Service Agency
State Agencies	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Virginia Department of Historic Resources; Virginia Department of Environmental Quality; Virginia Department of Forestry; Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Virginia Department of Transportation; Virginia Department of Taxation; Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia Department of General Services; Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy; Virginia Department of Health; Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Virginia Marine Resources Commission; Virginia Department of Taxation; Virginia Department of Planning and Budget
Other States	Delaware; Kentucky; New York; North Carolina; Tennessee; West Virginia; Maryland; Pennsylvania; District of Columbia
General Assembly/Legislative Branch	Virginia House and Senate members and their legislative aides; Division of Legislative Services
Local Governments	Water and Sewer Authorities; Emergency Managers; Local Planning, Zoning and Building Officials; Parks and Recreation Departments; Engineering and Public Works Officials, County, City, and Town Administrators/ Manager;
Soil and Water Conservation Districts	47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Boards and Foundation	Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, Board of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Virginia Cave Board, Virginia Outdoors Foundation Board, Commonwealth Transportation Board, Art and Architectural Review Board, State Water Control Board, Virginia Resources Authority Board
Professional Organizations	National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers, Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals, National Recreation and Park Association, Virginia Recreation and Park Society, Virginia Land Stewardship Partners

Stakeholder Organizations	Private Campground Association, Recreational Advocacy Groups, Virginia Recreation and Parks Society, Recreational User Clubs and Associations (Good Sam Club, Airstream Club, College Outing Clubs, etc.), Soil and Water Conservation organizations, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, James River Association, East Coast Greenway Alliance, Chesapeake Conservancy, Friends of the Rappahannock, International Mountain Biking Association, Scenic Virginia, Virginia Horse Council, Virginia Association for Parks, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia, Virginia Lakes and Watershed Association, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Virginia Native Plant Society
Agricultural Community	Agricultural producers, Virginia Agribusiness Council, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Grain Producers Association, Virginia Small Grains Association, the Cattleman's Association, the Poultry Federation
Land Conservation Organizations and Land Trusts	Virginia Outdoors Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, private land trusts
Volunteers and Volunteer Groups	Friends of State Park Groups, Virginia Master Naturalists, Natural Area volunteer stewardship committees
Chesapeake Bay Program	Includes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia
Development Community, Environmental Consulting, Engineering Firms	Consulting companies working with DCR to obtain natural heritage and dam safety information.
Educational Institutions	Virginia Colleges and Universities; Out of State Colleges and Universities
Tourism	Virginia Tourism Corporation
Native American Tribes	Individual Indian Tribes

Agency Goals

- **Enhance public safety by administering effective dam safety and flood plain management programs with greater emphasis on service to dam owners and stakeholders.**

Summary and Alignment

Dams create impoundments in Virginia to provide waters for drinking and farm water supplies, public recreation, and aesthetic purposes. Virginians need these dams regulated to ensure their safety. DCR protects citizens and lands in Virginia by mapping, identifying, classifying, and regulating dams. Additionally, education of the public and local governments promotes compliance with safety requirements and maintenance schedules, resulting in increased safety. DCR also works to protect citizens from the impacts of flooding, works to restore stream channels and floodplains to carry the natural flows, and educates citizens about the challenges associated with development within the floodplains.

Associated State Goal

Public Safety: Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing a prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Associated Societal Indicator

Emergency Preparedness

Objectives

- » **Reduce potential loss of life and property damage due to severe flooding and dam failures.**

Description

Throughout Virginia, there are thousands of lives, homes, businesses, and properties placed at risk during floods and dam failures. DCR programs relating to the enforcement of the Virginia Dam Safety Act, the Impounding Structure Regulations, and the Federal Floodplain Management requirements seek to protect lives and property.

Objective Strategies

- Increase the number of communities compliant with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program.
- Increase the number of communities participating in the Community Rating System that requires higher standards and provides lower flood insurance premiums.
- Increase the number of dams with regular operation and maintenance certificates that meet minimum safety standards through dam owner training, compliance assistance, grants for assisting dam owners, and enforcement as required.

- Increase the number of known regulated dams with a state scan using aerial photography, LiDAR (light detection and ranging) data, followed by field visits as required.

Measures

- ◆ Number of dams with Regular Operation and Maintenance Certificates
- ◆ Number of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participating communities compliant with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain regulations.

- **Improve the quality of Virginia's waters and the Chesapeake Bay through non-point source pollution reduction programs.**

Summary and Alignment

Virginia's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay need to be protected from run-off pollution. By promoting sound agricultural best management practices and urban nutrient management, Virginia's waterways, and the living systems, economies, and way of life they support, will be protected for future generations.

Associated State Goal

Natural Resources: Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Associated Societal Indicator

Water Quality

Objectives

- » **Provide cost-share support to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) to support their effective local delivery of soil and water conservation programs and services.**

Description

Cost-share assistance is made available to Virginia's 47 local Districts to enable them to support and assist in addressing state soil and water initiatives. District boards are made up of locally-elected directors and appointed persons.

Objective Strategies

- Provide cost-share assistance to 47 Districts in support of water quality.
- Provide Districts with adequate financial support to enable them to deliver programs consistent with applicable regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Allocate cost-share assistance funding to target those areas that have the greatest potential to generate agricultural nonpoint source pollution.

Measures

- ◆ Number of agricultural acres with conservation best management practices state-funded through the Department's agricultural cost-share program, in support of statewide water quality goals.

- » **Provide technical support for Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts).**

Description

Provide technical assistance to Districts to support their effective local delivery of soil and water conservation programs and services. This technical assistance is in the form of funding to Districts to support staff that deliver direct assistance to landowners and operators in support of the cost-share program.

Objective Strategies

- Provide Districts with adequate financial support to enable them to deliver programs consistent with applicable regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Provide technical assistance to 47 Districts to enable them to deliver technical assistance in support of water quality.
- Provide training to Districts to assure consistent delivery of state and federal cost-share programs.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

- » **Provide administrative and operational funding to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) to support their effective local delivery of soil and water conservation programs, services, and flood control.**

Description

State funds made available to Virginia's 47 local Districts enable them to support and assist in addressing state soil and water initiatives and ensure the safe condition of their flood control structures. District boards are made up of locally-elected directors and appointed persons.

Objective Strategies

- Seek Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approval of Soil and Water Conservation District (District) agreement performance deliverables prior to June 1st annually.
- Establish annual grant agreements with 47 Districts, specifying funding amounts and performance deliverables, based on available funding.
- Issue funding to all Districts according to grant agreement timelines.
- Assess fulfillment of performance deliverables for each DCR/District grant agreement (47) and present to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

- » **Improve and protect water quality, especially in the Chesapeake Bay and drainage basins Outside the Chesapeake Bay through implementation of programs serving the agricultural and urban communities.**

Description

Reducing nonpoint source pollution from agricultural and urban sources is critical to improving water quality and removing impaired waters in the Chesapeake Bay and drainage basins Outside the Chesapeake Bay. In accordance with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) and in coordination with the other Chesapeake Bay states and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Virginia must meet specified river basin allocations for Virginia Bay tributaries and segments for nutrients and sediments, in order to meet certain milestones for water quality. Strategies, when fully implemented, will make the reductions needed to remove the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Bay tributaries from the federal list of impaired waters. Implementation of TMDL plans in drainage basins outside of the Chesapeake Bay will address those impairments.

Objective Strategies

- Develop an outreach program, in concert with the 47 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the farm community, to target farmers for adoption of effective best management practices and to implement the Resource Management Plans Program.
- Develop and fund strategic water quality initiatives and Cooperative Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs with local governments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other partners to address agricultural/urban/suburban best management practices.
- Identify and engage federal, state, and local programs that can assist in implementing best management practices.
- Target cost-effective agricultural best management practices (BMPs) for state financial support through DCR's agricultural BMP cost-share program.
- Promote the Virginia Master Gardener Program to advance nutrient management practices in urban or urbanizing areas of the Commonwealth.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

- **Enhance opportunities to participate in natural resource-based recreation opportunities.**

Summary and Alignment

Virginia's natural resources provide opportunities for many to experience the outdoors through recreational opportunities. Increased awareness of natural resource recreational possibilities can expand usage.

Associated State Goal

Natural Resources: Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Associated Societal Indicator

Land Preservation

Objectives

- » **Provide outstanding state park facilities, services, and programs while protecting and promoting stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the Commonwealth.**

Description

Virginia's award-winning state park system promotes a conservation ethic and provides the natural resources, facilities, services, and programs for visitors to enjoy outdoor recreational opportunities and appreciate our natural and cultural heritage resources.

Objective Strategies

- Address maintenance needs at state parks.
- Foster the development of support groups and continue to use and increase volunteerism.
- Maintain existing, and develop additional, public and private partnerships to further programs and operations.
- Operate and maintain a statewide system of state park lands, facilities, programs and services and ensure public satisfaction with state park facilities, services and programs.
- Provide a quality Youth Program to complete natural resource projects, encourage teambuilding and citizenship, foster environmental and cultural stewardship, and increase awareness of natural resource careers.
- Provide and expand interpretive and educational program offerings.
- Provide and improve merchandise and food services programs.
- Provide and improve multi-faceted public awareness information using the website, media, marketing, and promotions.
- Provide effective staff training including but not limited Basic Ranger Training Academy, Program Support Training, "FOCUS for Excellence" customer service training, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training, Law Enforcement Training, Interpretive training, etc.
- Refine and implement resource management plans and maintain current master plans for parks.

Measures

- ◆ Agency administrative cost per state park reservation made.
- ◆ Number of "Virginia Treasures" annually conserved or completed.
- ◆ Number of overnight visits to state parks.
- ◆ Number of park day users.
- ◆ Percent of excellent or good responses on the State Park Customer Satisfaction Survey.

- » **Develop and update State Park Master Plans in accordance with §10.1-200, Code of Virginia.**

Description

DCR serves as the lead outdoor recreation planner for the Commonwealth. As such, the Department is regularly charged by the legislature, executive branch and others with completing special studies, surveys, and park master plans. In addition, DCR authors the statewide comprehensive recreation planning and land conservation document every five years known as the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Completion of these responsibilities in a quality manner and within the prescribed time periods is essential to advancing outdoor recreational opportunities in Virginia.

Objective Strategies

- Develop master plans for all new sites within 2 years of final property acquisition.
- Maintain a schedule of master plan updates to ensure existing plans are updated every 10 years and prior to major changes proposed by construction.

Measures

- ◆ Number of state park master plans, outdoor recreation plans, scenic river, scenic byway, and trails studies and surveys completed annually.

» **Develop and implement the Virginia Outdoors Plan according to §§10.1-200 and 10.1-1021 of the Code of Virginia.**

Description

DCR serves as the lead outdoor recreation planner for the Commonwealth. As such, the Department is regularly charged by the legislature, executive branch and others with completing special studies, surveys, and park master plans. In addition, DCR authors the statewide comprehensive recreation planning and land conservation document every five years, known as the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Completion of these responsibilities in a quality manner and within the prescribed time periods is essential to advancing outdoor recreational opportunities in Virginia.

Objective Strategies

- Publish and distribute the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan in accordance with the National Park Service schedule and guidelines.

Measures

- ◆ Number of "Virginia Treasures" annually conserved or completed.

» **Provide financial assistance for recreational development**

Description

DCR administers outdoor recreation grant programs, principally 2 federal programs: the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). LWCF grants are awarded to state and local governments. RTP grants are awarded to state, federal and local governments, and/or 501(c)(3) organizations. In order to meet this objective, DCR will award open space and recreational grant funds to qualified applicants and administer the grant programs in compliance with state and federal requirements. The Department will ensure that all potential customers (grant recipients) receive grant announcements in a timely fashion and receive guidance on the application requirements.

Objective Strategies

- Conduct federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant rounds according to established procedures and available funding.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

» **Complete the construction of Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) capital and major maintenance projects within budget, on time, and meeting quality construction and conservation standards.**

Description

There are numerous types of capital projects including: debt-financed, general fund-supported, maintenance reserve, special-funded, and dam rehabilitation projects. Completion of projects on time and within budget is affected by numerous factors including weather, staffing, availability of materials, contractor schedules, health of the overall construction industry, and multiple internal/external project reviews/approvals, etc. DCR staff provides design and construction project management.

Objective Strategies

- Conduct construction projects in compliance with awarded contracts.
- Develop state park and natural area preserve facilities that enhance customer satisfaction with the state park and natural area preserve systems.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

• **Advance the protection, conservation, and stewardship of Virginia's natural heritage resources, significant natural areas, and conservation lands.**

Summary and Alignment

DCR is responsible for ensuring that the Commonwealth's biological diversity and natural areas are conserved for future generations and

available for outdoor recreation. Programs that promote good stewardship, conservation, and protection help to ensure that these assets will be preserved for Virginians to enjoy and as an economic asset as a tourist attraction for present and future generations.

Associated State Goal

Natural Resources: Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Associated Societal Indicator

Land Preservation

Objectives

» **Conserve the natural diversity of biological resources of the Commonwealth through inventory, protection, and stewardship.**

Description

Virginia has a rich diversity of plants, animals, and natural communities. Southwestern Virginia, for example, has been identified as one of only six biological diversity "hotspots" in the United States. Statewide, Natural Heritage biologists have discovered 30 species new to science and over 300 species never before recorded in Virginia. The efficient management and dissemination of the gathered conservation information in a timely and cost-effective manner, and the protection and proper habitat management of the Commonwealth's native species and significant natural communities on public and private lands continue to be priorities of this program.

Objective Strategies

- Conduct field surveys to locate new natural heritage resource mapped locations and update existing locations.
- Conserve key additions to natural area preserves based on conservation plans.
- Implement a minimum of 20 stewardship projects annually (prescribed burns, invasive species control, habitat restoration, etc.).
- Implement monitoring of natural area preserve deeds of dedication and open space easements on an annual basis.
- Improve capacity to work with localities on land use and planning decisions. Strive for local data agreements, including comprehensive plan updates, with 85% of localities within the coastal zone and 55% statewide.
- Incorporate all natural heritage resource element occurrence field data into Biotics, a highly integrated information management system, within 1-year of observation.
- Maintain the conservation lands database and report on the Commonwealth's goals to permanently protect for conservation purposes land statewide in conjunction with private and public partners.
- Maintain, restore, and enhance species and natural communities by actively managing Natural Area Preserves and assisting other resource managers.
- Protect and conserve natural heritage resources through information sharing and partner assistance.
- Provide karst technical assistance to landowners and public and private agencies and organizations.

Measures

- ◆ Number of critical projects completed annually that restore and enhance threatened natural heritage resources.
- ◆ Number of natural heritage resources observed in the field.

» **Conserve important resource lands and meet Virginia's land conservation goals.**

Description

DCR's Land Conservation programs provide assistance in identifying and conserving important resource lands and meeting Virginia's land conservation goals through outreach, and training; to support Virginia's land trust and conservation community; and to assist landowners and others with conservation issues. This includes providing staff support for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) Board and to effectively administer the VLCF grant program and conservation plan. This area also includes the effective evaluation of certain land preservation tax credit requests and the annual issuance of funds to land trusts, conservation organizations, and state and local governments for stewardship responsibilities assumed through the conservation of properties resulting in tax credits.

Objective Strategies

- Assist local land trusts with land preservation efforts.

- Coordinate with other state agencies involved in land conservation.
- Coordinate with the Department of Taxation to determine the amount of land and the location of property preserved through the Land Preservation Tax Credit program.
- Maintain and utilize DCR's Conservation Lands Database to track progress towards Virginia's land conservation goals and other conservation tools to identify lands worthy of protection.
- Provide specialty workshops to build organizational and professional capacity for land conservation.
- Provide staff coordination for awarding and implementing Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grants and stewardship payments.
- Verify the conservation value of all donations of real property interests requesting \$1 million or more in Land Preservation Tax Credits using the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Conservation Value Criteria.

Measures

- ◆ Number of "Virginia Treasures" annually conserved or completed.
- ◆ Number of acres conserved for land conservation purposes within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

» **Coordinate DCR's environmental review responsibilities.**

Description

DCR serves as the key coordinator for environmental review of project development plans that may impact the state's natural, scenic, and recreational resources.

Objective Strategies

- Review projects from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), and other project sponsors and distribute within two business days to the appropriate persons within DCR to ensure that all relevant areas of concern are properly addressed.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

• **Provide efficient and effective administrative support.**

Summary and Alignment

DCR's many program units require effective and efficient administrative functions to support the delivery of mission critical products and services. Through increased uses of technology, better process management, and accurate financial reporting, information can be collected from and disseminated to our customers and partners resulting in a high level of customer satisfaction.

Associated State Goal

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Associated Societal Indicator

Government Operations

Objectives

» **Ensure that resources are used efficiently and programs are managed effectively, and in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal requirements.**

Description

Management in Administration, Finance, Operational Support Offices, and the Director's Office provide support to the Department's Divisions in the delivery of programs and services in support of DCR's mission to provide opportunities that encourage and enable people to enjoy, protect, and restore Virginia's natural and cultural resources.

Objective Strategies

- Perform procurement operations in a timely manner.
- Fully address issues identified in the 2014 audit of the Department.
- Enhance Department training programs.

- Enhance workforce development programs.
- Enhance the quantity and quality of environmental education programming.
- Update the Agency's Policies and Procedures and ensure that staff are trained on and properly implementing the contents.

Measures

No measures currently linked to this objective

Major Products and Services

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION. DCR works to improve water quality in the Commonwealth of Virginia. DCR partners closely with the state's 47 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, farmers, urban and suburban landowners, and other land managers to control runoff pollution. DCR provides tools and information to the 47 local Districts and provides financial assistance (cost-share) to these Districts and farmers to protect Virginia's waterways and to facilitate good conservation practices. DCR's nutrient management program works to ensure that farmers apply nutrients to their fields at the rate needed to meet agronomic needs and thus avoid over application of nutrients. DCR's newest water quality program is the voluntary Resource Management Plans Program that encourages farmers to reduce erosion, exclude livestock from streams, establish stream buffers, and use nutrient management planning.

DAM SAFETY. DCR, through the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, requires each owner of a regulated *high, significant, or low* hazard dam to apply for an *Operation and Maintenance Certificate*. It administers funds to provide for qualified dam rehabilitation, dam break inundation zone mapping, and floodplain projects proposed by local governments and private entities in order to advance public safety and infrastructure protection. DCR is responsible for developing and maintaining a flood protection plan for the Commonwealth.

STATE PARK/NATURAL AREAS/OPEN SPACE. DCR develops, manages, and protects Virginia's State Park System, Natural Area Preserve System, and more than 600 miles of trails.

NATURAL HERITAGE. DCR is responsible for the identification, protection, and stewardship of Virginia's natural heritage resources, which are defined as the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, or rare or state significant natural communities. DCR maintains a database of this information that helps customers make informed land conservation decisions, and perform environmental assessments of proposed developments.

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES. DCR is responsible for creating and updating the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*, which is the Commonwealth's comprehensive outdoor recreation and open space planning document, conducts master planning for state parks, designs and constructs recreation facilities for state parks and natural area preserves, and provides grants and technical assistance related to land use and outdoor recreation. DCR also administers the statewide Scenic Rivers Program and a statewide system of trails.

LAND CONSERVATION. DCR administers a statewide land conservation grant program through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. It also verifies the conservation value of donations of real property interests for which donors request state land preservation tax credits of \$1 million or more.

BOARD STAFFING. DCR provides staffing for the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Board of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, as well as the Cave Board, which is an advisory board.

Performance Highlights

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION. In Fiscal Year 2015, DCR is able to provide more than \$34 million in funding to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for local operational costs and to assist farmers with implementing effective practices to reduce pollution. DCR works with the farming community, local Districts, and federal agencies to expand and target cost-effective agricultural conservation practices (i.e., livestock exclusion and nutrient management) that improve water quality. DCR also continues to pursue necessary levels of funding and technical support to Districts and farmers to meet pollution reduction targets in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation plan.

DAM SAFETY. DCR, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, makes grants or loans to local governments and private entities for the purpose of providing matching funds for flood prevention or protection in order to ensure public safety. Over the past four years, over 360 grants have been awarded for a total of \$4.6 million to assist dam owners and localities with improvements to their dams and flood protection projects. DCR has also undertaken an initiative to locate dams of regulated size using aerial photography, topography, and field visits. DCR also uses a system to provide for early warning alerts to emergency responders and dam owners, in order to ensure public safety. DCR is also tasked with providing a simplified mapping service for owners of low hazard dams. Since the program was initiated, over 50 applications for the service have been received.

STATE PARKS. Virginia's parks have garnered 82 awards. Customer satisfaction is high, with around 93 percent of survey respondents rating their park experience as good or excellent in 2013. In 2001, the State Parks System was awarded the National Gold Medal for excellence in park and recreation management by the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association, and was again a finalist for the 2013 National Gold Medal Award. In 2014, there were over 8.9 million visits to state parks. Working with private sector partners, DCR is actively pursuing the construction of a mountain bike trail at Pocahontas State Park. This venture is expected to bring millions of dollars in economic activity to Virginia as this bike trail will serve as a key ongoing legacy project of the Richmond 2015 UCI Road World Championships. The Virginia Association for Parks has embarked on a major fundraising campaign to create new exhibits at 11 state park visitor centers.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL AREA PRESERVES. DCR remains on the leading edge of biodiversity conservation innovation within the Network of Natural Heritage Programs covering all of Canada, the 50 U.S. States, and 19 Latin American countries. The Natural Heritage Program's development of an on-line information portal, Natural Heritage Data Explorer, is being replicated in multiple states and provinces. Additionally, the newly completed Wetlands Catalog identifies previously unmapped wetlands and prioritizes all of the wetlands across Virginia for conservation and restoration purposes. Staff is developing advanced species distribution modeling maps of federally listed species' predicted ranges, allowing for significant cost savings to the development community. Field discoveries of new species continue, with 34 species new to science and 340 native species not previously recorded in Virginia having been found by staff scientists. DCR has also significantly expanded its Natural Area Preserve System, which now comprises 62 preserves and 55,372 acres, supporting 441 different and rare species and natural communities. In July a new Natural Area Preserve public access guide was released.

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES. The *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP), completed in Fiscal Year 2014 and launched in April in a promotional video by First Lady McAuliffe, is the first Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in the nation to be entirely web-based. The plan has been presented at several conferences and implementation of the plan commenced with the launching of annual meetings with each of the Commonwealth's Planning Districts. Access to the plan is available through the DCR website, www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop. Master plans for state parks are being regularly developed and/or updated and work is underway on a master plan for Breaks Interstate Park. In response to requests from localities, scenic river studies were completed on the Clinch and Dan rivers. During this performance cycle, DCR's Design and Construction section completed seven capital construction projects totaling over \$1.1 million, with numerous other projects in the planning and design stages. Trail initiatives were advanced with the distribution of quarterly trails e-newsletters, an annual water recreation workshop with over 100 in attendance, and participation by staff in numerous national and regional trail initiatives. During this period, 14 outdoor recreation projects were submitted to federal funding agencies for grant approvals.

LAND CONSERVATION. DCR will continue to further the Commonwealth's land conservation progress by assisting land owners, land trusts, and other agencies, by organizing educational workshops and conferences for land conservation professionals, providing state-of-the-art land conservation planning information, maps, and intranet mapping tools, tracking conserved lands, providing matching grants through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and reviewing state land preservation tax credits as required by state law.

DCR has also developed the Commonwealth's first comprehensive, continually maintained, Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer for Virginia's protected conservation lands. This database includes mapped boundaries and attributes for public and certain private lands having various conservation, recreation, and open-space roles.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES. DCR's performance measures provide the public with information regarding the ongoing successes of the agency's state park, natural heritage, soil and water conservation, dam safety and floodplain management, recreational resource, and land conservation programs.

Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	452
Salaried Employees	394
Wage Employees	622
Contracted Employees	19

Key Risk Factors

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION. DCR continues to provide programmatic and financial support to Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) in order to reduce nonpoint source pollution, generated from agricultural and urban runoff sources. DCR recognizes that local Districts have limited resources and need both financial and technical assistance from DCR. Within its existing resource base, DCR will continue to provide funding for targeted agricultural conservation practices and provide technical implementation assistance to ensure that pollution reduction practices are employed efficiently and effectively. This assistance is critical in order for Virginia to meet pollution reduction goals outlined in Virginia's federally-approved Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and other total maximum daily loads. Within its available resources for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, DCR is providing 100 percent funding for farmers and landowners who implement stream exclusion practices, which entails keeping livestock away from streams and establishing vegetative buffers along streams. Stream exclusion is a key practice under the WIP and provides significant local water quality benefits by reducing bacteria impairments and reducing sediment and nutrient pollution. In 2014, DCR

launched the Resource Management Plans Program that will largely utilize private planners to develop conservation plans for farms. The Nutrient Management Program is working to include more farmland and increase the participation of non-regulated farms. Both of these programs are also key components of the Chesapeake Bay WIP and will require significant participation by producers for Virginia to attain necessary water quality nutrient and sediment reductions in the Bay and in other waters statewide.

DAM SAFETY. As part of the DCR's efforts to protect the public and infrastructure within dam break inundation zones, DCR continues to identify a growing number of dams that should be regulated. Through DCR's efforts, several hundred additional dams have been identified and DCR expects that Virginia may ultimately have at least 3,000 dams that will meet the minimal size requirements for regulation once the inventory is completed. Virginia is geographically located in an area that experiences intense storms. This fact, coupled with an inventory of aging dams and more dams lying in high risk areas, demonstrates the importance of continuing to support Virginia's Dam Safety Program. DCR is also conducting a probable maximum precipitation study to update information last compiled in the 1970's regarding precipitation events across the Commonwealth. This information is utilized in determining the necessary spillway capacity for dams in order to minimize the potential for their failure during large rainfall events.

There are 12 Districts that are responsible for 104 dams constructed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Since many of these NRCS dams are reaching the end of their maintenance agreements with Districts, DCR is currently developing a plan for the rehabilitation of approximately 50 high hazard dams.

STATE PARKS. In July of 2013, Powhatan State Park officially opened, bringing the number of state parks in the Commonwealth to thirty-six. Land has also been acquired for five additional parks, which are Widewater (Stafford County), Seven Bends (Shenandoah County), Middle Peninsula (Gloucester County), Mayo River (Henry County), and Biscuit Run (Albemarle County). Each state park, including those not yet developed, has (or will have) an adopted master plan identifying facilities needed to bring the park to its desired level of development. There are over 300 major capital projects identified in these publicly-developed plans. Increased demand for services from customers has required DCR to use a combination of seasonal and year-round wage employees and volunteers, and DCR continues to look for ways to meet continued demands within existing resources. DCR is also working on strategies to open the land-banked park properties for limited public use until funds are available for traditional capital improvements. Also, there is a need for continued capital improvements to the State Parks System to address general maintenance and infrastructure improvements. In Fiscal Year 2015, DCR received slightly more than \$2.2 million to address general park maintenance and this level of funding represents an ongoing need to address critical maintenance issues.

NATURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL AREA PRESERVE SYSTEM. Virginia has some of the most biologically sensitive habitats and species populations in the world, and DCR manages the state's Natural Heritage database. Currently, slightly over 30 percent of the community and species information in this database is over 25 years old; therefore, DCR continues to seek creative solutions to this aging data problem.

Virginia's Natural Area Preserve System, managed by DCR, has grown significantly in the past ten years and this growth has largely occurred due to expansion because of resources provided in the 2002 State Park and Natural Areas Bond package. The expanding size of the Natural Area Preserve System has increased demands on existing staff for biological resource management such as invasive species control, managed hunts, prescribed burning, and law enforcement. Management complexity has increased due to more required oversight of easements and Natural Area Preserve System boundaries, and the need for increased public access. As public demand for access increases, a corresponding need arises for construction and regular maintenance of bridges, gates, signs, and trails.

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES. Since 2009, a 30% reduction in staff has impacted the ability of the Planning and Recreation Resources Division to provide needed service delivery for programs both within the DCR as well as to localities across the state. Over the past five years, legislation affecting changes in the state park master planning process and in statewide trails have placed additional demands on staff time. As a growing number of state parks is added to the inventory, master planning requirements also continue to increase. DCR responses to these staff reductions have included reduction of the scope of work conducted on master plans (to executive summaries only), and reduction of the amount of technical support provided to localities. With an aging workforce of highly skilled professionals, over 60% of the division's staff will be eligible for retirement within the next 5 years, making succession planning of critical importance.

GENERAL OPERATIONS. Limitations on staffing and funding have presented challenges to the operations and programs in state parks (including law enforcement), natural heritage, dam safety, and programs delivered to Soil and Water Conservation Districts. DCR continues to look for innovative solutions to address adequate staffing within its existing general and nongeneral fund resource bases. DCR also has recognized that its information technology platform needs internal restructuring to enhance operations, particularly in light of recent program changes. This restructuring has already begun within the scope of existing resources.

Management Discussion

General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

DCR continually examines methods to improve services to customers while controlling costs in an environment of limited resources and increasing demands. Following the transfer of certain Stormwater Management Division programs to DEQ in fiscal year 2014, DCR reorganized its remaining water quality programs to focus on effective pollution reduction practices, such as the use by farmers and other stakeholders of resource management plans and nutrient management plans. In addition to protecting the safety of the public and landowners through the enforcement of the Virginia Dam Safety Act, DCR is also working with customers to perform simplified analyses to determine whether certain dams could qualify for a low

hazard classification and thus reduced and streamlined regulatory requirements. DCR also contains the Office of Environmental Education charged with providing environmental education opportunities for formal and nonformal educators through training programs and field-based experiences.

DCR also continues to add capital improvements to existing state parks and to design new state parks. DCR maintains a comprehensive Conservation Lands database and continues to build a nationally-recognized Natural Heritage database. It also continues to respond to requests for land conservation information from the general public, other state agencies, land trusts, legal and real estate experts, and landowners.

Information Technology

DCR relies heavily on Information Technology (IT) for day-to-day central operations that serve all of its divisions and that effectively meet the needs of citizens and stakeholders. DCR has implemented the use of a SharePoint platform for its intranet communications. DCR's systems also track payments to Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts for cost-share and operational support.

In support of its customers, DCR uses IT to model land use practices used in the clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay and to assist Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the implementation of best management practices on farmland and in the use of nutrient and resource management plans for agricultural planning. IT resources also track all identified dams in Virginia in order to determine hazard status and the level of compliance to protect public safety. DCR uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to support the management of information on rare species and natural communities and protected lands in the area of natural heritage. GIS data are also used to support Dam Safety and Floodplain Management, Soil and Water Conservation planning, and for planning improvements to State Parks and Natural Areas. DCR's IT platform also supports a State Parks reservation center that enhances visitorship. A system has also been recently developed to address DCR real estate information. DCR is also completing the development of Agricultural Conservation Planning and Resource Management Planning Modules. DCR continues to work to meet to ensure that all database information is tied together so that information is shared on a timely basis with decision makers.

Estimate of Technology Funding Needs

Workforce Development

DCR has a maximum employment level of 452 salaried positions. As of August 8, 2014, there was a 17 percent vacancy rate at DCR. Almost 10 percent of the current workplace is eligible for retirement with full benefits. Much of DCR's authorized wage workforce (1756 positions) provides seasonal help needed in the 36 state parks. DCR will ensure that its workforce has the environment in which to adapt to frequently changing demands and the problem-solving and analytical skills needed to respond promptly to demands from the public and to complex issues.

Physical Plant

Providing and maintaining adequate funding will be necessary in order for DCR to properly maintain and continue to grow its State Park System and its Natural Area Preserve System. The 2002 Parks and Natural Areas Bond and the 2008 Virginia Public Building Authority Bond have created a significant expansion to State Parks and Natural Area Preserve Systems. These expansions require public access and facilities development funds. The 2013 General Assembly authorized additional bond projects for Powhatan State Park, Widewater State Park, and for new cabins at various state parks.

In 2013, DCR's central office in Richmond consolidated to one location. Prior to this consolidation, DCR's offices were located in four separate buildings in the State Capitol area. DCR maintains multiple field office locations across Virginia requiring office infrastructure management.

Supporting Documents

Title	File Type
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Nonpoint Pollution Prevention [50301]

Description of this Program / Service Area

To improve the quality of Virginia's surface and groundwaters, by reducing nonpoint source pollution from agricultural and other land uses using voluntary and regulatory based measures, innovative reduction programs, and constituent outreach and education.

Mission Alignment

This service area supports the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) mission and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board's Virginia Code and regulatory responsibilities by conserving, protecting, and enhancing water quality, and promoting stewardship of natural resources.

On July 1, 2013, regulatory programs related to water quality planning, stormwater permitting, erosion and sediment control, and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act were transferred to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Consequently, DCR and its Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board retained programmatic and financial control related to support of Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which includes vital agricultural cost-share assistance, as well as support for resource management plans (RMPs) and nutrient management plans (NMPs). To better characterize the current programs, in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget, DCR will seek to rename this service area to Soil and Water Conservation rather than Nonpoint Pollution Prevention.

RMPs – Through regulations promulgated by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, DCR works to encourage farm owners and operators to voluntarily implement a high level of best management practices (BMPs) on their farmlands in order to be protective of water quality and to help farmers and operators receive credit for these BMPs actions as they relate to nutrient and sediment load allocations that must be achieved in order for Virginia to comply with state standards, federal Clean Water Act standards, and with the requirements of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan. Accordingly, when an approved RMP has been found to be fully implemented, DCR issues a certificate to the farmer or operator that is valid for a period of nine years, granting them "safe harbor" or "certainty" from applicable new state regulations, subject to periodic onsite inspections to ensure continued compliance. A critical factor to the successful use of RMPs will be the level of support provided by DCR for not only financial assistance but technical assistance to farmers and operators so that RMPs will be developed and implemented on a voluntary basis widely enough to prevent more stringent federal standards related to the load allocations in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

Farmers or operators who implement and maintain a RMP shall be one of the priority considerations for financial assistance through the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program administered by DCR in accordance with program eligibility rules and requirements, developed in concert with affected stakeholders.

The RMP program is a newly established program under regulations that became final in July of 2014. DCR currently has three full-time positions to provide a minimum level of support needed for the program. RMPs are being viewed as a prototype for similar "safe-harbor" or "certainty" programs by the federal Environmental Protection Agency and by other states.

NMPs – DCR also works to manage both agricultural and urban nutrients found in fertilizers, manure, biosolids, and other sources so that they retain their efficient use yet do not impair the quality of Virginia's surface and ground waters. DCR staff work with stakeholders to use various strategies to encourage proper land application of fertilizer, manure, and sewage sludge for agricultural and urban purposes. Nutrient management specialists in DCR's regional offices provide direct technical assistance to farmers. DCR staff develop site-specific nutrient management plans to help these farmers with manure testing for nutrient levels, calibrate nutrient application equipment, and coordinate soil nitrate testing in agricultural crop fields. DCR provides written procedures for the development, submission, and the implementation of a nutrient management plan or planning standards and specifications that shall be provided to all state agencies, state colleges and universities, and other state governmental entities that own land upon which nutrients are applied. DCR also conducts periodic reviews.

DCR has contractors who provide services to permitted animal operations regarding nutrient management issues and who develop nutrient management plans on un-permitted animal operations throughout the state. Additionally, DCR is working closely with Virginia Cooperative Extension to promote the Master Gardener programs to reach more homeowners and private businesses in developing and following nutrient management practices on urban lands across the state,

Persons who own land operated as a golf course and upon which specified nutrients are applied, must implement nutrient management plans by July 1, 2017. The plans must be submitted to DCR for review and approval. DCR must provide technical assistance and training for golf course operators on the development and implementation of nutrient management plans. DCR is also responsible for establishing a cost-share program to assist in implementation of the nutrient management plans. DCR currently has contractors writing nutrient management plans on golf courses.

DCR has a program to certify private and public sector nutrient management planners. Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations, which govern the program, stipulate the requirements for certification and criteria for nutrient management plans developed by certified individuals. DCR conducts training sessions and examinations every six months. There are currently more than 400 certified professional Nutrient Management

Planners in Virginia. This program also supports the RMP program as many of these certified NMP planners can also become RMP developers and assist farmers and operators with the development of RMPs.

DCR also administers Virginia's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which is an enhancement to the federal Conservation Reserve Program, which was established in 1985 and has enrolled more than 39 million acres nationwide. Virginia's CREP is divided into two regions, which are the Chesapeake Bay and Outside the Chesapeake Bay. This program helps to meet Virginia's water quality improvement goals, particularly as they relate to the Chesapeake Bay. Virginia's CREP helps farmers restore riparian forest buffers, grass and shrub buffers, and wetlands. DCR is currently working on establishing a new agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for Virginia's continued participation in CREP.

DCR administers and trains Soil and Water Conservation District staff on the Agricultural Best Management Practice Tax Credit Program that provides a state income tax credit equal to the producer's 25% out of pocket expenses associated with implementing certain agricultural BMPs.

DCR recognizes farms that maximize utilization of practices designed to protect water quality and soil resources by administering the Clean Water Farm Award Program. This program includes recognition of the best farm of the year in each major river basin by the Virginia General Assembly. DCR is also authorized to allow the undertaking of supplemental environmental projects as partial settlement of civil enforcement actions that are not otherwise required by law.

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board as part of its Soil and Water Conservation District (District) oversight responsibility, is authorized to approve the creation, boundary modification, and discontinuance of Districts; to approve applications for federal aid for soil and water conservation programs; to make loans from state funds to local authorities for such programs; and give or lend financial aid and other assistance to Districts.

Under the Agricultural Stewardship Act, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board shall review appeals by persons aggrieved by decisions of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services regarding agricultural water pollution complaints.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Financial Assistance

Regulatory Programs - Information

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Training and certification programs

Anticipated Changes

Since the July 1, 2014 effective date of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board's Resource Management Plan regulations, the Department has seen significant interest in program participation and expects increasing numbers of producers to seek RMPs. The Department is also developing a project through which voluntary BMPs that producers have installed without cost-share assistance, can be identified and credited in the Chesapeake Bay model as nutrient and sediment reductions. Further, the Department is developing processes for BMPs that are reaching their end of creditable lifespan to be verified as still functional and to have their creditable lifespan extended.

Factors Impacting

Expanding state and federal requirements from Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Implementation Plan and TMDLs for impaired waterbodies statewide impacts the agricultural community. (Note: TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive while still meeting state water quality standards.)

The RMP program is a newly-established program within DCR that is critical to providing incentives to farmers to establish voluntary practices that ensure water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. DCR anticipates that this program will expand in future years.

Financial Overview

These funds are used for the administration and oversight of the agency's nonpoint source water quality improvement programs, including nutrient

management, cost-share program for agricultural best management practices, resource management plans, and the conservation reserve enhancement program.

In the area of RMPs, future implementation efforts will require additional resources if this program has significant participation levels from farmers.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	6,025,987	11,495,457	1,906,325	11,241,707
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	150,000	800,000

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Dam Inventory, Evaluation and Classification and Flood Plain Management [50314]

Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area promotes the proper design, construction, operation, and maintenance of impounding structures and provides support to communities in proper management of development in Virginia's floodplains to protect life and property.

Mission Alignment

Effective dam safety and floodplain management protects life and property from the effects of natural and manmade flooding and enhances the conservation of natural resources. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operates a number of initiatives in the area of dam safety to protect lives as well as land.

Grants and Loans - DCR, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (the Board), may make grants or loans from the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund to local governments and private entities for the purpose of providing matching funds for flood prevention or protection based on continued and dedicated funding. The DCR director, upon approval from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, may also make grants and loans to local governments owning dams and make loans to private entities for the design, repair, and the modifications of dams identified in safety reports and make grants to localities and private entities for the determination of the hazard classification for impounding structures, dam break analysis, the mapping and digitization of dam break inundation zones, incremental damage analysis, and other engineering requirements such as emergency action plan development.

DCR staff review grant and loan applications and the Board approves all grants and loans. Over the past four years, slightly over 360 grants have been awarded for a total of \$4.6 million to assist dam owners and localities with improvements to their dams and flood protection projects

Grant and loan funds in the dam safety category are awarded to assist dam owners to be in compliance with the Virginia Dam Safety Act and the Virginia Impounding Structure Regulations. Eligible applicants in this category include local governments and private entities. Eligible projects in this category include: 1) Dam Break Inundation Zone Analysis; 2) Mapping and Digitization; 3) Emergency Action Plan Development; 4) Incremental Damage Analysis; and 5) Engineering for Dam Repairs.

In the flood prevention and protection category, eligible applicants are limited to local governments. The purpose of this category is to assist local governments with: 1) Locality Flood Warning and Response Systems; 2) Improvements to Locality Floodplain Program with acceptance in Community Rating System required; and 3) Locality Floodplain Information and Educational Programs.

Enforcement and Certification - The owner of an impounding structure (dam) that does not currently hold a regular or conditional certificate from the Board, or the owner of an impounding structure that is already under certificate but the owner believes that a condition has changed downstream of the impounding structure that may reduce its hazard potential classification, may request that DCR conduct a simplified analysis to determine whether the impounding structure has a low hazard potential classification. The owner shall pay 50 percent of the cost of the analysis. If DCR finds that the impounding structure has a low hazard potential classification, the owner shall be eligible for general permit coverage. Since regulations were amended in the fall of 2012 to allow for this general permit coverage, over 50 applications for a simplified analysis have been received

Mapping and Database Management - Virginia is a partner with North Carolina regarding floodplain mapping to better prepare for disasters, such as hurricanes. In addition to providing access to digital maps for citizens, localities, and consultants, this floodplain mapping enables citizens to determine if their property is located in a floodplain and what actions can be taken to reduce the risk of damage from flooding. This system will also provide information regarding whether a property is located in a dam break inundation zone. DCR has used federal funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide resources for this project.

DCR has also undertaken an initiative to locate dams of regulated size using aerial photography, topography, and field visits for confirmation. The National Hydrologic Database is used to identify water bodies of adequate size that could be regulated dams. DCR also uses a web-based system, using live-sources and feeds, to provide an early warning system where alerts and notification are distributed immediately to emergency responders and dam owners, in order to protect those citizens at risk due to a dam failure.

Repair and Maintenance - Almost half of all dam failures are due to problems with the operation of the dam. In cases of extreme weather, actions may be taken to prevent a dam failure. DCR uses four equipped trailers to provide emergency repairs to dams in order to protect public safety. DCR makes this service available to local first responders and dam owners and this service is also used to repair dams at State Parks.

Flood Insurance – At this time, only a handful of Virginia's local floodplain programs participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS reduces premiums to flood insurance policy holders in exchange for improvements to the local floodplain management program above the minimum standards. DCR works to provide support to local programs so that Virginia's CRS participation rate grows and policy holders, such as citizens, can benefit from insurance premium savings.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement

Public Safety (dam safety, program enforcement, etc.)

Mapping funds for Dam Break Inundation Zones and Areas of Special Flood Hazards

Regulatory Programs - Information

Technical and Planning Assistance

Public Education

Financial Assistance

Mapping Coordination and Project Management for Special Flood Hazard Areas

Flood Protection Plan development and maintenance for the Commonwealth

Public Information

Anticipated Changes

With the recent legislative directives to DCR to add additional dam safety products and services and the continuing increase in the identification of known regulated dams, DCR will need to enhance services and products to both educate the public about Dam Safety Act requirements and to properly enforce the law.

For the 2014-2016 biennium and beyond, resources are being focused by DCR in the following areas: 1) grant and loan management; 2) enforcement and certification (simplified analyses of dams); 3) floodplain mapping and identification of previously unregulated dams; 4) expansion of early warning systems; and 5) study of probable maximum precipitation values. DCR seeks to continue to enhance its dam safety programs using existing state and federal funds; however, additional resources may be needed in future years in order for the full scope of each of these initiatives to be realized.

A Soil and Water Conservation Districts Dam Rehabilitation Committee has been formed to work with DCR in the development of a plan for the rehabilitation of District high hazard dams. There are 12 Districts that are responsible for 104 dams constructed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for flood control and other benefits. Since many of these NRCS dams are reaching the end of their maintenance agreements with Districts, the focus of this committee is to develop a plan for how best and at what cost to rehabilitate the approximately 50 high hazard dams to meet minimum public safety standards and maintain their flood control and other benefits to the citizens of Virginia.

Weather events create the periodic and unpredictable need for additional services from the floodplain staff.

Factors Impacting

State funding levels

Expanding demands on staff related to program delivery

Federal funding levels

Expanding state and/or federal requirements

Financial Overview

Funds are used primarily for the administration and oversight of the Virginia Dam Safety Act and National Flood Insurance Program.

Funding for DCR's Dam Safety Program is primarily from Virginia's general fund and permit fees. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides 100 percent funding for managing the Map Modernization Program in Virginia through the FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) grant. FEMA provides 75 percent of the funding for two DCR staff positions under the Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element grant to assist localities with compliance with Floodplain Management ordinances. The Department of Homeland Security/ FEMA provides an annual grant

to DCR to support the Commonwealth's Dam Safety Program.

Included in the general fund appropriation for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 is \$864,294 to be deposited to the Dam Safety Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund to be administered by the Virginia Resources Authority. From this amount, funds (\$400,000) are earmarked for repairs to Todd Lake Dam in Augusta County in each year of the biennium.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	1,519,722	349,403	1,519,722	349,403
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Natural Heritage Preservation and Management [50317]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) Natural Heritage Program operates as a model land conservation entity in state government, with a focus to conserve Virginia's biological diversity through inventory, conservation information, protection, and stewardship. This involves extensive natural community, plant, and animal field research and the maintenance of a comprehensive, internationally standardized database of the biota of Virginia, and a comprehensive open-space land conservation mapping and information distribution system. Additionally, the program provides support to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and supporting information for DCR's Land Preservation Tax Credit conservation value review process. Virginia manages a Natural Area Preserve System currently containing 62 properties and 55,372 acres supporting 663 mapped locations of 441 rare species and exemplary natural communities, managing the best examples of Virginia's natural habitats, and rarest plant and animal species for the benefit of present and future Virginians.

Mission Alignment

DCR's Division of Natural Heritage (DNH) works to conserve Virginia's biological diversity through inventory, conservation information, protection, and management. The DNH was formed in 1986 and codified in 1989 with a biological diversity focused land conservation mission. Recent key accomplishments, focused on the core mission, have included the release and promotion of the *Flora of Virginia*, a 1,500 page comprehensive guide to the naturalized plants of Virginia for use by citizens, students, professionals and designed to enhance the understanding and conservation of Virginia's plants and habitats, field documentation of over 200 significant natural communities and rare species, completion of state of the art natural resources map and data products such as the Virginia Wetlands Catalog, updates to ConservationVision - statewide land conservation planning maps, release and training on Natural Heritage Data Explorer, development of species predictive range maps, and responses to 2,333 written information requests. Additional acreage is being periodically added to the Natural Area Preserve System and staff routinely conduct prescribed burns on portions of critical Natural Area Preserves in order to restore and maintain natural communities and rare species.

DCR is authorized to: establish criteria for the selection, registration, and dedication of natural areas and natural area preserves; grant permits to qualified persons for the conduct of scientific research and investigations within natural area preserves; provide recommendations to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries concerning their regulatory activities related to endangered species; produce an inventory of the Commonwealth's natural heritage resources; maintain a natural heritage data bank; and develop a natural heritage plan to establish priorities for the protection, acquisition, and management of registered and dedicated natural areas and natural area preserves. General fund appropriations, gifts, bequests, devises, fees, lease proceeds, and funds accruing from, or attributable to, the use or management of state natural area preserves acquired or held by DCR are to be deposited to the Natural Area Preservation Fund.

DCR issues permits to excavate or remove any archaeological, paleontological, prehistoric, or historic feature of any cave, or to carry out other scientific investigations or collections. DCR, through the Virginia Cave Board, is responsible for protecting: rare, unique, and irreplaceable minerals and archaeological resources found in caves; rare and endangered animal or other life forms found in caves; ground water flow in caves; and the integrity of caves that have unique characteristics or are exemplary natural community types.

The DCR director serves as Executive Secretary to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) and is responsible for providing technical assistance and performing administrative duties for the Foundation. The DCR director is responsible for developing a biennial report of the work of the board, which includes land conservation targeting tools developed for the Foundation; a description of the geographic distribution of land protected; and progress made toward recognized state and regional land conservation goals.

DCR is also responsible for the welfare of the public visiting each Natural Area Preserve. Designated DCR staff, in addition to assisting the public with accessing recreational opportunities, may also be trained conservation officers. These conservation officers are law-enforcement officers and work with the law-enforcement officer of the localities where Natural Areas are located. They may enter into mutual aid agreements for the use of joint police and other law enforcement services as needed.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Financial Assistance

Outdoor Recreational Activities

Regulatory Programs - Information

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement

Public Safety (dam safety, law enforcement, etc.)

Invasive species information and management

Natural community and rare species inventory, information, and management

Cave and karst conservation services

Land conservation information

Land planning information

Anticipated Changes

Changes in land use and climate have resulted in a rapid aging of natural heritage resource site information, with many locations not visited in ten to twenty years. This, along with reduced inventory staffing and increased job duties and time demands has resulted in a priority need to revisit natural community and rare species sites in the field, verify their status, and update computerized data so the best available information is available to meet land planning and land conservation needs. Identifying additional resources and methods to address this issue is a priority.

More natural heritage information will need to be produced and distributed to the land conservation and land use community, via evolving internet mapping and database technology. There is also a demand for more general open space land conservation mapping and targeting information for land trusts and local governments. Natural Heritage scientists and staff need assistance with specialized geographic information systems (GIS) training to accomplish their work.

Factors Impacting

State funding levels

Expanding demands on staff in key program areas

Declining federal funding levels

Increased demand for agency services/products

Rapid changes in land use and climatic factors

Financial Overview

These funds are used for the administration of DCR’s Natural Heritage Program. Activities of this program include: the inventory of Virginia’s natural communities and rare species, management of this information to make it readily available for decision making, management and stewardship of the Natural Area Preserve System, environmental reviews for natural communities and rare species, invasive species control, prescribed burns, and land conservation public information and education.

There has been a rapid expansion of the Natural Area Preserve System brought about largely through the 1992 and 2002 bond funding and 2008 Virginia Public Building Authority bonds and an increasing demand by the public to recreate and visit natural area preserve lands.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	2,589,775	1,593,268	2,589,775	1,593,268
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	500,000	0

Supporting Documents

Financial Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts [50320]

Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area provides financial assistance to Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) for administrative and operational activities that support programs that conserve soil and water resources, improve water quality, coordinate local conservation activities, and maintain their water control structures.

Mission Alignment

By providing general fund support for the state's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts), the Commonwealth is providing a direct, local delivery system of programs and services that improve soil and water resources, coordinated through the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to achieve regional and state natural resource objectives.

The Appropriation Act annually provides specific language related to funds available for District operational and administrative support. The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board annually develops a policy detailing the specific distributions of this funding to Districts.

In 2012 and 2013, a stakeholder advisory group met to examine District fiscal resource needs. Coming from these discussions, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have completed a budget template in both fiscal year 2013 and 2014 that documents in detail how state funds are used and the specific areas where additional state funds are needed. The results of this exercise have been utilized to justify increased operational and administrative funding for Districts to allow them to adequately support necessary levels of program delivery. It has also been recommended by stakeholders that in order to provide greater annual stability to District operations, that technical assistance become part of District base funding and not be tied to fluctuating cost-share funding.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Financial Assistance

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Anticipated Changes

There are no anticipated changes to the customer base although the Board, Department, and Districts are working to involve more producers in the cost-share program.

Factors Impacting

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and other water quality goals, increased funding to the Districts for service delivery and increased constituent outreach will be critical. In addition to needs identified in stakeholder advisory group and needs assessment meetings, Districts also have outstanding needs related to information technology (IT) upgrades and needs related to additional engineering services.

Financial Overview

This general fund appropriation is distributed to the Districts in accordance with the provisions of the Appropriation Act and program, financial, and resource allocation policies established by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board for administrative and operational support. These amounts shall be in addition to any other funding provided to the Districts for technical and cost-share assistance which is captured in a separate service area.

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay TMDL and other water quality goals, increased funding to the Districts for service delivery and increased constituent outreach will be critical elements. The stakeholder advisory and needs assessment groups have identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the WIP. The use of a budget template by Districts to document funding needs remains very important for refining the resources needed to meet the goals of the WIP. This budget information is helping to document a level of stable, annual

funding that exceeds what is typically available through funding now provided through the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRCF).

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	6,841,091	100,000	6,841,091	100,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Technical Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts [50322]

Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area provides technical assistance to Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) for support of their delivery of programs which conserve soil and water resources, improve water quality, and coordinate local conservation activities.

Mission Alignment

DCR supports Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) by delivering programs and services that improve soil and water resources to achieve regional and state natural resource objectives.

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) work with local Districts to encourage and assist farmers and landowners to implement best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs include a number of voluntary on-the-ground actions that control the runoff of soil, fertilizer, and manure from farmlands, which, in turn, reduce nutrient and sediments released into Virginia waters and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. BMPs are implemented on croplands, pasturelands, and haylands, and can also address livestock operations. For instance, a nutrient management plan, which is a BMP, can ensure that the appropriate application of nutrients is timed to best meet crop needs while integrated pest management (another BMP) prevents the excessive application of pesticides. DCR maintains specifications for 86 BMPs that comprehensively cover agricultural operations. There is a special emphasis on the reduction of nutrient and sediments delivered to the Chesapeake Bay, in order to comply with federal standards and commitments made in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

Not only do BMPs protect and improve water quality but BMPs can enhance the operations of a farm through the use of prudent soil conservation and management decisions. DCR continues to examine BMPs as agricultural technology changes and federal and state standards regarding pollution limitations change. DCR recognizes that efficient and cost effective methods for applying nutrients and minimizing soil loss can translate to direct savings to farmers as well as reducing pollutant loads to Virginia waters.

The Appropriation Act provides funding for technical assistance to Districts, which includes technical assistance to farmers who implement agricultural BMPs. This assistance allows local Districts to fund local technical staff to advance adoption of conservation management services and promote incentives to encourage voluntary actions by landowners and land managers in order to minimize nonpoint source pollution contributions to state waters, which includes the implementation of resource management plans (RMPs). (RMPs encourage farm owners and operators to voluntarily implement a high level of BMPs on their farmlands.)

In 2012 and 2013, a stakeholder advisory group met to examine District fiscal resource needs. Coming from these discussions, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have completed a budget template in both fiscal year 2013 and 2014 that documents in detail how state funds are used and the specific areas where additional state funds are needed. The results of this exercise have been utilized to justify increased operational and administrative funding for Districts to allow them to adequately support necessary levels of program delivery. It has also been recommended by stakeholders that in order to provide greater annual stability to District operations, that technical assistance become part of District base funding and not be tied to fluctuating cost-share funding.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Technical Assistance

Public Information

Anticipated Changes

There are no anticipated changes to products and/or services.

Factors Impacting

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and other water quality goals, increased and stable funding to the Districts for service delivery and increased constituent outreach will be critical.

Financial Overview

This general fund appropriation is distributed to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) in accordance with the provisions of the Appropriation Act and program, financial, and resource allocation policies established by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. These amounts shall be in addition to any other funding provided to the districts for financial or cost share assistance which is captured in a separate service area.

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay TMDL and other water quality goals, increased funding to the Districts for service delivery and increased constituent outreach will be critical elements. The stakeholder advisory and needs assessment groups have identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the WIP. The use of a budget template by Districts to document funding needs remains very important for refining the resources needed to meet the goals of the WIP. This budget information is helping to document a level of stable, annual funding that exceeds what is typically available through funding now provided through the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRCF).

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	1,582,551	2,128,000	0	2,128,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	939,397	643,154

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Assistance [50323]

Description of this Program / Service Area

To provide cost-share assistance to Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) to support various practices in conservation planning to treat animal waste, cropland, pastureland, and forested land and reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Mission Alignment

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) supports Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) by delivering programs and services that improve soil and water resources to achieve regional and state natural resource objectives.

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) work with Districts to encourage landowners and agricultural operators to voluntarily install best management practices (BMPs) to meet Virginia's nonpoint source pollution reduction water quality objectives. Examples of BMPs include the development of nutrient management plans, planting of cover crops, and the implementation of stream exclusion of livestock.

The Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program supports agricultural BMP implementation. With Virginia's commitment to the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), which is designed to remove the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries from the list of impaired waters, the VACS program emphasizes the efficient implementation of agricultural BMPs. The VACS program also provides a special emphasis on reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment delivered to the Chesapeake Bay and to drainage basins Outside the Chesapeake Bay by providing targeted funding to high-priority areas.

Funding for the VACS program is provided by DCR to all 47 Districts in accordance with the provisions of the Appropriation Act and in accordance with policies and guidance adopted by the Board. DCR provides these funds to Districts, which are responsible to making payments to eligible individuals and privately-held business entities operating on agricultural land that apply to participate in the VACS program. To be eligible for funding, such individuals and businesses must use a minimum of five contiguous acres of land engaged in the production of agricultural, horticultural, or forest products for market. There must also be an annual minimum of more than \$1,000 of agricultural products being produced, sold, or both from the land.

In 2012 and 2013, a stakeholder advisory group met to examine District fiscal resource needs. Coming from these discussions, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have completed a budget template in both fiscal year 2013 and 2014 that documents in detail how state funds are used and the specific areas where additional state funds are needed. Additionally, a stakeholder group met in 2014 to refine the annual cost-share needs assessment. This assessment is published in the FY 2014 Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Waters Clean-Up Plan which may be found at <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2014/RD352>

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Anticipated Changes

Factors Impacting

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and other water quality goals, increased funding to the SWCDs for cost-share will be critical.

Financial Overview

The primary source of funding for the VACS program is deposits made to the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) or directly to the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRFCF). The VNRFCF is a subfund of the WQIF that is intended to support the implementation of agricultural BMPs.

Fifty-five (55) percent of the total VNRFCF is used for the Chesapeake Bay drainage basin and 37 percent of the VNRFCF is used for drainage basins

outside the Chesapeake Bay. The remaining eight percent provides technical assistance to farmers implementing agriculture BMPs, in accordance with the provisions of the Appropriation Act.

For Virginia to achieve its Chesapeake Bay TMDL and other water quality goals, increased funding to the Districts for service delivery, cost-share, and increased constituent outreach will be critical elements. The stakeholder advisory and needs assessment groups have identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the WIP.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	18,199,337	13,194,734	0	8,800,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	-10,000,000	9,757,074	16,742,263

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Preservation of Open Space Lands [50401]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The conservation of Virginia's land and related water resources is not only a mandate of Article XI of the Constitution of Virginia, but is also vital to the quality of life enjoyed by Virginians. With an increasing population and associated development, the conservation of these resources is essential to both the public well-being and the economic viability of the state. Land conservation is about more than just aesthetics; it is a strategy for protection and improvement of water quality, preservation of cultural and historic sites, protection of our plant and animal communities, sustaining working landscapes, natural areas and parks, and enhancing our quality of life as Virginians. Preserved open-space lands support Virginia's oldest and largest economic drivers: agriculture and forestry, as well as tourism, providing both economic and intrinsic benefits.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Preservation of Open Space Lands service area includes operational expenses transferred to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation; funds appropriated to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) for grant opportunities and stewardship responsibilities, for administrative support of the VLCF, and for the development of land conservation tracking and targeting tools and conservation plans on behalf of the VLCF; for administration and support of the Land Preservation Tax Credit Program; and activities related to the management and outreach activities associated with DCR's land conservation programs. DCR provides coordination with Virginia's land conservation community, assistance to the citizens of the Commonwealth, and review of conservation value for conservation easements where the applicant is requesting \$1 million or more in Land Preservation Tax Credits.

Mission Alignment

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation works with Virginians to conserve, protect, and enhance their lands and water. The Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC) Program has proven to be a valuable incentive for landowners interested in voluntarily conserving their property through perpetual conservation easements or fee-simple donations. The transferability feature of the tax credits is especially valuable to persons with little or no state income tax liability. A two percent fee on the transfer of tax credits now provides much needed support to land trusts and other conservation agencies and organizations for their ongoing responsibilities for the hundreds of thousands of acres of conserved lands they steward. Responsibilities for oversight of the LPTC program are shared by DCR, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF), and the Virginia Department of Taxation (TAX).

DCR's review of LPTCs, which began in January of 2007, serves as an important tool for the Commonwealth to ensure that the lands protected for which a tax credit is issued of \$1 million or more (based on a 40% credit for a donation valued at \$2.5 million or greater) have worthy conservation values and that the natural and historical resources they contain are adequately protected in perpetuity. DCR's review is carried out in accordance with criteria adopted by the VLCF for this purpose. Based on information provided to DCR from TAX as of October 31, 2014, in 2013, there were 222 applicants that claimed \$77,392,083 in tax credits protecting 62,467 total acres of land. The LPTC provides a crucial incentive to further Virginia's land conservation goals and DCR's oversight continues to provide benefits to the Commonwealth's efforts to ensure the conservation value of properties applying for the LPTC.

The VLCF serves an important land conservation mission in the Commonwealth. It leverages state funds through matching grants and partnerships to protect working farms and forests, historic lands, open space and parks, and natural areas. The Foundation's distinctive features include a cross-cutting grant review process to maximize conservation values of funded projects, an inter-agency staff review team that involves expertise from multiple state agencies, and a final review by a diverse Board of Trustees whose membership includes appointees from the Governor, Speaker of the House of Delegates, and the Senate of Virginia.

Total funds appropriated to the VLCF have exceeded \$46.2 million since FY2000. Of this amount, approximately \$34.6 million has been allocated to VLCF's matching grant program, and more than \$9.6 million has been allocated to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in accordance with state law. Since first receiving funding in FY2000, nine grant rounds have been held. During those nine grant rounds, VLCF received 254 applications requesting approximately \$100.2 million in state funding, which was almost three times the available amount. To date, VLCF has awarded funding to 143 of the 254 grant project requests and helped protect more than 51,000 acres.

DCR has developed several statewide tools that assist in VLCF's work such as the Conservation Lands Database (which provides a dynamic parcel-level tracking tool for all conservation lands in the Commonwealth) and the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment (which provides statewide models to display lands ranked in conservation importance based on their recreational, cultural, agricultural, forest economics, and watershed integrity assets). These tools are utilized to help assess grant applications submitted to the VLCF for funding consideration.

The DCR director serves as Executive Secretary to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) and is responsible for providing technical assistance and performing administrative duties for the Foundation. The DCR director is responsible for preparing a biennial report on the work of the Board, which includes progress made toward recognizing state and regional land conservation goals.

DCR serves as a statewide central contact, repository, and clearinghouse for land conservation in Virginia. During VLCF grant rounds, land conservation staff serve as an important source of information for potential grant applicants and act as the grant manager for projects funded. The

land conservation website includes a wide variety of land conservation materials and contact information that assists landowners, conservation organizations, and managers with their conservation planning.

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) was created by statute in 1966 under [Virginia Code § 10.1-1800](#). Today, VOF holds more than 3,700 conservation easements and protects about 760,000 acres throughout Virginia. VOF oversees the Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund, which is used to assist localities acquiring conservation easements or landowners conveying conservation easements with the costs of legal and appraisal fees. The fund can also be used to purchase all or part of the value of an easement.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

- Conservation lands tracking and targeting tools
- Property conservation through funding fee simple and easement acquisitions
- Financial assistance (land conservation grants and stewardship payments)
- Outdoor recreational activities
- Technical assistance
- Public education
- Public information
- Review of Land Preservation Tax Credit applications

Anticipated Changes

- More need for prioritizing what lands will be preserved.
- Greater need for education of landowners on the benefits of land conservation and the requirements of Land Preservation Tax Credit.
- Greater need for regional and statewide land planning.
- Stronger land conservation network for better communication.

Factors Impacting

- State Funding levels
- Increased demand for agency services/products
- Federal funding levels and the fluctuating status of federal tax benefits

Financial Overview

Funds provided in this service area include funds for operational support transferred to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation; funds appropriated to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) for grant opportunities and stewardship responsibilities, for administrative support of the VLCF, and for the development of land conservation tracking and targeting tools and conservation plans on behalf of the VLCF; for administration and support of the Land Preservation Tax Credit Program; and activities related to the management and outreach activities of DCR's Office of Land Conservation

The VLCF has recently conducted a grant round to obligate fiscal year 2015 and 2016 funding for land conservation projects.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	2,549,689	10,544,635	2,549,689	10,544,635

Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	3,000,000	0
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Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Design and Construction of Outdoor Recreational Facilities [50403]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Design and Construction (DAC) section of the Planning and Recreation Resources Division oversees the appropriate design and construction of all approved capital projects on DCR property and for Conservation District-owned dams and implements projects according to available funding.

DAC provides engineering and architectural support in the areas of capital outlay, maintenance, and technical assistance to enhance the Agency's efforts and initiatives to conserve Virginia's natural and recreational resources. DAC directs the capital development of Virginia's State Park system including the development of new parks, additional facilities in parks, and major maintenance projects to provide recreation facilities that are safe, well-designed, and that meet the goals of the Agency's master plans, the Governor, the legislature, and the citizens of Virginia. DAC also directs the capital development of the Natural Area Preserve system.

Mission Alignment

By designing and constructing accessible facilities, DCR lands are enhanced for the enjoyment of Virginians and out-of-state visitors. Resulting recreational facilities and infrastructure may be found within Virginia's 36 State Parks and within the Natural Area Preserve system.

The DCR director is authorized to issue revenue bonds of the Commonwealth to pay the cost of acquiring, constructing, enlarging, improving, and maintaining camping and recreational facilities in any of the state parks and to establish and collect fees and charges for the use of such facilities.

Utilizing Virginia Public Building Authority bond appropriations, DCR is authorized to fund the major modification, upgrade, or rehabilitation of dams owned or maintained by DCR and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts to bring impounding structures into compliance with dam safety requirements.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Technical Assistance

Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement

Construction Supervision and Oversight

Park Facilities (cabins, campsites, picnic shelters, visitor centers, etc.)

Acquisition of professional services such as architects, engineers, and land surveyors.

Procurement of construction

Anticipated Changes

The addition of funding for capital projects—particularly dams—will create a need for additional staffing to manage that workload

Operation of new or expanded facilities developed in several existing state parks

Development of new parks which have been acquired

Increased need for technical assistance to state parks (more requests for design plans)

Increased need to permit minor construction/repair projects throughout the State Park System.

Factors Impacting

Increased cost of construction materials, services, and land

Expanding demands on staff related to program delivery, including review of dams

Lack of sufficient maintenance funding to properly maintain aging facilities and equipment

Financial Overview

The funds in this service area provide for oversight of the DCR's capital projects and dam repairs. The funds do not include the actual bond appropriations or other capital appropriations.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	755,081	185,187	755,081	185,187
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

State Park Management and Operations [50404]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR's) award winning state park system provides a varied and robust assortment of natural, cultural, and recreational venues for the enjoyment, education, and use by Virginians and our visitors. The system encompasses 36 active state parks and additional sites have been acquired and are undergoing or awaiting development, including the provision of limited day-use public access opportunities.

Mission Alignment

The Virginia State Parks system promotes the stewardship, conservation education, and enjoyment of natural, cultural and outdoor recreational resources.

A visit to one of the Virginia's 36 active State Parks provides a myriad of outdoor experiences. Featured are some of the Commonwealth's most spectacular scenery and outstanding natural resources, such as Natural Tunnel in southwestern Virginia or the fragile coastal environment at False Cape in Virginia Beach. State Parks offer boat access to most of the major bodies of water in Virginia, including the Commonwealth's four largest lakes, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Camping and cabins have long been favorites of Virginia State Parks visitors. In addition, Virginia State Parks have offered the best in nature and history programming for more than 40 years, increasing the public's knowledge and understanding of the environment. DCR also provides operational and maintenance funding for Breaks Interstate Park, per an agreement with Kentucky to split this park's operating expenses.

In support of the State Park system, DCR is responsible for acquiring, developing, improving, managing, licensing, and regulating the use of State Parks and for undertaking a master planning process for all existing State Parks, following the substantial acquisition of land, or prior to undertaking major improvements to an existing park. DCR has established programs that provide discounts (for parking and admittance fees) to persons receiving social security disability payments and to disabled veterans. DCR is also charged to establish, maintain, protect, and regulate a statewide system of trails.

DCR is authorized to enter into contracts with private entities for revenue producing capital improvements in State Parks. Furthermore, DCR is authorized to issue revenue bonds of the Commonwealth to pay the cost of acquiring, constructing, enlarging, improving, and maintaining camping and recreational facilities and to establish and collect fees and charges for the use of facilities.

DCR is also responsible for the welfare of the public visiting each State Park and employ staff with law enforcement training. As law enforcement officers, State Parks staff work with the law-enforcement officers of the localities where State Parks are located and enter into mutual aid agreements for the use of joint police and other law enforcement services as needed.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Outdoor Recreational Activities

Public Education

Public Information

Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement

Public Safety (dam safety, law enforcement, etc.)

Park Facilities (cabins, campsites, picnic shelters, visitor centers, meeting facilities, training facilities, museums etc.)

Park Programs (Festivals, concerts, plays, performances, re-enactments, living histories, interpretive programs)

Merchandise sales, gift shops, restaurants and food concessions

Resource management and protection

Anticipated Changes

The State Parks system will continue to develop and adapt customer services to follow changes in demand, within the limits of available resources. Changes have been made and will continue to be made in the areas of electronic and social media, expanding seasons of operation to meet greater year-round demand, and accommodating new forms of outdoor recreation.

Factors Impacting

Changes in the recreation industry and society in general will require that DCR modify and develop its products and services. For instance, the camping industry continues to offer larger and more sophisticated RV units while there is also a strong demand for more basic camping for those of more modest means. Another factor that must be considered is the rapid pace of changes in technology for communications, advertising, and information delivery.

DCR continues to explore new opportunities for park services through public-private partnerships. There is a continued demand from the private sector for less formal user arrangements, such as contracting for fishing guides and canoe outfitters.

DCR leverages existing resources to the maximum extent possible to provide quality services to the public. In future years, DCR recognizes that there will be resource challenges in order to meet the increased use of technology and social media as the public expects that State Parks services such as the on-line reservation system will be available for use at any time. Additionally, there continues to be a demand for routine maintenance and operation of existing facilities. For instance, cabins need periodic repairs and pool equipment needs periodic replacement, in order to continue to meet public demand for a quality recreational experience.

DCR provides operational and maintenance funding for Breaks Interstate Park, per an agreement with Kentucky to split this park's operating expenses. Current funding levels may need to increase based upon this interstate agreement.

Financial Overview

The funds are provided for the operation and staffing needs for state parks. Park revenues are reinvested into park operations.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	18,857,398	17,110,465	18,857,398	17,110,465
Changes to Initial Appropriation	850,000	2,000,000	60,000	2,000,000

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

Natural Outdoor Recreational and Open Space Resource Research, Planning, and Technical Assistance [50406]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) serves as the lead outdoor recreation planning agency for the Commonwealth, administers several outdoor recreational grant programs, and provides for the management of and planning for the protection, acquisition, improvement, and expansion of Virginia's outdoor recreation and open space resources, facilities, and services.

Mission Alignment

This service area aligns with DCR's mission to promote the stewardship and enjoyment of natural, cultural, and outdoor recreational resources. Through the provision of grant funding, DCR assists agencies, localities, and organizations in developing, preserving, protecting, and enhancing Virginia's cultural, natural, and outdoor recreational resources for current and future generations.

DCR is responsible for acquiring, developing, improving, managing, licensing, and regulating the use of state parks and for undertaking a master planning process for all existing state parks, following the substantial acquisition of land for a new state park, and prior to undertaking substantial improvements to state parks. DCR is authorized to acquire properties or interests therein of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historical interest, biological significance or any other unusual features that should be acquired, preserved and maintained for the use, observation, education, health and pleasure of the people of Virginia. DCR also is charged to establish, maintain, protect and regulate a statewide system of trails.

DCR is directed to establish and maintain a comprehensive plan for the development of public outdoor recreational facilities; to establish standards for such facilities; to disburse funds to local, regional, and other state agencies for acquiring and developing such facilities; and to make regulations to carry out the statute. It may develop recreational programs and assist state institutions, agencies, and political subdivisions in developing such programs. DCR is authorized to acquire property or interests therein to maintain the character of the land as open-space land. The comprehensive plan for the development of public outdoor recreational facilities also contains the comprehensive plan that recognizes and seeks to implement all of the purposes for which the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation is created.

DCR is directed to cooperate with the Commonwealth Transportation board in the designation of scenic highways and byways. The DCR director has the responsibility to designate a public recreational area as such and recommend to the Commonwealth Transportation Board that an access road or bikeway be provided to the area. At the request of localities, DCR also has the duty of studying rivers or sections of rivers, reporting upon and recommending to the locality those to be considered for designation as scenic rivers.

The Board of Conservation and Recreation provides recommendations to the director on grants and loans pertaining to outdoor recreation, on the designation of recreational and historic sites eligible for recreational access road funds, on master plans and substantial acquisition or improvement amendments to master plans, and on designations for scenic highways and Virginia Byways. The Board shall advise the Governor and the DCR director concerning the protection or management of the Virginia Scenic Rivers System.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Special Studies, Research, Surveys, Reports, and Maps

Grants for acquisition of recreational lands and facilities

Anticipated Changes

Development and implementation of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (updated every five years) requires extensive staff effort and regional support. In 2011, DCR updated the Recreational Areas and Facilities Inventory and conducted a Demand Survey of Virginians in preparation for the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan. In 2012, staff engaged in soliciting public input, and in 2012-2013, efforts were focused on researching and writing the Plan. The 2013 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* was published as a web-based document in April of 2014. As the document has transitioned from a printed to a web-based

document, various steps will be implemented on an annual basis in preparation for the next update in 2018.

Implementation of the 2002 General Obligation Bond and other General Assembly actions have resulted in the acquisition of seven new state parks (High Bridge, Widewater, Seven Bends, Middle Peninsula, Powhatan, Biscuit Run, and Mayo River), with two additional properties currently under acquisition (Natural Bridge and the Blue Ridge Property in Loudoun County). Each new state park requires the development of a master plan. High Bridge opened in April of 2012 and Powhatan opened in July of 2013. Additional funding was authorized by the 2013 General Assembly and approved by the Governor for the development of Widewater State Park.

Each state park master plan must be updated every ten years, and prior to any major construction, addition of lands or significant changes in facility needs. As part of the master planning process a requirement has been added for DCR to notify and solicit comments from local businesses. With 38 active state parks now in the inventory for master plan updates, DCR's workload related to these updates has increased in recent years.

DCR is currently able to fund approximately 15-20 percent of the grant applications received for outdoor recreational projects through its outdoor recreational grant programs. With an ever increasing number of grant applications being received, a stable and increased funding source needs to be provided to fund additional projects. The 2011 Virginia Outdoors Survey identified trails for hiking, walking, and bicycling as the highest recreational need of Virginia's citizens, followed by public access to Virginia's waterways.

There continues to be a need for increased technical assistance for the development of greenways and additional pedestrian and biking facilities. Water trails, horse trails, and off-road motorized trails are also seeing increasing demand and require DCR technical planning assistance. The Trails and Greenways Tool Box was updated in 2011 and serves as a planning guide on DCR's website.

Growth of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and of the Chesapeake Bay Program will require substantial staff resources related to the coordination of the program within Virginia, the review of approved grants, and the development of public access to the system of Chesapeake Bay area water trails and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Staff has significant involvement in the development of the general management plan for the trail which is under the direction of the National Park Service. DCR is also working with the National Park Service in developing the Virginia segments of other national trails: the Southeast Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, the Star-Spangled Banner Trail, and the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

The high demand for public water access sites covers all areas of the state. This is requiring additional staff time and effort in working with numerous localities, agencies, and organizations in finding ways to increase both land to water and water to land access opportunities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) requires DCR participation in screening for and developing new public water access facilities at bridge sites. DCR has also been charged as the coordinating agency to conduct feasibility studies to evaluate proposed pedestrian/ bicycle crossings at rail lines.

Factors Impacting

- Expanding demands on staff related to program delivery
- Declining federal funding levels
- Increased demand for agency services/products
- Increasing land costs
- Lack of reliable and current data; data management

Financial Overview

The funds provide for: the development of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*; master planning efforts; the administration of the scenic rivers program, scenic byways program, trails and blueways program; administration of federal and state outdoor recreation grant programs; environmental review and coordination; and technical assistance and training to many organizations on outdoor recreation resource planning. In addition, pass-through funds are provided to public entities for the acquisition and development of facilities for public recreation, and for local, regional, and state organizations to develop outdoor recreational facilities and services.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	1,387,386	6,530,223	1,387,386	6,530,223
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	-57,624	0

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**

General Management and Direction [59901]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Director's Office, Division of Administration, and Division of Finance provide administrative support and general management direction to support program areas. This service area includes human resource development and management; procurement services; information technology; public relations, environmental education and website coordination; financial and budgeting services; policy development and oversight, internal audit; legislative and regulatory services; board and foundation support; real property services; and general oversight and direction to the agency from the Director's Office.

Mission Alignment

This service area enables program areas to perform the functions that conserve, protect, and enhance Virginia's lands and waters and that promote the stewardship and enjoyment of natural, cultural, and outdoor recreational resources.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

Financial Assistance

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Policy, Planning, and Budgeting

Legislative and Regulatory oversight

Property conservation through funding fee simple and easement acquisition

Internal Audit

Administrative Support - Human Resources, Procurement, Information Technology

Leasing and General Services

Anticipated Changes

DCR relies heavily on wage and seasonal staff in order to operate the Commonwealth's system of State Parks. The use of wage staff is necessary due to the seasonal nature of Virginia State Park visitorship. With a reliance on wage staff for certain services comes a greater administrative burden due to: 1) training needs; 2) payroll processing; 3) timekeeping; and 4) support needed for technology.

Factors Impacting

State funding levels

Expanding demands on staff in key program areas

Declining federal funding levels

Increased demand for agency services/products

Enhanced controls to properly address audit issues

Financial Overview

These funds are used to support the general administrative functions of the agency, including human resources, procurement, rent and procurement payments, Virginia Information Technologies Agency costs, Office of the Attorney General fees, eVA charges, and wages and salaries.

Biennial Budget

	2017 General Fund	2017 Nongeneral Fund	2018 General Fund	2018 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	7,239,314	1,191,354	7,342,034	1,191,354
Changes to Initial Appropriation	740,886	0	898,830	0

Supporting Documents

Title **File Type**