

# 2018-20 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 (DCR) receives funding from a mixture of sources. For fiscal year 2018, DCR received approximately 70 percent from the Commonwealth's general fund, 7 percent from the federal government, and 23 percent from nongeneral fund revenues.

DCR provides financial assistance to 47 soil and water conservation districts to support agricultural water quality improvements, provides financial assistance to dam owners in the form of grants and loans from the Dam Safety and Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund - 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 acquisition of state parks and natural area preserves. The capital improvement program historically has been funded primarily via General Obligation Bonds (GOB) and Virginia Public Building Authority Bonds (VPBA).

#### Biennial Budget

	2019 General Fund	2019 Nongeneral Fund	2020 General Fund	2020 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	119,653,799	50,292,668	53,948,147	50,292,668
Changes to Initial Appropriation	-659,000	0	-4,025,486	0

*(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 dams of potential regulated size are evaluated and brought under regulation.

The number of local governments coordinated with 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.

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, accommodating new forms of outdoor recreation, and expanding overnight camping facilities with the addition of yurts in several parks.

#### Current Customer List

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
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Recreationalist	Recreational Users (campers, picnickers, hikers, etc.)	10,474,134	11,500,000	Increase
Farm/Forest Owner	Agricultural Producers Participating in Cost-Share and nutrient management planning	6,000	47,000	Increase
Property Owner	Dam Owners	2,000	3,000	Increase
Natural Resources and Earth Science	Users of Environmental Databases and Tools	1,263	2,000	Increase
Taxpayer	Land Preservation Tax Credit Applicants	182	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	1,096	2,128	Stable
Volunteer	Park and Natural Area Volunteers	3,000	12,000	Increase
General Assembly	Legislators and Support Services Staff	100	300	Increase
Organization	Media Outlets	338	338	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
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

Regional Planning District Commissions	Virginia Planning District Commissions, Municipalities, Park Authorities, Middle Peninsula Public Access Authority
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 life and property 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 communities, sister agencies and citizens about the challenges associated with development within 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 defined safety standards through dam owner training, compliance assistance, grants to assist 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 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 deliver programs consistent with applicable regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Provide technical assistance funding to 47 Districts which enables 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

» **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 funding assistance is provided to Virginia's 47 local Districts to enable them to support and assist agricultural producers in addressing state soil and water initiatives. District boards are made up of locally-elected directors and appointed persons.

*Objective Strategies*

- Provide cost-share funding assistance to 47 Districts in support of water quality initiatives.
- Provide Districts with adequate financial support 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.
- Enhance the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Cost-Share Program (VACS) to ensure the efficient implementation of BMPs on

agricultural lands to meet the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals by 2025.

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 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 July 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

» **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 addressing 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 river segments for nutrients and sediments, in order to meet certain milestones for water quality. Strategies, when fully implemented, will meet 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 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 nutrient management on golf courses throughout the Commonwealth.

Measures

• **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.
- ◆ Number of Virginia State Park Visitors
- ◆ 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

» **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

• **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 35 species new to science and over 350 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. In particular, focus inventories on areas not surveyed in more than 25 years as well as on unsurveyed areas.
- Conserve key additions to natural area preserves based on resiliency of the natural area preserves system and 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. This support benefits Virginia's land trust and conservation community, in addition to assisting landowners with conservation interests. This includes providing staff support for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) Board and supporting effective administration of the VLCF grant program and conservation plan. This 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. DCR's Natural Heritage program supports both the Chesapeake Bay Agreement's land conservation goal and current Governor's land conservation efforts.

*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, conservation values 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 data and conduct analyses to support conservation prioritization, tracking of and reporting on Virginia's land conservation progress.
- 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

• **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*

Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Procurement, Policy, Operational Support Offices, and the Director's Office provide the infrastructure to the Department's Divisions for 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, human resources, finance, information technology and policy operations in a timely manner.
- Fully address issues identified in the 2014 audit of the Department.
- Enhance Department business administrative training programs.
- Enhance workforce development and diversity programs.
- Update the Agency's Policies and Procedures and ensure that staff are trained on and properly implementing the contents.

## Major Products and Services

DCR's services can be categorized into the following focus areas:

### SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION.

- DCR collaborates closely with the state's 47 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, farmers, urban and suburban landowners, and other land managers to improve water quality and control runoff pollution.
- DCR provides tools and information to the 47 local Districts in conjunction with providing operational and technical financial assistance to protect Virginia's waterways and to facilitate good conservation practices.
- DCR oversees the voluntary Resource Management Plan Program, a component of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program, which encourages farmers through a comprehensive plan, to reduce erosion, exclude livestock from streams, establish stream buffers, and use nutrient management planning.
- The agency also helps implement conservation measures by teaching citizens and businesses lawn care techniques that keep pollution from reaching nearby streams and faraway waterways, such as the Chesapeake Bay.

### DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT.

- DCR provides regulatory oversight for the Commonwealth's Dam Safety Program.
- DCR administers grant funds to provide for engineering studies for spillway or dam rehabilitation design, dam break inundation zone mapping, emergency action plan development and floodplain projects proposed by local governments and private entities in order to advance public safety and infrastructure protection.
- DCR created, maintains and updates the Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS), a web-based program that allows dam owners, emergency officials and DCR staff to have current electronic data related to dams.
- DCR provides support to local communities to help ensure compliance with NFIP requirements and other flooding related outreach and communications.
- DCR created and maintains the Virginia Flood Risk Information System (VFRIS) which is a web-based program that allows users to quickly locate and see if property is within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).

### STATE PARK MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

- DCR continuously develops, manages, and protects Virginia's system of 38 State Parks totaling 77,000 acres, to include 2060 campsites, 293 cabins, pools, beaches, restaurants, day-use areas, special event venues, equestrian areas, liverys, mountain bike centers, museums, educational and interpretive programs, yurts, boat launches, retail operations, a chairlift, wastewater and water systems, and 700 miles of trails.

### NATURAL HERITAGE.

- DCR is responsible for the stewardship of Virginia's Natural Heritage Resources which are the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, or state significant natural communities.
- Services provided by DCR include a database of Virginia's natural heritage resources along with an array of GIS-based models and map products that enable customers to make informed land conservation decisions, and perform environmental assessments of proposed developments.
- DCR also manages the Commonwealth's Natural Area Preserve System totaling 63 Natural Area Preserves providing long-term protection and outdoors recreation access to some of the state's most ecologically important lands.

### PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES.

- DCR is responsible for creating and updating the Commonwealth's comprehensive outdoor recreation and open space planning document, the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*.
- DCR develops and updates master plans 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 additionally administers a statewide system of trails, the statewide Scenic Rivers Program, and coordinates with the Virginia Department of Transportation on administration of the Scenic Byways program.

### LAND CONSERVATION.

- DCR administers a statewide land conservation grant program through the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation.
- The Agency verifies the conservation value of donations of real property interests for which donors request state land preservation tax credits of \$1 million or more. DCR also administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Federal program in Virginia.

### BOARD STAFFING.

- Support and staffing is provided for the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Board of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Cave Board, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and technical and advisory committees and workgroups for Scenic Rivers, State Trails, State Park Master Planning, Invasive Species, Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-share Program,

## Performance Highlights

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

**Allocated Funding** - In Fiscal Year 2019, DCR allocated over \$27 million in funding and in Fiscal Year 2020 expects to provide approximately \$68 million in funding to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for local operational costs and to assist farmers with implementing effective practices to reduce pollution

**Updated Grant Program** - Increased funding over the last several years provided to the Soil and Water Conservation District Dam Maintenance, Repair, and Rehabilitation Fund grant program has resulted in the completion of needed maintenance to District-owned dams. In December 2018, The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board awarded over \$523,000 from the Fund to Districts.

**Improvement to the Dam Safety Information System (DSIS)** – DCR has made continual improvements to capture dam safety data and enhance management abilities to the database to ensure critical data is available to emergency managers and the public.

**Migration of Virginia Flood Risk Information System (VFRIS)** - DCR is migrating VFRIS from VIMS to DCR for greater flexibility in updating and providing information to communities.

**Completed the Review of Grant Applications** - In May 2019, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board (Board) approved more than \$5,668,000 in grants from the Dam Safety Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund Grants Program. This allocation included \$5.1 M in directly appropriated projects to the City of Lynchburg for College Lake Dam and to the Town of Chatham for Cherrystone Dam #2.

**Established New Training** - DCR critical staff from the Dam Safety and Floodplain Management division participated in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Level Exercise simulating a category five hurricane making landfall on the coast of Virginia.

**Enhanced Customer Service at Virginia State Parks** - State parks received high customer service ratings reflecting that 91% of visitors rate their visit as excellent or good.

**Enhanced Lodging at Virginia State Parks** - Positive feedback has also been received regarding the construction and availability of new cabins, yurts, and lodges and the on-going expansion of yurts in many of the parks.

**Initiated Volunteerism** - Virginians demonstrated their commitment and support of Virginia State Parks through the donation of 272,281 hours of their time for volunteer projects.

**Positive Numbers on the Economic Impact Report** - The Virginia State Parks Economic Impact Report 2018 by the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech revealed the annual scope of state park system benefits to be \$267 million in economic impact and 3,858 jobs. Every \$1 of general fund support for state park operations brings in \$14.06 in fresh money to the Commonwealth.

**Initiated the Opening of New State Parks** - Widewater State Park in Stafford County, the 38th state park in Virginia, opened to the public in November 2018. Two additional state park properties, Seven Bends State Park in Shenandoah County, and Machicomoco, located on a property formerly targeted for development along Timberneck Creek and the York River in Gloucester County, are both under development and are anticipated to be open in calendar year 2020. Sweet Run State Park in Loudoun County is currently under development and the acquisition for the Clinch River State Park in Southwest Virginia is underway.

**Green Initiatives in State Parks** - Virginia State Parks implemented numerous best management practices to include changing the retail product lines in park gift shops to reflect environmentally friendly products, removing small individual soap containers in cabins and replacing with centralized dispensers and currently installing bottle filling stations to reduce plastic bottle use. State Parks received numerous awards at the Virginia Green Travel Awards in 2019.

**Alternative Energy** - The first electric vehicle charging station was installed at First Landing State Park and work continues to grand-fund additional stations at other parks. Park vehicle fleet now include numerous electric vehicles.

**Environment Education and Interpretation** - Park visitors have access to quality interpretive programs on the natural world, outdoor recreation, history and culture, either by attending ranger-led programs or self-guided programs. In 2018, 18,861 programs were offered with program attendance of 485,593. Many programs meet Virginia's standards of learning, so schools visit parks for special programs or DCR staff go to the classroom to introduce students to park experiences. The Library of Virginia and Science Museum offer a program that allows families to check out backpacks that include supplies to facilitate nature exploration in libraries and includes a park pass for visiting a park at no cost.

**Youth and Career Development Programs.** The Youth Conservation Corps brings youth, ages 14-17, to live and work in a state park for three weeks in the summer. State Parks strive to interest youth and young adults in conservation and stewardship as well as possible careers in Natural Resources. This program, in its 20th year, has an alumnus of nearly 3,000 youth. Additionally, the Virginia Service and Conservation Corps uses the federal Americorps program for college age and young adults to work for five to nine months in resource management, interpretation, volunteer recruitment and general park operations.

**Innovations Continued** - 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.

**Pioneering Development** - The Natural Heritage Program's pioneering development of an on-line information portal, *Natural Heritage Data Explorer*, is being replicated in more than a dozen states and provinces. In Virginia, this tool is currently being further innovated with the addition of predictive suitable habitat models for all state and federal threatened and endangered species in the Commonwealth.

**Updated Maps and Models** - Multiple models comprising the Virginia ConservationVision conservation planning tools have been updated. A revised Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment maps remaining intact habitat cores throughout the state, ranks and prioritizes these cores based on ecological integrity analysis and maps key interconnecting corridors between the highest ranked cores.

**Continued Field Discoveries of New Species** - 35 species new to science and 350 native species not previously recorded in Virginia have been found by staff scientists. DCR-Natural Heritage is embarking on the fifth year using mobile technology to collect field data on rare species and natural communities.

**Efforts Achieved in Public Access to Trails and Natural Preserve Areas** - In December 2017, a 3.5 mile hiking trail and parking area were completed in the town of Cleveland, Virginia, accessing Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve, including an ADA-accessible viewing area for the scenic Tank Hollow Falls. In addition, by the end of 2018 after three years of hard work by DCR and many dedicated partners, the Bald Knob Natural Area Preserve will be opened to the public, offering an interpretive trail focused on rare natural communities and the largest known population of Piedmont Flameflower in the world.

**Published the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan** – With support from the Planning and Recreation Resources staff, and in the collaborative efforts of strategic partnerships across the Commonwealth, the 2018 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP) was completed and published as a web document. The VOP is the Commonwealth's official open space, recreation, and conservation plan. The plan was completed with 50% of the cost funded by a federal grant.

**Completed Capital Construction Projects** - During this performance cycle, DCR's Design and Construction Section completed several capital construction projects totaling over \$6 million, with numerous other funded construction projects in the planning and design stages. An historic renovation of an 18th century plantation called Walnut Valley Farm at Chippokes State Park has been completed and opened to the public and two pool bathhouse renovations at Westmoreland and Pocahontas State Parks have been completed. Multiple maintenance reserve renovations have also been completed.

**Promoted Scenic Rivers Program** - DCR continues efforts to enhance the awareness of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. An undated website with a focus on the 50th anniversary of the program in 2020 has made information about designation easily available. This, along with staff outreach efforts, has resulted in an increase in inquiries about possible designations and extensions. Richmond, VA was selected by the national River Management Society (RMS) for the location of their next Symposium, to be held in partnership with DCR, VCU and RMS at VCU May 12-15, 2020, entitled Mountain Streams to Metro Canals, <https://www.river-management.org/symposium>. At this time DCR has received seven inquiries for evaluations to designate scenic rivers in time for the 50th anniversary celebration in 2020.

**Virginia Scenic Viewshed Registry** - DCR, through a partnership with Scenic Virginia, has coordinated with them to hire Virginia Tech to develop a statewide viewshed nomination and recognition program for scenic viewsheds. At this time, Virginia is only one of a few states that will have such a program. The program has been recognized by Scenic America as a possible protocol for other states.

**Advancing State Trails** - through the work of the State Trails Advisory Committee, and DCR's partnership with the Virginia United Land Trust to hold a joint annual conference on Land Conservation and Greenways. Performance Highlights include: State Trails Sign Plan published to encourage consistency along multijurisdictional trails, publish quarterly Greenways and Trails E-newsletters to keep trail planners and advocates informed (open rates are consistently above 30%), developed a trails track and coordinated field trips on trails during the annual Land Conservation and Greenway conferences, developed a State Connecting Trails map, story map itineraries for attractions near state parks and inventoried scenic assets along the Potomac Heritage Trail through task agreements with the National Park Service, continue to improve the trails and trailheads database with input from trail providers

**Administered Recreational Grants**—In 2018, DCR administered 11 recreational grants, totaling over \$3.2 million in federal funding. These grants will be managed by DCR staff over the next three years to ensure completion of the engineering and construction phases of each project. To date, DCR has administered 322 Recreational Trail Program grant projects and 445 Land & Water Conservation Fund projects.

**American Battlefield Protection Program Coordination** –DCR continues cooperation with the NPS, American Battlefield Trust and other non-profits utilizing American Battlefield Protection Program funding. In FY 2019 DCR passed through 12 grants for approximately \$6.8 million protecting 566+/- acres of battlefield lands. DCR collected \$15,000 in fees for serving as the governmental sponsor for these ABPP grants. DCR currently has 20 active grants in the amount of \$4.9 million, scheduled to protect 1069 +/- acres of battlefield lands. DCR anticipates passing through an additional 12 grants in FY 2020 and anticipate 12 new grants resulting in \$12,000 in revenue to recover administration costs.

**Continued Progress with Land Conservation Efforts** - DCR continues to further the Commonwealth's land conservation progress by assisting landowners, land trusts, and other agencies. This will be accomplished 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.

**Launched a New Database** - DCR developed and launched 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.

Diversity and Inclusion - DCR initiated Diversity and Inclusion training and increased awareness among personnel and within recruitment efforts.

## Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	465
Salaried Employees	428
Wage Employees	1310
Contracted Employees	19

## Key Risk Factors

### SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION.

**Continued Support for Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts** - 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 the effective and efficient implementation of pollution reduction practices. Adequate funding assistance is critical to meet pollution reduction goals outlined in Virginia's federally-approved Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and other total maximum daily loads. For FY19, there was a deposit of \$22.5 million to the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF); there was a statutory deposit in FY20 of \$73,757,699.

**Implementation of Stream Exclusion Practices** - With an additional appropriation of \$5.8 million in FY19, full funding was provided for the farmers and landowners who signed up in 2015 to implement stream exclusion practices, which entails fencing livestock away from streams and establishing vegetative buffers along streams. Stream exclusion is a key practice under the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and provides significant local water quality benefits by reducing bacteria impairments and reducing sediment and nutrient pollution, however additional funding is necessary to move the program forward.

**Necessary Water Quality Nutrient and Sediment Reduction** - During 2017, the Nutrient Management Program worked with Virginia's golf courses to ensure that golf courses have nutrient management plans in place, or are finalizing their plans, to reduce the risk of excess fertilizer polluting nearby streams or groundwater. The Resource Management Plan Program and the Nutrient Management Program are key components of the Chesapeake Bay WIP. Since the launch of the Resource Management Plan Program, 466 plans have been developed; to date 100 have been certified as fully implemented. While the agency's primary focus has been on the development of plans, additional resources have been directed towards assisting farmers with fully implementing their plans and achieving certification. Additional resources are necessary to address the implementation of those plans.

### DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT.

**Increasing Support of Virginia's Dam Safety Program** – In an effort to promote public safety, particularly during storm events, DCR has focused on continuing to bring dams of regulated size into compliance. Of concern is an inventory of aging dams and dams lying in high-risk areas, which demonstrates the importance of continued and increasing support of Virginia's Dam Safety Program to protect the public and infrastructure.

Increasing Support of Virginia's Floodplain Management Program - In an effort to increase resilience to flooding, DCR Floodplain Management has focused on outreach and education regarding flood awareness and the importance of flood insurance coverage. DCR has worked closely with the Secretary of Natural Resources and Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection in the implementation of EO24.

### STATE PARKS.

**Staffing and Operational Shortfalls** – The last major re-benchmarking of the Virginia state park system was made in 2004. Since that time, numerous properties and facilities have been added to the system along with a significant growth in visitation. In 2018 a comprehensive review of operational and staffing needs identified 254 additional classified positions at a cost of \$27,000,000 are needed to bring up operations and staffing to a sufficient level. \$25,424,251 is needed to support park and program operations, \$274,064,000 for Capital Infrastructure and \$224,471,464 for Capital Development. Many park structures date back to 1936 and are in need of repairs. It is critical to comprehensively address staffing and operational shortfalls, and to provide capital support to fully develop the Virginia state park system. Failure to do so will lead to the inevitable reduction of services and closure of park sites, lowering the quantity and quality of park visits that individuals, both in state and out-of-state, so thoroughly enjoy. This will directly affect revenues that currently support over 57% of park operations.

**Growth of the Virginia State Park System** - Virginia started with six parks in 1936 and has now grown to 38 operational and staffed locations by 2019, with three more properties in various stages of development. Parks have become a year-round, 24/7 operations and managing a park is very much like running a small town. There are educational programs, water and sewer systems, emergency and public safety operations, physical plant operations, community and public relations, marketing, and complex administrative functions (procurement, revenue management, recruitment and hiring, etc.) that require a broad skill set within a park staff that may only consist of 2-10 full time employees. A series of bond-supported capital programs since 1992 have greatly expanded the number of parks and the number of campgrounds, cabins, visitor centers,

conference facilities, swimming areas, trails, and other facilities within the system. However, staffing and operational funding for this expansion has been only partially provided, and supplemental funding that had been gained was often given back during the recent economic recession.

**Sustaining Operations** - The park system has worked hard to carry its own weight as well. Over the past few decades the agency has reassessed fees, added revenue producing facilities, recruited private concessionaires, and instituted a major retail merchandize program. As a result, in FY18 the Division of State Parks derived 57% of its operating budget from visitor revenues and only 43% from General Funds. State Parks conducted a comprehensive fee review of cabins, camping and parking in 2018 and implemented market reasonable fee increases in April 2019. While the agency will continue to review fees and pursue revenue opportunities as they arise, most of the potential for developing additional visitor revenue has already been realized, and fee increases may deter future visits to the parks. The amount and value of general fund contributions has remained fairly level through the last 10 years. However, due to inflation and additional regulatory requirements, this funding does not meet existing staffing, operational or maintenance needs.

## **NATURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL AREA PRESERVE SYSTEM.**

**Antiquated Data** - Managing Virginia's rare species habitats and natural communities, more than ever, require thorough current data on these resources. At this time, more than 30 percent of the community and species information in the Natural Heritage Resources database is over 25 years old and thus deemed historic and sub-optimal for use in land use and conservation decisions. This challenge and this decay of the data that have driven the success of this DCR Division over the past 30 years cannot be overcome without an increased general fund budget for staff and operating expenses for the Natural Area Preserve System. Accelerating shifts to Virginia's climate are and will amplify the impacts on sensitive biological habitats, adding another degree of difficulty to maintaining these databases, resources and the preserve system.

**Growth of the Virginia's Natural Area Preserve System** – Significant growth in the past ten years of the Natural Area Preserve System has largely occurred due to expansion from 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 duties. Management complexity has also increased due to increased oversight requirements 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 boardwalks, bridges, parking areas, gates, signs, and trails.

## **PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES.**

**Aging Workforce and Infrastructure** - Reduction in staffing levels within the Planning and Recreation Resources Division has presented the agency with a significant challenge in maintaining the level of service desired by programs within DCR as well as by localities across the Commonwealth. As funding has not kept pace with minimum operating costs for the division, the division's budget is currently subsidized by funding from State Parks. A loss of this supplemental funding would most likely result in layoffs and reduced services. The agency continues to look for innovative ways to address the needs of the division, to include critical succession planning as over 50% of the division's staff are at or are reaching retirement eligibility in the next five years. The Division is focusing on strategies to continue to address and efficiently manage the recreational grant program, State Park master planning requirements, new legislative programs, technical support, and an aging infrastructure within the State Park System.

## **GENERAL OPERATIONS.**

**Staffing and Funding** - Limitations on staffing and funding have presented challenges to the operations and programs in state parks (including law enforcement), natural heritage, recreation planning, 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.

**Information Technology** - DCR has recognized that its information technology platform needs continued development to enhance operations, and to improve broadband and cellular connectivity in Virginia State Parks.

## **Management Discussion**

### **General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency**

DCR strives to improve the effectiveness of our natural resource programs to conserve, protect, enhance, and advocate wise use of the Commonwealth's unique natural, recreational, scenic, and cultural resources. The successes achieved by the agency are attributed to the dedicated and knowledgeable staff who focus on soil and water conservation, dam safety and floodplain management, Virginia's state park system, natural heritage, planning and recreation resources, design and construction, public communication and operational and administrative processes and procedures. Achievements have been further attainable due to positive and productive partnerships, leadership support, citizen involvement, and hundreds of volunteers.

The agency recognizes the importance of identifying and addressing challenges that affect progress to ensure we continue to meet and exceed our mission objectives. The agency is constantly looking for new ways to improve efficiencies such as implementing a new Asset Tracking inventory system, improving broadband connectivity in rural state parks, and implementing environmentally friendly initiatives that reduce costs. The agency recognizes it needs to diversify its workforce to reflect the current public that DCR serves.

In preparation for upcoming years and our desire to continuously improve in the next stages of our conservation and recreation programs. The agency continues to focus on key deliverables, current performance and explore on-going challenges to include but not limited to:

- Dam safety and resiliency across the Commonwealth
- Overall water quality and issues related to rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay
- Preservation of natural areas, compliance with latest EPA rulings
- Connectivity opportunities to address visitor and operational concerns
- An aging infrastructure within Virginia State Parks
- Potential impact of funding changes to federally supported conservation programs

### Information Technology

DCR relies heavily on Information Technology (IT) for day-to-day central operations that serve all agency divisions and that meet the needs of citizens and stakeholders. Most notably, DCR utilizes IT systems to:

- Implement a SharePoint platform for its intranet communications.
- Model land use practices employed in the clean-up of the Chesapeake Bay.
- 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.
- Track payments to Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts for cost-share and operational support.
- Host Agricultural Conservation Planning and Resource Management Planning Modules.
- Support the management of information on rare species and natural communities and protected lands in the area of natural heritage.
- Track all identified dams in Virginia in order to determine hazard status and the level of compliance to protect public safety.
- Maintain Department real estate information.
- Host the State Parks' reservation center.
- Allow all divisions access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS); and
- Facilitate central office operations including, but not limited to, financial reporting and data management; Human Resource data management and reporting; Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application; telecommunications; and applications development.
- Improve mobile connectivity throughout Virginia State Parks that impacts operations, customer satisfaction and safety.

Internal Process Automation is an operational necessity for the agency. DCR has designed and built several applications either to address specific business needs where enterprise applications do not exist, or to interface with an existing enterprise application, with more applications being developed. Currently under development is support for tracking state owned assets, financial invoicing, and a repository and workflow for managing employee work profiles.

### Estimate of Technology Funding Needs

#### Workforce Development

DCR's Human Resources Office (HR) is collaborating with colleges and universities statewide to promote the agency to current students for internships, federal work-study and hourly positions. There has also been a focus on attracting students in relevant academic programs, and recent alumni, for positions requiring more direct experience. DCR is participating in the Virginia Management Fellows program. HR has been working with our Public Communications and Marketing Office (PCMO) to update job recruitment postings in order to better highlight the benefits of employment with DCR. DCR has also begun the process of promoting job opportunities on social media outlets such as LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, and CareerBuilder using the CareerArc tool managed by PCO.

HR is focusing on improving outreach efforts and developing an agency-wide team to assist with job/career fairs, career days at schools, and information sessions at colleges and universities. This initiative is supported by the agency Diversity and Inclusion committee that is focused on recruitment and retention. In partnership with PCMO, HR is constructing itself in a flexible manner so that it may adapt to the demands of a changing workforce, acquire a diverse applicant pool, and better promote the Department. To bring greater diversity to the environmental field, the Department initiated a Diversity Outreach Internship program. The paid internships offer college undergraduate students the opportunity to be introduced to a career in environmental and natural resources protection. Applicants can choose from internships based on their background and areas of interest in either cultural resources, engineering, naturalist or recreation planning. Internships may also be extended into the school year for college credit.

DCR will ensure that its workforce has the support required to adapt to frequently changing demands, and the problem-solving and analytical skills to respond promptly to requests from other government entities, legislators, and the public.

#### Physical Plant

The DCR Central Office is located in Richmond and includes the State Parks' customer service reservation team. The agency maintains multiple field offices throughout the Commonwealth for Natural Heritage, and the Soil and Water and Dam Safety/Floodplain Management programs. DCR housing is provided as a requirement of employment for conservation officers and other key staff in order to provide constant public safety and security throughout the Virginia State Park system. In addition, the agency is responsible for the development and management of facilities and infrastructure in the State Park and Natural Area Preserve systems. Providing and maintaining adequate funding is necessary for DCR to properly maintain and address an aging infrastructure and address ongoing facility development and expansion.

### Supporting Documents

**Title**

**File Type**

**Soil and Water Conservation [50301]****Description of this Program / Service Area**

To improve the quality of Virginia's surface and ground waters, by reducing nonpoint source pollution from agricultural and other land uses utilizing voluntary and regulatory based measures, innovative reduction programs, and constituent outreach and education. The Division of Soil and Water Conservation:

- Provides technical and administrative assistance, data application development and maintenance, policy guidance, audits and other accounting services to Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- Provides agricultural and urban nutrient management assistance to farmers, state agencies, and the private sector, which includes training, certification, regulatory development, development and administration of contracts, evaluates plan implementation, promotes precision nutrient management and provides specialized assistance to small farms.
- Provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and owners for the successful development and implementation of Resource Management Plans (RMPs).
- Provides engineering services to Districts, to include design of structural agricultural BMPs, inspections, training, quality assurance oversight, and inspection and administration of district dam maintenance funds.
- Ensures the protection of environmental resources by Districts through conservation planning training and plan reviews.
- Promotes riparian forest buffers through partnership with the federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
- Provides technical assistance through the review of plans for practices designed to protect and preserve tidal and nontidal shorelines.
- Recognizes farms that utilize practices designed to protect water quality and soil resources through administration of the Clean Water Farm Award Program.

**Mission Alignment**

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

§ 10.1-104.1 – Department to assist in the nonpoint source pollution management program.

§ 10.1-104.2 – Voluntary nutrient management training and certification program.

§ 10.1-104.2.1 – Nitrogen application rates; regulations.

§ 10.1-104.3 – Clean Water Farm Award Program.

§ 10.1-104.4. – Nutrient management plans required for state lands; review of plans.

§ 10.1-104.5 – Nutrient management plans required for golf courses; penalty.

§ 10.1-104.6 – Supplemental environmental projects

§ 10.1-104.7 – Resource management plans; effect of implementation; exclusions

§ 10.1-104.8 – Resource management plans; criteria.

§§ 10.1-502 (et seq.) – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

§§ 10.1-506 (et seq.) – Soil and Water Conservation Districts

§§ 10.1-2128 (et seq.) – Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund

4VAC50-70 – Resource Management Plans

4VAC50-85 – Nutrient Management Training and Certification Regulations

**Products and Services****Description of Major Products and Services**

Financial Assistance

Regulatory Programs - Information

Technical Assistance

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. Increasing numbers of agricultural operations are obtaining RMPs. Producers are installing an increasing number of Best Management Practices (BMPs) without cost-share assistance, which can be identified and credited in the Chesapeake Bay model as nutrient and sediment reductions. Further, the Department developed processes for BMPs that are reaching the end of creditable lifespan to be verified as still functional in order to have their creditable lifespan extended.

A legislative study, requested by the General Assembly in 2017, was conducted to examine the funding, training, and resources needs, as well as explore new incentives, for additional development and implementation of Resource Management Plans. The Department has implemented several changes to the RMP program in response to suggestions from members of this stakeholder group. Assisting agricultural producers to achieve RMP certification is a significant component of this year's contracts with RMP developers. Producers with an approved RMP were granted priority through a scoring bonus for cost-share funding. Additionally, eligibility was expanded for producers achieving RMP certification.

## **Factors Impacting**

Expanding state and federal requirements from the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) 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 critical to providing incentives to farmers to establish voluntary practices that ensure water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries and state waters statewide.

## **Financial Overview**

These funds are used for the administration and oversight of the agency's nonpoint source water quality improvement programs, including nutrient management, the 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 for this program to attain significant participation levels from farmers.

### Biennial Budget

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	12,078,177	8,256,752	2,183,967	8,256,752
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	-45,348	0

## **Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

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

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operates a number of initiatives in the area of dam safety and floodplain management to protect lives and property. This service area promotes the proper design, construction, operation, and maintenance of impounding structures and the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program within Virginia by providing support to communities regarding the proper management of development in Virginia's floodplains. Several current initiatives of the Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management include improving the management of, and making awards from, the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund Grants Program; continued enhancement of a publicly accessible dam safety database with mapping features and accessibility to dam break inundation zone maps and emergency action plans; the launch of and enhancements to the GIS based Virginia Flood Risk Information System; enhanced dam safety program compliance efforts; the development of dam owner and engineer training programs and tools; and the development and implementation of additional features related to the current Probable Maximum Precipitation values to better reflect Virginia's climatological conditions.

**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.

§§ 10.1-600 (et seq); Chapter 6. Flood Protection and Dam Safety;

Article 1. Flood Damage Reduction Act

Article 1.2. Dam Safety, Flood Prevention, and Protection Assistance Fund

Article 2. Dam Safety Act

Article 6. Comprehensive Flood Control Program

4VAC50-20 – Impounding Structure Regulations

44 CFR Parts 59, 60, 65, and 70; Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the National Flood Insurance Program

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Permitting, Regulation, and Enforcement

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

Regulatory Programs - Information

Technical and Planning Assistance

Public Education

Financial Assistance

Flood Protection Plan development and maintenance

Public Information

**Anticipated Changes**

DCR will need to enhance services and products to educate the public about Dam Safety Act requirements, to properly enforce the law, and to bring known dams into regulatory compliance.

Resources are being focused by DCR in the following areas: 1) compliance and certification; 2) grants management; 3) continued improvements to the on-line Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS); 4) floodplain mapping and enhancements to the Virginia Flood Risk Information System; 5) accessibility and accuracy of dam safety information including dam break inundation zone maps and emergency action plans, and the development of early warning tools; and 6) further study of features associated with the new probable maximum precipitation values. DCR seeks to continue to enhance its dam safety program using existing state and federal funds; however, additional resources are needed in future years in order for the full scope of each of these initiatives to be realized.

Significant flooding events and dam failures leading to loss of life and property in the Carolinas in recent years have led to a recognition that Virginia's impounding structures and dam safety program need significant funding and program capabilities to reduce future impacts of similar flooding conditions in Virginia.

DCR is required to submit a final rehabilitation report for District high hazard dams to the General Assembly November 1, 2018. A Soil and Water

Conservation Districts Dam Rehabilitation Committee has been working with DCR on the development of a funding plan for the rehabilitation of District high hazard dams. There are 12 Districts responsible for 104 dams constructed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for flood control and other benefits. The focus of this committee has been to develop a fiscal plan for the rehabilitation of the District 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 and dam safety staff. DCR staff have been trained to serve in Virginia's Emergency Operations Center to provide technical support during hurricanes and other severe weather events. While DCR is not an emergency response agency, our technical knowledge and access to information on Virginia dams can support other federal, state and local agencies empowered to respond to emergencies.

**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 Department of Homeland Security/ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding for community outreach and mitigation strategies in Virginia through the FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) grant. FEMA provides funding for DCR floodplain staff positions under the Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element grant to assist localities with compliance with Floodplain Management ordinances. FEMA also provides an annual grant to DCR to support the Commonwealth's Dam Safety Program.

Biennial Budget

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	5,346,847	1,292,496	1,771,257	1,292,496
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 on conserving 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.

Virginia manages a Natural Area Preserve System currently containing 63 properties and 56,650 acres supporting 608 mapped locations of 386 rare species and exemplary natural communities. The Preserve System manages the best examples of Virginia's natural habitats, and rarest plant and animal species for the benefit of present and future Virginians.

The Division of Natural Heritage is responsible for: establishing criteria for the selection, registration, and dedication of natural areas and natural area preserves; granting permits to qualified persons for the conduct of scientific research and investigations within natural area preserves; providing recommendations concerning regulatory activities related to endangered species; producing an inventory of the Commonwealth's natural heritage resources; maintaining a natural heritage data bank; and developing a natural heritage plan to establish priorities for the protection, acquisition, and management of registered and dedicated natural areas and natural area preserves.

The Division, through the Virginia Cave Board, is responsible for protecting: rare, unique, and irreplaceable minerals and archaeological resources; rare and endangered animal or other life forms; ground water flow in caves; and the integrity of caves that have unique characteristics or are exemplary natural community types.

Additionally, the Division provides support to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and supporting information for DCR's Land Preservation Tax Credit conservation value review process.

**Mission Alignment**

DCR's Division of Natural Heritage (DNH) works to conserve Virginia's biological diversity through inventory, conservation information, protection, and management.

§§ 10.1-209 (et seq.) – Virginia Natural Area Preserves Act

§§ 10.1-1000 (et seq.) – Cave Protection Act

**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 more than one third of locations not visited in ten to twenty years. This, along with reduced inventory staffing and increased job duties and time demands has generated an increased priority to revisit natural community and rare species sites in the field, verify their status, and update computerized data so the best

information is available to meet land planning and land conservation needs. Identifying additional resources and methods to address this issue is a priority.

Natural heritage data collection is transitioning to full utilization of mobile data collection (i.e. via GIS-based phone and tablet apps). These data are being developed into information that is produced and distributed to the land conservation and land use community via evolving internet mapping and database technology. This work is helping to meet the demand for more open-space land conservation mapping and for targeted information for land trusts and local governments. Natural Heritage scientists and staff have worked hard to build this capacity and train staff on its use and at least a dozen other state Natural Heritage Programs have followed suit. However, these technological efficiencies are not sufficient to meet the growing need for updating, managing, and sharing important conservation data and information. DCR-Natural Heritage seeks additional General Funds to bring on staff to help keep pace with changes on the landscape, the needs of partners, and advances in communication and information technology (i.e. mobile data collection and web-based sharing) to continue to streamline all aspects of this 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**

Funding for this service area provide 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, 2002, and 2008 bonds and an increasing demand by the public to recreate and visit natural area preserve lands. However, currently all additions to the Natural Area Preserve System is driven by grant awards or donations, though the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Survey ranks Natural Areas as teh #1 most popular and most needed resource for Virginians.

Biennial Budget

	2019 General Fund	2019 Nongeneral Fund	2020 General Fund	2020 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	3,467,500	1,382,320	3,367,500	1,382,320
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

**Financial Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts [50320]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides financial assistance to Virginia's 47 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 and repair 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.

§§ 10.1-500 (et seq.) – General Provisions

§§ 10.1-502 (et seq.) – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

§§ 10.1-506 (et seq.) – Soil and Water Conservation Districts

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Financial Assistance

Technical Assistance

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 (TMDL) and other water quality goals, increased funding to the Districts for service delivery and increased constituent outreach will be critical. In addition to financial needs identified in needs assessment meetings, Districts also have outstanding needs related to additional engineering services and various types of technical and administrative training.

**Financial Overview**

The funds are 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 separate service areas.

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. The needs assessment group has identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). The continued use of the District budget template is important for documenting the funding needed to achieve 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 provided through the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRFCF).

Biennial Budget

	2019 General Fund	2019 Nongeneral Fund	2020 General Fund	2020 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	7,191,091	100,000	7,191,091	100,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

## Supporting Documents

Title	File Type
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**Technical Assistance to Soil and Water Conservation Districts [50322]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides technical assistance to Virginia's 47 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.

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. DCR maintains specifications for over 70 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).

**Mission Alignment**

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

§§ 10.1-500 (et seq.) – General Provisions

§§ 10.1-502 (et seq.) – Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

§§ 10.1-506 (et seq.) – Soil and Water Conservation Districts

§§ 10.1-2128 (et seq.) – Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Technical Assistance

Public Information

**Anticipated Changes**

In FY19, nearly \$24 million was provided to Districts to implement the cost-share program. In addition to the funding provided for administration and operations, approximately \$3.5 million was allocated to Districts for technical assistance support.

A legislative study, requested by the General Assembly in 2017, was conducted to evaluate methods to stabilize the fluctuations in funding for Agricultural Best Management Practices. The study considered the impacts of fluctuations on the staffing and technical assistance needs of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The study included three key recommendations: providing funding of \$35 million annually for a minimum baseline cost-funding program; use the second half of the recordation revenue to stabilize the reserve fund; and provide adequate funding for District administration, operations, and technical assistance.

**Factors Impacting**

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

**Financial Overview**

The total 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 needs assessment evaluation group has identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the WIP. The continued use of the District budget template is important for documenting the funding needed to achieve the goals of the WIP. This budget information is helping to document the need for a level of stable, annual funding that exceeds what is typically available through funding provided through the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRFCF).

Biennial Budget

	2019	2019	2020	2020
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	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	6,217,751	1,200,000	0	1,200,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

## **Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Assistance [50323]**

### **Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides cost-share funding assistance to Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) so that they can support various practices in conservation planning to treat animal waste, cropland, pastureland, and forested land and reduce nonpoint source pollution. 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 and implementation of nutrient management plans, planting of cover crops, and the implementation of stream exclusion of livestock. With Virginia's commitment to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) designed to remove the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries from the list of impaired waters, the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) program emphasizes the efficient implementation of agricultural BMPs.

### **Mission Alignment**

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

§§ 10.1-500 (et seq.) - General Provisions

§§ 10.1-502 (et seq.) Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

§§ 10.1-506 (et seq.) - Soil and Water Conservation Districts

§§ 10.1-2128 (et seq.) – Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund

### **Products and Services**

#### **Description of Major Products and Services**

Technical Assistance

Public Information

#### **Anticipated Changes**

No anticipated changes.

#### **Factors Impacting**

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

A legislative study, requested by the General Assembly in 2017, was conducted to evaluate methods to stabilize the fluctuations in funding for Agricultural Best Management Practices. The study considered the impacts of fluctuations on the staffing and technical assistance needs of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The study included three key recommendations: provide funding of \$35 million annually for a minimum baseline cost-funding program; use the second half of the recordation revenue to stabilize the reserve fund; and provide adequate funding for District administration, operations, and technical assistance.

### **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 (VNRCF). The VNRCF is a sub-fund of the WQIF intended to support the implementation of agricultural BMPs.

Unless otherwise directed by the Appropriation Act, 55 percent of the total VNRCF is used for the Chesapeake Bay drainage basin and 37 percent of the VNRCF is used for drainage basins outside the Chesapeake Bay. The remaining eight percent provides technical assistance to farmers implementing agriculture BMPs.

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 needs assessment group has identified the need for stable sources of funding in future years to meet the requirements of the WIP.

Biennial Budget

	2019 General Fund	2019 Nongeneral Fund	2020 General Fund	2020 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	45,596,839	8,800,000	0	8,800,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**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. Land conservation is important for the protection and improvement of water quality, preservation of cultural and historic sites, protection of our plant and animal communities, sustainment of working landscapes, natural areas and parks, and enhancement to 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, administrative support of the VLCF, and for the development of land conservation tracking and targeting tools and conservation plans on behalf of the VLCF; 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.

DCR serves as a statewide central contact, repository, and clearinghouse for land conservation in Virginia. DCR manages several statewide tools that assist in VLCF's work with land conservation. These include 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.

### Mission Alignment

This service area aligns with the mission of the Department by working with Virginians to conserve, protect, and enhance their lands and water.

§§ 10.1-1009 (et seq.) – Virginia Conservation Easement Act

§§ 10.1-1017 (et seq.) – Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

§§ 10.1-1700 (et seq.) – Virginia Open-Space Land Act

§§ 10.1-1800 (et seq.) – Virginia Outdoors Foundation

§§ 58.1-510 (et seq.) – Virginia Land Conservation Incentives Act of 1999

26 U.S. Code § 170(h) – Internal Revenue Code of 1986

4VAC5-20 – Standards for Classification of Real Estate as Devoted to Open Space Use Under the Virginia Land Use Assessment Act.

### 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.

Biennial Budget

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	8,982,819	4,767,038	8,982,819	4,767,038
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	-3,530,138	0

**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 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.

Utilizing Virginia Public Building Authority bond appropriations approved by the General Assembly, 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.

### Mission Alignment

By designing and constructing accessible facilities, DCR recreational lands and natural area preserves are enhanced for the enjoyment of Virginians and out-of-state visitors. Modifications and the rehabilitation of impounding structures align with the mission of the agency for effective dam safety management for the protection of life and property.

§ 10.1-112 – Capital Improvement Projects

§ 10.1-300 (et seq.) – State Park Development Revenue Bond Act

### 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 2016 General Assembly appropriations of capital construction projects—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

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

	2019 General Fund	2019 Nongeneral Fund	2020 General Fund	2020 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	800,500	75,000	800,500	75,000
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) nationally recognized 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 37 active state parks covering over 70,000 acres and contains additional land banked sites that have been acquired and are undergoing or awaiting development, including the provision of limited day-use public access opportunities.

In support of the State Park system, DCR is responsible for acquiring, developing, improving, managing, licensing, and regulating the use of State Parks. Responsibilities also include providing operational and maintenance funding for Breaks Interstate Park and providing for the safety and welfare of visitors and employees by supporting public safety through the agency's division of law enforcement.

**Mission Alignment**

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

§§ 10.1-200 (et seq.) – State Parks

§10.1-205.1 – Breaks Interstate Park Compact of 1954

4VAC5-30 – Virginia State Park Regulations

4VAC5-36 – Standard Fees for Use of Department Conservation and Recreation Facilities, Programs and Services.

**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 its customer services to address changes in demand, within the limits of available resources. Changes will continue to be made in the areas of electronic and social media, expanding seasons of operation to meet greater year-round demand, accommodating new forms of outdoor recreation, and expanding our overnight camping facilities to include the addition of yurts in several of our parks.

**Factors Impacting**

Changes in the recreation industry and society in general require DCR to 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 to consider 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 significant resource challenges in order to meet the increased use of technology and social media as the public expects State Parks services such as the on-line reservation system to be available for use at any time. Due to increased visitation and aging facilities in a

state park system that began 80 years ago, there continues to be a demand for major and routine maintenance for existing facilities. The conditions of these facilities and the sustainability of operations for state parks have a direct effect on the potential of state parks to generate revenue to support operations and expand. A significant investment in capital resources is needed to address the over 700 million dollars in backlog maintenance. For instance, many cabins, campgrounds, and infrastructure, built in the 1930's and 40's, need renovations and upgrades as well as periodic repairs. Major infrastructures are antiquated and have a direct affect on the abilities to meet public demand and to provide for a quality and safe 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

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	19,960,990	21,322,602	19,627,625	21,322,602
Changes to Initial Appropriation	-235,000	0	0	0

**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.

The Division of Planning and Recreation Resource's primary responsibilities include the development of the *Virginia Outdoors Plan*; state park master planning efforts; the administration of the scenic rivers program, scenic highways and 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.

### 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.

§§ 10.1-200 - 10.1-217.1 – Parks and Recreation

§§ 10.1-400 (et seq.) – Scenic Rivers Act

§ 10.1-419 – Historic Lower James River

§ 33.2-405 - Designation of scenic highways and Virginia Byways

§ 33.2-1510 - Administration of federal funds for Recreational Access

§ 58.1-344.3 - Open Space Recreation and Conservation/ Tax Check-off Fund

36 CFR Part 59 – Land and Water Conservation Fund Program.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Outdoor recreation resource planning

Technical Assistance

Public Education

Public Information

Special Studies, Research, Surveys, Reports, and Maps

Grants for acquisition of recreational lands and facilities

#### Anticipated Changes

Increase in outdoor recreational grant applications.

Increase in technical planning assistance requests for trails, development of greenways and pedestrian and biking facilities. This includes coordinating and conducting feasibility studies to evaluate proposed pedestrian/bicycle crossings at rail lines and providing staff support and resources for the State Trails Advisory Committee.

Increased demand for public water access sites from localities, agencies and organizations. This includes a requirement to participate with VDOT and DGIF in screening and developing access facilities at bridge sites.

#### Factors Impacting

Expanding demands on staff related to program delivery

Declining state and federal funding levels

Increased demand for agency services/products

Increasing land costs

Lack of reliable and current data; data management

## Financial Overview

These funds are used for the administration of DCR's Planning and Recreation Resource program. 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

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	886,746	2,581,460	886,746	2,581,460
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	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 agency program areas. This service area includes human resource development and management; procurement services; information technology; public relations, 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 provides the infrastructure that 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.

Title 10.1. Conservation

Subtitle I. Activities Administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation

(§§ 10.1-100 – 10.1-1027)

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

Finance and Budget

Public Education

Public Information

Policy and Planning

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

Public Board Support

#### Anticipated Changes

Administrative business support is needed for all Divisions, and an enhanced level of business management support is necessary as new processes are developed and implemented to ensure compliance with all federal and state statutes, regulations, and policies.

DCR continues to rely 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 ensure agency compliance.

### Financial Overview

Sixty percent of the programs general funds provide for salaries and benefits to support the general administrative functions of the agency in the areas of human resources, procurement, finance, and information technology. The remaining funds support the day-to-day operations of the agency, including funding for rent, insurance premiums, and fees for the Payroll Services Bureau, Virginia Information Technologies Agency, Office of the Attorney General, State Procurement and Financial Systems, and other miscellaneous costs..

Biennial Budget

	<b>2019 General Fund</b>	<b>2019 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2020 General Fund</b>	<b>2020 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	9,124,539	515,000	9,136,642	515,000
Changes to Initial Appropriation	-424,000	0	-450,000	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**