

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Thursday, May 25, 2023
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Glen Allen, VA

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board took place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2023, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation in Glen Allen, Virginia.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Adam D. Wilson, Vice Chair
Dr. Stephen R. Hill
Pamela Mason
Charles Newton
Matthew S. Wells, DCR, Ex Officio
Dr. Edwin M. Martinez, NRCS, Ex Officio

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Charles A. Arnason, Chair
Jay C. Ford
Dr. Dahlia O'Brien

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Andrew Smith, Chief Deputy Director
Darryl Glover, Deputy Director, Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and District Services Manager
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Derrick Bolen, Special Assistant for Policy
Blair Gordon, SWCD Liaison

OTHERS PRESENT

Eric Lansing, Office of the Attorney General
Dr. Kendall Tyree, VASWCD
Suzanne Brown, Loudoun SWCD
Sharon Connor, Hanover-Caroline SWCD
Brad Copenhaver, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Zach Jacobs, Virginia Farm Bureau
Cliff Williamson, Virginia Agribusiness Council

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With four (4) members of the Board present, a quorum was not established.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Matthew S. Wells, DCR Director*

Mr. Wells advised that the Needs Assessment group would be meeting soon to develop plans for the next biennium. He noted that the group would look at how new legislation factors into the timeline. The group will also look at action at the federal level and how that affects planning for post-2025.

DAM SAFETY DIVISION – *Darry Glover, Deputy Director for Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety and Floodplain Management*

Mr. Glover gave an update regarding Division staffing. DCR will be hiring a second mapping engineer. The three engineering positions that are pending passage of the proposed FY24 state budget amendments will be (deployed) as a new Chief Engineer for Dam Safety, and two additional regional engineers.

Mr. Glover also noted that Ms. Howard Cooper recently left DCR for a position at another state agency.

The Division will be divided into two divisions. The Floodplain Management Division will oversee the National Flood Insurance Program as well as Grant Management. The Office of Resilience Planning will also be established.

The Dam Safety Division will be established as a separate Division.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION – *James Martin, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation*

Mr. Martin reported the following:

As the Director mentioned earlier, the Agricultural Needs Assessment Workgroup will be meeting next week to discuss the funding needs for both the VACS Program and technical assistance funding for the Districts.

In addition to that meeting, we are working with both the Secretaries of Natural and Historic Resources and Agriculture and Forestry to establish the Stakeholder Advisory Group (Group) established by legislation passed this year. Chapters 735 and 736, the "Bay backstop bills", charged this Group with reviewing annual progress and making recommendations toward the implementation of the Commonwealth's agricultural commitments in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. We are hoping this Group will begin meeting mid to late summer.

We have completed the quality review of the perennial stream dataset and have almost completed the viewer that will allow an individual to search to see whether a stream is classified as perennial or intermittent. The development of this dataset was mandated by legislation passed during the 2020 General Assembly Session and only covers the Chesapeake Bay portion of Virginia.

PARTNER REPORTS*Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Dr. Martinez gave the report for NRCS. A copy is included as Attachment A.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Not represented.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Dr. Goerlich presented the report for Virginia Cooperative Extension.

A copy of the report is included as Attachment B.

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Dr. Tyree gave the report for the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

She noted the following:

- The Association recently held Human Resources (HR) Training for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Thirty-six Districts participated. The Association will continue to work with District HR needs. The May session also included training regarding the budget template. Ms. Gordon from DCR will address a June Admin/Ops meeting to address any follow-up questions Districts may have. The Association will begin work on an HR and training assessment per recent discussions and correspondences from some Area III districts with the Board and VASWCD.
- The Annual Meeting planning session will be held on June 7. The Annual Meeting will be held December 3-5, 2023, at the Norfolk Marriott. The Association looks forward to hosting the Board as part of that conference. Input regarding training and session content is welcome.
- On June 13, the Association will host a small group of state leadership officials for a BMP tour and SWCD 101 tour at Piedmont SWCD.
- On June 21, the Association will hold its next quarterly Board meeting virtually to encourage attendance from SWCDs across the state.
- On July 11, the Association will hold the annual VCAP new fiscal year webinar to review program updates. The meeting will be held via Zoom.
- On the afternoon of July 11, the Admin committee will discuss work needs, including HR and other training assistance.
- The Envirothon was held at Virginia State University on May 22. Jamestown High School of the Colonial SWCD will be advancing to the International Competition in July. Dr. Tyree expressed thanks to Ms. Mason for serving as a judge.
- Plans are gearing up for Youth Conservation Camp, a weeklong summer program at Virginia Tech that immerses high school students in natural resources topics. Partner and District support makes the program a success.
- Invitations have been extended to the June 23 banquet recognizing the Youth Conservation Leadership Institute students. The event will be held at Randolph-Macon College.
- The VASWCD Leadership unanimously voted to elect Darryl Glover into the NACD Southeast Region Hall of Fame for his outstanding work in to support districts and conservation efforts in Virginia. Mr. Glover will be recognized at the NACD Southeast Region meeting in Savannah, Georgia on August 7.

Chesapeake Bay Commission

Not represented.

Virginia Agribusiness Council

Mr. Williamson advised that he was the new Executive Director for the Virginia Agribusiness Council. He commented that he looked forward to working with the Board.

Virginia Farm Bureau

Mr. Jacobs noted that he was looking forward to summer activities. He reported that the new Farm Use plates will soon be issued by DMV.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Mason reported that a new Master Naturalist group had been formed in the Middle Peninsula area. She expressed appreciation of the support from DCR.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board will be June 12, 10:00 a.m. at the Virginia Farm Bureau. Vice Chairman Wilson stressed the importance of member participation and the need for a quorum.

ADJOURN

Vice Chairman Wilson noted that the Board could conduct no further business, and the meeting adjourned.

ATTACHMENT A

**NRCS REPORT Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting
May 25, 2023
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Richmond, Virginia**

State Conservationist's Highlights

Virginia NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) – is a competitive program that supports the development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands. Since FY2010 NRCS Virginia has awarded over 43 projects with an NRCS contribution of \$3.1M. We are currently managing 12 active CIG's totaling \$1.1M with various partners like: Virginia Tech, Sustainable Chesapeake, Virginia State University, Virginia Department of Forestry, Water Science Institute and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – harnesses the power of public-private partnerships to coordinate conservation activities that expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Currently we have eight active RCPP projects. Since the 2014 Farm Bill, NRCS Virginia has participated in over 20 RCPP projects either multistate or Virginia only. The total funding in RCPP projects is \$116.2M including NRCS and partners FA and TA. Projects targeted oyster restoration, cropland, forestland, nutrient management, watershed scale conservation projects, etc. We also have some new projects awarded last year that we are looking to get off the ground like Headwaters Restoration Initiative with Trout Unlimited in Shenandoah Valley and Preserving Working Farms and Securing Urban Ag with Capital Region Land Conservancy for easement acquisitions in the Richmond Metropolitan area.

Source Water Protection – NRCS continues to work with our Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA) Partners to evaluate potential areas. We started this initiative in FY20, since then, we have increased our SWPA from 2% to 20% of the total Virginia land mass area. Each year our SWPA subcommittee meets to evaluate, review, and refine our HUC's based on various environmental concerns and risk factors. (e.g., ground water management areas, karst presence, sole source aquifers, TMDL – pathogens, phosphorus, sediment, nitrogen, etc.) Since FY20 we have provided \$5.6M in funding for SWPA areas for 102 contracts covering 10,000 acres.

Local Work Groups (LWG) – NRCS has issued state guidance regarding the 2023 LWG exercise. We encourage all 47 Virginia SWCDs to work with local partners to complete this yearly task. The Virginia NRCS Programs team is requesting that each LWG convene no later than June 16, 2023, to solicit input from landowners on resource concerns and recommendations on program changes and technical practices.

Notice of Funding Opportunity for Technical Assistance Agreements – Reminder: the deadline for partners to submit proposals on Grants.gov is May 28th. NRCS is announcing the availability of \$1M in funding for the purpose of leveraging agency resources to encourage collaboration with partners in providing strategic conservation delivery assistance and/or provide tools or data that enhance the ability of the agency to support conservation. Priority areas for this program are: 1) Providing technical assistance, 2) Supporting delivery of climate-smart agriculture and forestry conservation practices and 3) Reducing barriers to programs and improve support to underserved farmers, ranchers, and landowners.

Virginia Wildlife Action Plan Stakeholders Meeting, May 11th – NRCS attended this meeting.

Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Forests and Water Forum, May 16-18th – The State Conservationist attended this forum. The goal of the forum was to convene a group of leaders, source water protection and forestry experts to learn from each other and share conservation success stories.

ASTC-Programs (ASTC-P)**EQUIP, CSP, RCPP, VPA-HIP, CIG, TSP and Easement Programs**

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Received and ranked 1,031 EQIP applications. EQIP allocation is \$22.18 million. Preapproved 342 applications. 136 are currently obligated for \$8.3 million. 14 applications were preapproved for EQIP-CIC for \$1.3 million. EQIP-IRA ranking deadline is April 21, 2023 – EQIP-IRA allocation is \$2.5 million.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) – Classic, Renewals & GCI

Obligated \$7.6 million for 122 CSP renewals on 46,617 acres. CSP classic ranking deadline May 26, 2023. ProTracts currently shows 255 CSP Classic applications. CSP classic allocation is \$11.8 million, +\$200K for organic applications. Funded 14 CSP-GCI contracts for \$39,280 (all applications submitted). CSP-IRA ranking deadline TBD June 2023 – CSP-IRA allocation is \$4.8 million.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Currently managing 16 active contracts with total funding of \$2 million covering 6,687.6 acres. Notice of Funding Opportunity expected within next 60 days. Four RCPP proposals awarded as renewals. For RCPP HFRP, an easement application is currently being processed for Grayson County to conserve 997 acres of forested land with an estimated cost of over \$1 million.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Received 8 ALE applications with funding requests for \$3.2 million on 2,199 acres. 11 ACEP-ALE acquisitions underway. 2 ACEP-WRE restorations in progress. 146 existing recorded easements totaling 17,112 acres of land protected and monitored.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

2023 Virginia CIG Notice of Funding Opportunity posted April 14, 2023, on grants.gov and closed May 29, 2023. The recommended proposals topics are Soil Health and Forestry. Grants will be awarded for projects between one- and three-years duration with maximum awards of \$200k for each priority topic. We anticipate receiving 5 proposals for review and hope to make selections for each topic by June 15, 2023.

Engineering (SCE)**Staffing Updates****NRCS Virginia currently advertisements out for positions in Richmond.**

- Hydraulics Engineer
- Dam Safety Engineer

Dam Rehabilitation**• Beaver Creek 1**

Supplemental plan – The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) is overseeing the locally led planning effort and has retained Schnabel Engineering as its consultant. The final supplemental plan EA has been developed. The NRCS plan authorization process is ongoing. Design - Funding has been secured for the rehabilitation design. RWSA will be the sponsor for the locally led project. The agreement between NRCS and RWSA is in progress.

• Cherrystone Creek 1 and Cherrystone Creek 2A

Pittsylvania County is leading the locally led design effort for rehabilitating the structures. Pittsylvania County has retained Schnabel Engineering as its consultant. The design process is ongoing. The design is estimated to take 18 to 24 months.

- **Johns Creek 1**

Funding has been secured for the rehabilitation design. Mountain Castles SWCD will be the sponsor for the locally led project. The agreement between NRCS and the SWCD is in progress.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

NRCS is providing disaster assistance to Buchanan County through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) for a rain event in the Hurley area on August 30 (estimated 6-8 inches). NRCS and Buchanan County completed damage survey reports (DSRs) for 4 county-identified sites. Funding for 3 eligible sites was received in mid-January 2022 and the EWP agreement was finalized on March 15, 2022. NRCS has approved the final designs submitted by Buchanan County. The County is working on obtaining permits. Construction is anticipated to begin in May 2023 and will be completed by the end of June.

State Resource Conservationist (SRC)

Chris Bradshaw is currently acting State Resource Conservationist for Virginia for 120 days.

Released the two bulletins below:

VA Bulletin 180-23-7 CRP - Clear 30 – May 1, 2023

VA Bulletin 180-23-8 CRP – Grassland – April 28, 2023

Training to Field Staff

- RUSLE2 Office Hours – Mondays 2:00pm to 4:00pm hosted 4 events since May 1, 2023.
- Staff/Partnership Trainings – o Co-led training with FSA to present CRP Grasslands updates for FSA and NRCS.
- State Grazing Land NRI training – May 11, 2023.
- SRC Staff Training/Outreach Events – VFGC Basic Grazing School – May 2-3, 2023.
- SRC Staff Training – In-the-Field-Training – State Biologist gave SVAP2 field training to three Private Lands Biologist on May 18, 2023.

Customer Service and Outreach

- Partnership meeting with DWR – 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan – opening meeting – May 11, 2023.
 - Partnership meeting with DOF – discussion with District Foresters about DOF/NRCS agreement, working relations, and opportunities to improve collaboration at the local level.
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State Soil Scientist (SSS)

- Virginia NRCS is partnering with USGS and FPAC GEO to acquire new LiDAR data for the Cities of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and the counties of Northampton and Accomack. This will be tide coordinated data and should be flown in the late fall after leaf off.

- NRCS assisted with the State Envirothon at VSU's farm on the 22nd of May. There was a soils test with soils pit for the student teams to judge. The weather was beautiful, and the students seemed to learn as well as have a good time.

Results

1st- Jamestown High School

2nd- Louisa High School

3rd- Harrisonburg High School

- Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) grazing land protocol training was held near Rustburg, VA on the 11th of May. The annual training certifies the teams from each area to begin the annual collection of NRI grazing land data across the state.

Partnerships & Initiatives (P&I)

Peoples Gardens

Four new agreements were developed for FY 2023, 3 have been finalized and remaining one is being finalized this week. Updated summary for the 4 new agreements is below.

City of Richmond – Richmond Grows Garden

- Richmond Grows Gardens, the community garden program of the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities supports 22 garden sites on city property. Each garden site is unique and offers private or communal garden plots to the community to combat food and nutrition insecurity. Gardens across the program have ambitions to educate new gardeners, both youth and adults. Gardeners gather for communal workdays allowing education and mentorship to happen organically. One of the sites, Bellemeade, intentionally brings young people to the garden for hands on learning opportunities. Sankofa Community Orchard provides a space for an extensive training opportunity through Happily Natural Day's Central Virginia Urban Agriculture Fellowship program. As part of the Peoples Garden network, these 22 garden sites can continue to provide resources and support existing impactful, accurate, and engaging sustainable gardening education across the City of Richmond.

Groundworks RVA, Inc. – Hillside Micro Farm

- Groundwork RVA supports Hillside Micro Farm, located in a public housing community on just over a third acre. This food producing greenspace is led by the Green Team, a youth program that teaches high school aged youth to play, learn, work, and value the environment. The Green Team focuses on the importance of food accessibility and assists with work and development of the Micro Farm. As part of the People's Garden network, Hillside Micro Farm can continue to combat food and nutrition insecurity while creating community space, educating youth and families to support a healthier community and create the chance for young people to build wealth, both through working at the farm and learning the basics of how to grow their own food.

Greater Richmond Fit4Kids, Inc.

- Fit4Kids leads Learning Gardens at 12 school sites in Richmond, Virginia. The main objective of Fit4Kids' Learning Garden program is to improve children's diets through exposure to fresh produce and nutrition education. The Learning Gardens engage children in planting, growing, harvesting, and best of all, tasting fresh, flavorful food, changing the way they feel about vegetables. At two elementary

schools, garden lessons are educational in nature and are part of school day class time. At 10 additional schools, the lessons are a part of the after-school Garden Club program. Lessons are based around sensory experiences, such as fresh fruit and vegetable tastings, identifying plants by color and shape, recognizing herbs based on scent, and hands-on gardening such as seedling transplanting. Aside from the educational benefits, children also receive numerous wellness benefits including nutrition education, the ability to eat fresh produce, and experiencing nature through an outdoor classroom. As part of the People's Garden network, the Learning Gardens program can be expanded to ensure students in Richmond Public Schools have equitable access to nutrition education and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Kinfolk Community RVA

- Kinfolk Community uses urban agriculture as a tool in a holistic approach to transform marginalized, Black communities in Richmond's east end into vibrant green neighborhoods, marked by full employment, home ownership, and urban gardens/greenways. Urban agriculture is only one tool that Kinfolk Community is using in their program offerings that build and affirm self-efficacy, dignity, and self-sufficiency for individuals, while empowering the entire community. As part of the People's Garden network, Kinfolk Community will continue to use urban agriculture as a community engagement tool to address health and economic disparities.

Urban Office (Richmond)

Tatiana Gil had accepted the job offer for Urban Conservationist in Richmond and will start on June 19th. Tatiana is currently a NRCS District Conservationist in Valparaiso, IN.

ATTACHMENT B

Virginia Cooperative Extension

2022 Virginia Master Naturalists contribute to natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship across the Commonwealth**Relevance**

Americans' interest in nature is growing. There is a large constituency of people, from both urban and rural communities, engaged in non-consumptive uses of natural resources such as wildlife viewing, and studies show this population is growing. Parks and natural areas in Virginia are experiencing record visitation, and people also seek new ways to connect with nature at home. Research also shows, however, that Americans still face a significant gap between their interest in nature and their ability and opportunities to pursue that interest. Individuals need opportunities to be actively involved in exploring, caring for, and observing nature in their local communities. Furthermore, because the most impactful experiences in nature are deeply social, opportunities to connect people with nature through social groups are needed.

At the same time, Virginia is facing difficult natural resource challenges, such as loss of forestland, sea level rise, and pollution of our waterways. State and local natural resource agencies need help to accomplish their missions, address these natural resource challenges, and reach more sectors of our population. Public engagement is critical to successful conservation and management of Virginia's woods, wildlife, and waters.

Response

The Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) program addresses these needs by supporting a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. With 30 chapters across Virginia, the program aims to extend the capacities of both state and local natural resource agencies and organizations to be able achieve their missions in new ways, engage new audiences, and work towards creating a citizenry more informed about and involved in natural resource conservation and management. The program, because of its chapter-based structure, also promotes learning about, exploring, and stewarding natural areas through social groups.

Every year, hundreds of Virginians become new VMN volunteers through training and service. The process for becoming a Certified VMN typically takes 6 to 12 months. One starts by completing a 40-hour basic training course offered by one of the local chapters of the program. An additional 8 hours of continuing education and 40 hours of volunteer service are also required to become certified or recertified. Volunteer service hours are recorded in four primary areas: education, stewardship, citizen science, and chapter leadership. At the statewide level, the program is sponsored by seven state agencies, and on the local level, chapters partner with dozens of conservation and education organizations.

Results

The VMN program currently has 2,400 volunteers who reported service in 2022. These volunteers completed more than 43,000 hours of basic training and continuing education in 2022. They also contributed significant volunteer time in the areas of education, citizen science, stewardship, and chapter administration, amounting to more than \$6.5 million in contributions to natural resource conservation in Virginia (based on IndependentSector.org value of a volunteer hour.) Since the program's inception in 2005, VMN volunteers have contributed more than 1.8 million hours of service with a value of \$49 million to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In 2022, VMN volunteers contributed more than 53,000 hours of stewardship, valued at \$1.6 million, to improve local natural resource conditions on more than 500 sites through invasive plant management in parks, management of habitats for pollinators and other wildlife, maintenance of hundreds of miles of trails, and creation of more than 60 new habitat sites through planting and restoration projects. Volunteers also improved public lands through sustained efforts to clean up litter. For example, VMN volunteers in the Southern Piedmont Chapter organized regularly scheduled public events to pick up litter along area trails and waterways in Mecklenburg County. Along with removing several tons of litter, these events engaged other members of the community, and the VMN volunteers shared information about conservation and stewardship with attendees. The Historic Rivers Chapter conducted cleanups at more than 25 different parks, roads, trails, and shorelines in James City and York counties, and they were recognized for their work with the "Adopt A Trail Group of the Year" award from the Capital Trail Foundation. To increase the impacts of their work, the volunteers collected over 1,000 pounds of soft plastic and used it to earn durable plastic benches made by Trex, which the chapter has dedicated to the memory of three deceased volunteers. Their work has not only removed harmful plastics from the environment, but also honored beloved friends and provided more resting spots for people to enjoy local parks and trails.

Volunteers also contributed more than 75,000 hours of time, valued at \$2.3 million, to more than 100 nature-based citizen science, community science, and crowdsourcing studies. For example, VMN volunteers in Arlington launched a local phenology project to monitor seasonal changes in native plants and investigate how habitat influences plant development. Their data also are part of a national database used to learn about climate change impacts. Volunteers in nearly every VMN chapter conducted biological and chemical monitoring of Virginia's streams and rivers, resulting in data used by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and other partners to identify potential stream health issues and alert communities to health risks posed by bacterial contamination. VMN chapters also adopted 32 of 65 loops on the Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trail, conducting quarterly visits at hundreds of sites to report on site conditions and wildlife observations. Their data helped the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources promote publicly-accessible places to watch wildlife in communities all over Virginia and to document species that visitors are likely to observe at those sites.

In addition, volunteers made more than 288,473 direct contacts through educational programs in their communities that totaled 42,300 hours of service, valued at \$1.3 million. In one new program launched in partnership with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, VMN volunteers helped educate members of the public about changes they can make to reduce conflicts with black bears. They made more than 8,500 contacts with their "Living With Bears" booths at the Virginia State Fair, GoFest in Roanoke, and several local community events. Based on the questions and comments received, it was clear that their message was impactful. Volunteers also made specific efforts to connect with underrepresented audiences. For example, VMN volunteers in the Middle Peninsula Chapter partnered

with local bird club and NAACP chapters to host a bird walk for Black Birders Week. Volunteers in the Rivanna Chapter collaborated with partners to train young people in one of Charlottesville's most diverse urban neighborhoods to become Green Ambassadors, promoting tree plantings to reduce urban heat island effects. Fairfax Chapter volunteers reached out to Spanish-speaking audiences with information about stream health and other nature topics at events in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods and during Latino Conservation Week.

On top of their contributions to these many conservation projects, VMN volunteers also contributed 40,000 hours of time, valued at \$1.2 million, leading and managing our local chapters. The unique structure of the VMN program relies on volunteers to lead the day-to-day local operations of the program, including recruiting new volunteers, organizing training courses, developing local projects and partnerships, and tracking volunteer activities. Several hundred VMN volunteers provide this local leadership, without which the program would not exist. In 2022, these leaders organized 27 basic training courses, graduating more than 400 new VMN volunteers. They worked to re-organize those courses to be more engaging, accessible, and effective, which has resulted in more than 87% of 2022 basic training course graduates already contributing some volunteer service.

Improving Wellbeing

Albermarle County City of Charlottesville

460 Stagecoach Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902
albemarle.ext.vt.edu
434-872-4580



Community Voices

"Carrie Swanson, Ag Extension agent, was so very helpful when we decided to put our farm in conservation easement. She discussed options with us, and when we made our decisions, helped us to find an agency to help cost share for a stream exclusion project."



Bertha & Charles Durbin

599

**Albermarle County
Extension volunteers**

Partners for Solutions

"Master Naturalist volunteers provided stewardship at more than 50 parks, trails, and natural areas, helping protect natural resources benefitting Charlottesville and Albermarle residents and sharing knowledge of conservation with diverse communities. They also collected scientific data on a key wildlife corridor that will ultimately lead to safer roadways by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions."



Michelle Prysby
Master Naturalist Program
Coordinator



Families help install new plants.

Sharing Knowledge

Albermarle County prioritizes the revitalization of aging urban neighborhoods and efforts toward climate protection. Extension Master Gardeners are in a unique position to address both of these goals while also helping low-income families.

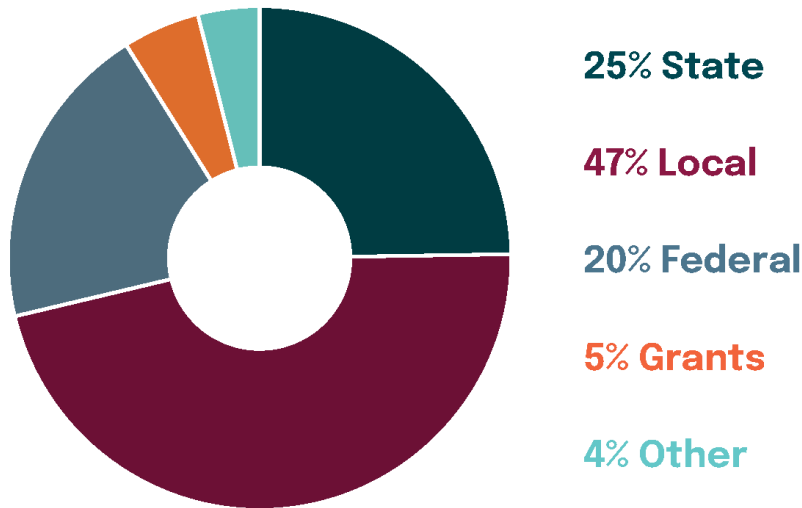
Master Gardeners partnered with Habitat for Humanity, Blue Ridge Farmers Co-op, and Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards to help families design, plant, and care for landscaping at their new homes, with a focus on education and the benefits of native plantings.

In the last two years, 239 plants were installed at 18 residences, of which 98% were native. Families participated in the planting of their new landscapes and received guidance on plant care for their shrubs and perennials. The contractor landscaping the rest of the neighborhood has since revised its plan to include 60% native trees.





Albermarle County/City of Charlottesville

Funding by Source



Total Funding: \$561,476

 <p>\$3.05 return on investment for every dollar invested by the state in Albermarle County/ City of Charlottesville</p>	 <p>\$107,153 Value of extension volunteer hours in Albermarle County/City of Charlottesville</p>
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To find out how you can support your local Extension office,
visit www.cals.vt.edu/make-a-gift.

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