

MINUTES
Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF)
Board of Trustees
3/28/19 Charlottesville, VA

Attendance

Trustees:

Eleanor Brown, Chair
Viola Baskerville
Beth Obenshain
Steph Ridder
Tom Slater
Absent: Brent Thompson and Raul Garcia

Guests:

Rob Farrell, State Forester
Martha Moore, Farm Bureau
Beck Stanley, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Grace Terry, landowner
Roberta Bondurant, interested party
Rex Linville, Piedmont Environmental Council
Nan Mahone, Conservation Partners
Ellen Shephard, Virginia United Land Trusts
Jay Norman, Blueline Conservation
Andrew Norman, Blueline Conservation

Brett Glymph, Executive Director
Sherry Buttrick, Assistant Director of Easements
Anna Chisholm, Administrative Director
Bobbie Cabibbo, Executive Assistant
Leslie Grayson, Deputy Director of Acquisitions and
Owned Lands
Martha Little, Deputy Director of Stewardship
Jason McGarvey, Communications Manager
Dave Morton, IT Manager
Tamara Vance, Deputy Director of Easements
Emily White, Conservation Manager, Forest Core

Counsel

Rich Mahevich, Office of the Attorney General
Victor Cardwell, Woods Rogers

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by chair, Eleanor Brown and Rob Farrell, State Forester, welcomed the group to the Department of Forestry headquarters.

Approval of the Order of Business

Motion made by Tom Slater to approve the order of business; motion seconded by Steph Ridder and passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Grace Terry – Ms. Terry is an easement landowner that has an old logging road impacted by the MVP pipeline, shared with trustees and staff what has transpired on her property so far. In May and over the summer trees were cut, and road signage has been put up where previously the road was obscured. In addition, she strongly conveyed that she believes affected communities should have a say in where and how the mitigation money is spent.

Roberta Bondurant – Ms. Bondurant shared concerns about what the MVP pipeline work is doing to the water source for the county. At Spring Hollow Reservoir, the water source for Roanoke, the sediment has increased. There were people monitoring for life forms and effects but now no one is there. The local landowners are very frustrated.

Martha Moore Farm Bureau – Ms. Moore reiterated the Farm Bureau’s concerns about the decision to not allow commercial forests to be eligible for Forest CORE grant money.

Chair's Report/Comments

Eleanor Brown reported that we filed our first report on the Forest CORE Fund and reminded everyone that VOF is using the tools that we have to try and make the most of what we have been dealt with the MVP pipeline for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

Some dates to remember: April 18 will be our Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee (FAC) where work will begin on the budget for FY2020.

Our next Board of Trustees meeting will be in Blacksburg, on June 27.

Hampton will commemorate African Arrival Day the landing of the first slave in America in August this year. There is more information on the website - <http://hamptonva2019.com/african-arrival-day/>

Eleanor shared that she met with Congresswoman Elaine Luria of the 2nd district and had the opportunity to introduce her to the good land conservation work of VOF.

And lastly, at a recent conference on urban land use, our direct action in urban conservation received another validation. Speakers related that the link between happiness and meaningful urban land use is real. The Atlanta Beltline is one example.

Executive Director's Report

Brett shared a presentation of the Martin Luther King Day Celebration at Evergreen Cemetery. The presentation is on file with permanent meeting record. Brett shared a comment from a Richmond publication in which the author (Ross Catrow) stated that *Evergreen is the center of Richmond's racial reconciliation work*. Viola Baskerville thanked the trustees for taking the step to help conserve Evergreen and East End which are a total of 76 acres with over 10,000 known graves. Viola noted that a citizen working group is guiding the restoration effort, with professional advice from Pond LLC on principles of design, historic preservation and best practices. Approximately 36% of the graves have been uncovered with 8,000 names uploaded to *Find a Grave*. Brett noted that the new women's monument in development at Capital Square will have representations of Mary Draper Ingles (Ingles family property is a VOF conservation project), Maggie Walker and Dr. Sara Garland Jones (the last two are both buried at Evergreen)

Secretary of Natural Resources has announced a new land conservation initiative – Conserve Virginia. The data driven mapping application will identify multiple important resources for conservation in Virginia.

For the upcoming VaULT annual conference in April she helped to arrange a continuing legal education seminar on heirs property and noted that several VOF staff members will be presenters on various topics.

Martha Little went to Environment Virginia conference in Lexington. VOF had a booth which highlighted our Forest CORE grant program. The Governor highlighted the new Conserve VA application, along with climate resilience and environmental justice.

Eleanor thanked Brett for her work at the recent 2019 legislative session. It was not a given that VOF was going to get the PTF funding restored and the trustees are very grateful and pleased with the work and the outcome.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Tom Slater to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting as presented; motion seconded by Beth Obenshain and passed unanimously.

Investment RFP – Motion made by Steph Ridder to have the Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee review the submitted proposals in response to the Request for Proposal for investment services and to select a finalist; motion seconded by Beth Obenshain and passed unanimously.

Owned Lands

Leslie reviewed the owned lands report included in the meeting materials and provided a few update highlights for some projects. She requested specific input from the Board regarding the letter included with the report from Virginia Military Institute (VMI) expressing interest in discussing a potential transfer of the House Mountain property from VOF to VMI. Steph Ridder stated that she thought VOF should keep House Mt. and expressed concern that VMI is not a land conservation organization. Tom Slater pointed out that they have successfully managed the Chessie Trail which is an urban space, proving that they can provide adequate oversight. Beth Obenshain agreed with Tom and added that VMI has employees in the immediate area, and there is the challenge of an ongoing need for capital and personnel expense. Beth wants to ensure that any decision fits within the goals of the Strategic Plan. Brett added that the Secretary of Natural Resources asked that if VOF considers a transfer of ownership of House Mountain that we keep in mind the other state agencies that have land conservation missions. Staff said that the cost of management of House Mountain is modest due to the location, property characteristics, and intended use of the Property.

Eleanor concluded the discussion by saying that some trustees on this board are not excited about VOF owning land except in compelling cases and that she would like staff to explore the VMI option along with consideration of other agencies. She noted that any potential transfer discussion among other things would need to:

- Ensure that anyone interested is given the same terms and conditions and that one of those conditions is keeping the property open to the public in perpetuity
- Include deed restrictions that are well defined
- Recognize the VOF investment made – original and recent

Viola Baskerville requested that staff come back to the trustees with short and long-term projections of costs associated with retaining ownership of House Mountain.

Martha Little reported that the report on the community outreach at Hayfields is being finalized.

Forest CORE Fund Program Changes

Emily went over the changes in the manual. Motion made by Steph Ridder to approve all the changes to the Forest Core Fund manual as presented noting the 2019 grant round would:

- make available \$3,000,000 for the next grant round;
- reserve the ability for the committee and board to have some leeway with the awarded amount,
- give staff discretion, like Preservation Trust Fund, with the authority to approve funding increases with extenuating circumstances up to \$10,000 without board action;
- allow staff to make minor edits and formatting changes in consultation with the committee;

Tom wants to insure there is outreach to community members regarding this program. Eleanor led a discussion regarding ways to communicate and advertise can we use the county websites and newspaper, Facebook and Twitter. We can gather names for the local community groups. Motion seconded by Beth Obenshain and passed unanimously.

At 11:45 a closed session for discussion as provided for in the Code of Virginia §2.2-3711(A)(7) and 2.2-3711.A.29 was called by the following motion, moved by Viola Baskerville:

“Madame Chair, I move that the Board go into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.7 and Section 2.2-3711.A.29 for :

1. consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiation or litigating posture of the public body, and consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel:
2.
 - a. VOF easement BAT-1951
 - b. Real Property interest in Bath County
 - c. potential litigation

This closed meeting will be attended only by members of the Board. However, pursuant to Section 2.2- 3712 (F), the Board requests the VOF’s Attorney General Counsel, the Executive Director, the Assistant Deputy Director of Stewardship, Deputy Director of Acquisition and Owned Lands, the Executive Assistant, Deputy Director of Easements and Director of Administration as it believes their presence will reasonably aid the committee in its consideration of topics that are the subject of the meeting.”

The closed session concluded at 1:45 and Viola Baskerville read the following certification:

“WHEREAS, The Board of Trustees conducted a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board.” Steph Ridder so certified, Viola Baskerville so certified; Beth Obenshain so certified; Tom Slater so certified and Eleanor Brown so certified.

Strategic Plan

Jackie presented the plan:

- Make it a goal and part of action plan to add easements in the 38 cities (of which VOF only has projects in 16). Currently VOF has completed projects in all but 2 counties.
- Goal 5 – we need to add succession planning under this goal
- Include a metric for staff training and include some quantifiable, such as continuing education courses attended.
- Delete the goal of a 10% reduction in lawsuits as we have no control over that. Instead add strengthening our existing land conservation projects by prioritizing work to reduce risk. Include a timeframe and a target for 2019 to analyze what it will take to review and strengthen those most at risk for misinterpretation/lawsuits – what additional staff, money and time would be needed.
- Add to Goal #2 and within Objectives – more development work on a policy/guidelines for owned lands. Add a work session for the trustees to work on what should be included in Objectives. The Board wants time to talk about all the current fee owned properties and the strategy for those pieces of land and to set some parameters for the future.

Motion made by Tom Slater to adopt the Strategic Plan with changes as noted above, motion seconded by Viola Baskerville and passed unanimously. (See Attachment A)

Advocate a Dashboard review approach for measuring progress on Strategic Plan, a one-page document, using a red, yellow and green system to note accomplishments.

Assignment of Quaker Hill Easements to VOF

Motion made by Tom Slater to approve the assignment and resolution; motion seconded by Viola Baskerville and pass unanimously.

PTF Public Access Grant – City of Charlottesville

A new proposal sheet was passed out to correct an error. The subject project is 5 acres. The new sheet will be on file with the permanent record of this meeting. Motion made by Beth Obenshain to re-direct and appropriate funds for this project; motion seconded by Tom Slater and passed unanimously.

Preservation Trust Fund

Type of Project	Name	County
Easement Reconsideration	Charles E. Blevins and Betty Jo Blevins	Washington
Easement	Brankley Farms	Mecklenburg
Easement	Jason MacDonald	Carroll
Easement	Jack Perrow & Perrowmont Farms, Inc.	Bedford

Motion made by Beth Obenshain to allocate up to an additional \$15,000 for a full boundary survey for Blevins; motion seconded by Tom Slater and passed unanimously.

Motion made by Steph Ridder to approve the other 3 projects; motion seconded by Viola Baskerville and passed unanimously.

There was a visual presentation of some land conservation projects from 2018, this presentation is on file with permanent materials from this meeting.

Proposed Land Conservation Projects

Type of Project	Name	County
Easement	Buchanan, David S. Jr.	Mecklenburg
Easement	Gail B. Camp LP et. al	Southampton
Easement	Deike, Selene K.	Louisa
Easement	Edwards, Wayne and Yoke Mee	Westmoreland
Easement Reconsideration	Carole F. Gerhard, Heidi M. Fleenor and Joseph G. Meeko, V	Rockingham
Easement	Dallas Randy Lawson, Jr. and William Jonathan Lawson	Smyth
Easement	Erick Taylor & Frances Mann	Amherst

Motion made by Steph Ridder to approve the projects listed; motion seconded by Tom Slater and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.



Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023

Letter from the Executive Director and VOF Board of Trustees Chair



In 1965, the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission produced *Virginia's Common Wealth*, "an analysis of the present and future outdoor recreation demands on the Commonwealth, an inventory of the State's recreation resources and facilities ... [and] a long-range comprehensive plan of action, The Virginia Outdoors Plan, to meet these demands."

The commission was chaired by Senator FitzGerald Bemiss, who wrote in the introduction, "The rich and varied resources of the Virginia Outdoors are indeed our Common Wealth, and every Virginian justly expects to enjoy its benefits.... The opportunities for enjoyment are severely limited by inadequate facilities and by a threatened and diminishing supply of enjoyable lands and waters."

The report included 21 recommendations that became the basis for the Virginia Outdoors Plan, which remains the state's comprehensive plan for land conservation, outdoor recreation and open-space planning. The report also recognized the potential of citizens to contribute to these efforts through private philanthropy. To facilitate such philanthropy, the commissioners recommended the establishment of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Since that time, VOF has preserved more than 830,000 acres of open space—nearly two acres every hour. Today, VOF's portfolio is among the largest in the nation. We have been tremendously successful at conserving rural open space, especially farms and forests, and this work has yielded many critical public benefits, including protected watershed, viewsheds, and wildlife habitat. But we have much work to do in Virginia's most populated regions. By 2018, we had protected land in all but two Virginia counties, but in just 16 of its 38 independent cities.

Through discussions with legislators, as well as feedback in the Virginia Outdoors Plan surveys, we have been hearing a desire among citizens for more access to open space near their homes. To close this gap, VOF has allocated more than \$2 million from our Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) in recent years for projects that will provide new opportunities for public access to open space, particularly in urban and suburban communities. They include a new hiking trail and kayak/canoe launch area on the Elizabeth River in Virginia Beach, an historic African-American cemetery in Richmond, and an 18th-century home and garden in downtown Alexandria that will be turned into a public museum. These efforts build upon VOF's long history of working on public access projects, from the Bull Run Mountains in Northern Virginia that we own and manage as a natural area preserve, to the numerous state and local parks and forests that we helped to facilitate on behalf of the Commonwealth.

We will continue protecting Virginia's world-class farmland and forestland, and we are excited about the prospect of doing more public access conservation in the future and expanding the number of communities that benefit from our work. Our board is eager to build new partnerships and explore innovative ways of protecting open space for recreation and education with the same efficiency and effectiveness that has defined our program for more than 50 years. This strategic plan will help to guide those efforts.

Thank you for your support and partnership as we work toward a better future for all Virginians.

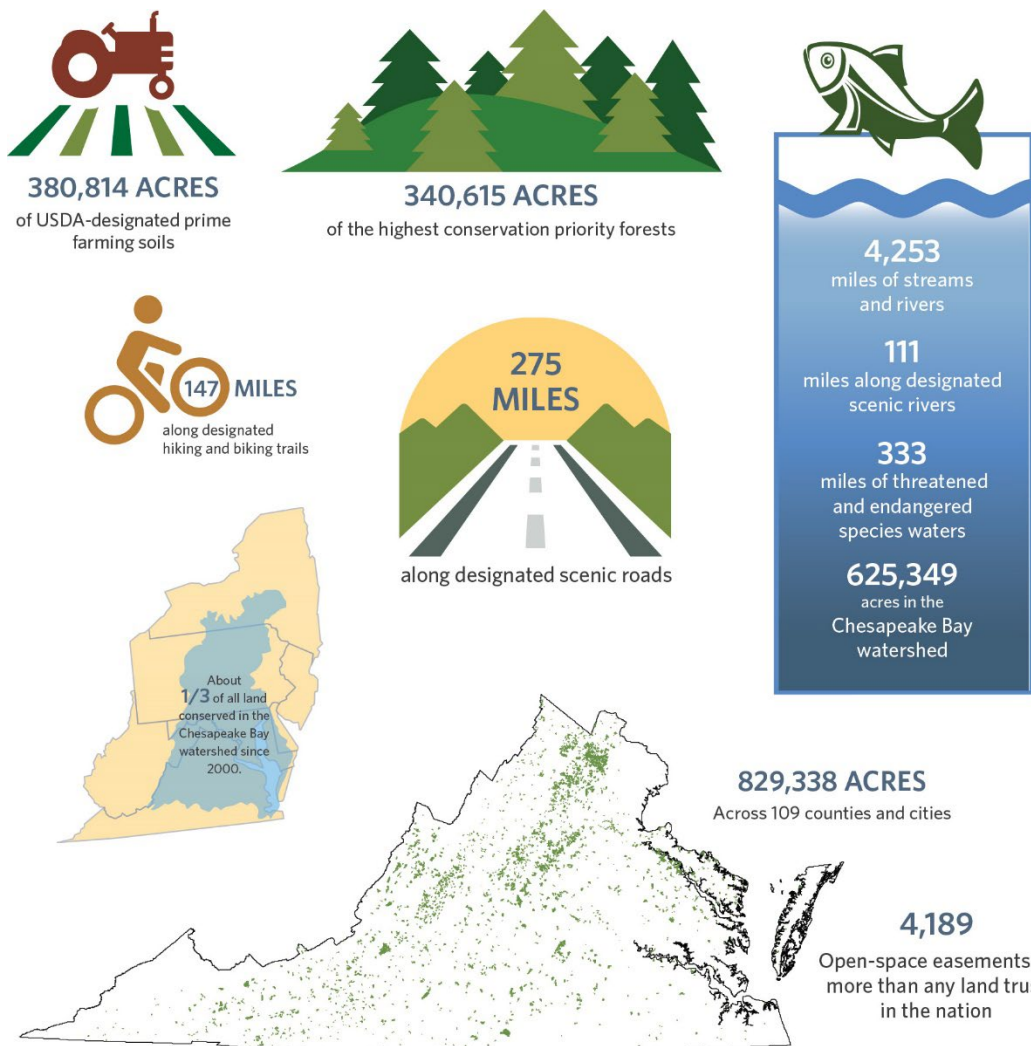
Ms. Eleanor Weston Brown, VOF Board of Trustees Chair ❧ *Ms. Brett Glymph, Executive Director*

Introduction

In 2018, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation began an initiative to develop a five-year strategic plan. As a first step, the Foundation completed a SWOT analysis to identify the organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses (the S and W) as well as external opportunities and threats that could have a significant impact on the organization’s future (the O and T). Input for the SWOT was obtained in meetings with the Foundation staff and the Board of Trustees and, via a survey, from organization stakeholders. Those providing SWOT input also offered ideas regarding a vision for the organization and possible strategic goals.

Following the SWOT analysis, the Foundation’s leaders met several times to finalize the plan that is presented here. The Foundation wishes to thank all who took time to share their perspectives.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation Achievements



Virginia Outdoors Foundation Vision

Creating a vision naturally requires a look forward. But the Virginia Outdoors Foundation found its vision by rediscovering words from *Virginia's Common Wealth*, produced by the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission, in 1965.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation Vision
Protect the quality of Virginia's outdoors and make its resources available to its people.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation Goals for 2019-2023

- 1 Advance the integrity and durability of our work.
- 2 Engage VOF's unique abilities to serve the Commonwealth's conservation goals.
- 3 Increase and diversify our revenue sources.
- 4 Increase VOF's visibility.
- 5 Optimize our organizational structure and effectiveness.

Goal 1: Advance the integrity and durability of our work.

Objectives	Strategies
O1.1: Reduce risks for lawsuits and misunderstandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a risk assessment of easement portfolio and develop a plan to reduce the likelihood of future litigation. • Offer opportunities and incentives for easement restatements. • Update the monitoring process. • Design and communicate a “call VOF before you plan” process. • Develop recommendations for attorney/donor discussions of donor obligations.
O1.2: Cultivate stronger relationships with Easement Owners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a central VOF information/help phone number (e.g., 311). • Overhaul communication tools. • Increase proactive contacts (e.g., monitoring visits) with current landowners
O1.3: Develop stronger enforcement tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the revision of easement templates. • Include project-specific reminders in communications with prospective donors. • Review and revise disclosure and disclaimer documents and add a “truth-in-lending” statement to information provided to prospective donors. • Explore possible implementation of fines for certain violations to reduce the need for more complicated legal action.
Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of easements containing fee-shifting language • Number of co-hold easements (Target: Reduce by 15% per year) • Percentage of respondents to the new donor survey that demonstrate improved understanding of easement • Percentage of respondents to VOF landowner survey who rate their relationship with VOF as positive • Number of new enforcement tools adopted by VOF; number of laws passed or regulations adopted to strengthen land conservation defense • 	

Goal 2: Engage VOF’s unique abilities to serve the Commonwealth’s conservation goals.

Objectives	Strategies
O2.1: Capture citizen and community interest in support of land conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a campaign to expand VOF’s relevance to all citizens of Virginia. • Expand work with local governments to understand and help them achieve their land conservation goals.
O2.2: Maximize the impact of VOF’s conservation activities to achieve the best outcomes for the Commonwealth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage public funds for conservation projects. • Prioritize the importance of projects based on significant public benefit. • Capitalize on alignment with Administration land conservation goals when practical. • Expand protected lands to include all counties and independent cities.
O2.3: Explore innovative and creative approaches to encourage and capitalize on conservation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a diverse tool box for a variety of conservation activities. • Utilize fee ownership as an important conservation tool with plan in place to identify appropriate long-term owner. • Develop owned lands guidelines. • Initiate a project that has the potential to protect targeted drinking water supplies.
Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of communities with public access to VOF-conserved lands • Number of VOF/local government partnership projects (Target: Increase by 25% per year) • Acres of protected land (protected or facilitated by VOF) contributing to the Chesapeake Bay Program’s land conservation goal • % of protected land contributing to the Governor’s CONSERVE VIRGINIA goal • Number of miles of new stream buffer protection • Number of protected acres (Target: Increase to one million by 2023) 	

Goal 3: Increase and diversify our revenue sources.

Objectives	Strategies
O3.1: Assess and improve current fee structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the \$1 recordation fee. • Restore the tax credit transfer fees to full funding. • Review and revise the internal VOF fee schedule as needed.
O3.2: Improve processes and options for private philanthropy and other avenues for revenue growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage private gifts of money, land and stock. • Seek and take advantage of public and other grant opportunities. • Invest all funds appropriately in accordance with the Investment Policy to maximize returns for VOF and dedicated funds. • Promote TERRA (Targeted Environmental Remediation and Restoration Accounts) as a vehicle for new sources of funding. • Develop a budget request to increase General Funds
Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of revenue (Target: Annual revenue increase that covers inflation rate plus 3%-5%) • Number of gifts of land or stock (Target: Increase by 50%) • Number of grant proposals submitted (Target: Increase by 100% each year) • Number of projects funded by TERRA (Target: increase by 10% per year) • Amount of interest earned (Target: Increase by 7% per year) 	

Goal 4: Increase VOF's visibility.

Objectives	Strategies
O4.1: Celebrate and share our successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate ambassador lands (a few owned properties that invite the public to connect to the land and VOF's mission of conservation) into messaging. • Develop and present at least eight to twelve major stories each year that convey VOF's most important public benefit accomplishments. • Find creative ways to feature existing public access lands. • Attend and present VOF's story at key conservation events.
O4.2: Engage with public and private partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a process of publicity oversight for public access, Forest CORE and other grant-funded projects. • Explore the idea of offering classes or public engagement sessions on land conservation to current and prospective easement owners. • Seek opportunities to partner with agencies, institutions and organizations to access owned lands for research and education. • Communicate compatible opportunities and resources to easement owners.
O4.3: Use more diverse tools to tell our story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve VOF's website through redesign. • Install and maintain site appropriate informational signage that conveys VOF's role in owned lands and conservation projects with public access. • Adopt consistent uniform and branding policies. • Expand the use of social media to deliver VOF's message.
Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stories published on a larger stage than website. (Target: 8-12 per year) • Number of VOF staff members presenting at key conservation events (Target: 5 per year) • Website, Facebook and LinkedIn hits (Target: Increase by 20% per year) • Percentage of owned lands with signage (Target: 100% by 2023) • Percentage of protected public access sites with signs (Target: 100% by 2023) 	

Goal 5: Optimize our organizational structure and effectiveness.

Objectives	Strategies
O5.1: Embed a clear organizational philosophy that informs all decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an effective decision-making and input process.
O5.2: Enhance the work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve internal communication channels. • Improve salaries and benefits. • Consolidate GIS work. • Evaluate the feasibility of locating offices to connect the physical location to the work we do. • Enhance teamwork and regional and/or central management of projects. • Support staff training and continuing education. • Develop a succession plan.
O5.3: Improve work processes and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a records management policy and program. • Complete implementation of Terra Trac. • Document and improve work procedures and employee work profiles to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of employees who rate teamwork as positive • Percentage of employees who rate internal communication as positive • Percentage of employees who rate their professional development path as satisfactory • Percentage of employees who are satisfied that their input was incorporated into key decisions • Percentage of core work processes that have been documented (Target: 100% by 2023) • Average annual hours of training/staff member 	