

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, June 10, 2021**

TIME AND PLACE

The virtual meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees took place at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 10, 2021 via GoToMeeting.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Matthew Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair

Mary-Carson Stiff, Vice Chair

Heidi Hertz for The Honorable Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Ex Officio

The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Jr.

Russell Vern Presley, II

Jay C. Ford

Robert Lazaro, Jr.

Bruce Vlk

John Paul Woodley, Jr.

Dr. James F. Casey

The Honorable David W. Marsden

Kat Imhoff

The Honorable Richard H. Stuart

Glenda C. Booth

Elizabeth Andrews

Clyde E. Cristman, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Secretary, Non-Voting

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Susan E. Donner

Andrew C. Jennison

James W. Beamer

Sonya Powell

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources

Melissa Baker, DCR

Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Julie Buchanan, DCR

Jason Bulluck, DCR

Gina DiCicco, DCR

Karl Didier, DOF

Michael Fletcher, DCR

Brian Fuller, DCR

Becky Gwynn, DWR

Terry Lasher, DOF

Kelly McClary, DCR

Kristal McKelvey, DCR

Megan Melinat, DHR

Lisa McGee, DCR

Larry Mikkelson, DCR
Sharon Partee, DCR
Karri Richardson, DHR
Kelly Seaton, DCR
Tom Smith, DCR
Catherine Shankles, Office of the Attorney General

OTHERS PRESENT

Parker Agelasto, Capital Region Land Conservancy
Emily Baker
Kathy Baker, Stafford County
Matt Gerhart, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Jim Green, Colonial Beach
Heather Groves, American Battlefield Trust
Cathy Hanks
Kelly Hitchcock, Central Virginia Planning District Commission
Rentz Hilyer, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
Peter Hujik, Piedmont Environmental Council
Maggie Lane, Colonial Beach
John McCarthy, Piedmont Environmental Council
Patrick Nalley
Mike Nardolilli, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin
Andrea Reese
Ellen Shepard, Virginia United Land Trusts
Kyle Shreve, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Kevin Tate, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Demetrius Venable, Belmead on the James

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With sixteen (16) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND CERTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC MEETING

Secretary Strickler called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and gave the following remarks.

Good morning, I would like to call this virtual meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees to order.

Thank you all for joining us. Again, I need to take the time to go over our virtual meeting rules. Generally, public bodies are prohibited from meeting electronically under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, language approved by the Governor and General Assembly in Chapter 552 of the 2021 Special Session Acts of Assembly allows us to move forward with certain restrictions that I will outline below.

Before I review those provisions, please let me take a moment to review how this meeting will work. We want to allow for participation by Board members, staff, and members of the public who wish to comment. However, it is essential that we are able to manage the conversation effectively.

Monitoring this meeting in the DCR offices and homes in Richmond are Tom Smith, Suzan Bulbulkaya, Gina DiCicco, and Michael Fletcher.

While the meeting will be open for Board comment, due to the challenges associated with an electronic meeting, we want to allow members of the public to be heard. If you would like to make a comment, please do so in the chat box. Sue and Gina will be monitoring the chat box and let us know when someone has submitted a comment. We will address your comments as time allows and during the noted public comment periods in the agenda.

Please be patient with all of us as we work through this. We understand and appreciate the challenges.

Again, I have to read a lengthy introduction for our virtual meeting. This is long, but is required to be read aloud for all electronic meetings:

Chapter 552 of the 2021 Special Session Acts of Assembly, also known as the “Budget Bill,” includes language addressing the ability of public bodies to conduct electronic meetings without the need for a quorum being present in a single physical location (“Electronic Meeting”).

The Budget Bill allows public bodies to hold Electronic Meetings when the Governor has declared a state of emergency pursuant to § 44-146.17 if:

“(i) the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location;

(ii) the purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body...and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities...” § 4-0.01(g).

The Budget Bill also has language regarding recordings and transcriptions of Electronic Meetings. Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded. This recording will be available to the public through the DCR website. The comments in the chat room will also be preserved as a public record. Official minutes of this meeting will be drafted and posted in accordance with regular procedures.

The Budget Bill does not allow the Board to hold an Electronic Meeting to discuss or transact business for any purpose. Rather, they may do so as long as the agenda items that the public body plans to take up are: (a) statutorily required or (b) necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties and responsibilities.

It is the Board's responsibility to determine whether "the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location."

At the conclusion of my remarks, I will ask for a motion for the board to make this determination. If that motion fails, this electronic meeting will end at that point.

The Budget Bill requires compliance with the provisions of § [2.2-3708.2](#). Therefore, in accordance with § 2.2-3708.2.D.2, public bodies must include a telephone number that may be used to notify the public body of any interruption in the telephonic or video broadcast of the meeting.

In the event that a disruption occurs, participants should contact Mr. Fletcher by phone or text at 804-317-8934.

Additionally, if there is an interruption in the broadcast, the meeting must be suspended until public access is restored.

Those provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act not addressed by the Budget Bill remain in effect.

Before we continue with the business portion of the meeting, I will ask Mr. Fletcher to call the roll for Board members and anticipated staff. Other participants will be recorded through the chat window. If you are participating by phone and your name is not called, please call or text Mr. Fletcher at 804-317-8934.

In addition, if at any time you lose connection and are unable to reconnect, please contact Mr. Fletcher at the same number.

I will now turn to Mr. Fletcher for the calling of the roll:

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: The Honorable Matthew Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources
Mary-Carson Stiff
Heidi Hertz for The Honorable Bettina Ring
The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Jr.
Jay C. Ford
Bruce Vlk
Dr. James F. Casey
Kat Imhoff
Glenda C. Booth
Russell Vern Presley, II
Robert Lazaro, Jr.

John Paul Woodley, Jr.
The Honorable David W. Marsden
The Honorable Richard H. Stuart
Elizabeth Andrews

ABSENT Susan E. Donner
 James W. Beamer
 Andrew C. Jennison
 Sonya Powell

With sixteen members of the board present, a quorum was established.

Secretary Strickler continued:

I will now present a recommended motion, and wait for a board member to request the motion:

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Imhoff moved the following:

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees certifies that the nature of the declared COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Board to assemble in a single location and further that the agenda items to be taken up at this meeting are necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities of the Board.

Mr. Lazaro seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlk, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

Secretary Strickler continued:

I want to explain further how we will handle participation by board members, staff, and the public. Everyone, except the individual presenting materials for an agenda item, will be muted. Once the presentation is completed, the board members, and only board members, will be unmuted for discussion. Staff will assist me with ensuring board members are recognized when they have questions or comments. As needed, staff will be unmuted to address questions or concerns. Members of the public will be able to ask questions and provide input by utilizing the chat box function only. As time allows and during the noted public comment periods in the agenda, we will respond to those questions and comments in the chat function.

We will now proceed with the business of the Board as outlined in the agenda.

Secretary Strickler noted that the agenda was full and that the following items would be covered:

- A report from the Interagency Task Force (IAT) with their recommendations to award \$4.8 million in grants to applications received for the second round of FY2021 grant funding. Thirty-five applications were received. The IAT is recommending funding for twenty-two projects.
- Announcing the start of the FY2022 grant round to include \$10 million in funding.
- Funding was also secured for other complementary land conservation programs:
 - \$1M for Virginia's Battlefield Protection program
 - \$1M for VDACS Farmland Preservation Program
 - The Virginia Outdoors Foundation is also planning another Get Outdoors (GO) grant round to provide grants for projects that increase equitable access to parks and open spaces in Virginia's communities.
- There are several active land conservation funding options. Those include:
 - Recreation Trails Program
 - Land and Water Conservation Fund, including LWCF's Outdoor Recreation Partnership program targeting urban areas
 - Forest Legacy

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 2, 2021 BOARD MEETING

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved that the minutes from the February 2, 2021 meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Ms. Imhoff seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlk, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

DISCUSSION OF MARCH 26, 2021, GRANT MANUAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING – *Mary-Carson Stiff, Vice Chair, VLCF*

Ms. Stiff gave an overview of the March 26, 2021 Grant Manual Subcommittee meeting. She noted that the subcommittee discussed issues surrounding outreach as well as some of the procedural and administrative functions.

Members of the subcommittee include Ms. Stiff, Ms. Booth, Mr. Ford, and Mr. Vlk. Minutes of the subcommittee meeting were provided to the Board.

Ms. Stiff advised that she would report on main issues discussed. She noted that none of the issues come with a specific motion but rather an opportunity to share and discuss next steps.

The first issue discussed by the subcommittee was how to better accommodate the participation of Virginia tribal communities. Virginia tribes are eligible to apply if they are a qualified non-profit, but are not eligible to hold easements. The subcommittee also discussed representation of Virginia tribes on the VLCF Board. Both changes would require legislative changes to the Code of Virginia.

Senator Marsden commented that the Senate Finance Committee will be addressing the topic of tribal awards. He noted that there should be guardrails regarding what a legitimate site would be. In addition to being significant parcels of Native American land, the parcels should also have significant conservation value.

Ms. Andrews noted that she supported incorporating tribes more into the process. She noted that consideration should be given to the distinction between state recognized and federally recognized tribes. Federally recognized tribes are considered sovereign governments and the liaison is the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Ford advised that the subcommittee was not seeking special recognition of tribal communities. The intent is to be able to allow tribes to compete within the parameters of the VLCF grant process.

Director Cristman clarified that on several occasions grants have been provided for tribal lands. The issue is the definition of the holder of the easement. In those cases, the tribes have worked with a qualified holder such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Now that the tribes are federally recognized, the issue is the ability to hold the easement. Under the current law tribes must have a public-body partner to hold the easement.

Secretary Strickler commented that if the Code can be amended to accommodate tribes to meet the purposes of the VLCF, which is appropriate. However, he noted that in discussions with the Secretary of the Commonwealth consideration has been given to a different method to fund land acquisition, or reacquisition for Native American tribes in Virginia.

Senator Stuart asked if there were other communities for which the VLCF makes exceptions to the Code for the application process. He noted that the purpose of the limitations is to safeguard the funds.

Ms. Bulbulkaya noted that the Code says, "The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation shall administer the fund solely for the purposes of providing grants to state agencies, including the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and matching grants to other public bodies and holders."

Secretary Strickler commented that the parallel was allowing local governments to hold easements.

Ms. Stiff noted that the subcommittee also discussed how to increase outreach. She noted that staff has made a huge effort to reach other communities through providing access to Board materials and through the recent listening session. The subcommittee will move forward with this issue and would like to hear comments from stakeholders.

Ms. Stiff advised that the subcommittee discussed how to better assist lower income applicants with the application process as well as how to meet the required fifty percent match. The match can often be a huge burden to the applicant. Making a change would require legislative action.

Ms. Imhoff expressed concern about a change to the fifty percent match requirement. She noted that the intent was to provide incentives for other groups to participate in the process. She suggested it might be a better option to work with groups to determine ways to acquire the matching funds.

Secretary Stricker noted that staff would continue to work on issue of outreach and best practices.

Ms. Stiff reported that the subcommittee discussed the 2019 legislation requiring a preapplication process and that a list of applicants be provided to the General Assembly. The intent is to influence the appropriations by showing the need to conserve lands.

The first issue with the legislation was that it was intended to provide notice to legislators about conservation needs in the Commonwealth by providing a list of all projects that could be funded. The concern is that legislators are not always aware of the needs. The list is distributed through a press release to legislators. The subcommittee suggested that it might be helpful to send the list directly to those legislators with possible project in their respective districts.

The second issue was how the preapplication process was created to satisfy the requirements. The preapplication process does not specifically match the grant application process. The ranking is not necessarily what would be used for the actual awards. The recommendation is to make the preapplication process more in line with the actual application. Staff cautioned that this would require additional board meetings.

Secretary Strickler noted that he did present the list to the Senate Finance Committee. He commented that additional help is needed in getting the word out.

Director Cristman commented that the intent was to make the preapplication as simple as possible, allowing the applicants to provide a high-level summary without going into detail.

Ms. Stiff advised that the subcommittee discussed the oversubscription to the Open Space Category of the VLCF program. The recommendation is to have a detailed discussion at a future Board meeting.

Ms. Stiff reported that the last recommendation is that public comment be received prior to the vote on grant rounds. This issue has been addressed.

RECENTLY COMPLETED VLCF GRANT PROJECTS – *Larry Mikkelson, Land Conservation Specialist, DCR*

Mr. Mikkelson reviewed the recently completed VLCF grant projects.

Mr. Mikkelson reported that the following two VLCF grants have successfully closed since the February 5, 2021 VLCF Board meeting. One FY21 grant was not accepted by the grantee and has been withdrawn.

Department of Forestry – Jack Mountain Tracts Easement (FY2018)

This VLCF grant funded the partial purchase of an open-space easement that now protects 1,658 acres, of which 1,600 acres are forested, in Highland County. The property includes the upper slopes and four miles of summit along Jack Mountain, the 12th highest peak in Virginia and the 3rd highest in Highland County. A majority of the forestland is considered high forest conservation value by VDOF. The property contains eight significant natural heritage resources confirmed by DCR-Natural Heritage including two G2/S1 element occurrences, which are now protected by the VDOF easement. The property is in the Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category of ConserveVirginia. Additionally, the site supports stands of red spruce (*Picea rubens*), considered a diminished tree species in Virginia by the State Forester. The property lies in the very upper reaches of the James River watershed, and collectively contains more than 31,000 feet of intermittent streams that flow directly into the Bullpasture River. The easement also requires permanent riparian buffers on all of the watercourses.

Grant Award: \$225,000. **Payment Amount:** \$225,000. **Match:** \$1,433,000.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – McThenia (FY2020)

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation purchased an easement on 39 acres in the City of Lexington that now allows public access along an existing trail to the Maury River. The property fronts the Maury for more than 5,700 feet and has a natural 'beach' area at the foot of the trail. Across the river from the property is the Chessie Trail, a heavily used public trail linking Lexington to the Buena Vista area. Bluffs along the river, and located on the property, are visible from State Route 631, which is part of U.S. Bike Route 76. The river at this location is a designated Blueway and provides habitat for several endangered mollusk species. The property lies within the Lexington Barrens and Bluffs conservation site due to the limestone cliffs, sinkholes and barrens, and also contains areas where a rare plant, the ThreeFlower Melic Grass (*Melica nitens*), has been found. The property contains several sinkholes that serve to capture most of the surface-water runoff in the upland portion of the property and falls within the Water Quality Improvement Category of ConserveVirginia.

Grant Award: \$180,000. **Payment Amount:** \$180,000. **Match:** \$0.

Culpeper County – Rappahannock River Park (FY2021) (WITHDRAWN)

Culpeper County, together with the Piedmont Environmental Council and other partners, was seeking to acquire and conserve Rappahannock River Park with VLCF funding. The property consists of 46.53 acres and would provide public access to: the river with an existing non-motorized boat launch; a park with an existing primitive campground with 47-sites and associated infrastructure; nature trails; a stocked fishing pond; and picnic areas. The property intersects four layers of ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, Cultural and Historic Preservation, and Scenic

Preservation. This rural property is mostly forested and borders the Rappahannock River for 650 feet. The historic and cultural significance is documented starting in the 1600s through the Civil War, and contains historic features such as Skinker's Ford, with the historic roadbed still evident today.

Grant Award: \$210,000. **Payment Amount:** \$0. **Match:** Cash provided by County and by Piedmont Environmental Council, and other grants. **Note:** This project was withdrawn by the grant recipient after the County's governing body did not accept the grant award stating that the project was no longer viable due to objections from adjoining landowners and others within the community. These funds will be requested to be re-allotted to the Open Spaces and Parks category for the FY21 Grant Round II.

Mr. Mikkelson gave a summary of open VLCF grants.

There are currently 15 open grants from the FY20 VLCF grant round. They are all moving forward and are expected to close by the end of 2021.

There are currently 11 open grants from the FY21 VLCF grant round. Most are just beginning to initiate the acquisition process as the grants were issued in February.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND FINANCIAL UPDATE – *Sharon Partee, Director of Finance, DCR*

Ms. Partee presented the financial update. She noted that the last financial update was in September, 2021.

Ms. Partee reviewed the Fund Statement. She noted that much of the information presented was for historical purposes. She advised that she would focus on fund changes since September.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Fund Statement
As of May 31, 2021

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE - June 30, 2018 **\$7,144,979**

INCOME

FY18 Stewardship Funds	\$1,418,289
FY19 Stewardship Funds	\$1,507,831
FY20 Stewardship Funds	\$2,125,898
FY19 Appropriation - Chapter 2	\$0
FY20 Appropriation - Chapter 854	\$4,500,000
FY21 Appropriation - Chapter 1289	\$4,500,000
FY21 Appropriation - Chapter 56	\$5,500,000
FY19 Interest	\$129,997
FY20 Interest	\$171,646
FY21 Interest	\$65,376
TOTAL INCOME	\$19,919,037

DISBURSEMENTS

FY19 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$1,418,289
FY20 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$1,507,831
FY21 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$2,125,898
FY19 Grant Payments	\$2,378,176
FY20 Grant Payments	\$1,627,477
FY21 Grant Payments	\$1,563,852
FY19 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$0
FY20 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$1,125,000
FY21 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$2,500,000
FY19 Administrative Expenses	\$94,588
FY20 Administrative Expenses	\$73,077
FY21 Administrative Expenses	\$216,429
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$14,630,617

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE - May 31, 2021 **\$12,433,399**

Ms. Imhoff asked the current interest rate.

Ms. Partee advised that is not shared with the Department. She will follow up to determine that rate.

DCR REQUEST TO SPEND INTEREST GENERATED BY THE FUND FOR VLCF ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT PURSUANT TO § 10.1-2020 (G): - *Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, DCR*

Ms. Bulbulkaya reviewed the agency request to spend the interest generated by the fund.

BOARD ACTION

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Mr. Pollard moved the following:

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board approves the request from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to expend up to \$230,000 in FY 2022 for use consistent with the legislative authority on the use of interest generated by the Fund, *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-1020.G.

FY 2022 \$230,000

Address existing administrative, web service and database-related expenses incurred by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of Virginia Land Conservation Foundation related activities. Specifically, the funding will be used in support of staff working to assist with grant management, tracking and stewardship to include acquisition assistance, site inspections of VLCF projects, development and management of ConserveVirginia and related data, and land conservation database support of the Foundation's mission.

Mr. Lazaro seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlck, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

FY21 GRANT ROUND II

Update to the FY21 Grant Round II Expenditure Plan – Suzan Bulbulkaya

Ms. Bulbulkaya presented the Grand Funding Plan for the FY2021 Round II.

FUNDING CATEGORIES		FY21 Budget Bill Chapter 56, Item 374 A.1.	Unspent Grant Reallocated on Feb. 5, 2021	Withdrawn Grant to be Reallocated	TOTAL
1	I. VOF Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (25% per § 10.1-1020 C.)	\$1,375,000			\$1,375,000
2	II. Grant Program				
3	(i) Farmland Preservation	\$825,000			\$825,000
4	(ii) Forest Preservation	\$825,000			\$825,000
5	(iii) Historic Area Preservation	\$825,000			\$825,000

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6	(iv) Natural Area Protection	\$825,000	\$500,000		\$1,325,000
7	(v) Open Space and Parks	\$825,000		\$210,000	\$1,035,000
TOTAL		\$5,500,000	\$500,000	\$210,000	\$6,210,000
Summary of Additional Unspent Grant Funds					
Natural Area Protection		\$500,000	Withdrawn: FY20 Bluebell Tract		
Open Space and Parks		\$210,000	Withdrawn: FY21 Culpeper County Rappahannock River Park		

Item 374 of Chapter 56 of the 2020 Virginia Acts of Assembly Special Session I

A.1. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$10,000,000 the first year and \$10,000,000 the second year from the general fund to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, § 10.1-1020, Code of Virginia. No less than 50 percent of the appropriations remaining after the transfer to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust fund has been satisfied are to be used for grants for fee simple acquisitions with public access or acquisitions of easements with public access. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of § 2.2-1509.4, Code of Virginia. [Grant Funds]

2. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$1,500,000 the first year and \$1,500,000 the second year from nongeneral funds to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be distributed by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation pursuant to the provisions of § 58.1-513, Code of Virginia. [Stewardship Funds]

*Due to budget uncertainties, we assumed a budget of \$4,500,000 for FY21 as appropriated in FY20. Because the final total amount is \$10,000,000, this grant round will award the remaining \$5,500,000 and includes separate Farmland and Forest funding categories as per § 10.1-1020 (D).

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation approve the Grand Funding Plan for the FY2021 Round II.

Ms. Stiff seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlk, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

Presentation of Recommended Grant Round II Applications for Authorization

Farmland Preservation

Mr. Didier presented on behalf of Jen Perkins, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Forkland Dairy

Virginia Outdoors Foundation is seeking funds to protect one of the last two dairies in Cumberland County with an open-space easement on the 900-acre Forkland Dairy farm, a multi-generational Century farm, in the family since 1848. The farm lies on the Appomattox River with an area along the river of Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity in ConserveVirginia, and has been awarded the Clean Water Farm award and the Forage and Grassland Council's award. The dairy is an active 300-head operation with a consultant's plan recently developed for future expansion and three generations actively involved. Best management practices have been installed including CREP, cover crops, tree planting in buffer areas, and the Precision Phosphorus Feeding Program through VA Tech. The family also placed a 400-acre property near this farm under VOF easement in 2020. The property also intersects the Agricultural and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$2,041,000. **Match:** VOF Preservation Trust Fund grant and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$813,800. **Recommended amount:** \$500,000.

Piedmont Environmental Council – Protected Farmland along the Rappahannock River – Culpeper County

Piedmont Environmental Council seeks grant funds to help secure a conservation easement to protect Lakota Ranch, a 100% grass-fed Devon cattle family farm comprised of 732 acres in Culpeper County, zoned for agriculture with 652 acres containing prime and statewide important soils, and 286 acres of forestland. The Rappahannock River, a Virginia Scenic River, borders the property for 1.02 miles with a 100' livestock exclusion buffer along the river. There are 80 acres of core and 547 acres of study area for Rappahannock Station Battlefield. The property is viewable to the public from a State Scenic Byway that contributes to the Journey Through Hollowed Ground, another state-maintained road, and the Rappahannock River. PEC is partnering with the Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District and securing funding through the NRCS Agricultural Land Easement program to leverage state and private funding to advance farmland protection in the Upper Rappahannock Basin. The property intersects the Cultural and Historic, Scenic Preservation, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$1,940,000. **Match:** NRCS ACEP-ALE, American Farmland Trust, and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$208,000. **Recommended amount:** \$208,000

Stafford County – Kevin Jones Farm

A grant is requested by Stafford County to place a conservation easement on the Kevin Jones Farm, which intersects both the Cultural and Historic Preservation and the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity categories of ConserveVirginia. The easement will be held by Stafford County, pursuant to their Purchase of Development Rights Program. The 70-acre property is located along Forest Land Road, a scenic, rural road providing visual access to the traveling public and is used for crop production and keeping of livestock. The easement will protect 36 acres of prime farm soils and soils of statewide importance; 15 acres of mixed forestland; and environmental features, including 2,430 feet of a forested

perennial stream and 4.8 acres of high quality wetlands. The property falls within a DCR Natural Heritage ecological core, and contains an element occurrence of a threatened and endangered species. The property is adjacent to managed conserved lands under easement with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and is located 200 feet from another County PDR conservation easement. The property itself is associated with Civil War activity and will preserve on-site Civil War trenches.

Total Project Cost: \$333,000. **Match:** Stafford County. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$166,500. **Recommended amount:** \$46,250.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Morse Brothers Farm

Zachary and Daryl Morse, brothers and third-generation African American farmers in Nelson County, recently purchased 111 acres of clear-cut property adjacent to their family farm and wish to protect it with a conservation easement. They plan an agricultural enterprise combining cattle and hay production with a small vineyard and an event barn to draw people from the Capital region who would not normally have the opportunity to visit a working farm. They envision a retreat that welcomes families to a venue where they can enjoy a day in the country, picnic and walk along a trail system highlighting the streams and views of nearby Turner Mountain. The brothers are working with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service to establish pastures and fence the streams so that they can showcase livestock production best-management practices. A small area of the property would not be included in the easement for the event venue and parking area leaving approximately 106 acres to be protected by a VOF perpetual easement. This property does not intersect with ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$249,500. **Match:** NRCS ACEP-ALE, VOF Preservation Trust Fund, and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$70,750. **Recommended amount:** \$70,750.

Forestland Preservation – Karl Didier, Forestland Conservation Program Manager, Department of Forestry

Mr. Didier presented the recommended projects for the Forestland Preservation category.

Department of Wildlife Resources – Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative II

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is requesting funds to acquire, conserve and improve 749 acres of forestland in Accomack County through its Eastern Shore Forest Conservation Initiative II, which complements a current VLCF-funded initiative to purchase 8,800 acres on the Eastern Shore. This fee-simple acquisition presents opportunities to facilitate natural marsh migration, support coastal resiliency, provide new public lands for wildlife-related recreation, and, importantly, improve habitat for migratory birds and species of greatest conservation need in an area of hemispheric importance. The lack of sufficient food and shelter in the Virginia portion creates an energy deficit for birds attempting to cross the Chesapeake Bay and continue southward migration. The DWR's purchase of this property will allow for strategic and targeted habitat improvements to meet the needs of these migratory birds and other wildlife, providing critical foraging and stopover habitat for the birds. The addition of this acreage to the public land portfolio provides for wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, hiking, and more. The parcels are in private ownership with a willing seller. This project intersects the Forestry, Protected Landscapes Resilience, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$1,444,775. **Match:** USFWS Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Grant; DWR Game Protection Fund; DWR Nongame Cash Fund; DWR Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp Fund. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$700,000. **Recommended amount:** \$400,000.

Department of Forestry – Three Creek Capron

The Virginia Department of Forestry is seeking to acquire an open-space easement over Three Creek – Capron to permanently protect riparian forest habitat and ensure continued use of upland acreage for commercial timber management. The 376-acre tract is fully forested with 1.8 miles of stream frontage on Three Creek, the largest blackwater tributary of the Nottoway River. The tract is comprised of roughly 300 acres of forested wetlands and 75 acres of upland pine forest. Forest cover in the expansive Three Creek riparian corridor, a central feature of Southampton County’s working forest and agriculture landscape, provides important terrestrial wildlife habitat and helps regulate water flows and water quality critical for aquatic system health of Three Creek and downstream reaches of the Nottoway River. The tract’s forest cover has a Forest Conservation Value of 5 (outstanding) and 45 percent of the tract is scored as class IV (high) Watershed Model Conservation Priority. Over 70 percent of the tract falls in a C3 (high) Ecological Core and is in the Forestry layer of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$530,000. **Match:** Landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$240,000. **Recommended amount:** \$200,000.

Department of Forestry – Round Hill Swamp at Doles Farm

The Virginia Department of Forestry is seeking to acquire an open-space easement over a 705-acre farm in Southampton County to permanently protect forest habitat and ensure continued use of the upland acreage for agriculture and forest management. Round Hill includes 507 acres of exceptional forests and 150 acres of prime farmland. The Round Hill swamp is 200 acres with roughly 137 acres of that being blackwater swamp containing Cypress-Tupelo forests. The property represents a significant opportunity to protect water sources that drain directly into the Blackwater River at the Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve. The easement will place substantial limits on taking forest along the waterways including 100’ riparian buffers and protections of the Cypress stand. This project intersects the Agriculture, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$1,294,000. **Match:** Landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$275,000. **Recommended amount:** \$225,000.

Historic Areas Preservation – Karri Richardson, Easement Program Specialist, Department of Historic Resources

Ms. Richardson presented the recommended projects in the History Areas Preservation category.

Belmead on the James, Inc. – Drexel-Morrell Center

The Drexel-Morrell Center project proposes to purchase the 56.48-acre Rosemont property in Powhatan that intersects the Cultural and Historic Preservation layer of ConserveVirginia. With the financial assistance of a VLCF grant, Belmead on the James will conserve an historic home on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places; an original woodframe barn; 40 acres of pristine wooded space and 16 acres of open space; and a permanent waterway that bisects the property.

All of the property will be placed under conservation easement. Our partners will include among others the Capital Region Land Conservancy. The Drexel-Morrell project will create and preserve a safe-space museum for common stories, history, and cultural inter-enrichment. It will be a protected learning place of preserved natural life and of beauty and simple peace where conservation and conversations combine to address how one acts locally to contribute globally to a wiser story of/on our earth. The project will tell a crucially important story of African American life impacted by the Drexel and Morrell schools in Powhatan.

Total Project Cost: \$456,900. **Match:** VOF Preservation Trust Fund and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$228,450. **Recommended amount:** \$228,450.

American Battlefield Trust - Rollins Tract at Bristoe Station Battlefield

The American Battlefield Trust seeks a VLCF grant to acquire the 22.35-acre Rollins Tract, located in Prince William County and record an open-space easement to be held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. The Rollins Tract intersects the Cultural and Historic Preservation layer of ConserveVirginia and is located in the Core Areas of the Bristoe Station Battlefield and the Manassas Station Operations Battlefield. Preservation of this property is a high priority for the county and the Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park. In addition to its historic significance, the Rollins Tract includes 410 feet of a perennial stream, 0.49 acres of woods, and 0.41 acres of wetlands. The Trust plans to match the VLCF grant with additional grant funding from the American Battlefield Protection Program, and other state and local grants, and private funding. After protecting the property with an open-space easement, the Trust would transfer the parcel to the county for incorporation into the Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park.

Total Project Cost: \$912,370. **Match:** American Battlefield Protection Program, ABT, grant from Prince William Co. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$285,000. **Recommended amount:** \$285,000.

American Battlefield Trust – Fussell’s Mill Tracts at Second Deep Bottom Battlefield

The American Battlefield Trust seeks to preserve the 52-acre Fussell’s Mill Tracts, located in Henrico County, via a fee acquisition and recordation of an open-space easement to be held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. The tracts are in the Core and Study Areas as defined by the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields of the Second Deep Bottom, First Deep Bottom, Glendale, and Fair Oaks & Darbytown Road Battlefields. Two of those battlefields are documented United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) sites, an important facet of African American history. The property includes 106 feet of Bailey Creek, 0.23 acres of pond, 575 feet along the pond’s edge, 48 acres of woods, and 0.86 acres of wetlands. The property is mostly open space, with one single-family residence, swimming pool, deck, and storage structures and is located in the Cultural and Historic Preservation and Water Quality Improvement categories of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$846,859. **Match:** American Battlefield Protection Program, Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund, and private funding. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$282,000. **Recommended amount:** \$282,000.

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation – Edwards

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation seeks funding to protect the 107-acre Edwards property located in Rockingham County, a property that intersects the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity

and the Water Quality Improvement categories of ConserveVirginia. This property is part of the “The Coaling,” made famous by the role this commanding landscape feature played during the Battle of Port Republic during the Civil War. Although fighting raged across a mile wide and three-mile long battlefield, the eventual outcome of the battle was decided by the fighting on the Coaling. It was control of this high ground that determined not only the victor in the Battle of Port Republic, but also the fate of Jackson’s entire Valley campaign. Today, nine acres of The Coaling are owned by SVBF but the vast majority of the site is still unprotected. The Edwards property makes up most of that unpreserved land, which has been subdivided into 12 parcels. This project will preserve the remaining, unsold, ten parcels.

Total Project Cost: \$1,624,370. **Match:** SVBF, Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund, and ABPP. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$400,000. **Recommended amount:** \$29,550.

Natural Area Protection – Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage, DCR

Mr. Bulluck presented the recommended projects in the Natural Area Protection category.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Pickett’s Harbor Maritime Forest & Migratory Bird Protection

DCR’s Division of Natural Heritage seeks funding to support the fee-simple purchase of 4.5 acres, two bayside lots on the Eastern Shore in Northampton County. Although small in size, these lots support two globally-rare natural communities, a globally-rare beach dwelling insect, as well as high quality, internationally significant migratory bird habitat. The property adjoins Pickett’s Harbor Natural Area Preserve and provides important protective buffer and management access to the existing Preserve. The property also intersects five categories of ConserveVirginia: Protected Landscapes Resilience, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, Scenic Preservation and Water Quality Improvement.

Total Project Cost: \$892,500. **Match:** Natural Area Preservation Fund, NOAA/CZM. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$642,500. **Recommended amount:** \$255,549.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Pickett’s Harbor Natural Area Preserve – Lake Allure Woods

DCR’s Natural Heritage Division seeks funding to support the purchase of a 44-acre open-space easement to protect high ecological value, mature maritime forests that adjoin Pickett’s Harbor Natural Area Preserve and the largest natural lake known on the Eastern Shore. This forest provides exceptional value for songbirds and lies within the mapped Delmarva Migratory Animal Stopover Habitat conservation site, which is Virginia’s only site mapped for a significant aggregation of fall migrating bird species. The area supports one of the largest concentrations of landbirds along the Atlantic Coast each fall, comprising nearly 200 different species (representing about 70 percent of all breeding bird species in North America). This project intersects the Protected Landscapes Resilience, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement categories of ConserveVirginia

Total Project Cost: \$551,500. **Match:** NOAA/CZM. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$551,500. **Recommended amount:** \$142,298.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Crow’s Nest Natural Area Preserve Addition – Accokeek Bottomlands

DCR’s Natural Heritage Division seeks funds to purchase in fee 52 acres in Stafford County as an addition to Crow’s Nest Natural Area Preserve. The subject parcel is adjacent to the preserve and situated along Raven Road. Acquisition of this tract will enhance DCR’s ability to protect key visual and ecological buffers along the main public access corridor into the preserve and prevent incompatible development. The majority of the property includes forested wetlands and extensive forested riparian buffers along Accokeek Creek that provide habitat for numerous species of greatest conservation need including songbird habitat. The tract falls within three categories of ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Protected Landscapes Resilience, and Floodplains and Flooding Resilience.

Total Project Cost: \$450,000. **Match:** \$0. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$450,000. **Recommended amount:** \$450,000.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – The Cedars Natural Area Preserve – Kinzer Hollow Cave

DCR’s Natural Heritage Division seeks funding for the fee-simple acquisition of 77 acres as an addition to the Cedars Natural Area Preserve in Lee County. The subject property supports several rare plants, foraging habitat for endangered Gray Bats, and Kinzer Hollow Cave, home to the globally rare Powell Valley Terrestrial Cave Isopod (*Amerigoniscus henroti*). An underground stream within the cave drains to the Powell River, which supports a host of Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Acquisition of the property will also provide long needed management access in support of prescribed burning efforts on the adjoining Dry Creek Barrens. There is no other place in Virginia that includes such a diverse and significant array of terrestrial, aquatic, and cave and karst resources. For over 25 years, DCR has been stitching together small parcels to protect these resources and build a functional and resilient natural area. The tract falls within two categories of ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Protected Landscapes Resilience.

Total Project Cost: \$204,000. **Match:** \$0. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$204,000. **Recommended amount:** \$204,000.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – The Cedars Natural Area Preserve – Northeast Addition

The Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Natural Heritage Division seeks funds for the fee-simple acquisition of 63 acres as an addition to the Cedars Natural Area Preserve in Lee County. The tract supports several rare plants, caves, and groundwater quality of the Powell River and was one of the first identified conservation priorities in the 1990s. For over 25 years, DCR has been stitching together small parcels to protect these resources and build a functional and resilient natural area. These lands also harbor a rich cultural heritage dating back to Native Americans and later, frontiersmen such as Daniel Boone and the waves of pioneers that traveled the Wilderness Road on their way west through Cumberland Gap. The tract falls within two categories of ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Protected Landscapes Resilience.

Total Project Cost: \$164,000. **Match:** \$0. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$164,000. **Recommended amount:** \$164,000.

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve – Northeast Addition

The DCR Division of Natural Heritage seeks funds to support fee simple acquisition of approximately 77 forested acres that adjoin the Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve in Roanoke County. The Preserve, established in 1991, is designed to protect the world's largest population of a globally imperiled plant species and the pine-oak heath habitats it occupies. This habitat is subject to natural fires that are difficult to control and tend to burn across large areas making contiguous, unfragmented managed areas critical. The subject tract not only supports individuals of the globally-rare Pirate Bush, it provides significant buffer on the northeastern flank of the Preserve and would effectively complete the Preserve design in this direction. The tract falls within the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Protected Landscapes Resilience categories of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$346,000. **Match:** \$0. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$346,000. **Recommended amount:** \$109,153.

Open Spaces and Parks – Kristal McKelvey, Recreation Grants Manager, DCR

Ms. McKelvey presented the recommended awards for the Open Spaces and Parks category.

City of Franklin – Blackwater Conservation Acquisition

The City of Franklin, in partnership with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), requests grant funds to acquire 203 acres of prime river frontage on the state scenic Blackwater River to create a trailhead on the Blue Water Trail that terminates at the River Park in downtown Franklin. This property intersects four layers of ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, Scenic Preservation, and Water Quality Improvement. It contains old growth hardwood bottomlands and forestlands categorized as Forest Conservation Value 4 (50 acres) and 5 (70 acres). The tract sits at the intersection of two Natural Heritage sites, the Blackwater River Main Stem Conservation site, and the Antioch Swamp Stream Conservation unit, as well as within the TNC Chowan Sandridge/Blackwater River Terrestrial Portfolio. This project supports several rare species and significant natural communities including anadromous fish and colonial water birds (Audubon). The City of Franklin and VOF have been awarded federal funding for the purchase of this tract to create a new public park with access to the Blackwater River. This project also received a grant award of \$375,000 from VLCF in FY21.

Total Project Cost: \$1,268,500. **Match:** USFWS via Ducks Unlimited, Enviva Forest Conservation Fund, and VOF Preservation Trust Fund. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$168,500. **Recommended amount:** \$168,500.

Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority – Haskins Creek Waterfront Land Acquisition in Tappahannock

The Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (MPCBPAA) proposes, on behalf of the Town of Tappahannock, to acquire seven acres on Haskins Creek at the Rt. 17 Bridge in Tappahannock. The project will provide additional public access to Haskins Creek and the nearby Rappahannock River, increase passive outdoor recreation opportunities (i.e. hiking/walking, fishing and swimming, wildlife viewing and bird watching), conserve a pristine coastal environment, and protect a wetland marsh. Plans are in place to construct a car-top boat launch with parking and part of the property will be set aside as a family outdoor gathering area. The property intersects the Floodplains and Flooding Resilience category of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$549,000. **Match:** Town of Tappahannock. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$219,500. **Recommended amount:** \$200,000.

Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority – South Garden International LLC Public Access Land Expansion

MPCBPAA proposes to acquire and conserve 125.59 acres in Naxeria, Gloucester County that will double the size of public access to state waters of the Middle Peninsula region for residents and visitors. This fee-simple acquisition is adjacent to 96.81 acres of existing MPCBPAA recreational resources and will expand recreational interests and conserved land. For the last 10 years, under the ownership of South Garden International, the land has been positioned for conservation and educational purposes. In part, the landowner provided a space for scientific research and nature observation to encourage preservation of pristine landscape; ultimately this coincides with MPCBPAA efforts and interests to acquire land and to advance the mission of the MPCBPAA. Once the land is acquired by the MPCBPAA, this property will be open daily for public waterfront access. The property is in the Floodplains and Flooding Resilience category of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$787,400. **Match:** MPCBPAA and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$391,200. **Recommended amount:** \$312,000.

The Conservation Fund – Nottoway River Wildlife and Recreation Area

With the help of a grant from VLCF, this 1,597 acre property in Sussex County will one day provide public access to the Nottoway River and protect land for hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife watching. The property contains nearly 2.5 miles of frontage on the Nottoway River, a designated Virginia Scenic River and 2.5 miles of Black Branch Swamp. There are more than 220 acres of forested wetlands and more than 400 acres of bottomland hardwoods. The Conservation Fund is working with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to acquire this property for the creation of a new Wildlife Management Area. Over 90 percent of the property is identified as a priority in ConserveVirginia, with rankings in three different categories: Agriculture and Forestry, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, and Scenic. Once conserved, the property can be restored to native longleaf pine and hardwoods to better support water quality and habitat for endangered species, such as the federally threatened Red-cockaded woodpecker. Federally endangered Roanoke logperch (*Percina rex*) and Dwarf wedgemussel (*Alasmidonta heterodon*) are found in this section of the Nottoway.

Total Project Cost: \$2,550,000. **Match:** Forest Legacy and landowner (TCF) donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$637,500. **Recommended amount:** \$264,500.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – The Green at the Science Museum of Virginia

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond propose an innovative partnership that will allow the Museum to convert a surface parking lot at its historic Broad Street Station into an urban park. The proposed 5.2-acres will be protected in perpetuity as open space providing recreational and environmental benefits. The proposed project will incorporate and demonstrate science-based, natural solutions to the effects of climate change while addressing the growing need for open green space in an area under intense development pressure. Transferring control of the parcel to VOF under the Open Space Land Act will protect it in perpetuity from the threat of future development and will provide necessary capital for its transformation into a high-quality public park and

sustainable landscape. With a ready audience of Museum visitors, public transit passengers, and a growing number of residents and workers within a 10-minute walk, bike, or bus ride, the site is highly accessible and visible with the promise of becoming a signature park for both the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth. The property intersects the Cultural and Historic Preservation layer of ConserveVirginia.

Total Project Cost: \$21,540,000. **Match:** LWCF and landowner donation. **VLCF Grant Request:** \$250,000. **Recommended amount:** \$90,000.

Discussion and Public Comment

Ms. DiCicco reviewed comments from the chat log.

- Mr. McCarthy asked about projects brought forward from DCR where three were funded at 100%. Ms. Bulbulkaya responded that the Code of Virginia allows state agency projects to be funded at 100%.
- A comment noted that most of the manual changes seemed to be focused around forest tracts and noted that there might be good projects that are less than 100 acres, but might not rank as highly. Mr. Didier noted that this would be covered during discussions of grant manual changes.
- Ms. Belcher expressed support for the Poor Mountain Reserve project.

A comment asked for additional information regarding the Eastern Shore Conservation initiative and public access.

Ms. Gwynn responded that the proposed properties offer full 365 day access except for instances where there is a seasonal need for closure, or to protect rare species or other features.

Mr. Ford asked for an overview of the Eastern Shore Conservation Initiative project.

Ms. Gwynn noted that the phase one aspect of the project addressed 8,800 acres and Phase II is the fee simple acquisition of an additional 750 acres. This part of the Eastern Shore is important as a migratory bird corridor. The intent is to manage the forested landscape by removing the industrial pine and replacing with other trees and shrubs beneficial to that corridor.

Mr. Agelasto offered the following comment via chat:

The Capital Region Land Conservancy is greatly appreciative of the work of the VLCF review committee in recommending the projects before the Board. We are very supportive of full funding for the Drexel-Morrell Center and the Fussell Mill property. We would like to also look at ways to also support additional funding for the Science Museum of Virginia that will have a critical impact on replacing paved surfaces with green infrastructure.

Mr. Pollard expressed concern regarding the Pickets Harbor 4.5 acre tract and public access. He noted difficulty in identifying the tract on the DCR website and the assessed value of the project.

Mr. Bulluck responded that property values were higher on the Eastern Shore. He noted that the website says that the property is available by arrangements. At this time, DCR doesn't advertise public access to Pickett's Harbor because there is no identified point of access. The parcel provides DCR ownership around a cul-de-sac where unofficial access has been happening.

Secretary Strickler commented that this should be clarified in the future to show why this would be a high scoring project.

Ms. Bulbulkaya noted that the application does say that the property will be open 365 days a year. She also advised that this statement will be included in the final recorded documents for the property.

Ms. Booth commented that she was encouraged to see the Science Museum project under the open space category. She asked for clarification regarding the description of science based natural solutions to climate change.

Ms. Bulbulkaya noted that the Science Museum application addresses details of proposed plantings as well as urban studies based on air pollution and heat index.

Secretary Strickler advised that in addition to providing green space the most important strategy of the Science Museum project was to address stormwater runoff.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved that the recommended projects in the FY2011 Grant Round II be approved as submitted by agency staff. Ms. Booth seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlk, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Ms. Imhoff abstained from the vote regarding Lakota Ranch.

VLCF FY22 GRANT ROUND

Discussion and Approval of the VLCF FY22 Grant Round – Suzan Bulbulkaya

Ms. Bulbulkaya gave the following presentation review of the FY22 Grant Round. She noted that there was \$7.5 million to be divided among the four categories.

Proposed Grant Fiscal Expenditure Plan

Ms. Bulbulkaya reviewed the proposed grant fiscal expenditure plan.

**VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
FUNDING PLAN FOR FY22 GRANT ROUND**

June 10, 2021

	FUNDING CATEGORIES	FY22 Budget Bill Chapter 552, Item 374 A.1.
1.	III. VOF Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (25% per § 10.1-1020 C.)	\$2,500,000
2.	IV. Grant Program	
3.	(vi) Farmland Preservation	\$1,500,000
4.	(vii) Forest Preservation	\$1,500,000
5.	(viii) Historic Area Preservation	\$1,500,000
6.	(ix) Natural Area Protection	\$1,500,000
7.	(x) Open Space and Parks	\$1,500,000
	TOTAL	\$10,000,000

Item 374 of Chapter 552 of the 2021 Virginia Acts of Assembly

A.1. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$10,000,000 the first year and \$10,000,000 the second year from the general fund to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, § 10.1-1020, Code of Virginia. No less than 50 percent of the appropriations remaining after the transfer to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust fund has been satisfied are to be used for grants for fee simple acquisitions with public access or acquisitions of easements with public access. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of § 2.2-1509.4, Code of Virginia. [Grant Funds]

2. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$1,500,000 the first year and \$1,500,000 the second year from nongeneral funds to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be distributed by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation pursuant to the provisions of § 58.1-513, Code of Virginia. [Stewardship Funds]

Proposed Timeline for Applications and Awards

Proposed FY22 VLCF Grant Schedule	
June 10, 2021	VLCF Board Meeting to approve grant manual and initiate the grant round requests for proposals (RFP).

Week of June 14, 2021	Announce official opening of grant round (update website and send emails).
Week of June 28, 2021	Virginia Grant Workshop: orientation and program information for grant applicants. Continued outreach to underserved communities.
Monday August 9, 2021	Deadline for application submittal.
Weeks of August 30 and September 13, 2021	Interagency taskforce meetings to score projects – usually takes two meetings.
Late September 2021	SNR and Director’s review of applications and recommendations of IAT.
Week of October 4, 2021	VLCF Board meeting. Approval of grant awards.
By end of October 2021	Grant agreements sent to grant recipients. Projects have two years to close.

Proposed Grant Manual and Application

Ms. Bulbulkaya reviewed the proposed changes to the Grant Manual. Recommended changes include some language changes and formatting. The application information has been updated with the new deadline.

Ms. Bulbulkaya asked Mr. Didier to explain proposed changes in the Forestland section. Most changes were minor to simplify the calculations of scoring. The proposed changes replace the percentage of lands in forest to a measurement by acreage. Mr. Didier explained that percentage gives an advantage to smaller properties.

Mr. McCarthy noted that he also commented via chat that this change might mean that there is no space for smaller projects.

Mr. Didier responded that the hope was that the smaller properties will be less expensive and can find room for those small projects.

Ms. Stiff advised that smaller properties, especially in urban areas, do not mean lower prices. She expressed a concern that this would eliminate small parcels.

Mr. Didier proposed that a solution would be to incorporate a criteria that adds additional scoring for urban and community based forests.

Secretary Strickler inquired as to why community and urban forests were not already added. He suggested that the Board accept the changes and review the process prior to the final scoring. Additional changes can be made in the next grant round.

Senator Stuart advised that he supported the proposed change. He suggested moving forward with the changes and addressing the urban areas in a future discussion.

Senator Marsden asked if consideration had been given to setting aside funds specifically for smaller projects.

Secretary Strickler commented that while that had not been done in the past, it could be a future consideration.

Ms. Hertz commented that DOF is working to address urban and community forests. She supported the current changes, but noted that DOF would continue to work to address the issue of smaller tracts.

Secretary Strickler proposed allowing the suggested revisions to stand and noted that he would appoint an ad hoc committee to work together to address the issue.

Ms. Booth supported the idea of the ad hoc committee and also noted that she and other members had been contacted by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. They have proposed that grants include not just water quality but also protection of drinking water quality.

Secretary Strickler advised that the ad hoc committee could also review this issue and make recommendations.

Ms. Bulbulkaya continued reviewing the recommended grant manual changes.

Mr. Pollard expressed concern with the statement “properties associated with enslaved peoples.” He expressed a concern that the language could be a reference to plantations and suggested that the language be amended to say “people of color during times of slavery.”

Ms. Melinat noted that the intent was not to reference just enslaved peoples and agreed to amend that section per Mr. Pollard’s comments. Staff will make the necessary adjustments.

Mr. Bulluck noted that the changes in the Natural Areas category were for the purposes of clarification.

In the Open Spaces and Parks category, Ms. Bulbulkaya noted that clarification was given to the mappers and models used to score grants.

Ms. Bulbulkaya reviewed recommended changes to the scoring sheets.

Secretary Strickler called for public comment regarding the proposed grant manual changes.

Mr. McCarthy asked about the use of the ConserveVirginia model and suggested that future grant applicants report their scoring.

Ms. Bulbulkaya noted that applicants do provide a screen shot of that scoring. She also noted that in this grant manual we are requesting shape files from applicants if available, otherwise DCR staff provide the necessary shapefiles for review.

There were no additional comments from the Board or public.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation approve the FY22 Grant Round and application process as presented by staff. Mr. Woodley seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Strickler, Stiff, Hertz, Pollard, Ford, Vlk, Casey, Imhoff, Booth, Presley, Lazaro, Woodley, Marsden, Stuart, Andrews

NAY: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional public comment.

Secretary Strickler noted that the Board would meet at a date to be determined in the fall for the purpose of awarding the FY22 VLFC Grant Round.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 12:16 p.m.