

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees
Wednesday, June 5, 2024
East Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building
Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees took place at 11:00 a.m. on June 5, 2024, in the East Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, Virginia.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Travis Voyles, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Chair
The Honorable Matthew Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
Mary-Carson, Stiff, Vice Chair
The Honorable David Marsden
Elizabeth Andrews
Jay C. Ford
Stewart Leeth
Lisa Kestner Quigley
The Honorable Ed Scott
Morgan Slaven
Bruce Vlk
Matthew Wells, Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Secretary

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

James Beamer	The Honorable Richard Stuart
Glenda C. Booth	Woodie Walker
Leslie Cockburn	Krystina E. White
Samantha Vargas Poppe	One Vacancy, Tribal Member
Sonya Powell	

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Jason Bulluck, DCR	Charles Marston, DCR
Lora Callahan, DCR	Lisa McGee, DCR
Whitten Cluff, DCR	David Neudeck, DCR
Linda Crowe, DCR	Sharon Partee, DCR
Gina DiCicco, DCR	Karri Richardson, DHR
Rob Evans, DCR	Paul Saunders, DCR
Michael Fletcher, DCR	Amanda Scheps, DOF
Brian Fuller, DCR	Kellie Seaton, DCR
Rebecca Gwynn, DWR	Andrew Smith, DCR
Dan Hammon, DCR	Frank Stovall, DCR
Genelle Harris, VDACS	Stephanie Taillon, SNHR
Martha Little, VOF	

OTHERS PRESENT

Brad Copenhaver, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Adrienne Kotula, Chesapeake Bay Commission
Andrea Reese, Potomac Conservancy
Heather Richards, The Conservation Fund
Nikki Rovner, The Nature Conservancy
Ellen Shepard, VaULT
Tom Smith
Ken Wright, Potomac Conservancy

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With eleven (11) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Voyles called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. He welcomed new members, Morgan Slaven, Stewart Leeth, and The Honorable Ed Scott.

Secretary Voyles called for member and staff introductions.

RECOGNIZING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VLCF GRANT PROGRAM

Secretary Voyles addressed the 25th Anniversary of the VLCF Grant Program. He noted that he participated in a panel discussion at the recent Virginia Land Conservation and Greenways Conference. He shared his remarks from that conference. They are included below:

“In my role as Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, I am fortunate to travel across Virginia and see firsthand the abundance and diversity of natural and historical resources that we are so fortunate to have here in the Commonwealth. The establishment of VLCF was a strong recognition of the importance of investing in these treasures, to ensure that they will be around for future generations to come.

Over the past 25 years, VLCF has awarded 356 grants to fund the conservation of 156,694 acres across the Commonwealth.

- Over this time—\$118.6 million has been appropriated in the state budget for VLCF,
 - o With \$28.1 million of that going to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and their Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund to further assist landowners with the costs associated with conserving their land.

VLCF has impacted every region of the Commonwealth, from far Southwest to the Eastern Shore, from the Valley to Northern Virginia to the Northern Neck, and everywhere in between.

These projects vary greatly in size, sometimes ranging from critical acquisition and protections of less than 10 acres—to some amazing opportunities that have been greater than 10,000 acres.

As most of you are aware, grant funds are divided into five categories pursuant to the Code of Virginia:

- farmland preservation, forestland conservation, historic area preservation, natural area protection, and open spaces and parks.

With the structure and effectiveness of the program—Significant lands have been conserved through VLCF grants, including privately-owned working farms and forests, State Forests, state Natural Area Preserves, state Wildlife Management Areas, state historic sites and structures, tribal ancestral homelands, and local and regional trailways and parklands.

Looking at the distribution of projects across Virginia, funding is being directed throughout these categories to the areas most in need.

- Many farmland preservation projects have occurred in the northern part of the state, combatting development pressures that have made it challenging for our farmers to produce the food and fiber that feed and clothe the world.
- Southwest has been the recipient of numerous significant natural area and open space protections, ensuring those unique landscapes held dear by so many can continue to be enjoyed, and helping build on what is already an amazing outdoor recreation and tourism destination.

This really leads right into one of the main factors that makes VLCF so successful—the partners involved. From both the state and the non-profit sector—Conservation partners, including numerous entities in the room today, have leveraged VLCF state funds with more than \$400 million in matching funds. That is a phenomenal testament to the commitment and dedication you all have to the incredibly important conservation work that is happening in Virginia.

The work you are doing is setting the example for future partnerships and opportunities. One of those key partners that has recently emerged and shown the potential impact of VLCF is Virginia's tribes. In total VLCF, has awarded over \$6.2 million in funding to Virginia Tribes to acquire and protect over 2,800 (2,809) acres – focusing in on their historic lands and re-establishing a critical aspect of their lives for their future legacies and communities.

The structure of VLCF is something that has contributed to this success we are reflecting on today. An interagency task force, consisting of representatives of the Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Agriculture and Consumer Services, Forestry, Historic Resources, Wildlife Resources, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation—assisting the VLCF Board of Trustees – has developed criteria for each of the five grant categories, scoring applications, and making funding recommendations. That coordinated expertise enables smart, strategic decisions to be made. Decisions we can all be confident in—and decisions we know will result in impactful use of taxpayer dollars.

That is a legacy to be proud of. A legacy that has a solid foundation. And a legacy that we continue to build on.

Thank you to all who have played a role over the past 25 years in making VLCF what it is today. I look forward to seeing what will be accomplished over the next 25. “

Secretary Voyles called on Ms. DiCicco for additional remarks about the 25th Anniversary of the VLCF.

Ms. DiCicco commented that DCR has been working to highlight the work of the VLCF over the last 25 years. She noted a project map showing where VLCF has funded projects. She also introduced the new VLCF logo commemorating the 25th Anniversary.

DCR has developed a story map to highlight the 25 years of VLCF projects. The story map shows five projects in each category. Ms. DiCicco advised that staff from partner agencies would be highlighting five of those projects.

Farmland Preservation - Genelle Harris, VDACS

Ms. Harris gave an overview of Forkland Dairy:

One of the last dairies in Cumberland County is forever protected with an open-space easement. The 904-acre Forkland Dairy farm, a Virginia Century Farm, has been in the same family since 1848. Three generations of the family are actively engaged in the 300-head operation and have a plan for future expansion. The farm lies on 4,370 feet of shoreline along the Appomattox River and has received the Clean Water Farm Award and the Forage and Grassland Council's award for management practices. Best management practices installed include Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, cover crops, tree planting in riparian buffer areas and a precision phosphorus feeding program. Partners include the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Farmland Preservation Category FY21 Round 2; FY22

Forestland Preservation - Amanda Scheps, DOF

Ms. Scheps gave a review of Big Woods, Piney Grove Flatwoods:

VLCF grants supported the creation of Big Woods, the first state forest in southeastern Virginia, with 4,192 acres, followed by a new wildlife management area of 1,286 acres. The new Piney Grove Flatwoods Natural Area Preserve is the most recent addition to this mosaic of conserved lands in Sussex County, which makes up one of the most intact coastal-plain stream systems in eastern Virginia. All these public lands have been critical for efforts to restore habitat for the endangered Red-cockaded woodpecker and longleaf pine savannahs. Partners include Department of Forestry; Department of Wildlife Resources; Natural Heritage Program; The Nature Conservancy.

Forestland Preservation Category FY07; FY09; FY15; FY20

Historic Area Preservation - Karri Richardson, DHR

Ms. Richardson gave an overview of Siegen Forest:

Siegen Forest preserves portions of two Civil War battlefields: Chancellorsville and Wilderness in Orange County. The property contains seven known archaeological sites, including two resources related to a mill complex once located at Germanna Ford, Civil War-era military earthworks, and the remains of structures from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The property contains a well-marked trail system and newly opened public boat launch at Germanna Ford with access to the Rapidan River. Partners include the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program; Department of Historic Resources; Piedmont Environmental Council; Historic Germanna.

Historic Area Preservation Category | FY22

Natural Areas Preservation- Jason Bulluck DCR

Mr. Bulluck gave an overview of Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve:

The first-ever VLCF grant awarded to a natural area project resulted in the establishment of Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve in Lancaster County. The grant was awarded to the Northern Neck Audubon Society to protect 254 acres of mixed pine-hardwood forest, ravines and habitat for migratory songbirds and rare plants. This project set the bar for natural area projects: it helped to protect irreplaceable natural heritage resources while allowing public access. Hickory Hollow remains a persistently popular birdwatching hotspot. Additional partners include Natural Heritage Program.

Natural Area Preservation Category| FY00

Open Spaces and Parks – Kellie Seaton, DCR

Ms. Seaton presented an overview of Paradise Creek:

Over two VLCF grant rounds, the Elizabeth River Project received funding to acquire 40 acres in Portsmouth for the creation of an urban nature park along the shores of the Elizabeth River. The completed park now boasts 11 acres of restored tidal wetlands, a kayak launch, walking trails, picnic tables, a river-themed playground and an educational wetland learning lab. The park's 2 miles of trails traverse an old growth coastal oak woodland, wildflower meadows, pollinator gardens and the restored wetlands, providing a view of Paradise Creek. Additional partners include the City of Portsmouth; Virginia Port Authority.

Open Spaces and Parks Category | FY06, FY07

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Martha Little

Ms. Little presented an overview of Camp Kum-Ba-Yah:

Three VLCF grants supported a conservation easement over Camp Kum-Ba-Yah, protecting a 42-acre urban forest in Lynchburg in perpetuity. The public recreation, learning center and outdoor space has offered outdoor nature programming for more than 70 years. The land has connections to the civil rights movement. It was the only space in the city to offer a meal to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his 1962 visit, and was the first pool in Lynchburg to welcome African American families to swim alongside their white neighbors. Generations have had formative nature experiences in its woods. The organization offers scholarships to nearly half its campers. Partners include Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Open Spaces and Parks Category | FY20; FY21 Round 1; FY22

Secretary Voyles thanked the presenters and asked if any members of the Board would like to comment.

Ms. Andrews commented that she has both represented the Board and been a member. She noted that a common theme has been the great staff support and that she is proud to speak about the program outside of Virginia.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 13, 2023, BOARD MEETING**BOARD ACTION**

Mr. Ford moved that the minutes of the November 13, 2023, meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Senator Marsden seconded, and the motion carried.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND FINANCIAL REPORT - Sharon Partee, DCR, Director of Finance

Ms. Partee presented the following financial information:

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
Fund Statement
As of April 30, 2024**

OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE – June 30, 2022		\$16,287,778
INCOME		
FY22 Stewardship Funds		\$2,124,270
FY23 Stewardship Funds		\$1,667,123
FY23 Appropriation – Chapter 2		\$16,000,000
FY24 Appropriation – Chapter 1		\$16,000,000
FY23 Interest		\$506,071
FY24 Interest*		\$1,098,433
TOTAL INCOME		\$37,395,997
DISBURSEMENTS		
FY23 Stewardship Fund Disbursements		\$2,124,370
FY24 Stewardship Fund Disbursements*		\$1,667,123
FY23 Grant Payments		\$5,507,148
FY24 Grant Payments*		\$6,130,299
FY23 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments		\$4,000,000
FY24 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments		\$4,000,000
FY23 Administrative Expenses		\$122,897
FY24 Administrative Expenses		\$49,590
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT		\$23,601,427
*Changes since last report		
OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE – April 30, 2024		\$30,082,348

AUTHORIZATION TO EXPEND INTEREST FROM VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FUND, PURSUANT TO § 10.1-1020 - Frank Stovall, DCR, Deputy Director for Operations

Mr. Stovall presented the DCR request for authorization to expend the interest from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund. He noted that pursuant to *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-2020(G), up to \$250,000 per year of the interest generated by the Fund may be used for the Foundation's administrative expenses.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Ford moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation authorize the Department of Conservation and Recreation to expend up to \$250,000 in FY 2025 for use consistent with the legislative authority on the use of interest generated by the Fund. *Code of Virginia* § 10.1-1020.G; as outlined below:

FY2025 \$250,000

Address existing administrative, web service and database-related expenses incurred by the Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grant management activities. Specifically, the funding will be used in support of staff assisting with the VLCF grant program, the Webgrants online Grant Management Portal, land conservation database support of the Foundation's mission, and fulfillment of statutorily required reporting requirements.

Ms. Stiff seconded and the motion carried.

VLCF GRANT PROGRAM

Review of VLCF Grant Projects That Have Closed – Gina DiCicco, DCR, Land Conservation Specialist

Ms. DiCicco reviewed the 19 projects that closed since the November 13, 2023, meeting of the Board.

- 1. Piedmont Environmental Council – Farmland Protection along the Blue Ridge Turnpike (FY2021)** Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) received a FY2021 grant for \$315,000 to project the M&W Farm and Willis Properties in Madison and Orange Counties – totaling 447 acres. The project leveraged VLCF funds with matching federal NRCS Agricultural Land Easement funds. PEC now co-holds the conservation easement with the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District. Grant Award: \$315,000. Payment amount: \$315,000. Match: \$1,690,431. Grant Closed: April 2024.
- 2. Piedmont Environmental Council – Farmland Protection along the Robinson River (FY2021)** A FY2021 VLCF grant for \$106,875, along with matching federal Agricultural Land Easement funds, were utilized by The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) to project the 596-acre Goodall Family Farm with an open space easement. The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District awarded the Goodalls its forestry award for their outstanding forest management and restoration efforts in 2019. The SWCD is a co-holder of the easement conserving the farmland in perpetuity. Grant Award: \$106,875. Payment amount: \$106,875. Match: \$2,123,304. Project closed: April 2024.
- 3. Department of Conservation and Recreation – Southside Virginia Conservation and Recreation Complex (Phase I) (FY2021)** The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) received a grant for \$843,750 to acquire Phase I of its first ever joint State Parks Division and Natural Heritage Division project; the Southside Virginia Conservation and Recreation Complex in Halifax

County. After the grant was awarded for the first phase to acquire 2,010 acres, the entire 7,4000 acres was donated to DCR. The VLCF grant funds were used to cover due diligence expenses required by the Commonwealth to accept the donation and ensured 2,010 acres were placed under a recorded Natural Areas Deed of Dedication. Grant Award: \$843,750, revised to \$240,000 to cover due diligence at May 2023 Board Meeting. Payment amount: \$207,418. Match: \$0. Project closed: May 2024. Amount to be returned to Natural Areas Preservation Category: \$32,582.

4. **Friends of the Lower Appomattox River – Appomattox River Trail – Critical Petersburg Gap Connections (FY2021)** Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) was awarded \$28,943 by VLCF in the FY21 grant round to acquire an eight-acre tract with 2,112 feet of river frontage along the Appomattox River, a state designated Scenic River. Project partners include the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (who holds the open space easement on the property), The Cameron Foundation, and the City of Petersburg. The project intersects two layers of ConserveVirginia: Cultural and Historic Preservation and Scenic Preservation. Grant Award: \$28,943. Payment amount: \$28,943. Match: \$70,971. Project closed: April 2024.
5. **Stafford County – Kevin Jones Farm (FY2021 Round II: FY2022)** Two VLCF grants, totaling \$166,500, were awarded to Stafford County to place an open-space easement on Kevin Jones Farm through the county's Purchase of Development Rights program. The easement preserves and protects on-side Civil War trenches within the wooded portion of the property. The farm is adjacent to land under conservation easement with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and is located 200 feet from another county-held PDR easement. Grant Awards: FY2021 Round II: \$46,250; FY2022: \$120,250. Payment amount: \$166,500. Match: \$243,290. Project closed: November 2023.
6. **American Battlefield Trust – Fussell's Mill Tracts at Second Deep Bottom Battlefield (FY2021 Round II)** The American Battlefield Trust received a VLCF grant for \$282,000 in FY21 to acquire and preserve the 50-acre Fussell's Mill Tracts in eastern Henrico County. The Trust has executed a written Rehabilitation and Management Plan for demolition and removal of the non-historic residential improvements on the 2.3-acre tract along with rehabilitation of the battlefield landscape. The Trust intends to interpret the Property for its historic battlefield significance through a publicity accessible roadside pull-off and signs. Grant Award: \$282,000. Payment amount: \$282,000. Match: \$490,644. Project closed. May 2024.
7. **Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Pierces Lowgrounds – Meherrin River Conservation Easement (FY2022; FY2023)** Virginia Outdoors Foundation was awarded \$650,000 over the FY22 and FY23 VLCF grant rounds to place an easement on the Pierces Lowgrounds tract. The property consists of 2,860 acres of multigenerational family-owned and operated forest and farmland along the Meherrin River in Greensville County. The property is within four categories of ConserveVirginia: Agriculture and Forestry, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement. Grant Award: FY2022: \$350,000; FY2023: \$300,000. Payment amount: \$650,000. Match: \$2,744,908. Project closed: April 2024.
8. **Virginia Department of Forestry – Over the River and Point Beach (FY2022)** Two properties along the State Scenic Nottoway River in Southampton County, under the same family ownership for almost 100 years, have been placed under easement with the Department of Forestry with the assistance of a VLCF FY22 grant for \$250,00. The two properties intersect five layers of ConserveVirginia: Agriculture and Forestry, Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, Scenic Preservation, Protected Landscapes Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement. Grant Award: \$225,000. Payment amount: \$225,000. Match: \$620,699. Project closed: May 2024.

9. **The Germanna Foundation – Siegen Forest (FY2022)** The Siegen Forest project is now protected under an open-space easement held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources. A VLCF grant, awarded in FY22 for \$647,370, helped to advance the preservation of important archaeological artifacts and assist in preserving this undeveloped park land in Orange County, which provides daily public access. The property is located within the Cultural and Historic Preservation, Floodplains and Flooding Resilience, and Water Quality Improvement layers of ConserveVirginia. Grant Award: \$647,370. Payment amount: \$628,910. Match: \$628,910. Project closed: December 2023. Amount to be returned to Historic Preservation Category: \$18,460.
10. **American Battlefield Trust – Pegrams Battery Tract at Cedar Mountain (FY2022)** An FY2022 VLCF grant in the amount of \$249,876 assisted in the American Battlefield Trust’s purchase and conservation of the 44-acre Pegram’s Battery Tract, located in Culpeper County. The tract is entirely within the Core Area of the Cedar Mountain Battlefield and falls within the Cultural and Historic Preservation and Scenic Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia. The Trust will steward the tract and incorporate it into its existing Cedar Mountain Park, which is open to the public year-round. Grant Award: 249,876. Payment amount: \$249,876. Match: \$265,763. Project closed: March 2024.
11. **Department of Conservation and Recreation – Difficult Creek South Addition (FY2022)** DCR’s Natural Heritage Division received a FY22 VLCF grant for \$30,000 to acquire a two-acre addition to the 819-acre Difficult creek Natural Area Preserve (DCNAP) in Halifax County. The property intersects the Protected Landscapes Resilience, the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity, and the Scenic Preservation layers of Conserve Virginia. Grant award: \$30,000. Payment amount: \$24,862. Match: \$0. Project closed: May 2024. Amount to be returned to the Natural Area Protection Category: \$5,137.
12. **Department of Conservation and Recreation – Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve Land Donation (FY2022)** The Division of Natural Heritage received a FY22 VLCF grant for \$20,000, to complete the due diligence necessary to accept the fee simple donation of a one-acre parcel adjoining the 905-acre Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve in Rockbridge County. The tract intersects the Protected Landscapes Resilience and Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity layers of ConserveVirginia. Grant Award: \$20,000. Payment amount: \$13,511. Match. \$0. Project closed: November 2023. Amount to be returned to the Natural Area Protection Category: \$6,489.
13. **Tadpole Land and Trail Conservancy – Ballenger Creek Nature Preserve (FY2022)** Tadpole Land and Trail Conservancy (TLTC) purchased 76 acres along Ballenger Creek in Fluvanna County to create Ballenger Creek Nature Preserve. The easement conserves the land, protects the forest, and provides public access. TLTC plans to build trails, conserve the habitat, and install interpretive signs. The property is not within ConserveVirginia. Grant Award: \$65,084. Payment amount. \$65,084. Match: \$186,513. Project closed. February 2024.
14. **Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Harris Farm (FY2023)** A VLCF grant award of \$400,000 to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) helped to purchase an open-space easement on the WD Harris farm in Spotsylvania County. Protection of the Harris Farm bolsters agricultural viability and projects water quality. Agricultural best management practices will continue, and a 50-foot-wide forested buffer will be maintained along the length of Beverly Run, about ¾ of a mile, which drains immediately into Lake Anna. Grant Award: \$400,000. Payment amount: \$400,000. Match: \$425,470. Project closed: April 2024.
15. **Downtown Greens, Inc. – Downtown Greens Expansion (FY2023)** Downtown Greens, Fredericksburg’s oldest community garden, was awarded a \$400,000 grant by VLCF in FY23 to

conserve a 56-acre parcel under an open-space easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The parcel shares a boundary with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, helping buffer both Braehead Farm and the adjacent Lee Drive from encroaching industrial development. Its 30 acres of bottomland forest, wetland and vernal pool habitat help generate clean water for the nearby lower Rappahannock River. About 2,000 feet of streams on the property will remain protected by the 100-foot forested riparian buffers. Grant Award: \$400,000. Payment amount: \$400,000. Match: \$1,823,634. Project closed: November 2023.

16. **Department of Forestry – Hornet Swamp (FY2023)** The Department of Forestry (DOF) received an FY23 VLFCF grant of \$400,000 to acquire an open-space easement on two separate tracts totaling 608 acres in Southampton and Sussex Counties. The DOF easement will protect sensitive bottomlands and more than 20,000 feet of 50-foot-wide forested buffers along Hornet Swamp and the perennial streams that transect the property. Grant Award: \$400,000. Payment amount: \$400,000. Match: \$503,125. Project closed: April 2024.
17. **Capital Region Land Conservancy – 5270 New Market Road (FY2023)** Capital Region Land Conservancy received an FY23 VLFCF grant for \$588,250 to match funding from the American Battlefields Protection Program, to acquire and conserve 41 acres at Willis Church and New Market Roads in eastern Henrico County. The property has the support of local neighborhood groups, many of which have placed an emphasis on preserving sites pertinent to the U.S. Colored Troops (the Battles of Deep Bottom I and II) and greater connectivity of conserved lands around Malvern Hill. Grant Award: \$588,250. Payment amount: \$582,485. Project closed: January 2024. Amount to be returned to the Historic Preservation Category: \$5,765.
18. **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation – Shiflett Tract at Piedmont Battlefield (FY2023)** Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation was granted \$253,433 from VLFCF in FY23 to acquire a historic preservation and open-space easement held by the Board of Historic Resources on the 141-acre Shiflett Tract in Augusta County. The project intersects the Agricultural and Forestal, Cultural and Historic Preservation and Watershed Preservation layers of ConserveVirginia. Grant Award: \$253,433. Payment amount: \$253,433. Match: \$645,303. Project closed: November 2023.
19. **Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation – Red Hill (FY2023)** The Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, utilizing a FY2023 VLFCF grant for \$602,830, conserved the 600-acre historic Red Hill property under an open-space easement held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The property fronts on the Falling River for almost one mile, and the state scenic Staunton River for 1,800 feet – both will have 50-foot-vegetated riparian buffers. Red Hill was named a National Memorial in 1986 by the President Reagan and is listed on both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Grant Award: \$602,830. Payment amount: \$602,830. Match: \$1,046,571. Project closed: December 2023.

Ms. DiCicco advised that two projects were withdrawn since the November, 2023 meeting.

1. **American Battlefield Trust – James Jackson Tract at the Wilderness Battlefield (FY2021)** Grant Award: \$221,023. Funds will be returned to the Historic Preservation Category.
2. **City of Waynesboro – Basic Park (FY2022)** Grant Award: \$87,500. Funds will be returned to the Open Spaces and Parks Category.

Summary of Open VLFCF Grants

Ms. DiCicco gave the following summary of open VLFCF grants.

- There are three open grants from the FY21 Round II grant round.
- For the FY22 grant round, nine of the 30 grants originally awarded are open.
- For the FY23 grant round, 26 of the 40 grants awarded are open.
- The 29 grants awarded in the FY24 grant round remain open.
- Currently, DCR is managing a total of 67 open grants with a total value of \$26,888,197.

Discussion and Approval of the VLCF FY25 Grant Round

Proposed Grant Fiscal Expenditure Plan

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Proposed GRANT FUNDING PLAN FOR FY25

FUNDING CATEGORIES	FY25 Budget Bill Chapt. 2 Item 360 A.I. \$16,000,000	Interest through 4/30/24 \$1,361,211	Unspent Grant Funds to be Approved and Reallocated	TOTALS Available
I. VOF Open-Space Land Preservation Trust Fund (25% per § 10.1-1020 C.)	\$4,000,000	\$340,301		VOF PTF: \$4340,301
II. Grant Program				VLCF Grant Round
(i) Farmland Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$0	\$2,604,182
(ii) Forest Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$0	\$2,604,182
(iii) Historic Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$245,248	\$2,849,430
(iv) Natural Area Preservation	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$195,514	\$2,799,696
(v) Open Space and Parks	\$2,400,000	\$204,182	\$87,500	\$2,691,682
TOTAL for Grant Round	\$12,000,000	\$1,020,910	\$528,262	\$13,548,172
<i>Summary of Additional Unspent Grant Funds</i>				
Farmland Preservation	\$0			
Forest Preservation	\$0			
Historic Area Preservation	\$245,248	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY21 American Battlefield Trust, James Jackson Tract at the Wilderness Battlefield \$221,023 <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY22 The Germanna Foundation, Siegen Forest \$18,460 . FY23 Capital Region land Conservancy, 5270 New Market Road \$5,765		
Natural Area Preservation	\$195,514	<u>Unallocated FY24 Grant Funds:</u> \$151,425 . <u>Unexpended Remainder:</u> FY21 DCR-DNH, Southside VA Conservation and Recreation Complex \$32,582 . FY22 DCR-DNH, Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve Land Donation \$6,489 . FY22 DCR-DNH, Difficult Creek South Addition \$5,018		
Open Spaces and Parks	\$87,500	<u>Withdrawn:</u> FY22 City of Waynesboro, Basic Park – Natural Area \$87,500 .		

Proposed Timeline for Applications and Awards

Mr. Stovall presented the proposed timeline.

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Proposed FY 24 Grant Schedule

Proposed FY24 VLCF Grant Schedule	
June 4, 2024	VLCF Board meeting to approve grant manual and update the grant round request for proposals (RFP).
Week of June 5, 2024	Announce official opening of grant round (update website and send emails).
June 27, 2024	Virtual Grant Workshop: orientation and program information for grant applicants: <u>Date set for June 27 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.</u>
Wednesday, August 28, 2024	Deadline for application submittal. (12 weeks)
Weeks of September 16 and 30, 2024	Interagency taskforce meetings to score projects and finalize recommendations – usually takes two meetings.
Mid-October 2024	SNR and Director’s review of applications and recommendations of IAT
Late October/Early November 2024	VLCF Board Meeting: Approval of grant awards.
By end of November 2024	Grant agreements sent to grant recipients. Projects have two years to close.

Proposed Grant Manual

Mr. Stovall presented the proposed edits to the VLCF Grant Manual. A copy with edits was provided members and was made available for public review prior to adoption.

Mr. Stovall noted:

- The first section of changes were minor edits or technical corrections, to include changes to improve document organization, grammar, and to clarify existing requirements.
- The Interagency Taskforce (IAT) recommended an age limit for boundary surveys. No survey greater than 20-years-old should be accepted as valid for grant applications. The Office of the Attorney General aided in developing the language for this recommendation.

Mr. Stovall advised that the IAT recommended that in the Farmland Preservation category, additional criterion be added to award up to five (5) points for projects working with local purchase of development (PDR) programs. This was requested by the Board at the November 13, 2023 meeting where seven of the 13 applications in the Farmland Preservation category were submitted by local PDR programs.

With regard to wildlife corridors, the IAT recommended that up to 10 points may be given to projects that fall within an area designated as a wildlife corridor buffer or an actual corridor in the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan.

Mr. Stovall advised that additional changes were recommended by the Interagency Taskforce. However due to the significant nature of the changes, DCR recommended a period of additional review and public comment prior to implementing the changes in the FY26 Grant Manual.

Mr. Stovall noted that DCR was seeking Board approval and adoption of the following:

1. The proposed Grant Fiscal Expenditure Plan
2. The proposed Timeline for Applications and Awards
3. The proposed Grant Manual
4. The addition of points for Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Wildlife Corridors

Public Comment

Secretary Voyles opened the floor for public comment regarding the proposed grant manual changes. There was no public comment.

Secretary Voyles called for discussion or questions from Board members.

Ms. Stiff asked about the addition of points for the Purchase of Development Rights. She suggested the Board consider the expansion of these points for additional categories, not just Farmland Preservation.

Mr. Stovall suggested this could be included in the section where bonus points are awarded. He noted that the IAT was just proposing the addition in a single category but that the decision to expand that would be up to the Board.

Secretary Voyles suggested that the expansion of the points for PDR beyond the Farmland Preservation category be included as part of the discussion and public comment for the FY26 Grant Manual.

Ms. Stiff suggested that a subcommittee of the Board be convened to address those changes and other changes that might come forward. The discussion process would be open to the public.

Secretary Voyles agreed to convene a subcommittee following the public comment period. He suggested that members of the IAT be involved in that discussion prior to a final presentation to the Board for adoption of the FY26 grant manual.

Mr. Leeth asked about the prohibition of indirect costs for reimbursement as matching funds.

Mr. Stovall responded that the intent is to maximize available funding for land acquisitions.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Quigley moved that the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (Board) approve the recommended adjustments for the CY24/FY25 grant cycle, as recommended by the Interagency Task Force to include adoption of the financial plan, the grant timeline, technical changes to the manual, and addition of points and scoring criteria related to PDR and Wildlife Corridors.

Ms. Stiff seconded and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

Secretary Voyles recognized Mr. Fletcher who will be retiring in September, after twenty-seven years of service to DCR.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.