

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, September 5, 2017
DCR Board Room, Richmond, Virginia**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Subcommittee Chair
R. Brian Ball
Glenda C. Booth

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Jay C. Ford

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director for Administration and Finance
Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Analyst
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Melissa Jackson, Budget Analyst
Larry Mikkelson, Land Conservation Specialist
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Sarah Richardson, Land Conservation and Real Property Manager
Thomas Smith, Deputy Director of Operations
Synthia Waymack, Grants Administrator
Joe Weber, GIS Projects Manager

OTHERS PRESENT

The Honorable L. Preston Bryant, Jr., McGuireWoods Consulting LLC
Nicole Rovner, The Nature Conservancy
Mike Santucci, Virginia Department of Forestry
Andy Sorrell, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Ellen Sheppard, Virginia's United Land Trusts
Elizabeth Tune, Department of Historic Resources
Deb Van Duzee, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pollard called the meeting to order and called for introductions.

Overview of Virginia's Conserved Lands and an Analysis of Scenarios for Conservation Priorities

Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage

Mr. Bulluck gave a presentation regarding Virginia's Conserved Lands. A copy of Mr. Bulluck's presentation is included as Attachment A.

Mr. Bulluck reviewed the current mapped priorities relating to the VLCF grant categories. He gave an overview of the top 10% of lands needing to be conserved in each of the categories.

Mr. Bulluck indicated that 10% of the high priority lands represents 2,000,291 acres or 7.9% of the state, and that 10% was picked as simply a strawman to assist the conversation, not a recommendation.

Mr. Pollard noted that there was no discussion of recreational lands. Mr. Smith noted DCR has plans to develop a revised recreation model over the coming months and following the general process used by the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Mr. Bryant advised that when the budget writers look at funding for land conservation and for the Land Preservation Tax credit the concern is to see that funding is meeting multiple policy needs. That may be water quality, resiliency, public access or other needs. The desire is to be more accurate in projecting the land preservation tax credit and working to provide more to the general fund.

Discussion of Setting Strategic Goals for Land Conservation

The subcommittee discussed using geographic regions within the Commonwealth for goal setting and the creation of goals for different land uses.

Mr. Pollard noted that with the information provided there was the concern that resources were being double counted. He asked members and staff to consider what the approach should be and what goals should be established.

Ms. Booth expressed an interest in seeing an analysis of these lands using geographic regions.

Mr. Bulluck noted that there are challenges in communicating goals to the various regions of the state. There needs to be a focus on what resources should be addressed in each region.

Mr. Smith suggested that a statewide analysis be completed for the top 20% of lands and then divided according to specific regions.

Mr. Bulluck replied that identifying the best opportunities within the state would help in making funding decisions.

Mr. Pollard asked that on the final slide staff identify how much land is already conserved in each area. This would allow funding to be directed in more specific amounts.

Mr. Bulluck said that the next step would be to map the priorities and show the overlap between the categories.

Mr. Pollard suggested a map showing the top 10% and the top 20% of land conservation priorities with a bar graph showing the percent already preserved in each of the categories.

Mr. Bulluck replied that the recreation map could be developed by the end of the year, and Mr. Pollard's 10% and 20% analysis could be done by the next subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Poole advised that much of the issue of recreational funding could be addressed through the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Ms. Rover suggested that the information should also include recreational access to water as well as river segments that do not have access.

Ms. Booth expressed a concern that the aspect of recreational lands does not fit the mission of the VLCF. She relayed that she comes from an area where much of the natural habitat been developed and noted that it was important to save what little is left.

Ms. Poole noted that the Virginia Outdoors Plan addressed recreational lands in a systematic way.

Mr. Pollard replied that not including the recreational lands in the analysis would lead toward the creation of an incomplete document.

Mr. Pollard suggested that the concept of geographic regions be tabled and that the subcommittee look at the maps and consider how broadly the lands are distributed. He asked that DCR develop a document that would provide quantifiable numbers regarding recreation lands and what has been asked for through the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Mr. Ball expressed a concern that the information must be science driven and noted that some recreation information did not necessarily fit into the science.

Mr. Smith replied that many of the natural lands are considered to provide natural and nature based recreation, including trails and water access. This is guided by what is asked for in the Virginia Outdoors Plan and staff would see how that data can be integrated into the variables of the recreation model.

Mr. Bulluck noted that overlap with recreation lands can be good, but can also produce conflict with regard to preservation and use of the land. For example, a large tract of forest should not necessarily be developed with trails if the land harbors rare species. The mapping process will help identify these areas of potential conflict.

Mr. Pollard asked that staff compile the requested information including a map showing the top 10% and the top 20% of land conservation priorities with a bar graph showing the percent already preserved in each of the categories and report back to the subcommittee. At that point the subcommittee will determine next steps and the next meeting date.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Attachment A

Towards a Commonwealth Strategy for Land Conservation

VLCF Subcommittee Meeting
September 5, 2017

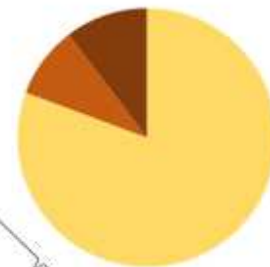
A Top 10% Analysis

- Review current mapped priorities related to the VLCF categories

- Graph proportion of state



- Graph proportion of protected/unprotected
- Visualize the addition of top 10% of lands in each category

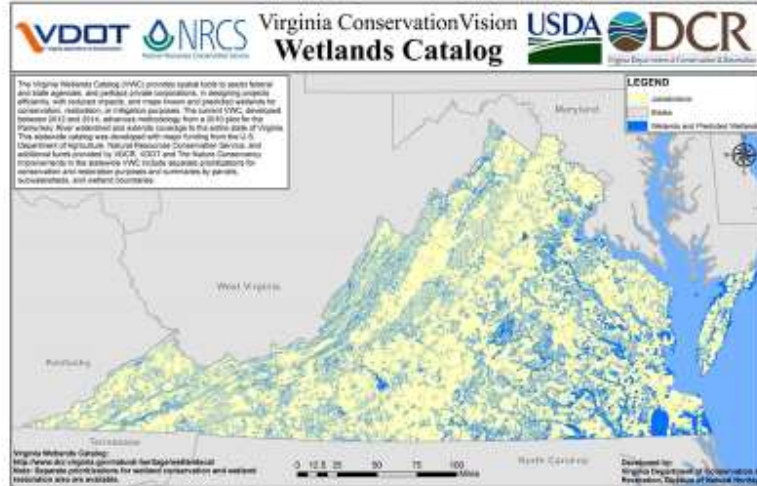


- Finish with relative acreages, and conversation

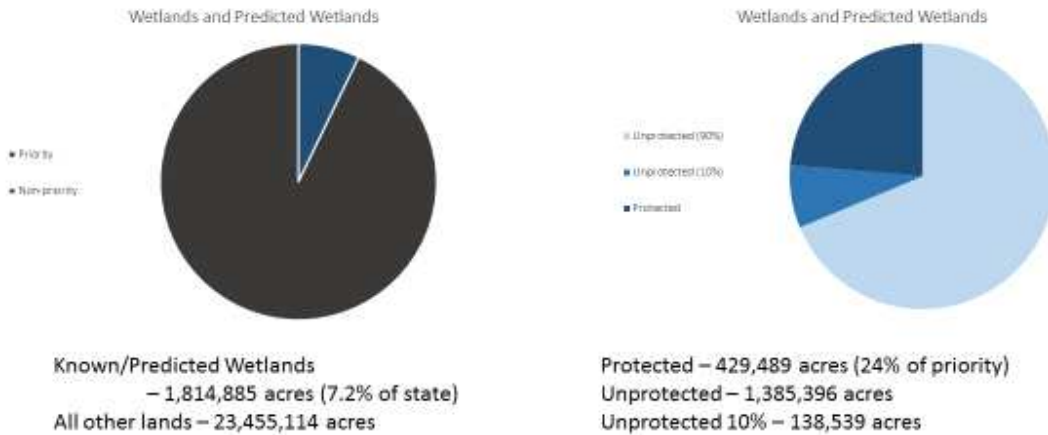
Wetlands and Predicted Wetlands

CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

- Used all areas where at least 3 of 8 indicators of known or predicted wetlands occur
- Permanent protection



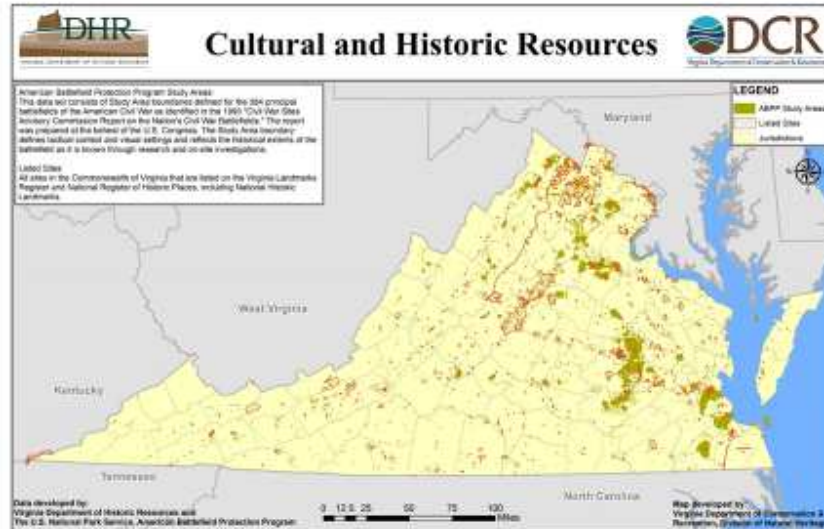
Wetlands and Predicted Wetlands



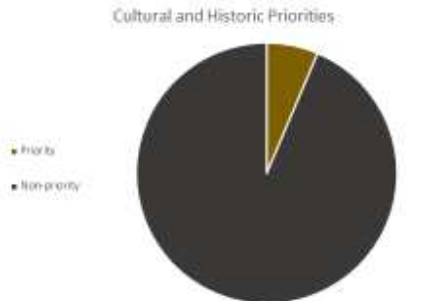
Priority Cultural and Historical Resources

CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

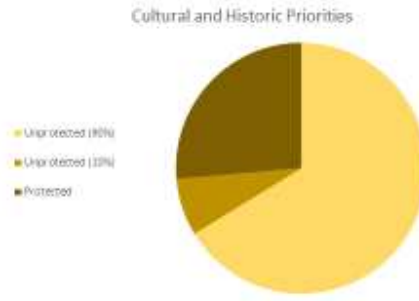
- Used total acres of battlefields, historic sites and DHR easements
- Included non-DHR easements that also intersected mapped battlefields/sites
- Permanent protection



Priority Cultural and Historical Resources



Cultural and Historic Priorities
 – 1,617,668 acres (6.4% of state)
 All other lands - 23,652,332 acres

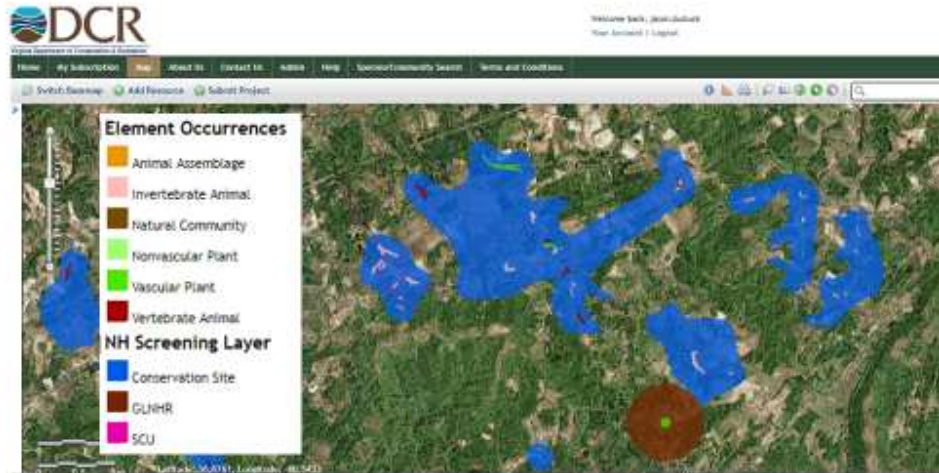


Protected – 427,015 acres (26% of priority)
 Unprotected – 1,190,652 acres
 Unprotected 10% – 119,065 acres

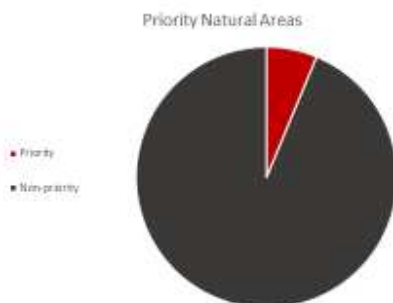
Priority Natural Areas

CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

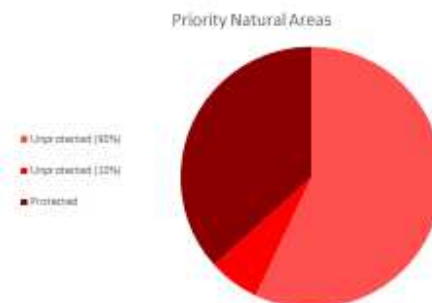
- Used all terrestrial conservation sites, stream conservation units and cave/karst areas providing habitat for rare species, and natural communities
- Permanent protection and managed for biodiversity and habitat protection



Priority Natural Areas



Mapped Natural Areas – 1,583,991 acres (6.3% of state)
 All other lands – 23,686,009 acres

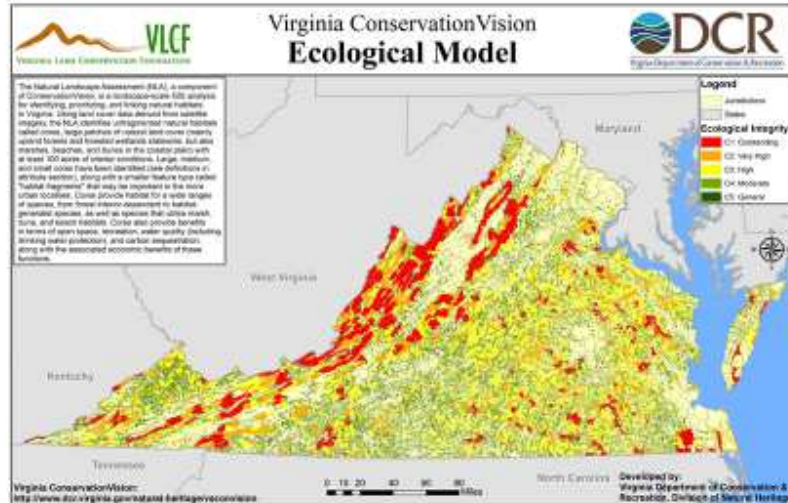


Protected – 580,750 acres (37% of priority)
 Unprotected – 1,003,241 acres
 Unprotected 10% – 100,324 acres

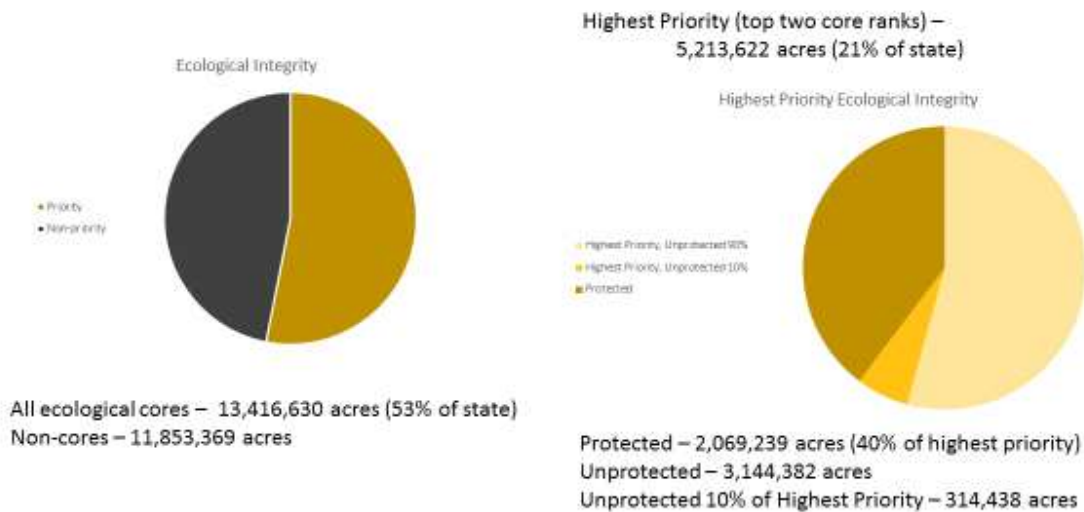
Priority Ecological Integrity

CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

- Used all classes, representing all existing intact ecological cores
- Permanent protection and managed for natural resource values



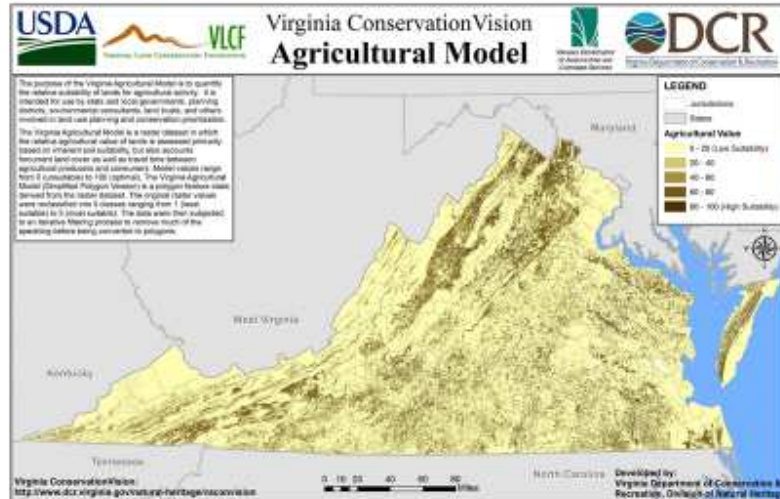
Priority Ecological Integrity



Priority Agricultural Lands

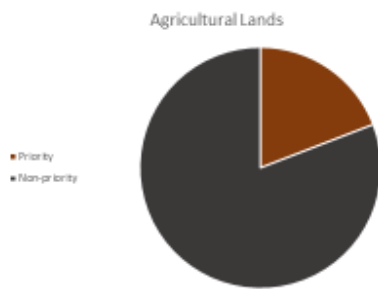
CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

- Used all but the lowest ranking of agricultural suitability
- Removed all forested areas
- Removed all developed areas
- Permanent protection



Priority Agricultural Lands

Highest Priority (top two ranks) –
- 3,768,584 acres (15% of state)



Ag model lands rank 2-5
– 4,842,290 acres (19% of state)
All other lands – 20,427,709 acres

Highest Priority Agricultural Lands

- Highest Priority, Unprotected 90%
- Highest Priority, Unprotected 10%
- Protected

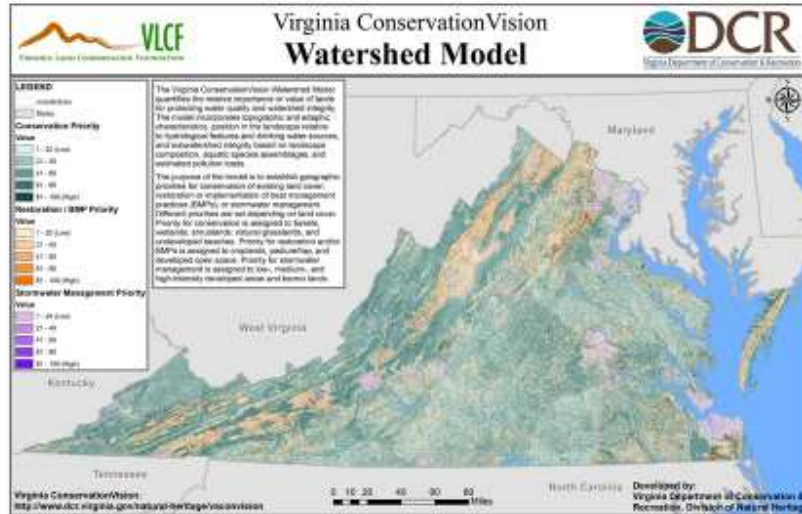


Protected – 314,564 acres (8% of highest priority)
Unprotected – 3,454,019 acres
Unprotected 10% of Highest Priority – 345,402 acres

Priority Watershed Conservation

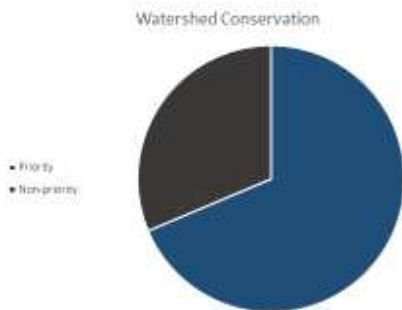
CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

- Used all ranks, excluding areas not included in the model
- Permanent protection



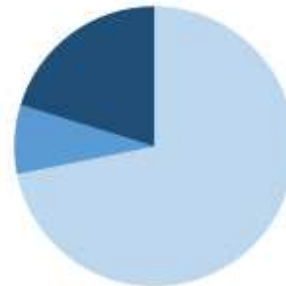
Priority Watershed Conservation

Highest Priority (top two ranks)
 – 2,351,621 acres (9% of state)



All Watershed Model ranks –
 17,347,085.36 acres (69% of state)
 Non-Model lands – 7,922,914 acres

Highest Priority Watershed Conservation

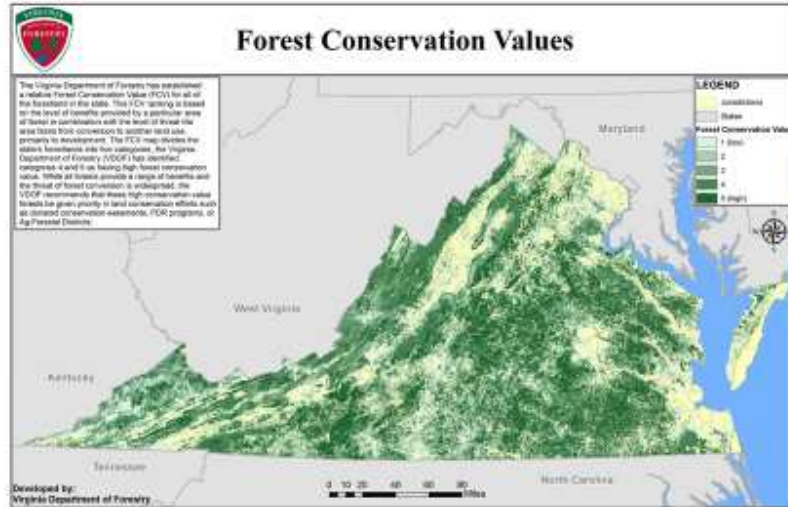


Protected – 475,129 acres (20% of highest priority)
 Unprotected – 1,876,491 acres
 Unprotected 10% of Highest Priority – 187,649 acres

Priority Forestlands

CRITERIA FOR ANALYSIS

- Used all ranks
- Permanent protection and managed for natural resource values



Priority Forestlands

Highest Priority (top two FCV ranks)
 – 9,762,617 acres (39% of state)

Forestlands per Forest Conservation Values
 Analysis (Virginia DOF)



All forestlands – 17,400,969 acres (69% of state)
 Non-forest – 7,869,030 acres

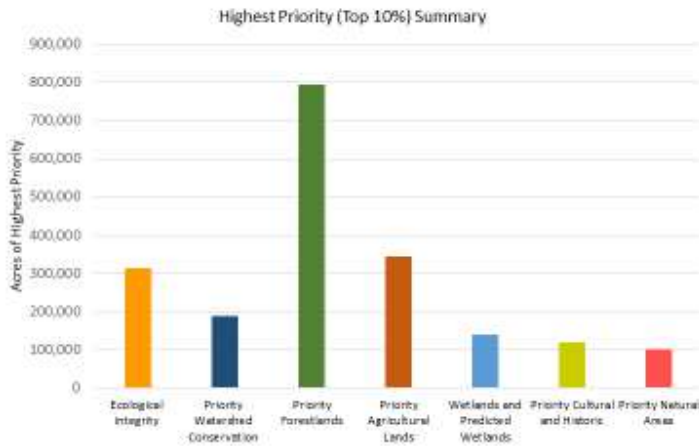
Highest Priority Forestlands

■ Highest Priority, Unprotected 90%
 ■ Highest Priority, Unprotected 10%
 ■ Protected



Protected – 1,812,889 acres (19% of highest priority)
 Unprotected – 7,949,727 acres
 Unprotected 10% of Highest Priority – 794,973 acres

How many acres is 10%?



- 2,000,391 high priority acres
- 7.9% of state

