

**Senate Finance Economic Development/Natural
Resources Subcommittee
January 23, 2008**

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

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State Parks * Soil and Water Conservation * Natural Heritage

*** Outdoor Recreation Planning * Land Conservation**

*** Dam Safety and Floodplain Management**

*** Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance**



Department of Conservation and Recreation

Programs

- Virginia State Parks
- Natural Heritage (Natural Area Preserves System)
- Nonpoint Water Quality Agency
- Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
- Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
- Land Conservation
- Outdoor Recreation Planning, Trails, Greenways

Key State Boards

- Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
- Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation
- Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
- Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Board
- Virginia Scenic River Board

Department of Conservation and Recreation

(* = Proposed in Governor Kaine's budget)

	<u>Total Appropriation</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Non-Gen Fund</u>	<u>Authorized Staffing</u>
FY08	\$77M	\$50M	\$27M	536
FY09*	\$122M	\$57M	\$65M	548
FY10*	\$103M	\$53M	\$50M	563

Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements

- Runoff from farm fields, streets, construction sites, lawns, septic tanks, etc.
- Major contributor to nutrient & sediment problems of Bay and impaired waters
- **Agricultural Programs**: Voluntary BMP Cost-Share Programs; Nutrient Management Plans; Poultry Litter Transport
- **Developed Land Programs**: Erosion Control, Stormwater Management, Bay Preservation Act
- **Recent efforts**: Targeted Ag BMPs; Enhanced oversight of local implementation; Consolidated state stormwater programs; Partnership agreements; Outreach campaigns; Strategic grants
- **Key Partners**: Farmers, local governments, developers, conservation organizations
- **47 Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts**: Vital role in delivery of technical assistance, recruitment & installation of AG BMPs, etc.

Virginia Agricultural BMPs

Priority Practices-5 BMPs

- Cover Crops
- Conservation Tillage
(No-till)
- Nutrient Management
- Riparian Buffers
- Livestock Exclusion
(Cows out of
streams/Alternative Water
Systems)

Base Program-33 BMPs

- Stream Protection
- Stream Crossing & Access
- Litter & Animal Waste
Storage Facilities
- Sinkhole Protection
- Livestock Lot Mgt.System

Virginia's Nonpoint Needs

	<u>State Share of Cost</u>
CHESAPEAKE BAY and TRIBUTARIES	
Implement Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) through Cost-Share, including 5 Priority Practices	\$580 Million
Implement BMPs on non-agricultural lands	\$660 Million
SOUTHERN RIVERS and TRIBUTARIES	
Implement BMPs for 400 stream and river clean-up plans (TMDLs)	\$989 Million
TOTAL STATE NPS COST	\$2.23 Billion

History of WQIF Funding Nonpoint Source

Funding has been unpredictable and dependent upon state surpluses and year-end contributions to the Water Quality Improvement Fund – Nonpoint account.

- FY 2002 – No funding
- FY 2003 – No funding
- FY 2004 – No funding
- FY 05 – \$ 9.4 M
- FY 06 – \$ 69.7 M
- FY 07 – \$ 3.8 M
- FY 08 – No funding

Governor's Introduced Budget

Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements

\$ 20 M Deposit for Agricultural BMP Cost-Share and targeted initiatives tied to Chesapeake Bay Restoration and Impaired Waters

Agriculture Cost-Share Program Total - \$18.5 M

Chesapeake Bay - \$ 11.2 M (60%);

Southern Rivers - \$ 7.3 M (40%)

- Base Cost Share Program
- Targeted 5 Priority Practices
- Implementation of TMDL (impaired waters) clean-up plans

Strategic Water Quality Initiatives - \$ 1.5 M

- Support innovative and cost-effective practices (ex: animal diet and feed management, litter transport, stream restoration, buffer establishment)
- Partnership with Department of Forestry

Stormwater Management Field Inspectors – 10 NGF positions (paid from permit fees)



DAM SAFETY

- 2005 Report Card (American Society of Civil Engrs) Grade of “D”
- Lack of funding for maintenance and repair; increased # high hazard dams; inadequately staffed state dam safety programs
- 9 of 19 most severe rainfall events in VA and surrounding areas
- 2001 G.A. expanded Act; hundreds more dams under state regulation
- Currently, 600 dams regulated; over 1,700 dams in database.

Recent Actions

- Strengthened compliance for dam safety
- Initiated first comprehensive review of regulations since 1989.
- First-ever state loan round for dam repairs and floodplain (\$2.5M)
- HB 837 (Delegate Sherwood) – Dam Break Inundation Zone

Governor's Introduced Budget

Dam Safety

VPBA Bonds for Dam Repairs (Capital Budget)

- \$ 20 M total in FY 2009 for needed repairs
- 14 priority dams owned by soil and water conservation districts
- 6 State Park dams

Dam Safety/Floodplain Loan Fund

- \$ 2.7 M for loans to dam owners and localities
- (\$ 1.35 M in both FY 2009 and FY 2010)

Dam Safety Engineers

- FY09 - 2 positions (no additional funding requested)
- Currently, only 4 dam safety engineers statewide

Virginia State Parks System

- Established 1936
- 34 state parks; land for 5 more
- Award-winning best managed system 2001; Rated among the Nation's Best Campgrounds, Fishing Spots, Scenic Views, Kid-Friendly Parks by 2005 Camping Life Magazine
- More than 7.4 Million visitors in 2007 (record year)
- Account for more than \$171 M in economic impact



- **Recent Actions**

- Acquired land for 5 new parks and expansions of existing parks (30+ tracts; 5,000 acres)
- Due to passage of 2002 GOB, opened 63 new cabins, 192 new campsites, 150 renovated campsites, 3 meeting halls, etc.
- All construction projects to be completed by 2010 (energy efficient, LEED)
- Progress made on re-benchmarking of staff and operational support

- **Immediate and Future Challenges**

- Continue re-benchmarking of existing park operations and staffing
- Substantial deferred maintenance needs
- New Park Development (Capital funds)
- New Park Operations and Staffing



Governor's Introduced Budget Funding for New State Parks

Powhatan

- Appropriations Act in 2003 directed transfer from Beaumont Juvenile Correction Center
- 1,563 acres along the James River
- Proposed as day-use until nearby state road improvements can be made
- **GOVERNOR'S CAPITAL BUDGET FY09: \$ 3 M (first-time funding to begin Phase 1 development)**
- Future funding to complete Phase 1: \$ 9 M for park and \$ 5M for VDOT road work at nearby intersection State Route 522

High Bridge Trail

- Authorizing legislation in 2004; Dedication in 2007
- 34 mile trail: Burkeville to Farmville to Pamplin; includes historic Civil War battle site and “world’s largest bridge”
- Donation of rail-to-trail corridor from Norfolk Southern
- Current funding of \$ 1 M; “fast track” plan to open first 7.5 miles this spring (High Bridge to Farmville; Farmville west towards Pamplin)
- **GOVERNOR'S CAPITAL BUDGET FY09: \$ 4.5 M; enable DCR to open additional 13 miles in spring 2009**
- Future funding to complete trail and Master Plan: \$ 7.5 M



FUTURE STATE PARKS

Widewater - Stafford County

- 1,100 acres along the Potomac River
- Bargain sale from Dominion Virginia Power
- Land acquired in 2006 using VA Public Building Authority Bonds
- *Master Plan underway*

Middle Peninsula

- Initial 428 acres along the York River acquired (Gloucester County)
- Land acquired in 2006 using GOB funds (below market price)
- *Additional acreage being sought*

Seven Bends - Shenandoah County

- 307 acres acquired along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
- Almost 800 add'l acres donated by private individual & Town of Woodstock
- *Master Plan underway*

Future Possibilities (should funding become available)

- Grand Cavern - Augusta County
- Charlottesville area
- Northern Virginia
- Richmond region
- Mayo River – Henry County



Governor's Introduced Budget

Funding for State Park Operations

Needs Identified by 2002 Commission on Future of Virginia's Environment and updated in 2004 by DCR to reflect demands from new GOB facilities and prospective new parks

Currently 283 State Park FTE

Remaining Need: \$ 10 M and 117 Staff

FY 2010 - \$ 1.5 M and 15 FTE to continue re-benchmarking began in 2005

- Park Rangers
- Maintenance Staff
- Cabin Housekeepers
- Seasonal Staff
- Equipment

FY 2009 - Transfer 2 positions and responsibilities for Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation to DCR

Virginia Natural Heritage Program & Natural Area Preserve System

- Established 1986
- Named the outstanding program in Western Hemisphere in 2006
- Virginia has some of the greatest diversity of biological resources in USA
- Identify and protect rare plants and animals and natural resource communities
- Offers unique recreational, educational and research opportunities
- **Recent Actions**
 - Acres protected have more than doubled (from 20,000 to over 42,000)
 - Established 18 new preserves and added 32 tracts to existing preserves
 - Now 52 preserves, 42,541 acres; expect to add 15 (total 67) more by 2010
- **Immediate and Future Challenges**
 - Limited staff and operational support for preserve system resulted in closing of North Landing River NAP; disturbance of rare and sensitive plants; poaching; limitations on providing public access; reduced stewardship and management of state properties; trespass violations; deterioration of resources for which the lands were protected.
 - Board and DCR plan to develop “showcase preserves”
 - Immediate staffing needed for Crow’s nest acquisition



Immediate Operational Challenge

Crow's Nest, Stafford County

- Approximately 2,900 acre peninsula
- Recognized by USFWS as one of the most significant natural areas remaining on East Coast
- Has natural and historic significance including 750 acres of wetlands, 2,200 acres mature unfragmented hardwood forest –two globally rare forest types; Early Native American (Potomac) village settled in 1300's, 1662 land grant plantation, Union Army staging area
- Protection sought for over 10 years
- Purchase agreement signed with owner December 2007
- Joint acquisition between DCR and Stafford County to be dedicated as State Natural Area Preserve
- Closing on Phase 1 (1,720 acres) in April 2008; two-year option for Phase 2 (additional 1,200 acres - \$16.2 M)
- Located in highly populated region; expectation of public use very high
- Need for immediate on-site staff and operational support



Crow's Nest
Peninsula
And Marshes



Chinkapin Oak



Governor's Introduced Budget Funding for Land Conservation

- FY 2009 - \$ 50 M VPBA Bonds for Land Acquisition (DCR, Historic Resources, Forestry, VOF)
- FY 2009 and 2010 - \$ 950,000 in operational support for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation