



**PROTECTING VIRGINIA'S
WATERSHEDS**



VOF Overview

- Created by General Assembly in 1966.
- Protects 609,845 acres in Virginia – three times the size of Shenandoah National Park.
- 500,000 acres lie within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Since 2000, VOF has preserved open space in Virginia at a rate of five acres every hour.
- VOF easements account for about 80% of all open-space easement acreage in Virginia.



How does VOF protect water quality?

- Conservation easements
- Land acquisitions
- Landowner education



Direct Conservation: VOF Easements

Ways VOF easements protect water quality

- Caps on impervious surface
- Development limitations
- Forestry BMPs
- Stream buffers and livestock exclusion
- Mining restrictions



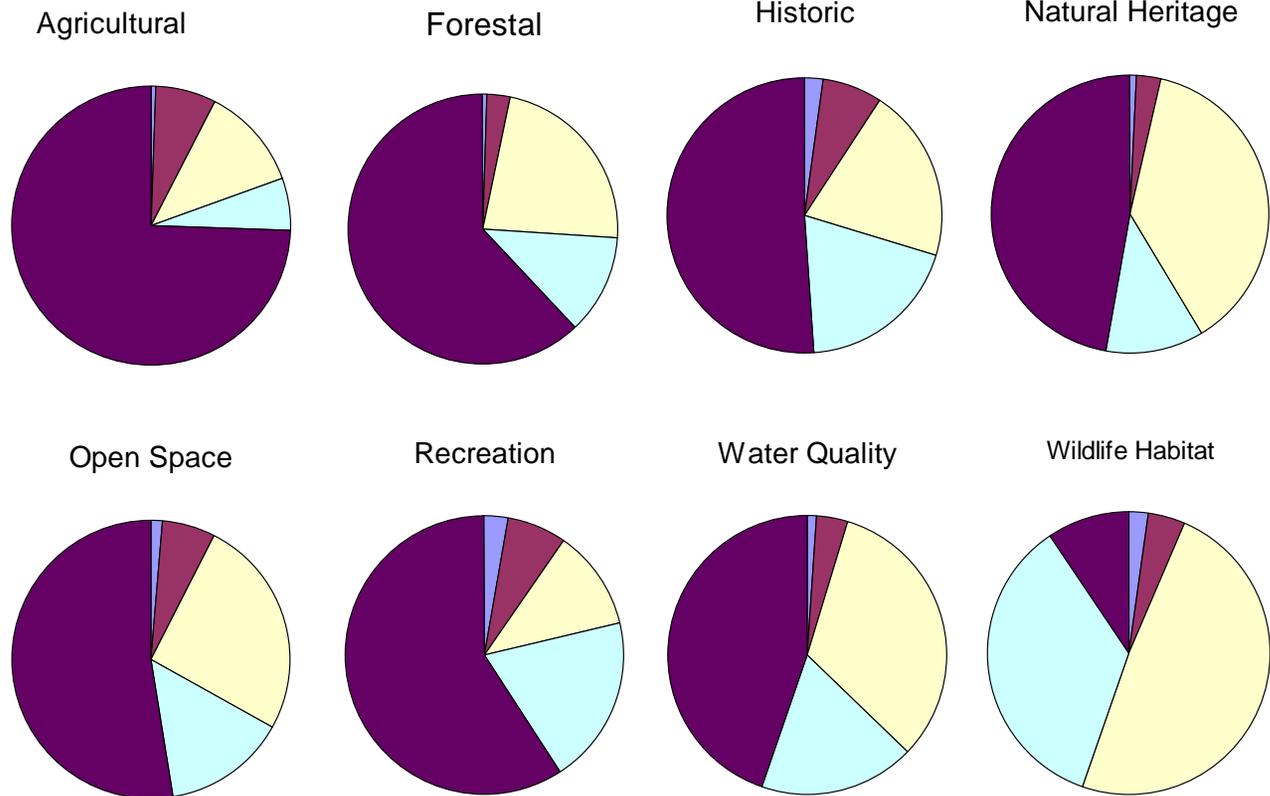
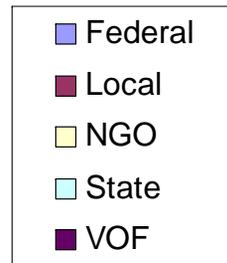
VOF's Direct Impact

- 609,845 acres protected statewide
- 497,999 acres in Bay watershed
- 41,070 acres on 313 easements in the Shenandoah watershed
- 83,566 acres within one mile of a drinking-water intake
- VOF protected lands contain 1,720 BMPs that are tracked by DCR. 1,481 are within the Bay watershed.
- 81 miles of designated trout streams (64 miles are wild trout streams) statewide

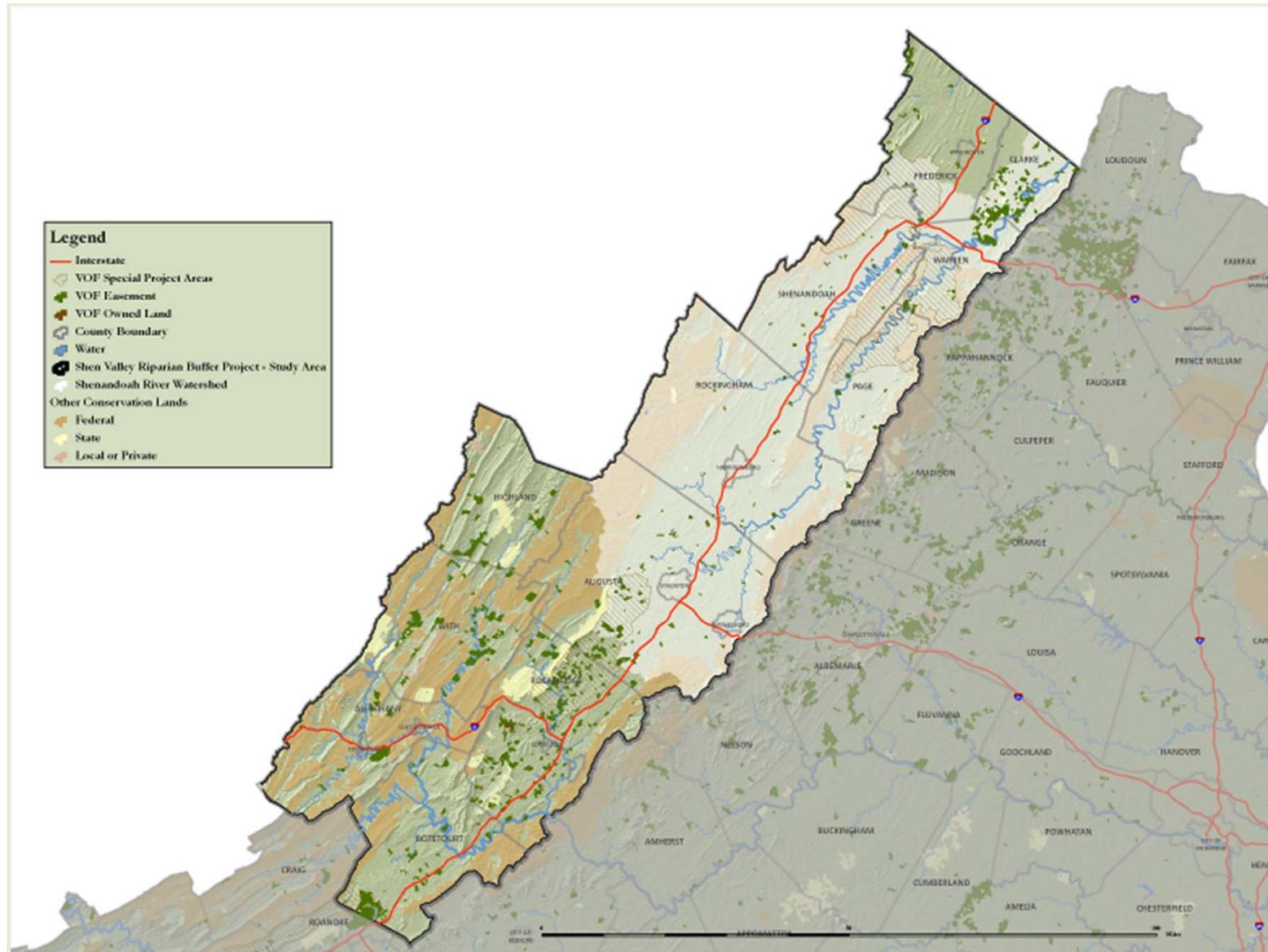


Conservation Values Tracked by DCR

For acreage protected between 2006–2010



Conservation in the Shenandoah Valley

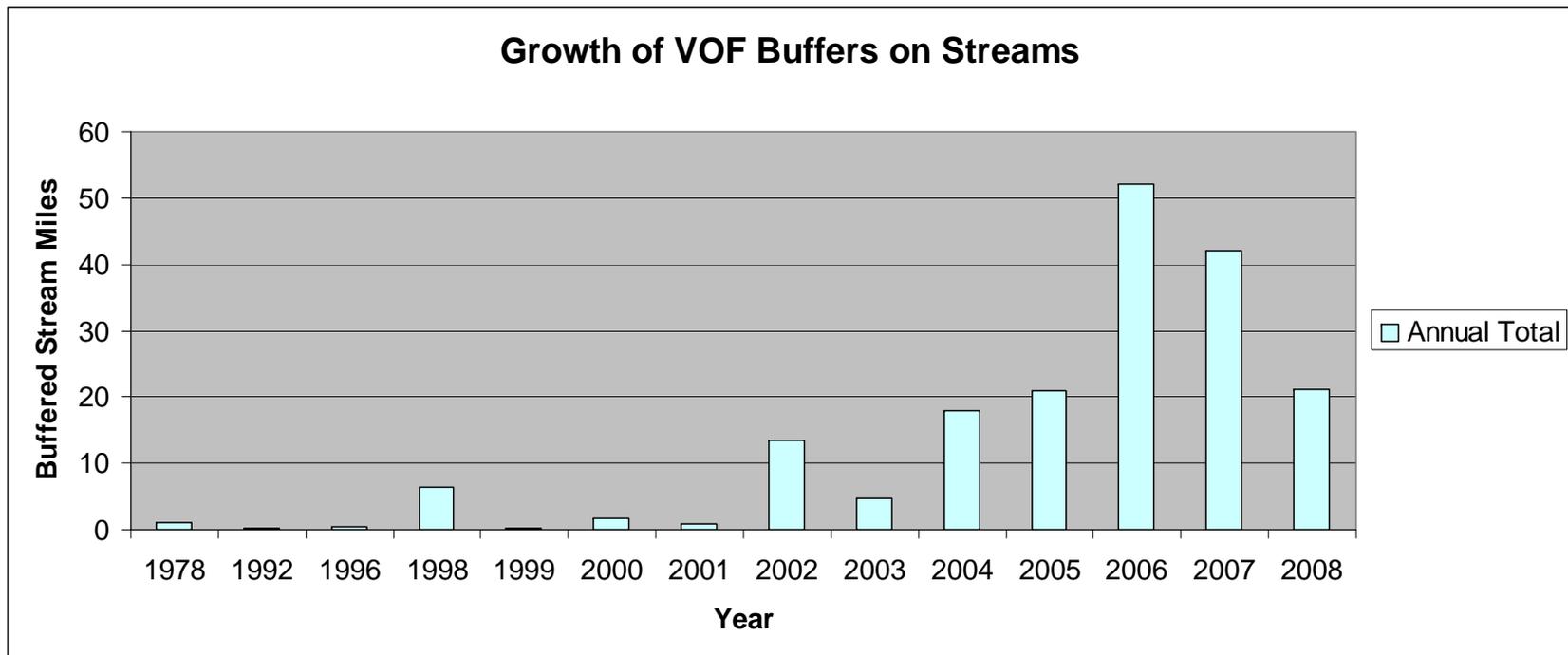


VOF's Shenandoah Valley Buffer Project

- Study area contains 112,585 VOF-protected acres on 637 easements.
- 190 miles of streams in study area have VOF buffers.
 - 97.7 miles are “no-plow” buffers
 - 92.3 miles are vegetated or forested
- 109 miles permanently fenced off from livestock



Valley Buffer Improvements from 2000-2008



Meeting Chesapeake Bay goals

2000 Bay Agreement Goal

- What was the goal?
 - 2,766,378 total protected acres in Virginia's portion of the watershed by 2010
- What was needed to meet the goal?
 - 671,142 newly protected acres by Dec. 31, 2010
- What was achieved?
 - 543,041 acres
- What was VOF's contribution?
 - 376,153 acres (69%)



Beyond easements: Landowner education

- Interagency cooperation
- Partnerships with regional watershed nonprofits (Potomac Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, James River Association, New River Land Trust, etc.)
- Newsletter articles about buffers and other voluntary BMPs
- Distribution of DCR cost-share program brochures to VOF landowners
- Ongoing landowner relationships through regular monitoring





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