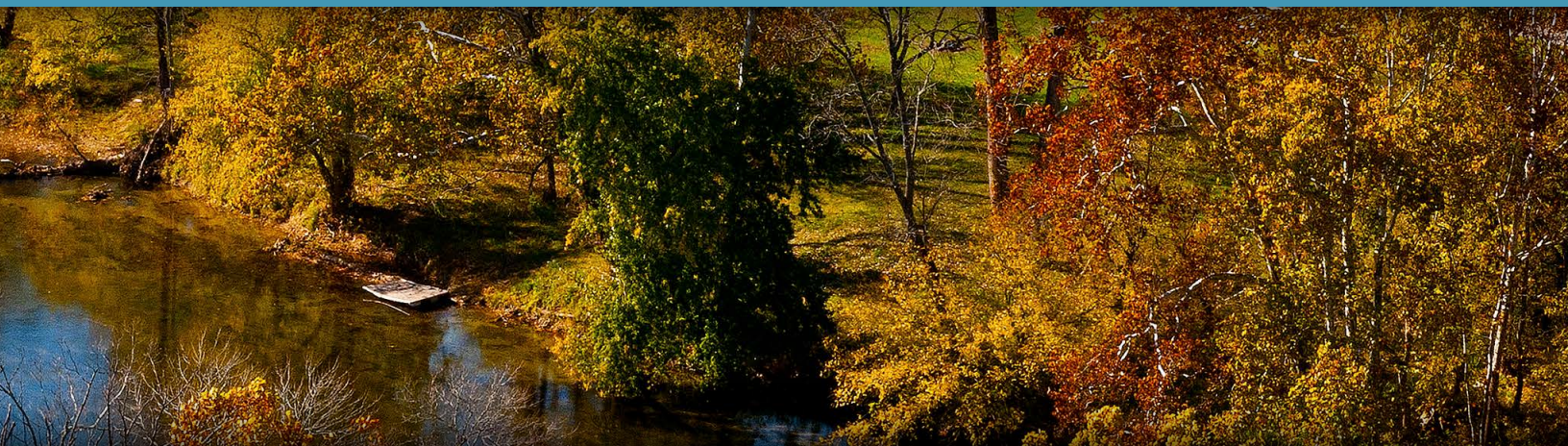


INVESTING IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S LAND AND WATER

Highlights of VIRGINIA*forever*'s Five-Year Plan, 2015-2019



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OUR MISSION

As a unique coalition of concerned businesses, environmental organizations and outdoor enthusiasts, VIRGINIA*forever* advocates for increased funding to restore and protect the lands and waterways of the Commonwealth.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF VIRGINIA'S FUTURE

Virginia's history is as much a story of its land and water as it is the story of the people and communities its natural resources have sustained. The Commonwealth encompasses the rugged Appalachian Mountains, the fertile Piedmont, the tidal rivers of the Coastal Plain, and over a third of the watershed of our nation's largest estuary, the Chesapeake Bay. Virginians often invoke the marvel of being able to travel from mountains to beaches in a matter of hours, a journey that crosses one of the most ecologically diverse landscapes on the east coast. It is also one of the most pressured.

Virginia's natural resource industries are essential to its economy. In 2006, the total combined economic impact of farming and forestry was \$79 billion and employment for over half a million people. That same year, landowners earned over \$350 million for harvested timber while farms generated \$2.7 billion in cash receipts. Exports of agriculture and forestry products topped \$2.61 billion in 2012. Virginia's farmers are meeting the increasing demand for food raised and grown within the Commonwealth, and now Virginians can purchase locally and regionally produced food at nearly 250 farmers markets statewide.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that Maryland and Virginia's combined 2009 commercial seafood industry produced \$3.4 billion in sales, \$890 million in income, and 34,000 jobs. Investments in oyster aquaculture and restoration are providing increasing economic payback; the 2012 oyster harvest was the largest in 25 years with dockside value increasing to nearly \$9 million and this year's season is on track to climb even higher. Recreational fishing, both within the Bay watershed and beyond, is also an important economic contributor; one million recreational freshwater anglers contribute millions of dollars to Virginia's local economies. Virginia's tourism promotion focuses almost exclusively on the Commonwealth's natural beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, history, and cultural heritage. The Virginia Tourism Corporation reports that the total benefits of travel and tourism in 2011 was \$34.1 billion, an 8.1 percent increase from the previous year.

Virginians have always altered their natural environment, first for survival, then for prosperity. But in just the past 50 years, the population of the Commonwealth has doubled to eight million citizens. As a result, the demands on our land and our water have never been greater nor has the necessity of heeding Virginia's Constitutional charge: "to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth." VIRGINIA*forever* stands by that commitment.

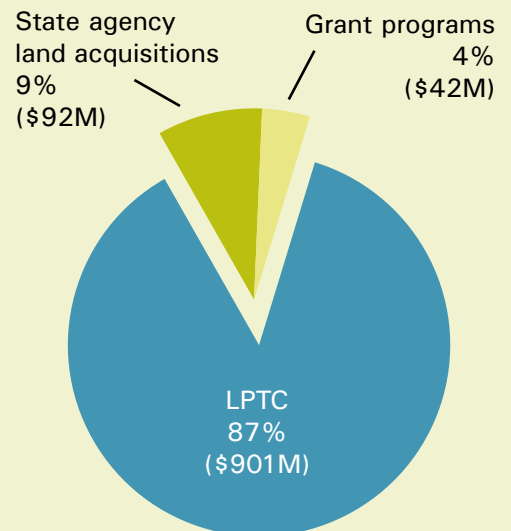
As a unique coalition of concerned businesses, environmental organizations, and outdoor enthusiasts, VIRGINIA*forever* advocates for increased funding to restore and protect the lands and waterways of the Commonwealth. VIRGINIA*forever* formed ten years ago because of a shared recognition that the Commonwealth was investing less than one percent of the state budget in natural resources, and that sum was insufficient. Since then our organization has successfully argued for increased funding for land conservation and water quality improvement, with one estimate now indicating an investment level of 1.5 percent of total state expenditures. VIRGINIA*forever*'s five-year plan succinctly captures the accomplishments of Virginia's land and water conservation strategies and proposes—for the first time—five-year goals for investing in Virginia's future. Highlights from this plan are outlined on the following pages.

LAND CONSERVATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia has an impressive record of safeguarding places and resources that matter. Since 2006, Virginia has protected more than 591,000 acres of forests, farmland, historic sites, recreational lands, and natural areas through a variety of private and public actions. Grant programs that leverage other funding sources, the Land Preservation Tax Credit, and state acquisition with bond issuances are fundamental tools for land conservation in the Commonwealth. Communities throughout Virginia rely on cost-share collaboration with the state to protect local resources and plan strategically for their future.

To continue to advance land conservation in the Commonwealth, *VIRGINIAforever* proposes a total investment of \$833,785,000 in grant programs, the Land Preservation Tax Credit, and bonds. The state has already identified \$588,600,000 and must add to it \$245,185,000 in new funding. Because categories of conserved land can overlap and protected acreage may meet multiple goals, it may be possible to meet these acreage goals at a lower overall cost. Achieving these goals will sustain the levels of land conservation that were achieved when the Commonwealth's efforts were at their most robust.

Makeup of State Financial Support for Land Conservation (2002-2011)



FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

FARMLAND: Ensuring that farmland remains a meaningful part of Virginia's landscape depends in part upon the reliability of the Land Preservation Tax Credit and local PDR programs. Historic levels of loss demonstrate the vulnerability of agricultural lands. The 30,000 acres of farmland permanently protected every year on average from 2006 through 2010 proves what is possible. *VIRGINIAforever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide sufficient funding for land conservation to achieve the protection of 120,000 acres of farmland over the next five years.

FORESTLAND: Between 2006 and 2010, 249,210 acres of forestland gained permanent protection through both public and private means (acquisitions and easements). *VIRGINIAforever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide sufficient funding to achieve the protection of 240,000 acres of forestland over the next five years.

HISTORIC LANDS: Virginia's cultural heritage is rooted in its enduring historic places that continue to be the heart of the state's tourism industry and are often intertwined with its agricultural economy. Acknowledging them with plaques and markers is not enough; they must be protected permanently from further destruction both privately through easements and publicly through state contributions to state,

local, and National Park Service acquisitions. Virginia protected 62,472 acres of historic lands from 2006 to 2010. VIRGINIA*forever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide sufficient funding to achieve the protection of 50,000 acres of historic lands over the next five years.

NATURAL AREAS: Establishing new NAPs in these two regions and protecting additional land around existing NAPs requires striving toward the same kind of goals Virginia has reached in the past. Virginia protected 47,563 acres of natural areas from 2006 and 2010. VIRGINIA*forever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide sufficient funding to achieve the protection of 40,000 acres of natural areas in the next five years.

RECREATIONAL LANDS: Virginians depend upon recreational lands to enjoy all that their state has to offer. Public demand for expanded opportunities to use trails and to swim, fish, paddle, and boat is strong throughout all parts of the state. VIRGINIA*forever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide sufficient funding to achieve the protection of 50,000 acres of recreational lands such as parks, trails, boat landings, and other water access points and public hunting lands over the next five years.

INVESTING IN LAND CONSERVATION

The Cost of Land Conservation In The Commonwealth

Type of Open Space Land	Proposed 5-year goal	Investment proposed [†]
Natural Areas	40,000	\$668,785,000
Farmland	120,000	
Forestland	240,000	
Historic lands	50,000	
Recreational lands	50,000	\$165,000,000
TOTAL	500,000	\$833,785,000
Funding already ^{††} identified		\$588,600,000
New dollars needed		\$245,185,000

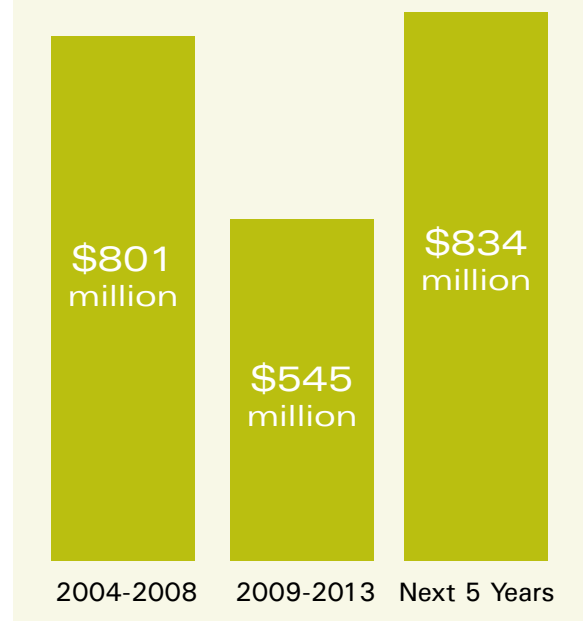
Overlapping Resources. When considering these acreage goals and costs, it is important to keep in mind that Virginia's conserved lands can only be neatly divided up on paper. Farmlands often were once battlefields and forests are home to rare and endangered species. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail is an excellent example of where history meets recreation. In other words, categories of conserved land can overlap and protected acreage may meet multiple goals. Therefore, it is possible to achieve the individual resource goals without achieving the overall acreage goal. If many such overlaps occur, the overall cost will also be reduced.

Recreational Lands. This category includes lands that would be acquired to become public lands that are managed for public access. Some of the lands that are in highest demand by the public are those for parks, trails, and water access points such as boat landings and canoe launches. This category also includes public hunting lands such as Wildlife Management Areas and other public lands that provide recreational opportunities such as State Forests and Natural Area Preserves.

Ongoing costs. It is important to note that there are ongoing costs associated with all conserved lands, as the holder must ensure proper stewardship of that asset. The need for adequate ongoing funding is particularly acute for recreational lands, which require significant infrastructure to provide access and amenities to the public. General Obligation Bond packages generally both fund infrastructure and acquisition. Agencies also need ongoing funding to properly manage the lands they own and to dissuade users of these lands from encroaching on neighboring private property.

Willing sellers. VIRGINIA*forever* notes that all of the land and easements that Virginia will conserve pursuant to these goals can and must be acquired from willing sellers only.

Five-Year Funds Appropriated and Need for Land Conservation



WATER QUALITY IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Virginia's efforts to improve water quality are getting results. The Commonwealth has made progress in reducing excess nutrients and sediments flowing to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through modifications to wastewater treatment and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) on agriculture and urban lands. Forty-nine upgraded wastewater treatment plants have significantly reduced nutrient loads to the Chesapeake Bay from that sector. Virginia can apply lessons gained from years of experience with wastewater improvement to the challenge of reducing pollution from urban and agricultural lands. The potential for more cost-effective stormwater BMPs and broad implementation of agricultural BMPs depends on adequate, stable funding. Efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution will help to meet broader water quality goals throughout the state.

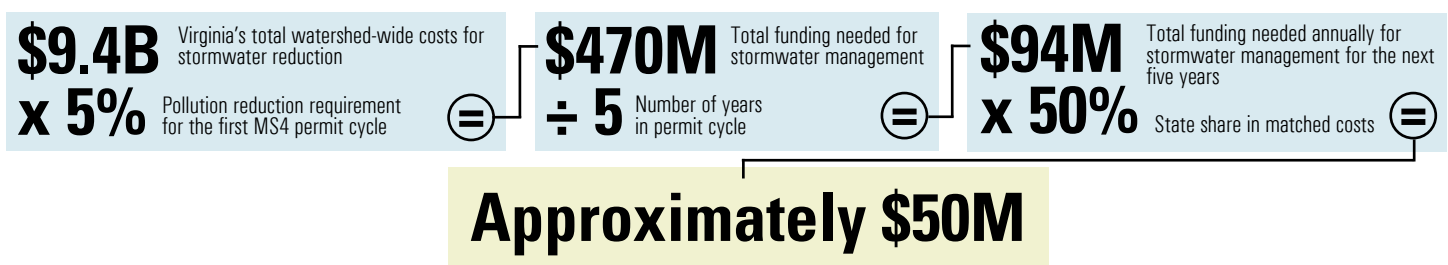
To keep the Commonwealth on track to meet its commitments to improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and local rivers and streams, *VIRGINIAforever* proposes a total investment of \$805,000,000 in the Water Quality Improvement Fund and the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRCF). The state has already identified \$80,000,000 and must add to it \$725,000,000 in new funding. The funding would support programs reducing pollution from wastewater, agriculture and urban stormwater over five years beginning with fiscal year 2015. This amount includes the \$35 million the 2013 General Assembly has appropriated for stormwater management and \$45 million for the cost of agricultural BMPs if the state maintains in the biennial budget the existing investment of the recordation fee in the VNRCF.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

WASTEWATER TREATMENT: *VIRGINIAforever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide \$50 million through FY 2019 beginning with FY 2017 (given that the Commonwealth has already funded upgrades for fiscal years 2015 and 2016).

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT: *VIRGINIAforever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide \$50 million each year for the next five fiscal years, minus the \$35 million appropriated during the 2013 legislative session.

Calculation for Funds Needed to Invest in Stormwater Pollution Reduction



AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES: VIRGINIA*forever* calls on the Commonwealth to provide \$505 million over the next five years*:

Cost Share Funding:	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Chesapeake Bay	\$27	\$42	\$66	\$69	\$71
Southern Rivers	\$18	\$28	\$44	\$46	\$47
Technical Assistance:					
Chesapeake Bay	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$6	\$6
Southern Rivers	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
Total	\$54	\$79	\$119	\$125	\$128

*These funding needs may be reduced by approximately \$9 million per year if annual investments to the VNRCF from the state's existing recordation fee are maintained in the biennial budget.

INVESTING IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S WATER

Proposed Five Year Water Quality Investment

Sector	Proposed five year investment
Wastewater Treatment	\$50,000,000 [†]
Stormwater Management	\$250,000,000 ^{††}
Agricultural BMPs	\$505,000,000 ^{†††}
TOTAL	\$805,000,000
Funding already identified ^{††††}	\$80,000,000
New dollars needed	\$725,000,000

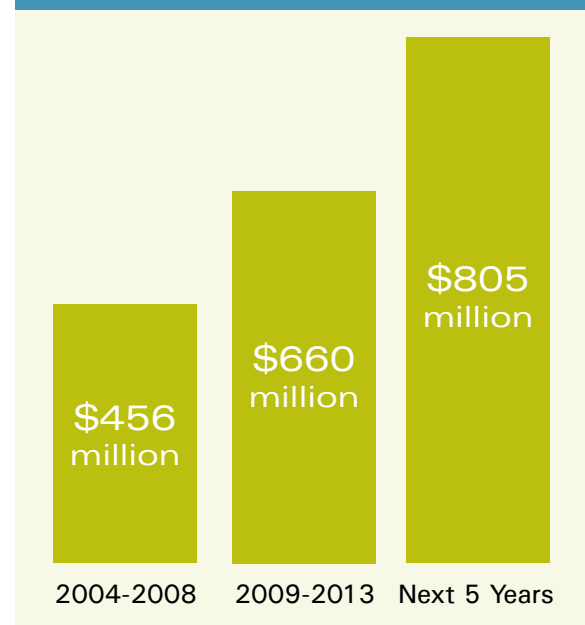
[†] Beginning with FY 2017 (given that the Commonwealth has already funded upgrades for fiscal years 2015 and 2016)

^{††} \$50 million each year

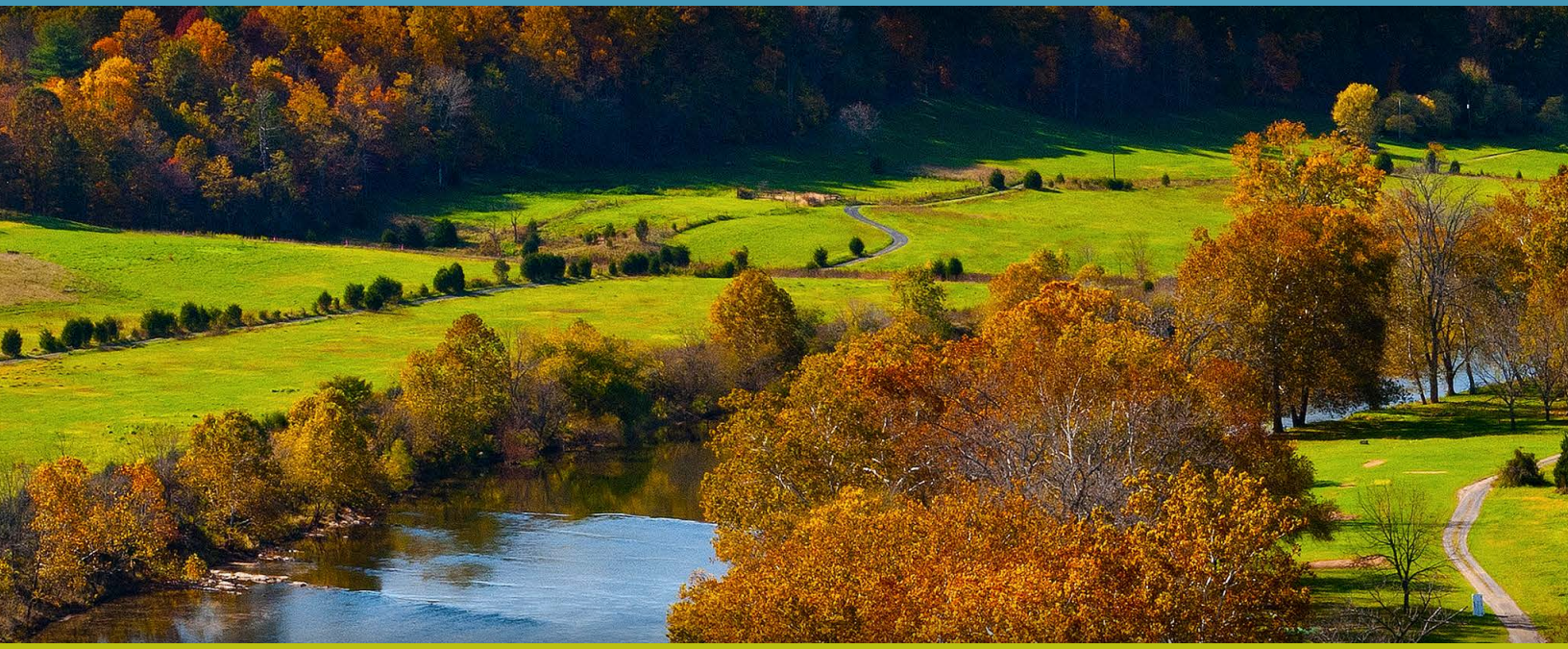
^{†††} See agricultural stewardship for annual breakdown

^{††††} For stormwater management, the 2013 General Assembly appropriated \$35 million. \$45 million is available for agricultural BMPs if annual investments to the VNRCF from the state's existing recordation fee are maintained in each biennial budget.

Five-Year Funds Appropriated and Need for Water Quality



Read the full five-year plan at VIRGINIAforever.org/5yearplan



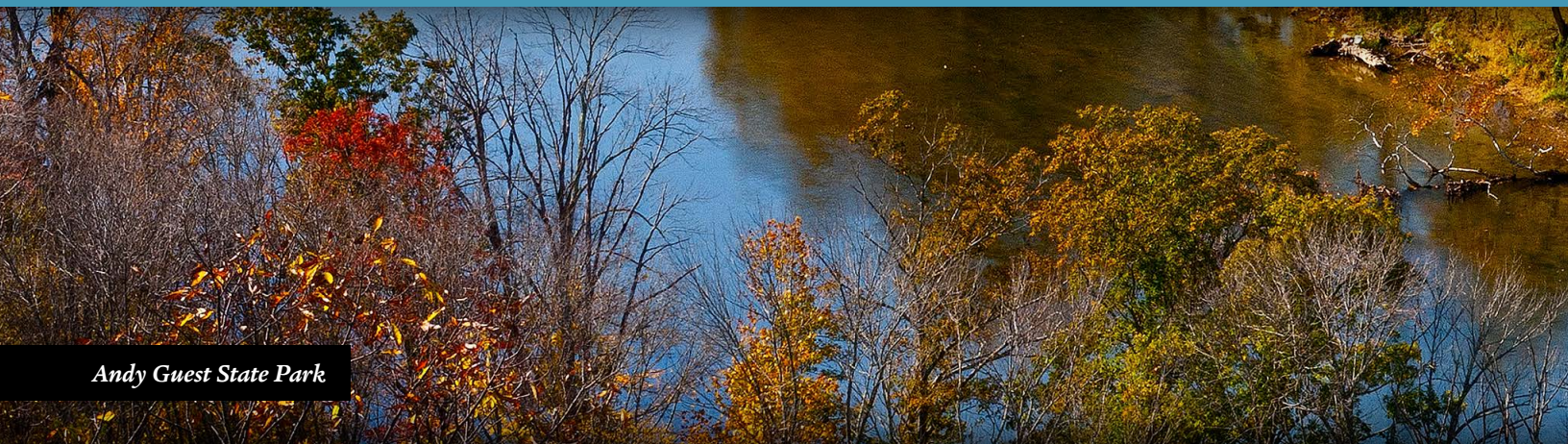
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Andy Guest State Park

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