



**2021 General Assembly Makes  
Major New Investments in Virginia’s Natural Resources**

*Additional state funding for water quality,  
targeted land conservation projects, state parks, environmental agency staffing*

“VIRGINIAforever is extraordinarily grateful for the priority investments made by the 2021 General Assembly to protect the Commonwealth’s natural resources. We applaud the significant new funding for water quality and land conservation as well as for state environmental regulatory agencies to ensure better stewardship.”

– Matt Wells, chair, VIRGINIAforever

The General Assembly’s amended FY 20-22 budget builds on recommendations made by Governor Ralph Northam, who has made natural resources investments a high priority for his administration. Overall, the General Assembly’s new state budget includes some \$77 million more over the biennium for natural resources than the previous budget.

This year’s new state investments in Virginia’s natural resources are consistent with VIRGINIAforever’s priorities in our [Five-Year Plan](#).

These are just some highlights of additional appropriations made this year to promote, protect, and conserve Virginia’s waters and lands.

**Water Quality**

- Water Quality Improvement Fund. – Appropriated \$100 million to partner with local governments and public service authorities to fund upgrades to approximately 30 wastewater treatment plants, with a strong focus on the James River watershed. This is a significant down payment on additional state funding assistance needed for facility improvements to be carried out over the next five years.
- Stormwater Local Assistance Fund. – Appropriated an additional \$25 million in FY 22 in grant funding to assist local governments with suburban and urban stormwater projects. This adds to \$50 million appropriated in 2020.

- Agricultural BMPs. – Appropriated an additional \$30 million for the state’s water quality cost-share program for farmers, bringing the total appropriation in FY 22 to \$65 million. This includes \$3.9 million for technical assistance in addition to the \$4.5 million for base technical assistance in the underlying budget for a total of \$8.45 million in technical assistance to Soil & Water Conservation Districts. This year’s Ag BMP is in addition to the approximately \$10 million provided from the state’s recordation fee.

## **Land Conservation**

- Virginia Land Conservation Fund. – Appropriated \$10 M for this important land conservation grant fund.
- Farmland Preservation Fund. – An additional \$750,000 to assist owners of agricultural lands, bringing the current fund to \$1.25 million over the FY 20-22 biennium.
- Up to \$10 million for regional multi-use trails (planning, development, and construction) to improve connectivity of trail networks.
- \$2 million to assist in the acquisition and conservation of George Washington’s River Farm (Alexandria).
- \$1 million to help acquire the Newton Neck property in Chesapeake for a public park.

## **State Parks**

- Nearly \$3 million in infrastructure improvements at various state parks.
- More than \$500,000 for additional state parks operating support.

## **State Agency Support**

- Department of Environmental Quality. – An additional \$12 million for additional staff to support work with the regulated community, including in permit-writing, compliance, and stakeholder communications.
- Department of Conservation & Recreation. – An additional \$1 million to support the Natural Heritage Program and \$400,000 to supports its Dam Safety Program.

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