

**REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA LAND CONSERATION FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**

**Criteria for Evaluation of
2005 Virginia Land Conservation
Foundation Grant Applications**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 3

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
2005**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

(804) 786-0044
Fax: (804) 371-8333
TTY: (804) 786-7765

December 6, 2004

The Honorable Vincent F. Callahan, Jr., Chairman of House Appropriations
The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, Chairman of House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources
The Honorable John H. Chichester, Chairman of Senate Finance
The Honorable Charles R. Hawkins, Chairman of Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Dear Committee Chairmen:

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Department of Conservation and Recreation serves as staff to the Foundation. The report is presented pursuant to:

- Item 383 H3 of Chapter 4 of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1 that states "[t]he Chairman of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, or his designee, shall review the criteria used to evaluate grant applications. Based on this review, the Foundation shall develop new review criteria that better quantify the relative merits of each prospective grant parcel. The measurable criteria shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) the status of the parcel under a locality's master plan as a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, (2) the degree to which securing the parcel will protect local drinking water supplies, (3) the degree to which the parcel satisfies recreational needs of population centers, or recreational needs as identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan, (4) the extent to which the affected localities have identified the parcel as having important local water quality or recreational benefits, (5) other criteria that are relevant to the particular classes of open space preservation provided under Virginia law, and (6) the cost-effectiveness of the parcel in satisfying these criteria compared to alternatives. By November 19, 2004, copies of the proposed revisions to the grant review criteria shall be provided to the Chairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations, and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, and the Senate Committees on Finance, and Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources".

The criteria presented in this document were prepared by updating the existing grant review criteria that have been utilized since 1999, to include those specified in the 2004 Appropriations Act. The combined scores total to 100 points and comprised of 80 points allocated to one of the 4 primary funding categories for which the applicant has applied (Open Spaces and Parks, Natural Area Protection, Historic Area Preservation, and Forest and Farmland Preservation) and 20 points allocated amongst the 5 new criteria and wildlife benefits.

Committee Chairmen

December 6, 2004

Page 2


These criteria were approved by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board at their November 15, 2004 meeting and a new grant round is set to open on January 1, 2005 and close on March 18, 2005. These criteria will be utilized for the first time during this grant round.

The modified criteria adopted by the Foundation will help to further ensure that land conservation funding will be expended wisely in accordance with legislative directives and will protect the properties with substantial resource value for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Respectfully submitted,



W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources and
Chairman of the Virginia Land Conservation
Foundation



Joseph H. Maroon
Director, Department of
Conservation and Recreation and
Executive Secretary of the Virginia
Land Conservation Foundation

Attachment

cc: Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board Members

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman

The Honorable W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr. Secretary of Natural Resources

Gubernatorial Appointees	Address	Term Expires
David H. Turner	Onancock	06/30/05
Fred W. Greene, III	Virginia Beach	06/30/05
Albert Essel	Prince George	06/30/06
Albert C. Weed, II	Lovingston	06/30/06
Terri Cofer Beirne	Richmond	06/30/06
Nancy T. Bowles	Kent Store	06/30/07
William C. Dickinson	Alexandria	06/30/07
Lou Giusto	Edinburg	06/30/07
Thomas B. Graham	Marion	06/30/08
Leah Fried	Springfield	06/30/08
Mary Bruce Glaize	Winchester	06/30/08

Senate Appointees

The Honorable Patricia S. Ticer (Vice Chairman)	Alexandria	coincident w/ term of office
The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds	Hot Springs	coincident w/ term of office

House Appointees

William M. Park	Skipwith	06/30/05
Alexandra Liddy Bourne	Alexandria	06/30/06
Wendell P. Ennis	Midland	06/30/07
R. Brian Ball	Richmond	06/30/08

Executive Secretary

Joseph H. Maroon Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation

PREFACE

This report has been prepared in accordance with and fulfills the requirements of:

- Item 383 H3 of Chapter 4 of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1 that states "[t]he Chairman of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation , or his designee, shall review the criteria used to evaluate grant applications. Based on this review, the Foundation shall develop new review criteria that better quantify the relative merits of each prospective grant parcel. The measurable criteria shall include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) the status of the parcel under a locality's master plan as a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, (2) the degree to which securing the parcel will protect local drinking water supplies, (3) the degree to which the parcel satisfies recreational needs of population centers, or recreational needs as identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan, (4) the extent to which the affected localities have identified the parcel as having important local water quality or recreational benefits, (5) other criteria that are relevant to the particular classes of open space preservation provided under Virginia law, and (6) the cost-effectiveness of the parcel in satisfying these criteria compared to alternatives. By November 19, 2004, copies of the proposed revisions to the grant review criteria shall be provided to the Chairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations, and Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, and the Senate Committees on Finance, and Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources".

The following pages provide a reporting on the Foundation approved new criteria established to evaluate grant applications for the January 1st through March 18th, 2005 grant round.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES	
TABLE OF CONTENTS	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
GRANT CRITERIA DISCUSSION	1
APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SCORING CRITERIA	2
Natural Areas Category	3
Open Space & Parks Category.....	4
Forest Lands Category.....	5
Agricultural Lands Category.....	6
Cultural and Historic Resources Category.....	7
Chesapeake Bay Area Preservation.....	8
Drinking Water Supply Protection	8
Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need	8
Water Quality or Recreation Benefit	8
Value Added	9
Wildlife Benefit.....	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 15, 2004, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (Foundation) met and approved the grant evaluation criteria contained in this document. The existing criteria of the Foundation were revised to incorporate those items identified in Item 383 H3 of Chapter 4 of the 2004 Virginia Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1. This item directed the Foundation to develop new review criteria that better quantify the relative merits of each prospective grant parcel. In addition to the recognized existing criteria that are relevant to the particular classes of open space preservation provided under Virginia law, the new measurable criteria were to include the following:

- (1) the status of the parcel under a locality's master plan as a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area
- (2) the degree to which securing the parcel will protect local drinking water supplies
- (3) the degree to which the parcel satisfies recreational needs of population centers, or recreational needs as identified in the Virginia Outdoors Plan
- (4) the extent to which the affected localities have identified the parcel as having important local water quality or recreational benefits, and
- (5) the cost-effectiveness [value added] of the parcel in satisfying these criteria compared to alternatives.

An inter-agency task force comprised of representatives of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Department of Forestry, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Department of Historic Resources, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation worked together to analyze the legislative directive and to develop recommendations to the Chairman of the Foundation. The final recommendations that were presented and adopted by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation are presented in this report.

The scoring criteria presented in this document total to 100 points and are comprised of 80 points allocated to one of the 4 primary funding categories for which the applicant has applied (Open

Spaces and Parks, Natural Area Protection, Historic Area Preservation, and Forest and Farmland Preservation) and 20 points allocated amongst the 5 new criteria (outlined above) and wildlife benefits.

Of the five new criteria, three points have been allocated to each of Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, Drinking Water Supply Protection, Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need, and Water Quality or Recreation Benefit. Five points have been allocated to the Value Added category and three points have been allocated to wildlife benefits identified in the project proposal.

These criteria will be utilized to evaluate grant applications received during the January 1st through March 18th, 2005 grant round that was announced by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board at their November meeting.

GRANT CRITERIA DISCUSSION

The scoring criteria presented in this document total to 100 points and are comprised of 80 points allocated to one of the 4 primary funding categories for which the applicant has applied (Open Spaces and Parks, Natural Area Protection, Historic Area Preservation, and Forest and Farmland Preservation) and 20 points allocated amongst the 5 new criteria and wildlife benefits. The overall criteria that combine to 100 points are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Proposed Grant Application Scoring Sheet and Criteria

Primary Category	Statutory category scoring	Chesapeake Bay Area Preservation	Drinking Water Supply Protection	VOP Identified Need	Water Quality or Recreation Benefit	Value Added	Wildlife Benefit	Total
	Maximum 80 points	Maximum 3 points	Maximum 3 points	Maximum 3 points	Maximum 3 points	Maximum 5 points	Maximum 3 points	Maximum 100 points
Natural Area Protection								
Open Spaces & Parks								
Farmland and Forest Preservation								
Historic Area Preservation								

Appendix 1 contains the scoring criteria details for each of the categories outlined in Table 1.

The criteria outlined in these documents addresses the intent of the Appropriation Act and the Code specified funding categories. The criteria were approved by the Foundation's Board at their November 15, 2004 meeting. These criteria will be utilized to evaluate grant applications received during the January 1st through March 18th, 2005 grant round that was announced by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board at their November meeting.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SCORING CRITERIA

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Natural Areas Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) The Natural Heritage Biodiversity Rank of the site, based upon the global and state rarity of the natural heritage resources present, the number of natural heritage resources present, and their condition</p> <p>Maximum score: 25.</p> <p>B1=25 B4=5 B2=15 B5=0 B3=10</p>		
<p>2) Size & Natural Condition: Are the size and natural condition of the site adequate to protect and allow for management of conservation targets?</p> <p>Maximum score: 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and condition are adequate to fully protect & manage targets = 20 • Size and condition are uncertain to provide for full protection and management of conservation targets = 10 • Size and condition are unlikely to allow full protection & management of the conservation targets = 0 		
<p>3) Management: Applicants capability to implement necessary management to protect the site from short-term and long-term stresses.</p> <p>Maximum score: 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has proven experience with natural community/rare species management = 10 • Applicant has land management experience = 5 • Applicant has no proven land management experience = 0 		
<p>4) Community Representation: To what extent does the site support exemplary natural communities that are not well protected in Virginia?</p> <p>Maximum score: 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports communities not found on other protected lands = 10 • Supports communities found on limited number (1-10) of protected lands = 5 • Supports communities well represented (10+) on other protected lands = 0 		
<p>5) No. & Quality of EOs: How many element occurrences (EO) are known for the site and what is the quality of those occurrences? Assign the value below for each occurrence based on it's EO-rank. Sum these values.</p> <p>Maximum score: 10</p> <p>A-rank=4 D-rank=0 B-rank=2 E-rank=1 C-rank=1</p>		
<p>6) Proximity: Is the site/tract adjacent to or in close physical or functional proximity (e.g. upstream or upslope) to other protected managed areas and would it expand the protection of natural heritage resources?</p> <p>Maximum score: 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close proximity and supports NHRs = 5 • Close proximity, important buffer, but no NHRs = 3 • No physical or functional proximity to existing natural area = 0 		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Open Space & Parks Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>Determine the degree to which the Project: 1) Protects and/or acquires greenways, blueways, viewsheds, abandoned rail corridors, and open space areas. Maximum score 9</p>		
<p>2) Acquires land or easements on land which provide increased protection and/or public access to state water. Maximum score 15</p>		
<p>3) Addresses a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i>. Maximum score 9</p>		
<p>4) Supports local and/or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities and programs. Maximum score 8</p>		
<p>5) Supports the goals of the special use tax program, which is managed by the State Land Evaluation Advisory Council. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>6) Supports the conservation and planning for Virginia's Scenic Rivers, Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways. Maximum score 10</p>		
<p>7) Demonstrates partnerships with public agencies, corporations, and non-profit organizations that will enhance, through easement and acquisition, the development of aesthetic parks, open space, and greenways in rapidly developing population areas. Maximum score 9</p>		
<p>8) Acquires sensitive lands or easements contiguous to existing park systems that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests. Maximum score 9</p>		
<p>10) Provides needed infrastructure on property purchased with Foundation funds. Maximum score 4</p>		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Forest Lands Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) The land is in an area of potential development and/or other land use changes whereby the retention of forest land would be important. Maximum score 15</p>		
<p>2) The forestland protects a significant watershed, waterways on state 303(d) list, or protects water reservoirs for public use. Maximum score 15</p>		
<p>3) The property owner offered a purchase/easement at a price below market value thereby helping with the matching grant. Maximum score 10</p>		
<p>4) The property is: (a) a State Forest inholding and, (b) it is contiguous to an existing protected forest area and, (c) it is within a manageable distance of existing State Forest. Maximum score 10</p>		
<p>5) The property is located adjacent to already conserved lands such as a Forest Legacy Project. Maximum score 10</p>		
<p>6) The property is suitable for long-term forest research, special landowner demonstration opportunities, or conservation education. Maximum score 10</p>		
<p>7) The property is within an area identified in the local comprehensive plan as important for open space, agricultural/forestal district, biological preservation, etc. Maximum score 5</p>		
<p>8) The property has or has the potential to protect and/or restore: 1). threatened and endangered species of fauna or flora, 2).unique habitat for threatened and endangered species, 3). provides the opportunity to restore diminishing native tree species, or 4). protects a significant historic or archeological site. Maximum score 5</p>		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Agricultural Lands Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>Category I: Soil Productivity & Land Quality (20 points)</p> <p>Soil Productivity Using soil classes prime, unique or locally important farmland, score the percentage of project land in each soils class (§3.1-18.5 of the Code of Virginia). (Note: The total score cannot exceed 20 points) Value the soils classified as Prime. Value the soils classified Unique. Value the soils classified as Locally Important Farmland. Maximum Score 0-20</p>		
<p>Land Quality (20 points) In order of importance, value the land quality described below. The maximum score cannot exceed 20 points.</p> <p>The farmland is very unique in that it has a history of producing high yields of high-value specialty crops, such as grapes, fruits, nuts or vegetables grown and meets the definition described in the Grant Manual, in the Agricultural Land Category.</p> <p>The farmland is prime land (other than unique or important) as defined in the Grant Manual in the Agricultural Land Category.</p> <p>The farmland (other than prime or unique) is of statewide or local importance, as defined in the Grant Manual in the Agricultural Land Category. Maximum Score 0-20</p>		
<p>Category II: Land Use (40 points)</p> <p>A. Is the land: 1) currently being farmed; 2) being farmed by owner; 3) significant as a result of what is being produced; and, 4) significant from the family's tenure of the farm? Score 0-10</p> <p>B. To what degree is the land adjacent to or in close proximity to other preserved lands, either in agriculture production or non-active in farming? Score 0-6</p> <p>C. To what degree will local developmental patterns threaten or affect the project? Score 0-12</p> <p>D. Are there local developmental patterns that could negatively affect the proposed land? Score 0-4</p> <p>E. Does the project support the local comprehensive plan and, zoning regulations? Score 0-4</p> <p>F. To what degree will preserving the proposed land in agricultural use secure environmental benefits? Score 0-4</p> <p>Maximum score 40 points</p>		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____
Cultural and Historic Resources Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) The proposal will protect or preserve an area containing one or more buildings or places in which historic events occurred or having special public value because of notable architectural, archaeological, or other features relating to the cultural or artistic heritage of the community, of such significance as to warrant conservation and preservation. Strong proposals are likely to protect or preserve a resource that is: (A) Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register or certified as eligible for listing by the Director of the Department of Historic Resources; or (B) A resource that contributes to the integrity, enhances the setting, or provides a buffer for a property that is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.</p> <p><i>*Note: For applications under (B) above, the historical significance of the listed property will be evaluated. For resources which are not listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register but have been certified as eligible for listing, historical significance will be determined as if such properties were so listed.</i></p> <p>11 - 20 points: National Historic Landmarks, properties listed on Virginia Landmarks Register, contributing properties in National Historic Landmark districts.</p> <p>0 - 10 points: Contributing properties in Virginia Landmarks Register districts, other historic and cultural resources.</p> <p>Additional 0–4 points: Rarity, quality, and integrity of resource.</p> <p>Maximum score 24</p>		
<p>2) An identifiable threat to the resource, or compelling need for immediate preservation, exists. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>3) Protection or preservation of the resource may further other public interests, such as education, research, heritage tourism promotion or orderly community development. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>4) The resource may complement or enhance other cultural or historic resources. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>5) Protection or preservation of the resource may serve as a catalyst for or complement other preservation activities. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>6) Protection or preservation of the resource is part of a documented broader resource management plan. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>7) There is demonstrated public support for the protection or preservation of the resource. Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>8) The applicant has realistic plans and the organizational and financial capacity to ensure appropriate treatment and ongoing maintenance of the resource. (Project plans must meet the relevant preservation standards and be approved by the Department of Historic Resources.) Maximum score 7</p>		
<p>9) The applicant has realistic plans and the organizational and financial capacity to develop the resource appropriately for maximum public benefit. Maximum score 7</p>		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Chesapeake Bay Area Preservation

Status of the parcel under a locality's master plan

Maximum 3 points

- Resource Preservation Area = 3 points
- Resource Management Area = 2 points
- Not in Master Plan = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Drinking Water Supply Protection

Degree to which the parcel protects local drinking water supplies

Maximum 3 points

- Within Public Drinking Water Supply Impact Area = 3 points
 - Outside of Public Drinking Water Supply Impact Area = 0 points
- Note: Must be within 2 miles upstream or adjacent to a public surface water withdrawal structure.

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need

Degree to which a parcel satisfies recreational needs of population centers, or other recreational needs as identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)*.

Maximum 3 points

- Meets a public outdoor recreational need identified in the VOP = 3 points
- Not identified in VOP = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Water Quality or Recreation Benefit

Extent to which the affected localities have identified the parcel as having important *local* water quality or recreational benefits in their local comprehensive plans.

Maximum 3 points

- Identified = 3 points
- Not Identified = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Value Added

In addition to the statutory category under which the project is evaluated, the project will also be subjectively evaluated as to the general value of the project in terms of Natural Area Protection; Open Spaces and Parks; Farmland and Forest Preservation; and Historic Area Preservation.

Dependent upon value added 0-5 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Wildlife Benefit

Dependent on Wildlife Benefits Added

Maximum Score 3

- Property is managed for wildlife benefits and offers public use for hunting, fishing, or wildlife viewing = 3
- Property is managed for wildlife benefits and offers private use for hunting, fishing, or wildlife viewing = 2
- Property is managed for wildlife benefits = 1
- Property will not be managed for wildlife benefits = 0