

REPORT ON EXPENDITURES FROM THE CHESAPEAKE BAY RESTORATION FUND

Prepared Pursuant to § 58.1-344.3.C2.c of the Code of Virginia

Presented by the Secretary of Natural Resources

Annual Report on the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund
By the Secretary of Natural Resources
November 1, 2019

Pursuant to § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(a), the purpose of voluntary contributions of tax refunds to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (Fund) is to fulfill “the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan submitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, 2010, **and any subsequent revisions thereof.**” [Emphasis added.]

This report fulfills the requirements of § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(c) that “the Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit a report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources; the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; the House Committee on Appropriations; the Senate Committee on Finance; and the Virginia delegation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, describing the grants awarded from moneys deposited in the fund. The report shall include a list of grant recipients, a description of the purpose of each grant, the amount received by each grant recipient, and an assessment of activities or initiatives supported by each grant.”

The balance of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund as of October 23, 2019 was \$482,038.69.

On August 23, 2019, Virginia issued the final Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that revises prior restoration plans for reducing nutrient and sediment pollution based upon updated science, enhanced modeling tools, higher resolution land use/cover data, as well as local area water quality goals. The Phase III WIP succeeds the Phase I and Phase II WIPs, prepared in 2010 and 2012 respectively, and serves as the guide for implementation efforts moving forward.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds will be used to implement the following key strategies in the Phase III WIP:

#1. *Establish state-federal-private collaborative approach to document voluntary agriculture best management practices (BMP), particularly nutrient management (NM) plans.* (Phase III WIP, Page 62) Implementing this WIP initiative, the Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources has convened a documenting voluntary agriculture BMP task force consisting of multiple agencies and agriculture stakeholders with the goal of identifying efficient and effective methods to document agriculture BMPs that are employed without federal or state incentive payments. The task force has met on three occasions and has reviewed existing methods including a farm survey protocol developed and implemented by Pennsylvania State University. Assuming full support by the members of the task force, the Secretary will dedicate \$150,000 to \$175,000 of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to work in partnership with the Virginia Cooperative Extension to conduct a statistically valid survey of farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This approach has been used successfully by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in partnership with agriculture stakeholders to document an additional 1 million pounds of nitrogen reduction from agriculture practices. Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds used for this initiative

will be supplemented with a \$75,000 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Assistance grant recently received by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

#2. *Expand the Healthy Virginia Lawns Program.* (Phase III WIP, Page 72.) This proposal builds upon an existing Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) educational program that helps homeowners learn and implement best management practices for their lawns. Healthy Virginia Lawns offers personalized lawn care recommendations based on specific needs. This program begins with a state visit and soil analysis and ends with a complete urban nutrient management plan. The Healthy Virginia Lawns Program is offered through the VCE Master Gardener program. Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Extension agents provide leadership to the Master Gardener program at the local level. With funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, VCE will 1) recruit at least one new Extension Unit office to adopt the Healthy Virginia Lawns program for implementation; 2) provide program support to existing Extension programs in Fairfax, Henrico, and Prince William counties with a goal of 20 % growth either by clients, plans, or acres under urban nutrient management or a combination of all three components; 3) encourage the use of summer interns in local Extension offices to promote best practices for proper lawn maintenance that encourages Bay-friendly or watershed-friendly practices; 4) report to DEQ the potential nutrient reductions for nitrogen, phosphorus, or sediment based on the number of acres of residential lawn being managed under a certified plan. A target of at least 350 acres will be set for 2019; and 5) develop a robust evaluation plan to capture short-term and mid-term impacts from Healthy Virginia Lawns clients. Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds totaling \$30,175 are dedicated for this project.

#3. *Prepare a State Lands Watershed Implementation Plan.* (Phase III WIP, Page 58). The Phase III WIP calls on the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to coordinate development of a watershed implementation plan to specifically address pollutant loads originating from state lands. In order to determine the necessary load reductions, it is important to first understand the existing loads, which is dependent on acreage and land use. Determining acreage of state lands requires a comprehensive dataset of all lands that are either owned or managed by a state agency. Though many agencies have individual datasets for land they own or manage, there is currently no single, comprehensive dataset that includes all agencies. Once such a dataset has been developed, it can be compared to the Virginia Statewide Land Cover dataset to determine the acreage of each land use classification present on state lands. Once developed, this dataset would be available for use by all state agencies and would have multiple benefits in addition to supporting the state lands WIP, including in land conservation and climate change resilience spaces. Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds totaling \$30,000 will be utilized for this mapping need. These funds will be supplemented with \$95,000 in Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program Grant funding from the EPA.

For further information:

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