



ANNUAL REPORT

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION NETWORK
Spring 2021 - Winter 2022



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Founded as the Conservation Council of Virginia in 1969, Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) began as a roundtable of major conservation groups and has grown to include over 150 Network Partners across the Commonwealth. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources.

VCN is a facilitator of strategic action, a resource for Network Partners statewide, and a constant conservation presence in Virginia's Capitol. Playing a unique role in Virginia's conservation community, VCN helps the community speak with one coordinated voice. The organization and its staff focus on strengthening the conservation community as a whole and winning environmental victories that benefit all Virginians.

VCN's Network Partners work on a wide range of issues from stream restoration, to transportation reform, to renewable energy advancement, to promoting sustainable community growth, to environmental justice and more. Given the diverse work of our partner organizations, VCN organizes its programs into four main categories: **HEALTHY RIVERS, CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE, LAND CONSERVATION, and LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION.**

VCN IS A PROUD MEMBER PARTNER OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:



VCN is proud to serve as the state lead for the Choose Clean Water Coalition — the regional coalition advocating for clean rivers and streams in communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, — as the Virginia state affiliate for the National Wildlife Federation, as a member of the Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative.

| PHOTO: FORT MONROE BY LORI A CASH

ANNUAL REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for reading our 2021–2022 Annual Report. This report reviews Virginia Conservation Network’s (VCN) work from Spring 2021 to Winter 2022.

Over the last year, VCN worked with our 150+ Network Partners to maintain momentum around policy gains while continuing to navigate working within the confines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The year was defined by a gubernatorial election and the infusion of federal money into the state budget. It ended with a vastly different political landscape including a new, untested Governor and a change in conservation strategy from offense to defense.

While it feels almost impossible to cover everything we worked on last year in only a few pages, we did our best to squeeze in the highlights.

One of the things I’m most proud of in the last year is the ever growing engagement of VCN Partners through our workgroups and Our Common Agenda process. VCN’s partnership continued to grow in the last year with the addition of over 10 new partners. More than 70 of our Partner organizations participated in our workgroup meetings throughout the year and 85 individual authors collaborated on Our Common Agenda – the most engagement we’ve ever seen.

Thanks to our increased engagement and coordination, VCN’s partnership held together a strong wall against legislative rollbacks to our priority climate and environmental policies. While the budget is still being finalized through a Special Session, we are still hopeful to see historic investments for clean water and trails in the state budget. We didn’t make progress on everything and had some losses along the way as well - but thanks to our coordination we’re coming out of this year strong and ready to continue maintaining policy gains of the last few years.

Thank you for being a part of our successful and growing network. As you flip through the next few pages I hope you’ll agree with me - when we work together, we make real policy gains for our environment. I’m looking forward to working with you in 2022 and beyond!



Mary Rafferty
Executive Director



FIGHTING FOR CONSERVATION VICTORIES YEAR-ROUND

VCN's team coordinates the conservation community year-round to build a shared policy agenda and the public support it needs to be successful. This is accomplished through a three-step process: Develop Our Common Agenda, Educate the Public, and Advocate & Mobilize.

1 DEVELOP *OUR COMMON AGENDA*

Our Common Agenda is the shared set of policy priorities crafted over a multi-month process and then pursued by our broader partnership through strategic campaigns. *Our Common Agenda* briefing book is a collection of papers written by, vetted through, and voted on by our 150+ Network Partners. This book is published annually and serves as an educational tool for policy makers and conservation advocates alike.

VCN kicked off the 2022 *Our Common Agenda* process in the Spring, when we ran long-form virtual planning meetings. Our workgroups continued to meet monthly year-round to plan, strategize, and share information.

VCN facilitates four main workgroups:

- Clean Energy & Climate
- Land Use & Transportation
- Healthy Rivers & the Chesapeake Bay (in partnership with the Choose Clean Water Coalition)
- Land Conservation & Wildlife (in partnership with VaULT)



This year's workgroups and *Our Common Agenda* process had the highest engagement level we've ever seen:

150

Partners

85

Authors

41

Policy Papers

1

Common Agenda

Coming off two years of historic policy wins, the 2022 *Our Common Agenda* focused on building equitable communities as a key strategy for reducing carbon pollution, protecting our landscapes, and ensuring clean water for all. In addition, there was an increased focus on access to hiking and biking trails, public transportation, local foods, rooftop solar, and more.

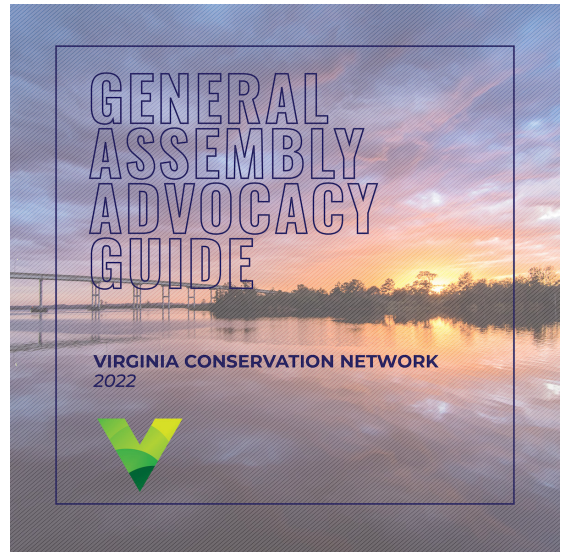
"Our work in the Shenandoah Valley is decidedly more effective and impactful because of VCN. Like most place-based conservation groups, we do not have the organizational capacity for dedicated state policy staffers. Instead, we rely heavily on the expertise and coordination provided by VCN."

- Kate Wofford, Executive Director, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley

Once *Our Common Agenda* is set, VCN works with our Partners to build public support for our shared priorities through media coverage, coalition building, public education, and events.

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF THE FIRST *OUR COMMON AGENDA* EDUCATION SERIES

In the Fall of 2021, VCN launched our first Education Series for *Our Common Agenda*. Over 9 weeks – one week per chapter – authors educated attendees in hour-long virtual brown bag presentations kicked off by guest speakers such as Dr. Mamie Parker (the first Black woman regional director in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); Renee Hoyos (DEQ’s Environmental Justice Office Director); and State Senator Barbara Favola.



PARTNERS RECEIVE A “TRAIL GUIDE” TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In preparation for Virginia’s General Assembly session, VCN shared a “Trail Guide to the General Assembly” series which provided background on how the General Assembly works, how to engage with legislators, and the environmental issues we expected to see in the upcoming General Assembly session. The series also promoted updated advocacy action guides, which provide insider tips on how to navigate the policy making process.

3

ADVOCATE & MOBILIZE

When the Assembly begins in January, VCN advocates for *Our Common Agenda*, tracks legislation, advances our policies, and coordinates Partner advocacy.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE PROVIDES CRITICAL COORDINATION

Through VCN’s Legislative Committee, VCN Partners share legislative information, strategize, and request that VCN takes public positions on bills in the General Assembly. The public positions taken by VCN’s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors are made available weekly on the VCN website and include talking points for each position taken. VCN took positions on 122 bills in the 2022 Session and tracked over 200 pieces of legislation.

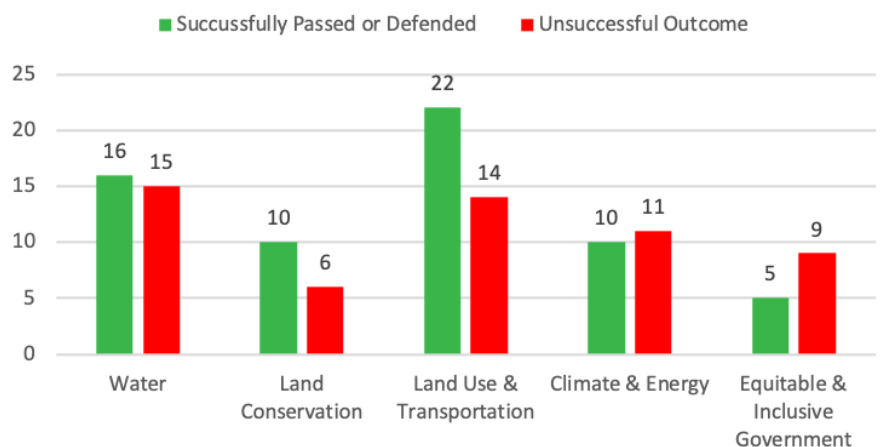
CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY FEATURES NEW ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS & CHAMPION LAWMAKERS

Each year, VCN invites volunteer advocates to join professional staff to meet with their state legislators for our annual Conservation Lobby Day. This year, more than 200 conservation advocates completed 50 meetings with legislators over Zoom.

The day kicked off with welcomes from:

- Matt Lohr, incoming Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry
- Mike Rolband, incoming Director of the Department of Environmental Quality
- Senator Jennifer McClellan
- Senator Jennifer Boysko
- Delegate Kathy Tran
- Chris Zarba, former EPA staffer

VCN Policy Results by Issue Area



PROTECTING VIRGINIA'S WATER RESOURCES

In recent years, Virginia's leadership has taken important steps to equitably reduce risks of recurrent flooding and to build flood-resilient communities. To further protect Virginians, the General Assembly passed a suite of bills to integrate statewide flood planning and implementation across the Commonwealth, including strengthening our **Coastal Resilience Master Plan** while defending the **Community Flood Preparedness Fund**. Lead campaign partners: Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Rappahannock, Southern Environmental Law Center, and Wetlands Watch.

COASTAL RESILIENCE MASTER PLAN

To increase our resilience to sea level rise and increased duration/intensity of storms, the former Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources released the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. The comprehensive plan will help communities prepare for and adapt to flooding with new resiliency projects, financing strategies, and better coordination among state, federal, and local governments.

The General Assembly added 44 miles of the James River, 23 miles of the Maury River, and 9 miles of the North Fork Shenandoah River to the **Virginia Scenic Rivers Program**. This will bring the James River scenic designation up to about 100 miles. In total, there are 900 miles of river in the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. Lead campaign Partners: James River Association and Scenic Virginia.

In order to prevent tree canopy loss due to development, localities now have the authority to prioritize on-site **tree canopy preservation** and

replanting during development. Lead campaign Partner: Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Virginia's leaking and failing water infrastructure and wastewater treatment plants are a threat to human health and water quality in our communities. This year, the General Assembly passed a series of bills that **improve water treatment infrastructure** in order to reduce the amount of pollutants discharged into our rivers, streams, and the Bay. Lead campaign Partner: Friends of the Rappahannock.

Despite the victories in reducing wastewater pollution, a series of bills to keep chemicals and toxic pollution out of our water failed to pass this session. Measures such as creating a study of toxic "forever chemicals," aka PFAS; registering above-ground storage tanks, reducing sources of toxic coal tar, and updating regulations for metals mining would have reduced industrial toxins and pollution that are threatening both human and ecological health. The defeat of this series of water protections is a disservice to Virginians, and we will continue to advocate for the health of our water and our people. Lead campaign Partners: Appalachian Voices, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, James River Association, and Southern Environmental Law Center.

Last session, Virginia adopted policies to reduce plastic waste, prohibiting the intentional release of balloons and phasing out the use of single-use plastics. This session, an Extended Producer Responsibility bill and a Bottle Bill would have required plastic manufacturers to be responsible for proper collection and recycling of packaging materials and single-use bottles. Although both bills died, we will continue to pursue policies to reduce our plastic waste. Lead campaign Partners: Environment Virginia.

PHOTO: HUGH KENNY |



CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S LANDSCAPES & WILDLIFE

For decades, the histories of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have been overlooked, underfunded, and untold. By establishing the **Virginia Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Historic Preservation Fund**, groups can receive grants from the Fund to acquire, preserve and interpret historic structures, cultural landscapes, and archeological sites of significance in the history of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In addition, easing the burden and costs associated with inheriting family land will prevent the involuntary loss of family land, farms, and forests. Updates to the **heirs property rights** will especially protect Black family's land loss, who are more than twice as likely as white Americans to not have a will. Lead campaign Partners: Black Family Land Trust, Piedmont Environmental Council, and Preservation Virginia.

Agriculture accounts for 10% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. However, agriculture can also act as a significant climate solution when regenerative practices are applied. Regenerative, pasture-based farming can reduce agriculture's climate impact while providing premium products and marketing opportunities for farmers' prosperity. Through the **Local Food and Farming Infrastructure grant program**, small-scale, local farms can now enhance their food production and prosperity through sustainable farming methods. Lead campaign Partner: Virginia Association for Biological Farming.

The sale of invasive plants in Virginia harms our native plants, adversely impacts wildlife habitat, and costs millions of taxpayer dollars at the local, state, and federal levels to manage. By creating **signs and labels for vendors to explain the value of native plants and the harm of invasive plants**, consumers can now make better informed decisions at the point of sale when purchasing plants. Lead campaign partner: Audubon Society of Northern Virginia.

Over the past year, Virginia has begun to devise a **Wildlife Corridor Action Plan**. Wildlife corridors are critical wildlife habitat and aquatic connectivity pathways that may also improve drivers' safety by reducing vehicle-wildlife collisions. Unfortunately, efforts to further aid the development of wildlife corridors through increased funding and improved vehicle-wildlife

data reporting failed to advance, but we look forward to continuing advocating for a strong wildlife corridor plan and project funding in Virginia. Lead campaign Partners: Wild Virginia and Wildlands Network.

MULTI-USE TRAILS FUNDING

In his outgoing budget, Governor Northam dedicated a historic \$245 million for outdoor recreation to increase equitable public access of our green spaces for all Virginians. Of that budget, \$233 is dedicated to improving and expanding multi-use trails, a policy goal of the Network. While we are still waiting to see the General Assembly's finalized budget, the current proposals suggest that multi-use trails will receive at least \$57 million in funding.

PHOTO: HUMPBACK ROCKS BY FREDDY JACKSON |

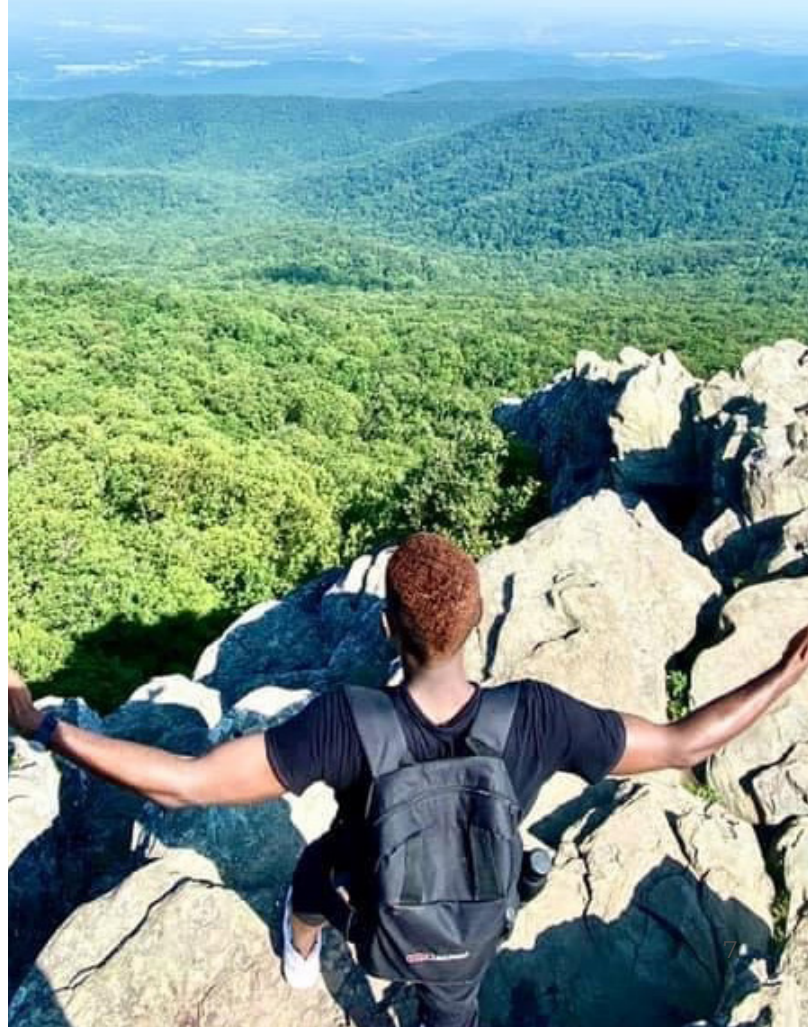




PHOTO: HOPEWELL RIVERWALK BY DANIEL JONES

TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION & BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The past year and a half has shown that high-quality, reliable public transit service is essential for Virginians to access their jobs, schooling, healthcare, education, and shopping needs. Beyond transit's vital role in economic growth and social mobility, public transportation is critical to mitigating the climate crisis.

To support public transportation affordability, the **Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP)** now makes its funding more flexible to better accommodate the needs of Virginians. A greater portion of TRIP funding can now be used to support **zero-fare transit programs** and low-income riders, matching the increased demand Virginia has seen over the course of the pandemic. Lead campaign Partners: Virginia Interfaith Power & Light and Southern Environmental Law Center.

ZERO-FARE TRANSIT

Zero-fare transit initiatives are a proven method to increase public transportation ridership, a sustainable transportation alternative to driving personal vehicles. In Richmond, enacting zero-fare transit has boosted the Greater Richmond Transit Company's ridership above pre-pandemic levels. The DASH bus system in Alexandria has similarly enjoyed a ridership surge after announcing city buses would remain free through at least 2025.

For those that need to use a personal vehicle, Virginia adopted a suite of bills to improve the

accessibility of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, which includes:

- Implementing a parking violation **fine for non-electric vehicles that park in electric vehicle charging spots.**
- Lifting restrictions on **park systems' ability to install electric vehicle charging stations**
- Requiring state agencies to use a **"total cost of ownership" calculator** when procuring new vehicles - studies show that electric cars have the lowest costs (and emissions) over a car's lifetime.

Transportation Funding is critical to improving the speed, frequency, and reliability of public transit; extending service to new areas; modernizing stations; and improving multimodal connections to them. The conservation community successfully **defended against cuts to our transportation funding**, such as cuts to the gas tax and state recordation tax. Lead campaign Partners: Virginia Transit Association and Virginians for High Speed Rail.

The conservation community also successfully defended attacks on recent policy progress, including **Clean Car Standards** and **SMART SCALE**. Clean Car Standards are one of the best tools available to curb transportation pollution and will continue to provide many other benefits, and SMART SCALE uses data to compare and rank project proposals to different criteria. By defending these policies, we are ensuring improved public health, expanded consumer choice, and economic growth for Virginia. Nearly all VCN Partners played an active role in defending our transportation progress.

POWERING VIRGINIA WITH CLEAN ENERGY

Virginia's climate progress was on the line this past General Assembly session, but the conservation community was able to defeat a majority of bad energy policy. We protected the **Virginia Clean Economy Act** and our participation in the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative**, both critical climate policy which reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nearly all VCN Partners played an active role in defending our climate progress.

Strong climate policy that we fought for and missed out on this year included:

- **Solar-Ready Roofs:** ensuring that solar-ready roofs are part of the planning process of new public buildings. Lead campaign Partner: Sierra Club.
- **Access to Essential Services:** limiting disconnection of water, gas, and electricity for Virginia households during extreme weather, periods of crisis, or in the case of serious medical conditions. Lead campaign Partner: Virginia Interfaith Power & Light.

DEFENDING CLIMATE POLICY

Virginia's climate progress was on the line, but the conservation community successfully held off attempts to roll back the Clean Economy Act, RGGI, and Clean Car Standards, defeating a majority of our opposed bills.

It is a disservice to all Virginians that this session was spent defending sound policies rather than advancing our clean energy transition. We will continue to advocate to strengthen our position in combating the effects of climate change that are already ravaging our state's coastal communities through sea level rise, wreaking havoc with increasingly severe storms, and racking up high dollar recovery costs in every corner of the Commonwealth.

PHOTO: HARK VINEYARDS BY SARAH STRYKER |



ENSURING AN EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT

The conservation community was on the defense to protect sound environmental governing practices. In a major policy loss to civic participation, Virginia's **citizen air and water boards lost permitting authority**. While air & water boards will still require public comment this is a major loss for our air and water quality. Citizen Boards have historically played a key role in Virginia's regulatory framework for protecting the environment by including citizen participation in certain regulatory and permitting decisions. Lead campaign Partners: Appalachian Voices, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, James River Association, and Southern Environmental Law Center.

Once again attempts to **prohibit public utility monopolies from contributing to the political campaigns** and committees of the same government officials who are tasked with regulating them failed. However, the policy proposal gained more traction this year than ever before, even receiving unprecedented support from newly-elected Governor Youngkin. We look forward to advocating for this policy with our partners until it is made law. Lead campaign Partners: Appalachian Voices and Clean Virginia.

Efforts to enhance Virginia's **environmental justice** and education plans also failed this session. Partners advocated to encourage localities

to include a healthy communities strategy in their comprehensive planning process and prepare students to understand environmental challenges through an environmental literacy plan. Lead campaign Partners: Friends of the Rappahannock and Virginia Interfaith Power & Light.

MOUNTAIN VALLEY PIPELINE AIR PERMIT DENIED

In December of 2021, the Virginia Air Pollution Control Board denied an air quality permit for the proposed Lambert Air Compressor Station in a 6-1 vote.

The facility would have supported the Mountain Valley Pipeline. The Air Board denied the Mountain Valley Pipeline permit because the facility would have pumped tons of toxic pollution into the atmosphere of the local area and beyond, especially burdening people of color in the immediate vicinity. This was a huge win for environmental justice in Virginia!

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES CELEBRATE THE REJECTION OF THE LAMBERT AIR COMPRESSOR STATION AIR PERMIT
- BY CAROLINE HANSLEY, SIERRA CLUB



ENSURING A SUFFICIENT CONSERVATION BUDGET

Every two years, Virginia's Governor proposes a biennial budget to then be amended and agreed upon by the General Assembly. At the end of his term, outgoing Governor Northam shared a state budget with historic allocations of funding to protect Virginia's natural resources and full funding for nearly all of the Virginia conservation community's budget requests.

During the General Assembly session, both the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee shared their own respective budget proposals based on the Governor's proposal. There were many differences in allocations between the House and the Senate proposals, but one thing they both had in common were cuts to Northam's investments in our natural resources.

The House and Senate have not yet agreed on a final budget proposal to send to Governor Youngkin for final review. For now, see the minimum budget allocations shared between the Governor, House, and Senate's budget proposals below.

Outgoing Governor Northam allocated over \$1 billion in funding to meet our Chesapeake Bay cleanup goals by 2025. Between the House and Senate proposals, water protection programs should receive at least:

- \$314 million for the Water Quality Improvement Fund
- \$230 million for the Virginia Agriculture Cost Share program
- \$69 million for the Wastewater Nutrient Removal Program
- \$25 million for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund
- Funding for a PFAS Drinking Water Study
- Funding to study the impacts of gold strip mining
- Funding for environmental education grants

Virginia's protected landscapes safeguard our game and nongame wildlife, keep our creeks and rivers clean, and spur our outdoor recreation economy. Former Governor Northam dedicated a generous \$233 million in investments to restore or create multi-use trails throughout the Commonwealth. While the General Assembly did not match this allocation, Virginia should see at least \$57 million budgeted for Virginia's multi-use trails. For the first time ever, Governor Northam dedicated \$12 million in his proposal for tribal

land conservation, but unfortunately the House and Senate proposals removed the funding for tribal lands. However, all proposals dedicated \$5 million for BIPOC Historic Preservation for the first time.

Transportation represents the largest source of carbon pollution in Virginia. In order to build a more sustainable future, we need to shift to a cleaner, stronger, and more equitable transportation system. Virginia rail programs received \$798 million and public transportation received \$1.5 billion in all budget proposals - an increase from previous budgets.

Lead campaign Partners: James River Association, The Nature Conservancy, SELC, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Piedmont Environmental Council

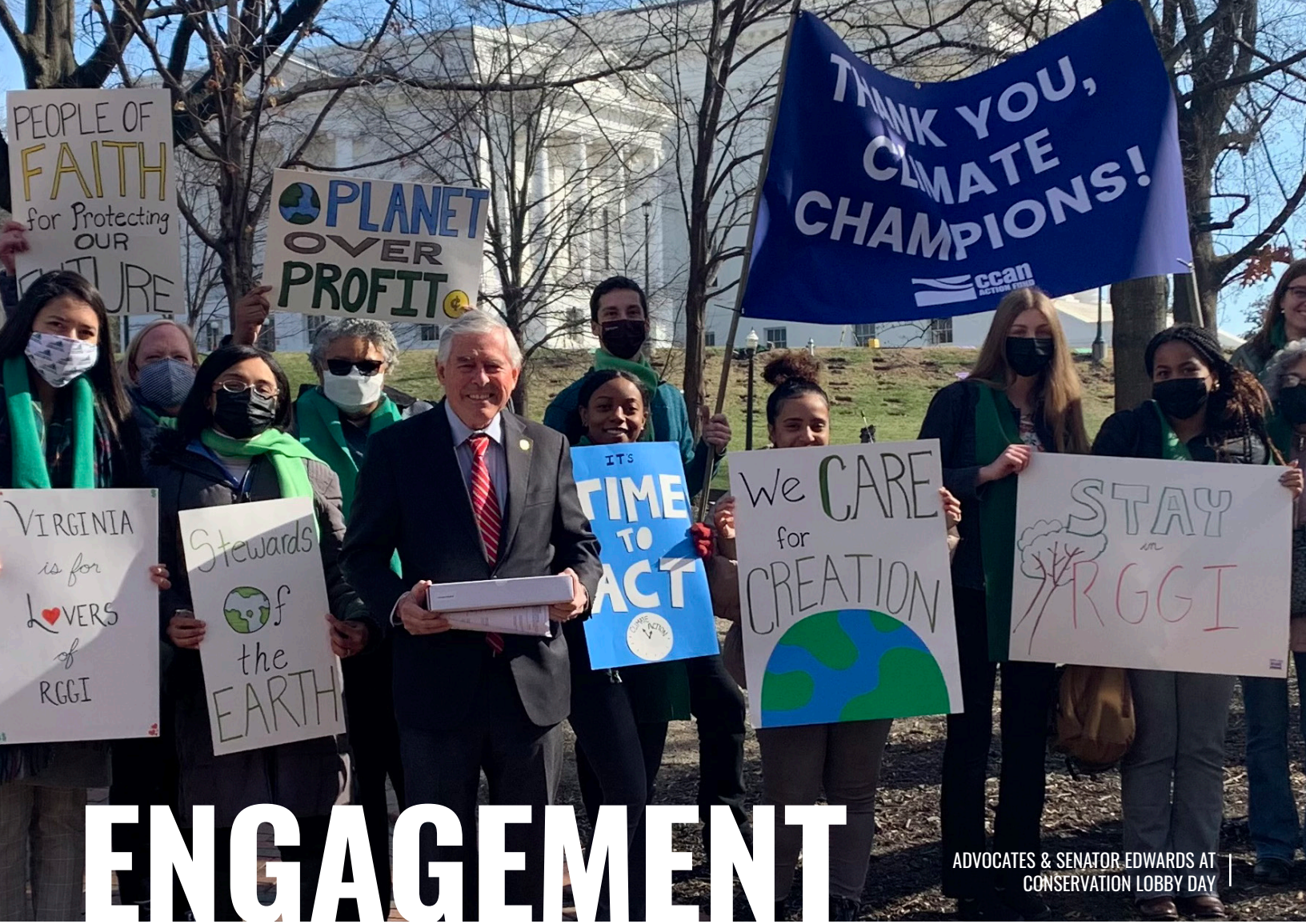
HISTORIC FEDERAL INVESTMENTS FOR CONSERVATION

In 2021, the General Assembly met over the summer to allocate over \$800 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for clean water, energy efficiency and park maintenance and trails. Later that fall, the Federal government passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, investing nearly \$3 trillion into infrastructure such as roads, bridges, transit, and social programs.

These federal investments will provide Virginia with funding for nearly every policy issue area VCN addresses in Our Common Agenda, from transportation reform, to climate-smart agriculture, to industrial decarbonization, and everything in between.

PHOTO: GRANDVIEW NATURE PRESERVE
BY AILEEN DEVLIN





ADVOCATES & SENATOR EDWARDS AT CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY

REGIONAL FORUMS SPARK PARTNER DISCUSSIONS

After the General Assembly session, our Partners led six virtual Regional Forums. Local partners provided their perspective on the successes and challenges of the 2021 General Assembly and outlined their vision for which issues they would like to see the conservation community prioritize as we head into the Common Agenda season. A majority of regions saw the utility in these regional discussions and requested that VCN help facilitate regular meetings at strategic points during the year.

To follow-up, VCN hosted another Regional Forum after we published *Our Common Agenda*. Again, our Partners came together to review the policies outlined in the briefing book and strategize environmental advocacy to implement our policies in the 2022 General Assembly Session.

STRENGTHENING OUR WRITING FOR ADVOCACY

In May, VCN hosted a “Writing for Advocacy” training led by Susan Rakov, the director of the Frontier Group. This training occurred right before authors started to draft their Briefing Book policy papers as a way to hone the writing skills of our Partners and strengthen this tool.

PARTNERS GET OUTSIDE FOR ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSEMBLY

Where VCN’s past Environmental Assemblies have been multi-day, in-person conferences, the pandemic kept us creative in the ways we get together. This year, VCN and our Partners got to choose from 6 regional field trips led by our Partners, which included a community farm tour with PEC, a bike ride with the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation, a paddle trip with FoR, and a tour of the Wildlife Center of Virginia.

RE-THINKING OUR ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT FOR AN ELECTION YEAR

In anticipation of the Fall elections, VCN hosted a series on how to engage in elections as a 501(c)(3) organization. The training series was two-part including “Navigating Advocacy & Law ” with trainers from Bolder Advocacy and “Election Advocacy in Practice” with trainers from the Analyst Institute. We followed up with additional advocacy guides and VCN’s voter resources webpage to help Partners navigate Election season.

BLACK OAK PARTNERSHIP

In April 2021, VCN publicly launched our partnership with the BlackOak Collective (BlackOak). The BlackOak Collective is a new Black environmental networking organization bringing together students, professionals, and advocates across D.C, Maryland, and Virginia. VCN and BlackOak teamed up in late 2020 to help expand the pipeline of professionals of color launching careers within Virginia’s environmental movement.

Our first event was a career panel highlighting Black leaders with a career in Virginia’s environmental community. The career panel was an opportunity for Black students and young professionals to gain career advice and learn from Black environmental leaders. In November, we co-hosted an event focused on how students of color can launch their careers in the environment through paid fellowships and internship programs.

EQUITY COHORT

After having an internal, 6 month shared learning cohort with VCN’s staff and board, VCN launched our shared learning cohort for VCN partners in September. This monthly two-hour series was co-created by VCN and Ebony Walden, a Virginia equity consultant with feedback and support from Queen Shabazz, director of the Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative and Emily Piontek, Virginia Energy Democracy Field Coordinator. The cohort includes 25 directors, operations managers, and program managers from VCN partner organizations. The sessions feature topics such as white privilege, allyship, and recruitment & retention of a diverse staff team. In addition, participants work within smaller communities of practice monthly to provide an equity overview of their organizational practices using the Choose Clean Water DEIJ Action Guide checklist. Using the equity framework, the participants share what’s working and identify where they need support. The 11-month series will wrap up in July 2022. We will launch our next cohort in September 2022.



Kim Jemaine
Chesapeake
Climate Action
Network



Ebonie Alexander
Black Family Land
Trust



Harrison Wallace
Climate & Clean
Energy Equity
Fund



Josephus Allmond
Southern
Environmental
Law Center

“I’m really grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Racial Equity Shared Learning Cohort. ACLC is a small nonprofit, and we’re working through the implementation of our DEIJ goals through our strategic plan this year. Being part of the cohort has given us the tools we need to start to develop our own roadmap.”

- Mary Cromer, Executive Director Appalachian Citizen Law Center

VCN STAFF

Mary Rafferty
Executive Director

Pat Calvert
Senior Policy & Campaigns
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Narissa Turner
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Wyatt Gordon
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Manager – Land Use &
Transportation

Nicole Duimstra
Communications &
Campaigns Manager

Andrew Perrow
Civic Engagement
& Outreach Manager

Kyle Gatlin
Partner Resources
Manager

Lisa McLaughlin
Operations Manager



Our Board of Directors toured the Pump House on the James River.



VCN biked 17 miles (downhill!) on the Virginia Creeper Trail in southwest Virginia.



VCN staff joined Friends of the Rappahannock to plant 750 trees at Belle Isle State Park.

VCN OPENS HUB OFFICE SPACE IN RICHMOND FOR PARTNERS

After putting our office move on hold due to the pandemic, VCN moved in December to fulfill our vision of providing a hub office space for VCN's 150 Network Partners to use while in Richmond. This new space includes large and small conference rooms, hybrid-meeting video technology, as well as desk space for Partners to work and relax when they're downtown.

Located at 701 E Franklin St, Suite 800, the office is two blocks from Capitol Square. Opening just in time for the General Assembly session, Partners used the office regularly in between Capitol meetings and lobbying for the workspace, the camaraderie, and the candy jar. Throughout the year, VCN Partners are invited to work in the coworking space, take calls or hold private meetings in one of the two smaller conference rooms, and even book our large conference room. Come see us next time you're in town or reach out if you're looking for a meeting space!

Chris Leyen (left) and Anna Killius (right) visited VCN's office throughout session for VCN's Legislative Committee and to recharge between Capitol meetings



VCN NETWORK PARTNERS

Founded as the Conservation Council of Virginia in 1969, Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) began as a roundtable of major conservation groups and has grown to include over 150 Network Partners across the Commonwealth. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.

BALD EAGLE



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ***
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.



CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure



EXPLORE. CONSERVE. INNOVATE.



Finding the ways that work



CARDINAL

Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley · Appalachian Citizens' Law Center · Blue Ridge Land Conservancy · Chesapeake Legal Alliance · Clean Virginia · Community Climate Collaborative · Electrification Coalition · Environment Virginia · Foundation Earth · Friends of the Rappahannock · Generation 180 · James River Garden Club · Lynnhaven River NOW · Natural Resources Defense Council · Potomac Conservancy · Powered by Facts · Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation · The Nature Conservancy in Virginia · Valley Conservation Council · Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center Foundation · Waterkeepers Chesapeake · Wildlands Network

TIGER SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY

Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance · Appalachian Trail Conservancy · Appalachian Voices · Audubon Naturalist Society · Audubon Society of Northern Virginia · Blue Ridge PRISM · Capital Region Land Conservancy · Center for Progressive Reform · Chesapeake Climate Action Network · Clean Fairfax Council · Clean Virginia Waterways · Coalition for Smarter Growth · East Coast Greenway Alliance · Edith J Carrier Arboretum at JMU · Friends of the Lower Appomattox River · Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah · Keep Virginia Beautiful · Loudon Wildlife Conservancy · Mothers Out Front · New Virginia Majority · Northern Virginia Conservation Trust · Oceana · Potomac Riverkeeper Network · Preservation Virginia · Prince William Conservation Alliance · Richmond Audubon Society · Scenic Virginia · Shenandoah National Park Trust · Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition · Sierra Club - Fall of the James Group · SouthWings · Spotswood Garden Club · Trust for Public Land · Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton · Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke · UVA Law School, Environmental and Regulatory Law Clinic · Virginia Association for Environmental Education · Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts · Virginia Capital Trail Foundation · Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action · Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative · Virginia Interfaith Power & Light · Virginia Living Museum · Virginia Native Plant Society · Virginia Urban Forest Council (TREES Virginia) · Virginia's United Land Trusts · Virginians for High Speed Rail · Wetlands Watch · Wild Virginia

DOGWOOD

Albemarle Garden Club · Alexandria Families for Safer Streets · Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay · Ashland Garden Club · Back Bay Restoration Foundation · Bike Norfolk · Bike Walk RVA · Black Family Land Trust · Blue Ridge Garden Club · Boxwood Garden Club · Climate Action Alliance of the Valley · Conservation Park of Virginia, Inc. · Cville100 · Drive Electric RVA · EcoAction Arlington · Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions · Fauquier & Loudoun Garden Club · Friends of Accotink Creek · Friends of Buckingham · Friends of Dyke Marsh · Friends of the James River Park · Friends of the Rivers of Virginia · Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula · Garden Club of Norfolk · Garden Club of the Northern Neck · Goose Creek Association · Groundwork RVA · Hands Across the Lake · Hunting Creek Garden Club · Keep Virginia Cozy · Leesburg Garden Club · Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers Association · Mill Mountain Garden Club · Nelson County Garden Club · Old Dominion Smallmouth Club · Partnership for Smarter Growth · Rail Solution · Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection · Rappahannock Valley Garden Club · Rivanna Conservation Alliance · Rivanna Garden Club · Rockbridge Area Conservation Council · Rockfish Valley Foundation · RVA Rapid Transit · Shenandoah Green · Sierra Club – Blue Ridge Group · Sierra Club – Chesapeake Bay Group · Sierra Club – Great Falls Group · Sierra Club – Mount Vernon Group · Sierra Club – New River Valley Group · Sierra Club – Piedmont Group · Sierra Club – Potomac Region Outings Group · Sierra Club – Rappahannock Group · Sierra Club – Roanoke Group · Sierra Club – Shenandoah Group · Sierra Club – York River Group · Southside ReLeaf · Surfrider Foundation – Virginia Chapter · The Clinch Coalition · The Greater Good Initiative · Tree Fredericksburg · Virginia Association for Biological Farming · Virginia Bicycling Federation · Virginia Community Rights Network · Virginia Composting Council · Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited · Virginia Green Travel Alliance · Virginia Society of Ornithology · Virginia Wilderness Committee · Washington Area Bicycle Association · Wildlife Society–Virginia Chapter · Williamsburg Garden Club · Winchester-Clarke Garden Club

"I am relatively new to the conservation/environmental movement in Virginia ... I have been attending VCN meetings over the past year. I am so impressed with the collaboration of so many conservation groups and the leadership of VCN."

- Sharon Fisher, President, Clinch Coalition





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