

Forest CORE Fund Program Report

Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) Board of Trustees, March 12, 2026

Background

The Commonwealth of Virginia (Commonwealth) and the Mountain Valley Pipeline, LLC (MVP, LLC) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in connection with the construction of the Mountain Valley Pipeline project, an approximately 303.4-mile, 42-inch diameter natural gas pipeline to be constructed in 17 counties in West Virginia and Virginia, crossing six counties in the Commonwealth specifically.

The Commonwealth developed a methodology for assessing the total impact of linear development projects to forest cores and the habitat and ecosystem services they provide. This methodology was used to analyze how the gas pipeline development project changed the sizes, depths, and shapes of forest cores identified by the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment and to estimate the reductions in interior habitats and ecosystem services resulting from the pipeline.

The MOA establishes commitments related to forest conservation based on consideration of the impacts from forest fragmentation as described above. Pursuant to the MOA, certain funds were allocated by the Commonwealth to VOF, which was tasked with the administration of a grant program to help mitigate such impacts.

Along with partner conservation agencies and oversight by the Secretary of Natural Resources, VOF developed project selection criteria as well as a process for evaluating appropriate sites based on the goals and objectives from the MOA and in accordance with the Commonwealth's policy to conserve its natural resources. Program requirements ensure these forests are protected in perpetuity, incorporating timber management for the health of the forest ecosystem including restrictions on timber harvesting.

Overview

The Forest CORE (Community Opportunities for Restoration and Enhancement) Fund for the Mountain Valley Pipeline region was established under VOF's TERRA Program in June 2018 using \$15 million from the mitigation agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and MVP, LLC. The Fund's purpose is to mitigate forest fragmentation that results from the installation of the MVP pipeline through Virginia. Funds are available for projects that mitigate for forest fragmentation by preserving, connecting, and enhancing forest resources.

Achievements

To date, VOF has completed four grant rounds (FY19-21, and FY25), with the amount of funding made available tied directly with the clearing and grubbing of the pipeline right of way. In total, 21 projects have been completed with \$8,700,957.77 expended and 5,093 acres protected in 11 counties. Grant recipients include six localities, four non-profits, two state agencies, one regional commission, and a water authority. Three projects are underway with an additional 6,945 acres slated for protection.

FY26 Grant Round Summary

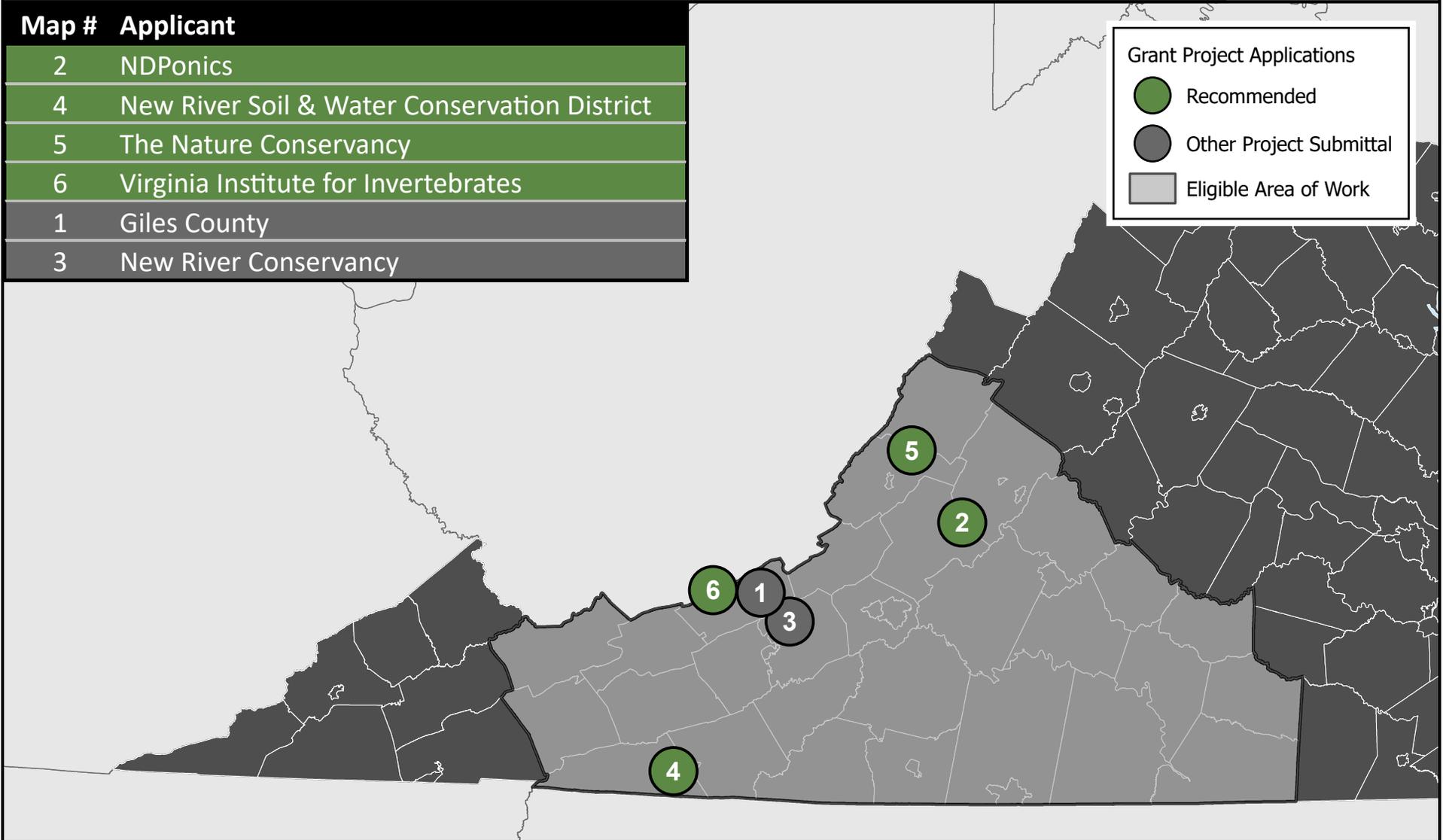
VOF opened the grant round on November 12, 2025, and staff hosted a webinar for 20 attendees. Six applications for over \$3.2 million were submitted, proposing the protection of 926 acres in six counties.

All applications have been provided to the VOF Board, with four proposals to protect 878 acres in five counties being recommended for a total funding amount of \$2.27 million. The recommended projects are listed on the agenda.

Forest CORE Fund Grant Funding Applications

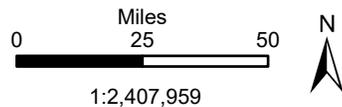


Map #	Applicant
2	NDPonics
4	New River Soil & Water Conservation District
5	The Nature Conservancy
6	Virginia Institute for Invertebrates
1	Giles County
3	New River Conservancy



Board of Trustees Meeting

March 12, 2026



Map created: 2/20/2026 by VOF-LV
Projection: NAD 1983 Virginia Lambert

Source data: Source data provided by County Boundaries - US Census Bureau/VOF; all else - VOF.

This map is for general reference and display purposes only. Any determination of topography or contours, or any depiction of physical improvements, property lines or boundaries, are solely for general information and should not be used or relied upon in the design, modification, or construction of improvements to real property or for resource protection area or flood plain determination.



PROJECT SUMMARY

NDPonics

He Kawiyan Mani

Locality: Botetourt & Rockbridge Counties

Acres: 428

Board Meeting: 3/12/2026

Staff Lead: Emily Yates

Region: Western

VOF Project # 5133 & 5134 VOF Instrument # 8810 & 8811 VOF Property # 6036 & 6037 VOF Application # 26-03-02

Project Description/Property Features

NDPonics requests a Forest CORE Fund (FCF) grant to protect 428 acres of forest ecosystems through the acquisition of two easements, building the type of forest corridor for which FCF was created. The parcels border the 4,232-acre Short Hills Wildlife Management Area and will protect a forest corridor to Purgatory/Mays Mountain, a 6,486-acre project funded for protection through the FCF in 2025. These parcels are all viewable from the Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway, and I-81. Conservation of this land protects endangered bat habitat, a 25-ft waterfall, and significant karst resources.

Project Type

- Charitable Contribution
- Partial Purchase of Open-Space Easement (2)
- Fee Simple Acquisition
- Protection of Owned Land
- Other: _____

Instrument Type

- Deed of Open-Space Easement (2)
- Deed of Dedication to Open Space
- Deed of Conveyance/Acquisition
- Other: _____

Land Protection Agent

- VOF
- Other State Agency: _____
- Locality: _____
- Other: _____

Funding Source & Amount

- VOF Grant Program(s): FCF
Amount Requested: \$952,600.00
- External Grant Program(s): ATC, The Conservation Alliance
Amount Secured: \$140,000.00
- Tax Benefits (Sought by Applicant)
- Not Applicable

Staff Recommendation

- Conservation Project:**
- Approve project as presented.
 - Approve project, contingent upon satisfaction of the following: _____
 - Approve project, final VOF easement terms to be approved at subsequent Board of Trustees Meeting.
- Conservation Funding:**
- Not applicable
 - Approve requested funding: \$ _____
 - Approve recommended funding: \$ 942,112.50
 - Approved administratively, PTF-Easement Assistance: \$ _____

Notes: N/A

Conservation Purposes

Forestral Use:

- The properties are identified as important for protection in the ConserveVA Agriculture and Forestry Category.
- The properties are almost entirely wooded, with 385 acres of forest ranked as Very High or Outstanding Forest Conservation Value (FCV4 or FCV5) through the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Conservation Value model, which is a tool used to strategically identify the highest priority forestland for conservation in Virginia. The intent is to maximize the efficiency of limited resources by focusing conservation efforts on the highest quality, most productive, and most vulnerable forestland statewide.

Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity:

- The properties are identified as a significant site for protection in the ConserveVA Protected Landscapes Resilience and the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity categories.
- The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has developed the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment project (the "VNLA") as part of the Virginia Conservations Lands Needs Assessment to identify, prioritize and link natural lands as targets for protective activities, such as the adoption of conservation easements and the restoration of habitat. The VNLA has identified the properties as having an ecological core of outstanding integrity (C1) which indicates the properties support numerous habitat and ecosystem values.
- The northern property contains a DCR-Division of Natural Heritage dedicated Natural Heritage Conservation Site, indicating the property contains habitat for one or more natural heritage resources (rare plants, animals, communities, or geologic features).
- The properties are located within an area categorized in The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient and Connected Landscapes Project as Resilient, indicating that the area contains both complex landscapes (with a "wide array of micro-climates") and connected landscapes ("allowing species to move and disperse"). According to TNC, resilient sites are those in which conservation actions have the best chance of succeeding in the long term.
- The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources' (DWR) Wildlife Corridor Action Plan indicates the properties are within a Wildlife Biodiversity Resilience Corridor. Wildlife Biodiversity Resilience Corridors represent relatively intact, representative, and biologically diverse habitat connections designed to provide refuge and facilitate species distribution shifts as the climate changes, and the landscape becomes more developed.

Scenic/Open Space:

- The properties are within the viewshed of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, the Short Hills Wildlife Management Area, and Interstate 81. Protecting this property will preserve the forested viewshed.
- Adjacent to other conserved properties, protecting these properties will create a vast area of land that will never be disturbed by development.

Water Resource Protection:

- The southern property contains 7,500 ft of perennial streams.
- The northern property contains a DCR-Division of Natural Heritage dedicated Natural Heritage Conservation Site, indicating the property contains significant karst resources.
- The National Wetlands Inventory ("NWI") maintained by the USFWS shows the southern property contains riverine (3.40 acres) wetland areas.

Project Details

The Governing Document: *The primary terms contained in the deed or instrument are listed below in a condensed form. The complete terms, conditions, and restrictions are in the recorded deed.*

This project will result in two VOF easements. These terms apply to each easement individually.

1. Divisions permitted: 0 Maximum Properties: 1

2. Impervious Coverage Limitations: Total impervious coverage, including that of both existing and future improvements, may not exceed 8,000 square feet.

3. Buildings and Structures:

Any new building or structure exceeding 5,000 square feet in ground area, must have Grantee's prior review and written approval. No building may exceed 35 feet in height. No more than 1 freestanding dwelling may be maintained or constructed on the Property. All new buildings and structures exceeding 500 square feet in ground area must be located in designated Building Envelopes. Any freestanding dwelling must be located in a Building Envelope.

4. Management of Forest:

The Forest CORE Fund Forest Management Provision states:

No timbering shall be permitted other than for the following purposes:

- i) Cutting of trees for maintenance of existing cleared areas used for parking, roads, utilities, buildings, and structures allowed by deed terms;
- ii) Cutting of trees for creation and maintenance of trails;
- iii) Cutting of trees, with prior written approval of Grantee for wildlife habitat management, for the protection or enhancement of the natural heritage resources, for conversion of monoculture plantations to natural forest conditions, which approval or disapproval shall take into consideration the ecological importance of tree cover and avoidance of forest fragmentation;
- iv) Removal of trees posing an imminent hazard to the health or safety of persons or to property;
- v) Removal of invasive trees or other invasive species or
- vi) Removal of trees that are diseased, storm-damaged, or have died naturally.

In general, the forest shall be maintained in its natural state. Forest management practices conducted shall comply with an approved forest stewardship plan with the intent of restoring the ecological health and function of the forest and such practices may not be employed primarily for commercial purposes.

Best Management Practices (BMPs), as defined by the Virginia Department of Forestry, shall be used to control erosion and protect water quality when any allowable forest management activity is undertaken, such as may be required for (iii), (v), or (vi) above. A plan shall be submitted for approval no later than fourteen days before the proposed date of activity, and such plan must be consistent with the terms of the easement on the property. The plan shall describe the BMPs to be used in sufficient detail to ensure that water quality will be protected.

5. Water Quality Protection Areas: Southern property: 50-ft buffers on all waterways.

6. Unique Deed Provisions: N/A

7. Public Access: NO YES

8. Sign Required: NO YES

9. Consolidation of Tax Parcels: NO YES TBD

Summarize: To be determined should funding be awarded. Northern property is one tax map parcel. Southern property is three tax map parcels.

Further Discussion
N/A

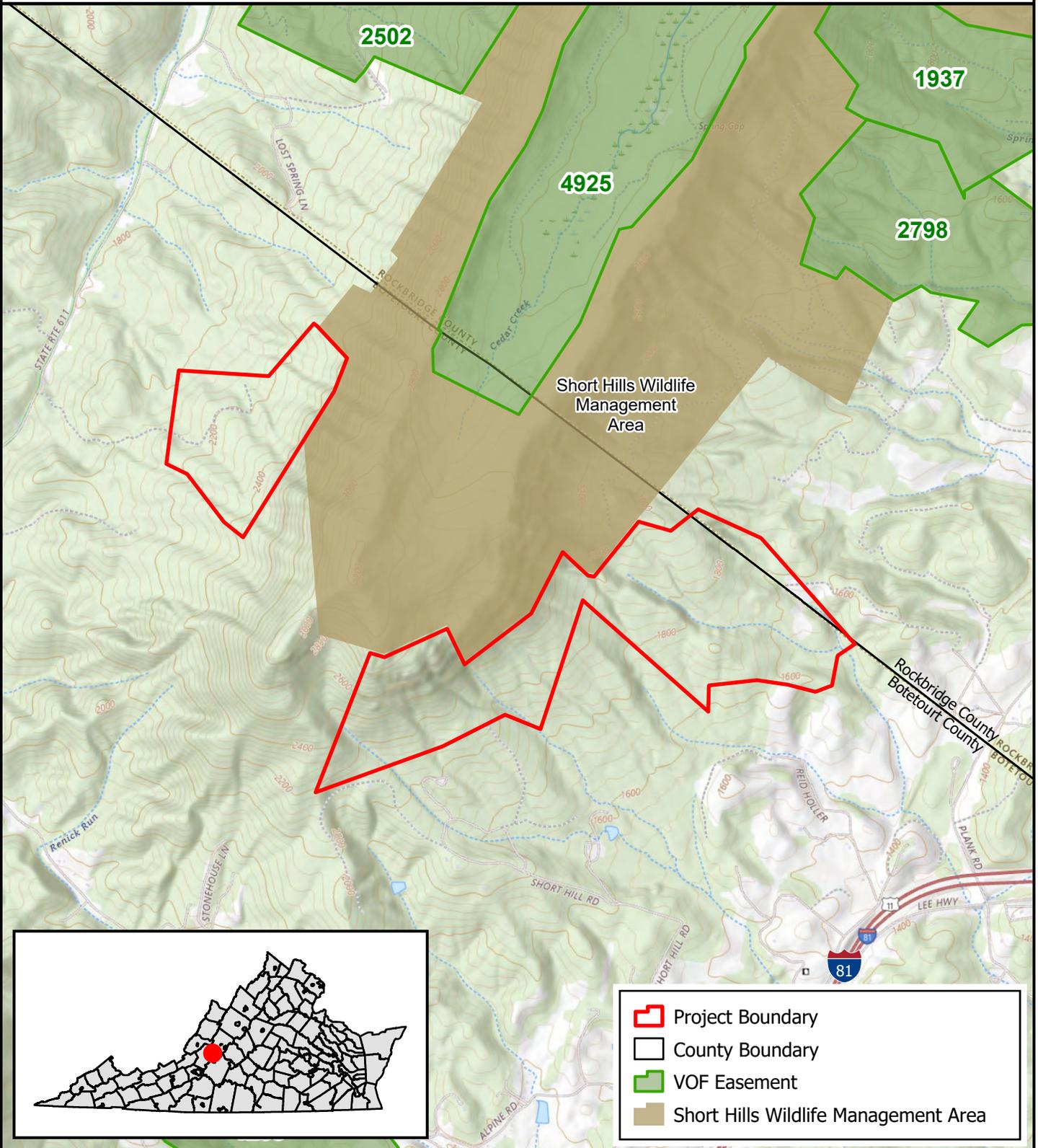
Comprehensive Plan
Has the locality confirmed the project is in compliance with the comprehensive plan? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO DETAILS: Documented compliance provided from both localities in FCF grant application.

Public Infrastructure Information	Conflicts with published plans	Yes	No
Roads:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utilities:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes: To be determined if grant award is made.			

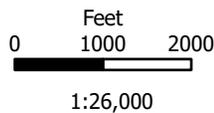
Revision Date 03/04/2025

Location

He Kawiyan Mani



Botetourt and
Rockbridge Counties
428.0 ± Acres

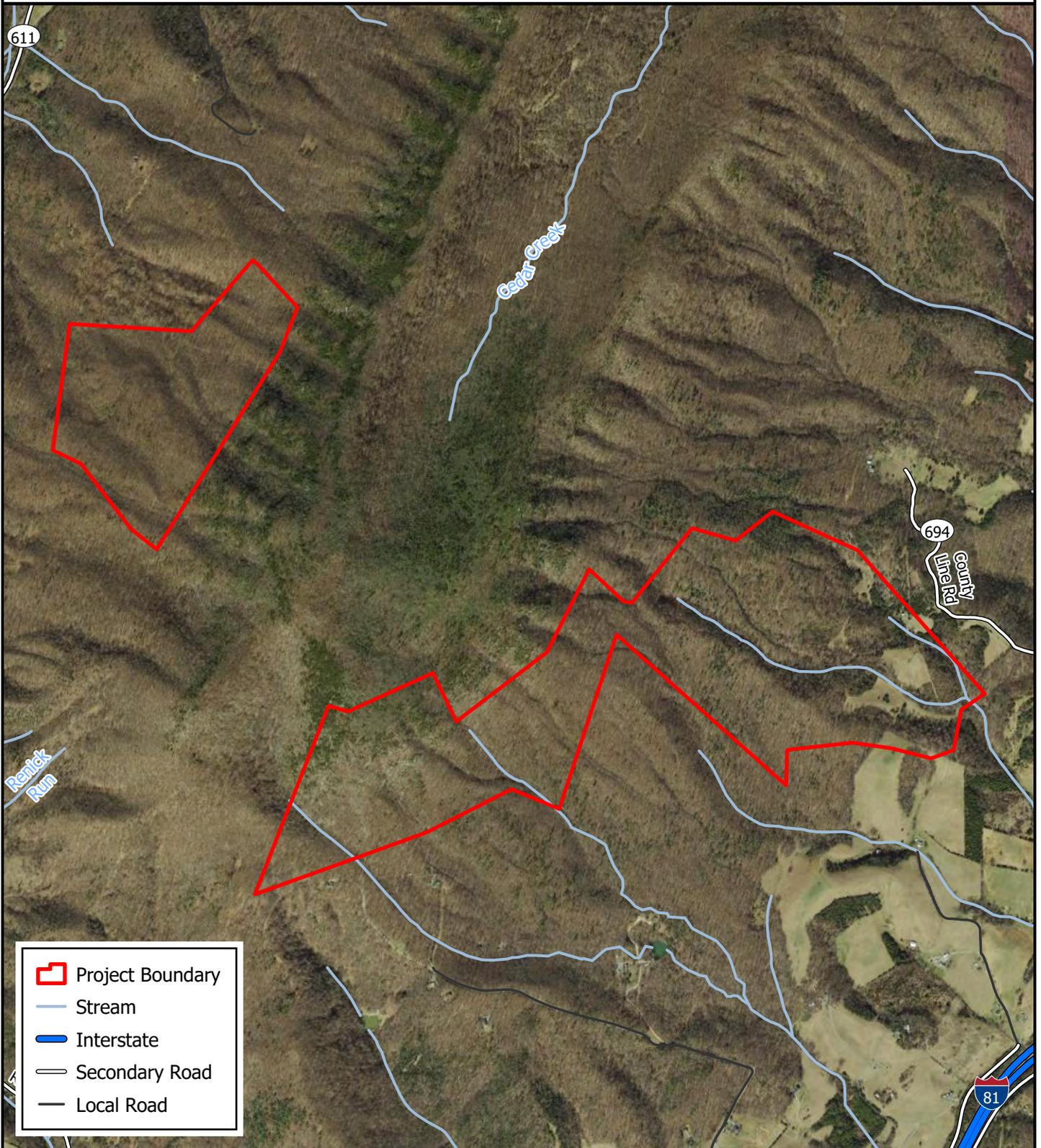


Map created: 2/13/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

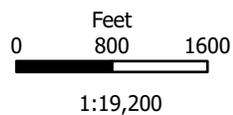
Source data: USGS Topo Quad Names: Sugarloaf Mountain, Natural Bridge, Arnold Valley, Buchanan; County Boundaries - US Census Bureau/VOF; Roads - VDOT; Other Conservation Land - VA DCR; all else - VOF.

Aerial Imagery

He Kawiyan Mani



Botetourt and
Rockbridge Counties
428.0 ± Acres



Map created: 2/23/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

Source data: Aerial Imagery - VGIN/VBMP acquired 2/18/2023;
Rivers/Streams - USGS-NHD; Roads - VDOT; all else - VOF.



PROJECT SUMMARY

New River Soil & Water Conservation District

Wilson Hollow Expansion

Locality: Grayson County

Acres: 94

Board Meeting: 3/12/2026

Staff Lead: Emily White

Region: Western

VOF Project # 4857

VOF Instrument # TBD

VOF Property # TBD

VOF Application # 26-03-04

Project Description/Property Features

The New River Soil & Water Conservation District's Wilson Hollow Expansion will permanently protect 94 acres of forest preventing deforestation and supporting ecosystem health through a comprehensive Forest Management Plan. The District will acquire the property and dedicate it as permanent Open Space. Forest composition and structure will be improved via timber stand enhancements, invasive species control, and the reforestation of four acres.

Project Type

- Charitable Contribution
- Partial Purchase of Open-Space Easement
- Fee Simple Acquisition
- Protection of Owned Land
- Other: _____

Instrument Type

- Deed of Open-Space Easement
- Deed of Dedication to Open Space
- Deed of Conveyance/Acquisition
- Other: _____

Land Protection Agent

- VOF
- Other State Agency: _____
- Locality: _____
- Other: New River SWCD

Funding Source & Amount

- VOF Grant Program(s): FCF
Amount Requested: \$244,400.00
- Tax Benefits (Sought by Applicant)
- External Grant Program(s): VLCF
Amount Secured: \$314,300.00
- Not Applicable

Staff Recommendation

Conservation Project:

- Approve project as presented.
- Approve project, contingent upon satisfaction of the following: _____
- Approve project, final VOF easement terms to be approved at subsequent Board of Trustees Meeting.

Conservation Funding:

- Not applicable
- Approve requested funding: \$244,400.00
- Approve recommended funding: \$ _____
- Approved administratively, PTF-Easement Assistance: \$ _____

Notes: N/A

Conservation Purposes

Forestral Use:

- The entirely wooded property contains 60 acres of forest ranked as High or Very High Forest Conservation Value (FCV3 or FCV4) through the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Conservation Value model, which is a tool used to strategically identify the highest priority forestland for conservation in Virginia. The intent is to maximize the efficiency of limited resources by focusing conservation efforts on the highest quality, most productive, and most vulnerable forestland statewide.

Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity:

- The property was identified as a significant site for protection in the ConserveVA Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity category.
- The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has developed the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment project (the "VNLA") as part of the Virginia Conservations Lands Needs Assessment to identify, prioritize and link natural lands as targets for protective activities, such as the adoption of conservation easements and the restoration of habitat. The VNLA has identified the Property as having an ecological core of C3 (High), which indicates the property may support numerous habitat and ecosystem values.
- The property is located within an area categorized in The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient and Connected Landscapes Project as Resilient, indicating that the area contains both complex landscapes (with a "wide array of micro-climates") and connected landscapes ("allowing species to move and disperse"). According to TNC, resilient sites are those in which conservation actions have the best chance of succeeding in the long term.

Scenic/Open Space:

- The property is bordered by the New River, a designated Blueway in the Virginia Outdoors Plan as well as a designated Scenic River.
- Adjacent to other conserved properties, protecting this property will create a vast area of land that will never be disturbed by development.

Water Resource Protection:

- The property is located in an area identified as important for the protection of Floodplains and Flooding Resilience as well as water quality by the ConserveVA model.
- Located within the New River watershed, the entirely wooded property is bordered by the New River (~4,300-ft).
- The National Wetlands Inventory ("NWI") maintained by the USFWS shows the property contains and riverine (0.17 acres) wetland area.

Outdoor Recreation, Education, or Research:

- The property will be open to the public with educational information and programming available.
- Land-based Recreational Need as modeled by the Department of Conservation and Recreation is ranked as Medium in this area.

Project Details

The Governing Document: *The primary terms contained in the deed or instrument are listed below in a condensed form. The complete terms, conditions, and restrictions are in the recorded deed.*

1. Divisions permitted: 0 Maximum Properties: 1

2. Impervious Coverage Limitations: Total impervious coverage shall be less than 0.25% of the total property including that of both existing and future improvements.

3. Buildings and Structures:

Only buildings and structures allowed are those that support public use of the property as a forested park.

4. Management of Forest:

The Forest CORE Fund Forest Management Provision states:

No timbering shall be permitted other than for the following purposes:

- i) Cutting of trees for maintenance of existing cleared areas used for parking, roads, utilities, buildings, and structures allowed by deed terms;
- ii) Cutting of trees for creation and maintenance of trails;
- iii) Cutting of trees, with prior written approval of Grantee for wildlife habitat management, for the protection or enhancement of the natural heritage resources, for conversion of monoculture plantations to natural forest conditions, which approval or disapproval shall take into consideration the ecological importance of tree cover and avoidance of forest fragmentation;
- iv) Removal of trees posing an imminent hazard to the health or safety of persons or to property;
- v) Removal of invasive trees or other invasive species or
- vi) Removal of trees that are diseased, storm-damaged, or have died naturally.

In general, the forest shall be maintained in its natural state. Forest management practices conducted shall comply with an approved forest stewardship plan with the intent of restoring the ecological health and function of the forest and such practices may not be employed primarily for commercial purposes.

Best Management Practices (BMPs), as defined by the Virginia Department of Forestry, shall be used to control erosion and protect water quality when any allowable forest management activity is undertaken, such as may be required for (iii), (v), or (vi) above. A plan shall be submitted for approval no later than fourteen days before the proposed date of activity, and such plan must be consistent with the terms of the easement on the property. The plan shall describe the BMPs to be used in sufficient detail to ensure that water quality will be protected.

5. Water Quality Protection Areas: As the property may not be timbered except as allowed above, and the entire property is currently wooded with no interior streams or waterways, the entire property will be an RPZ.

6. Unique Deed Provisions: N/A

7. Public Access: NO YES

8. Sign Required: NO YES

9. Consolidation of Tax Parcels: NO YES N/A

Summarize: The project site is one tax map parcel.

Further Discussion
N/A

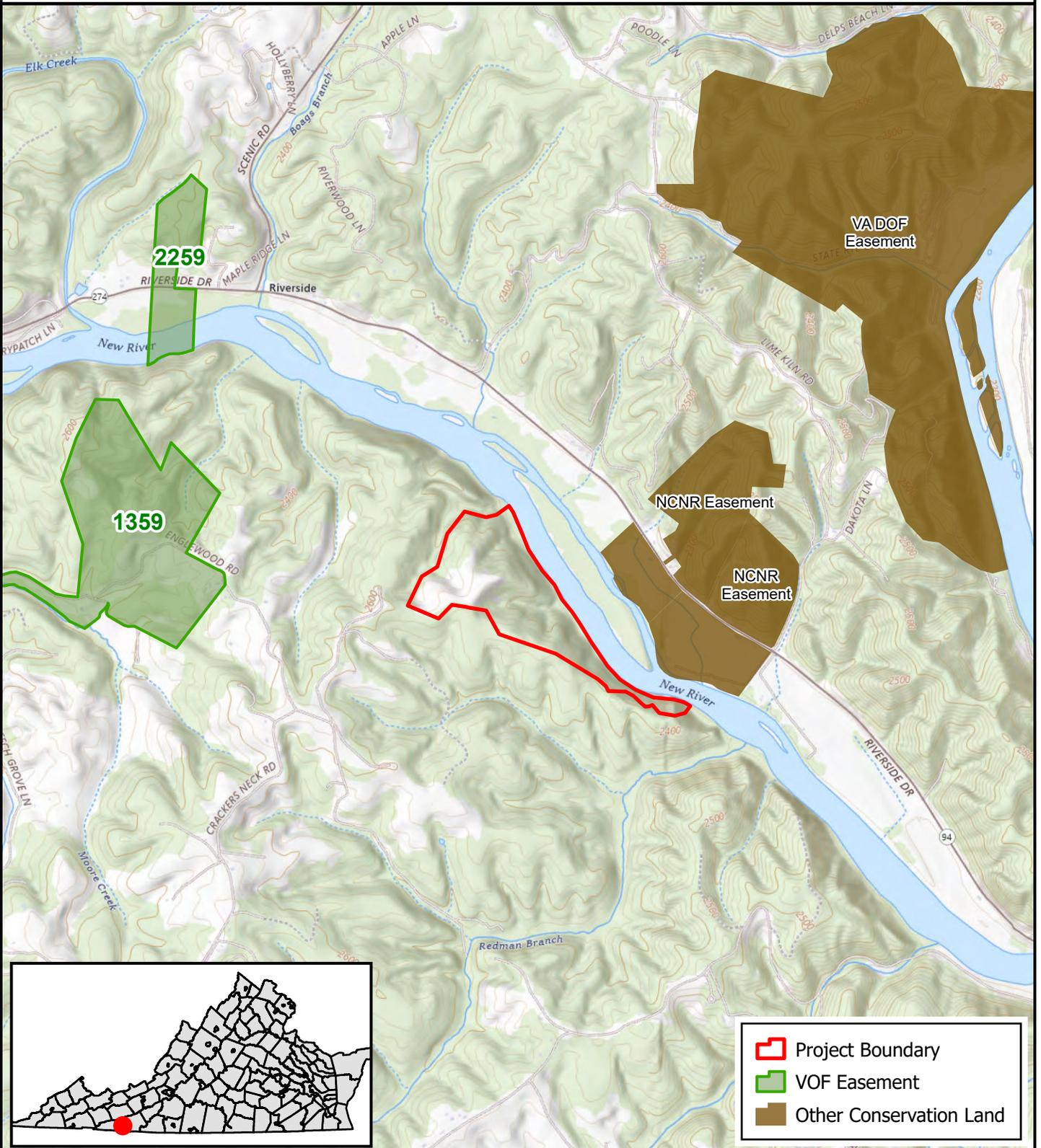
Comprehensive Plan
Has the locality confirmed the project is in compliance with the comprehensive plan? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO DETAILS: Confirmation from locality to be obtained if grant award is made.

Public Infrastructure Information	Conflicts with published plans	Yes	No
Roads:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utilities:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes: To be determined if grant award is made.			

Revision Date 03/04/2025

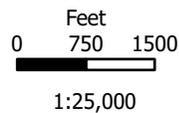
Location

Wilson Hollow Expansion



Grayson County

94.0 ± Acres



Map created: 2/23/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

Source data: USGS Topo Quad Names: Brierpatch Mountain, Galax;
Other Conservation Land - VA DCR; all else - VOF.

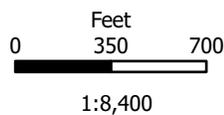
Aerial Imagery

Wilson Hollow Expansion



Grayson County

94.0 ± Acres



Map created: 2/23/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

Source data: Aerial Imagery - VGIN/VBMP acquired 3/6/2023;
Rivers/Streams - USGS-NHD; Roads - VDOT; all else - VOF.



PROJECT SUMMARY

The Nature Conservancy

Warm Springs Mountain Addition

Locality: Bath County

Acres: 134

Board Meeting: 3/12/2026

Staff Lead: Emily White

Region: Western

VOF Project # TBD

VOF Instrument # TBD

VOF Property # TBD

VOF Application # 26-03-05

Project Description/Property Features

The Nature Conservancy is pursuing the fee-simple acquisition of an approximately 134-acre forested property located in Bath County. If funded, the property will be placed under VOF easement and become part of Warm Springs Mountain Nature Preserve. Acquiring this property will protect resilient upland forest and riparian areas while working to close a connectivity gap. The Allegheny Highlands region contains intact forested tracts which support a variety of wildlife and this addition will ensure that a variety of habitats remain in a changing climate.

Project Type

- Charitable Contribution
- Partial Purchase of Open-Space Easement
- Fee Simple Acquisition
- Protection of Owned Land
- Other: _____

Instrument Type

- Deed of Open-Space Easement
- Deed of Dedication to Open Space
- Deed of Conveyance/Acquisition
- Other: _____

Land Protection Agent

- VOF
- Other State Agency: _____
- Locality: _____
- Other: _____

Funding Source & Amount

- VOF Grant Program(s): FCF
Amount Requested: \$380,150.00
- Tax Benefits (Sought by Applicant)
- External Grant Program(s): _____
Amount Requested/Secured: \$ _____
- Not Applicable

Staff Recommendation

Conservation Project:

- Approve project as presented.
- Approve project, contingent upon satisfaction of the following: _____
- Approve project, final VOF easement terms to be approved at subsequent Board of Trustees Meeting.

Conservation Funding:

- Not applicable
- Approve requested funding: \$380,150.00
- Approve recommended funding: \$ _____
- Approved administratively, PTF-Easement Assistance: \$ _____

Notes: N/A

Conservation Purposes

Forestral Use:

- The entirely wooded property consists of forest rated Outstanding Forest Conservation Value (FCV5) through the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Conservation Value model, which is a tool used to strategically identify the highest priority forestland for conservation in Virginia. The intent is to maximize the efficiency of limited resources by focusing conservation efforts on the highest quality, most productive, and most vulnerable forestland statewide.

Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity:

- The property was identified as a significant site for protection in the ConserveVA Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity category.
- The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has developed the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment project (the "VNLA") as part of the Virginia Conservations Lands Needs Assessment to identify, prioritize and link natural lands as targets for protective activities, such as the adoption of conservation easements and the restoration of habitat. The VNLA has identified the Property as having an ecological core of high integrity (C3) which indicates the property may support numerous habitat and ecosystem values.
- The property contains a DCR-Division of Natural Heritage dedicated Natural Heritage Conservation Site, indicating the property contains habitat for one or more natural heritage resources (rare plants, animals, communities, or geologic features).
- A state species of concern has been found on the property, and models indicate the property contains habitat appropriate for many species of concern.
- The property is a designated Audubon Important Bird Area.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identifies the property as containing habitat essential for the success of the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*).
- The property is located within an area categorized in The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient and Connected Landscapes Project as Resilient, indicating that the area contains both complex landscapes (with a "wide array of micro-climates") and connected landscapes ("allowing species to move and disperse"). According to TNC, resilient sites are those in which conservation actions have the best chance of succeeding in the long term.

Scenic/Open Space:

- State Route 785 (Blacksburg Road) has been designated a Virginia Scenic Byway, and the Property's historic buildings, pristine pastures and wooded slopes, being highly visible from this Byway, provide scenic enjoyment to the traveling public.
- The property is bordered by the Rappahannock River, a designated Blueway in the Virginia Outdoors Plan as well as a designated Scenic River.
- Adjacent to other conserved properties, protecting this property will create a vast area of land that will never be disturbed by development.

Water Resource Protection:

- The property is located in an area identified as important for the protection of Floodplains and Flooding Resilience by the ConserveVA model.
- Located within the New River watershed, the property contains over 2,500 feet of several perennial streams.
- The National Wetlands Inventory ("NWI") maintained by the USFWS shows the property contains riverine (1.17 acres) wetland area.

Outdoor Recreation, Education, or Research:

- The property will be open to the public with educational information & programming available.

Project Details

The Governing Document: *The primary terms contained in the deed or instrument are listed below in a condensed form. The complete terms, conditions, and restrictions are in the recorded deed.*

1. Divisions permitted: 0 Maximum Properties: 1

2. Impervious Coverage Limitations: Total impervious coverage shall be less than 0.25% of the total property including that of both existing and future improvements.

3. Buildings and Structures:

Only buildings and structures allowed are those that support public use of the property as a preserve.

4. Management of Forest:

The Forest CORE Fund Forest Management Provision states:

No timbering shall be permitted other than for the following purposes:

- i) Cutting of trees for maintenance of existing cleared areas used for parking, roads, utilities, buildings, and structures allowed by deed terms;
- ii) Cutting of trees for creation and maintenance of trails;
- iii) Cutting of trees, with prior written approval of Grantee for wildlife habitat management, for the protection or enhancement of the natural heritage resources, for conversion of monoculture plantations to natural forest conditions, which approval or disapproval shall take into consideration the ecological importance of tree cover and avoidance of forest fragmentation;
- iv) Removal of trees posing an imminent hazard to the health or safety of persons or to property;
- v) Removal of invasive trees or other invasive species or
- vi) Removal of trees that are diseased, storm-damaged, or have died naturally.

In general, the forest shall be maintained in its natural state. Forest management practices conducted shall comply with an approved forest stewardship plan with the intent of restoring the ecological health and function of the forest and such practices may not be employed primarily for commercial purposes.

Best Management Practices (BMPs), as defined by the Virginia Department of Forestry, shall be used to control erosion and protect water quality when any allowable forest management activity is undertaken, such as may be required for (iii), (v), or (vi) above. A plan shall be submitted for approval no later than fourteen days before the proposed date of activity, and such plan must be consistent with the terms of the easement on the property. The plan shall describe the BMPs to be used in sufficient detail to ensure that water quality will be protected.

5. Water Quality Protection Areas: As the entirely wooded property may not be timbered except as allowed above, the parcel will be treated as an RPZ.

6. Unique Deed Provisions: N/A

7. Public Access: NO YES

8. Sign Required: NO YES

9. Consolidation of Tax Parcels: NO YES N/A

Summarize: Project site is one tax map parcel.

Further Discussion
N/A

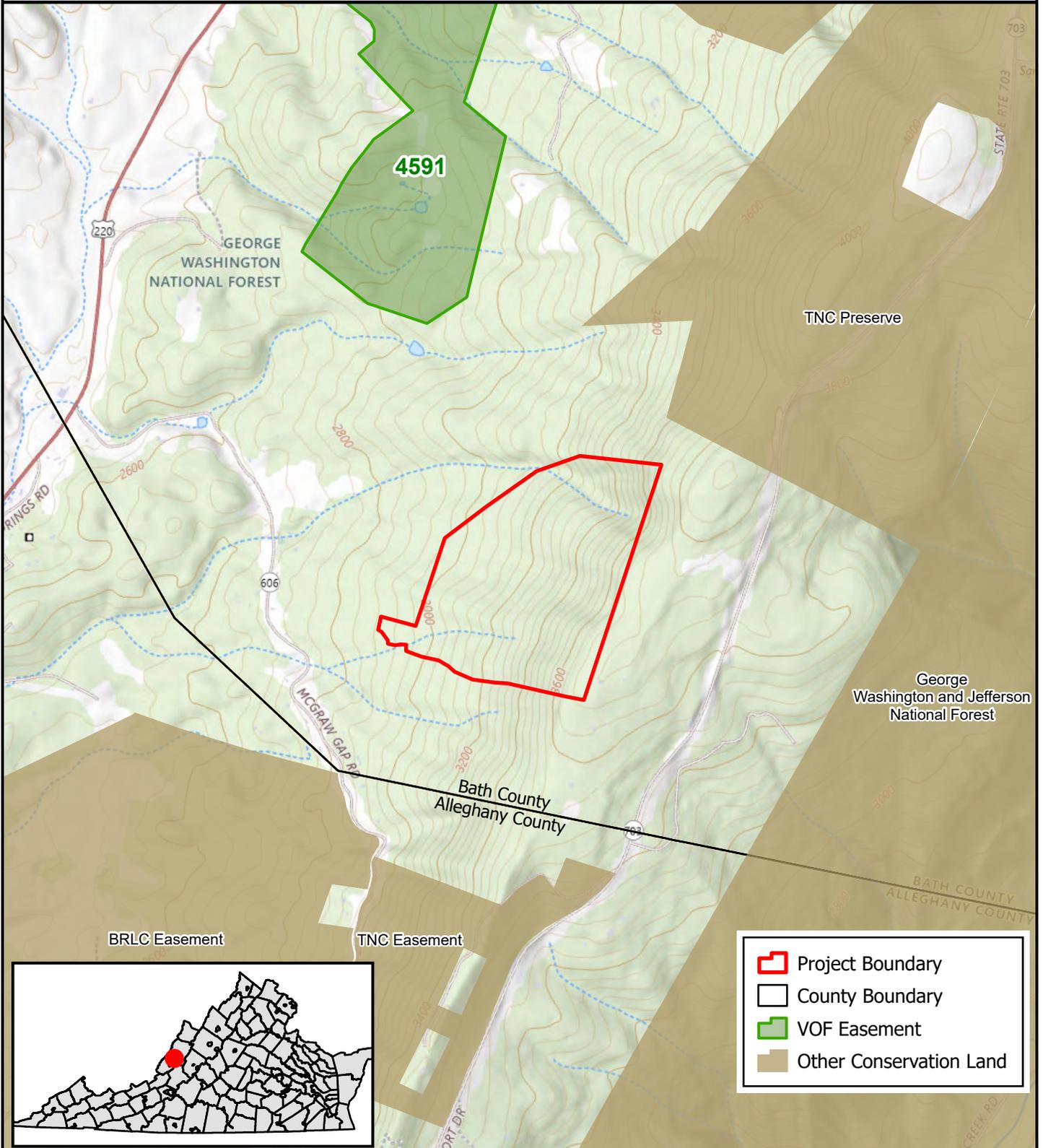
Comprehensive Plan
Has the locality confirmed the project is in compliance with the comprehensive plan? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO DETAILS: Confirmation from locality to be obtained if grant award is made.

Public Infrastructure Information	Conflicts with published plans	Yes	No
Roads:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utilities:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes: To be determined if grant award is made.			

Revision Date 03/04/2025

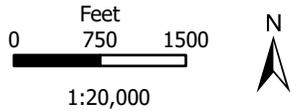
Location

Warm Springs Mountain Addition



- Project Boundary
- County Boundary
- VOF Easement
- Other Conservation Land

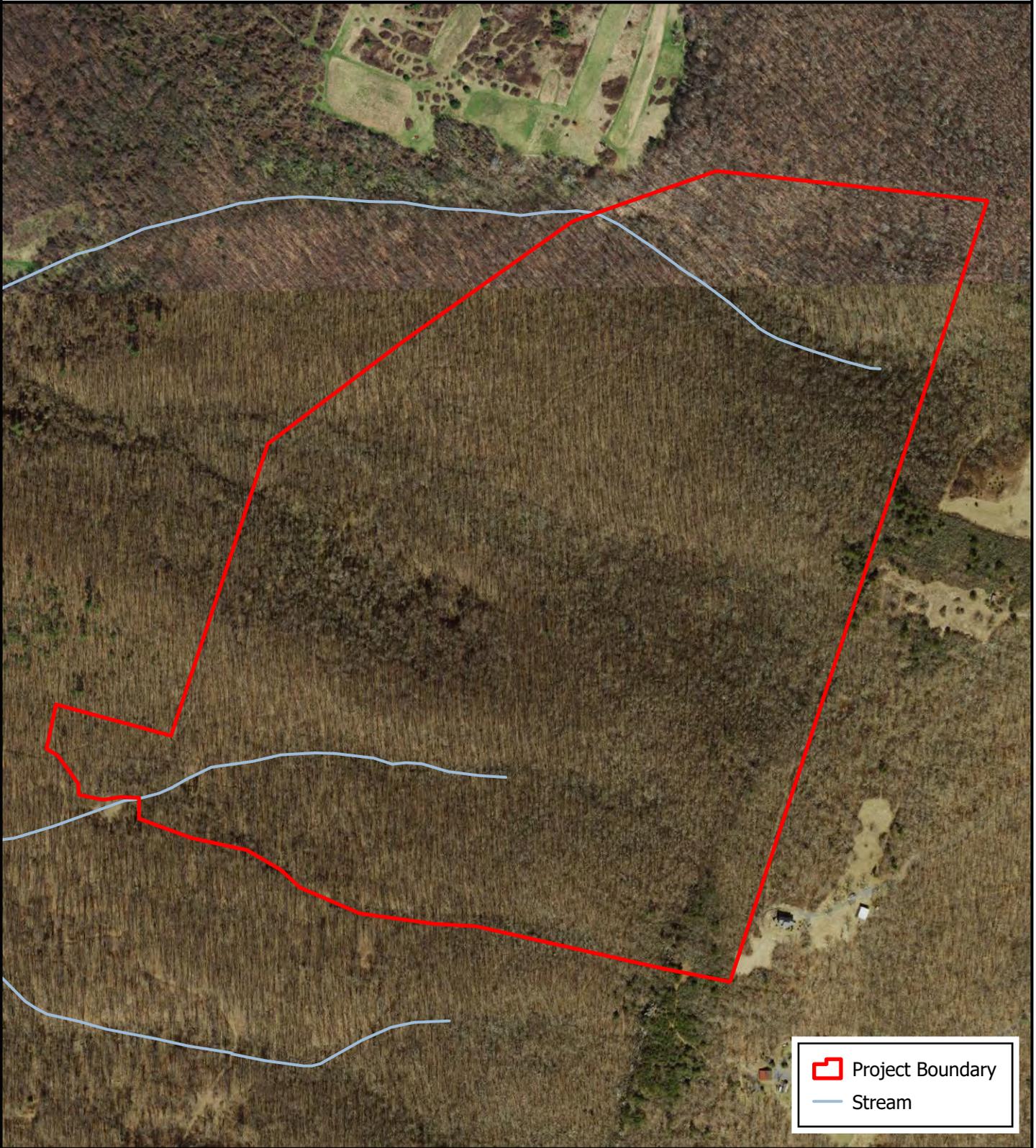
Bath County
134.0 ± Acres



Map created: 2/19/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert
Source data: USGS Topo Quad Names: Falling Spring, Healing Springs; County Boundaries - US Census Bureau; Other Conservation Land - VA DCR; all else - VOF.

Aerial Imagery

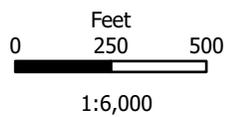
Warm Springs Mountain Addition



 Project Boundary
 Stream

Bath County

134.0 ± Acres



Map created: 2/19/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

Source data: Aerial Imagery - VGIN/VBMP acquired 4/15/2022, 2/28/2023;
Rivers/Streams - USGS-NHD; all else - VOF.



PROJECT SUMMARY

Virginia Institute for Invertebrates

Spineless Cave Preserve

Locality: Giles County

Acres: 222.21

Board Meeting: 3/12/2026

Staff Lead: Emily White

Region: Western

VOF Project # TBD

VOF Instrument # TBD

VOF Property # TBD

VOF Application # 26-03-06

Project Description/Property Features

The Virginia Institute for Invertebrates (VII) seeks to acquire a 222.21-acre tract rich in karst features and home to rare plants and unique animals, including a new species of millipede, a new genus of spider, and a rare cave-dwelling spider. The mission of VII is to monitor invertebrate populations throughout Virginia in perpetuity and to research and protect their diverse ways of life. The acquisition of this property will allow the newly-formed institute to begin that mission while permanently protecting this site as a Department of Conservation & Recreation Natural Heritage Program Natural Area Preserve.

Project Type

- Charitable Contribution
- Partial Purchase of Open-Space Easement
- Fee Simple Acquisition
- Protection of Owned Land
- Other: _____

Instrument Type

- Deed of Open-Space Easement
- Deed of Dedication to Open Space
- Deed of Conveyance/Acquisition
- Other: Deed of Dedication as Natural Area Preserve

Land Protection Agent

- VOF
- Other State Agency: Department of Conservation & Recreation, Natural Heritage
- Locality: _____
- Other: _____

Funding Source & Amount

- VOF Grant Program(s): FCF
Amount Requested: \$700,131.00
- Tax Benefits (Sought by Applicant)
- External Grant Program(s): _____
Amount Requested/Secured: \$ _____
- Not Applicable

Staff Recommendation

Conservation Project:

- Approve project as presented.
- Approve project, contingent upon satisfaction of the following: _____
- Approve project, final VOF easement terms to be approved at subsequent Board of Trustees Meeting.

Conservation Funding:

- Not applicable
- Approve requested funding: \$700,131.00
- Approve recommended funding: \$ _____
- Approved administratively, PTF-Easement Assistance: \$ _____

Notes: N/A

Conservation Purposes

Forestral Use:

- The property is entirely wooded with predominant rankings of Very High or Outstanding Forest Conservation Value (FCV4 or FCV5) through the Virginia Department of Forestry's Forest Conservation Value model, which is a tool used to strategically identify the highest priority forestland for conservation in Virginia. The intent is to maximize the efficiency of limited resources by focusing conservation efforts on the highest quality, most productive, and most vulnerable forestland statewide.

Natural Habitat and Biological Diversity:

- A species identified by the Department of Conservation & Recreation Natural Heritage Program as imperiled has been found on the site.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identifies the property as containing habitat essential for the success of the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*).
- The property is located within an area categorized in The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Resilient and Connected Landscapes Project as Resilient as well as a Climate Corridor, indicating that the area contains both complex landscapes (with a "wide array of micro-climates") and connected landscapes ("allowing species to move and disperse"). According to TNC, resilient sites are those in which conservation actions have the best chance of succeeding in the long term.

Scenic/Open Space:

- The property lies within one mile of the scenic New River and comprises a significant portion of the New River viewshed.
- Adjacent to another conserved property, protecting this property will enlarge the area of land that will never be disturbed by development.

Outdoor Recreation, Education, or Research:

- The property will serve as an invertebrate population monitoring location for the Ridge and Valley physiographic province as well as a regional field site for natural history work.

Project Details

The Governing Document: *The primary terms contained in the deed or instrument are listed below in a condensed form. The complete terms, conditions, and restrictions are in the recorded deed.*

1. Divisions permitted: 0 Maximum Properties: 1

2. Impervious Coverage Limitations: Total impervious coverage shall be less than 0.25 % of the total property including that of both existing and future improvements.

3. Buildings and Structures:

The allowance for any buildings and structures will be determined by the Department of Conservation & Recreation, which will hold the easement on the property. Natural Area Preserves typically allow minimal, if any, buildings and structures.

4. Management of Forest:

The Forest CORE Fund Forest Management Provision states:

No timbering shall be permitted other than for the following purposes:

- i) Cutting of trees for maintenance of existing cleared areas used for parking, roads, utilities, buildings, and structures allowed by deed terms;
- ii) Cutting of trees for creation and maintenance of trails;
- iii) Cutting of trees, with prior written approval of Grantee for wildlife habitat management, for the protection or enhancement of the natural heritage resources, for conversion of monoculture plantations to natural forest conditions, which approval or disapproval shall take into consideration the ecological importance of tree cover and avoidance of forest fragmentation;
- iv) Removal of trees posing an imminent hazard to the health or safety of persons or to property;
- v) Removal of invasive trees or other invasive species or
- vi) Removal of trees that are diseased, storm-damaged, or have died naturally.

In general, the forest shall be maintained in its natural state. Forest management practices conducted shall comply with an approved forest stewardship plan with the intent of restoring the ecological health and function of the forest and such practices may not be employed primarily for commercial purposes.

Best Management Practices (BMPs), as defined by the Virginia Department of Forestry, shall be used to control erosion and protect water quality when any allowable forest management activity is undertaken, such as may be required for (iii), (v), or (vi) above. A plan shall be submitted for approval no later than fourteen days before the proposed date of activity, and such plan must be consistent with the terms of the easement on the property. The plan shall describe the BMPs to be used in sufficient detail to ensure that water quality will be protected.

5. Water Quality Protection Areas: N/A

6. Unique Deed Provisions: N/A

7. Public Access: NO YES

8. Sign Required: NO YES

9. Consolidation of Tax Parcels: NO YES TBD

Summarize: To be determined should funding be awarded.

Further Discussion
N/A

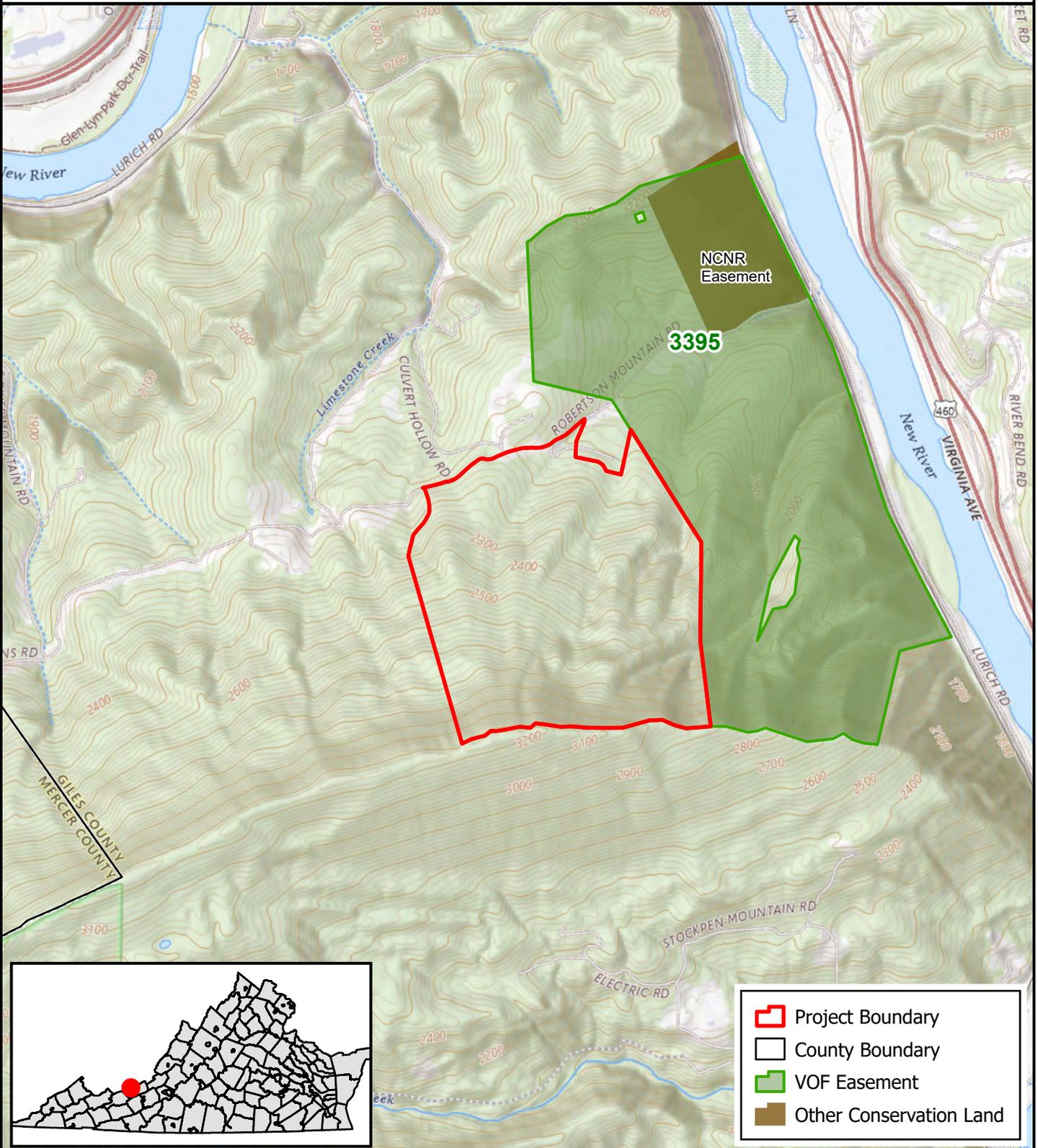
Comprehensive Plan
Has the locality confirmed the project is in compliance with the comprehensive plan? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO DETAILS: Confirmation from locality to be obtained if grant award is made.

Public Infrastructure Information	Conflicts with published plans	Yes	No
Roads:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rail:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utilities:		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes: To be determined if grant award is made.			

Revision Date 03/04/2025

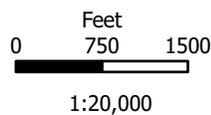
Location

Spineless Cave Preserve



Giles County

222.21 ± Acres

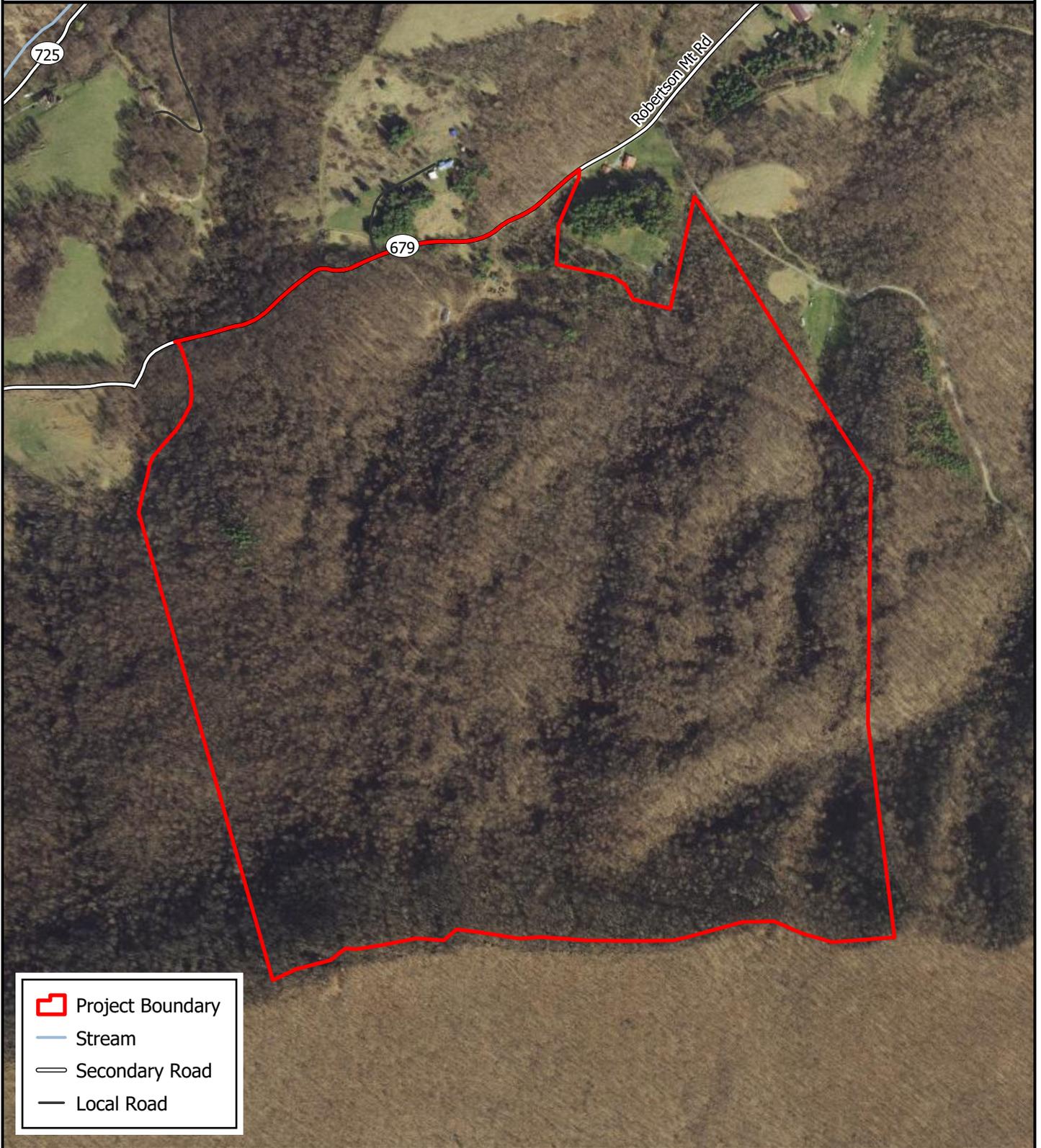


Map created: 2/23/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert

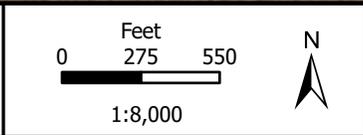
Source data: USGS Topo Quad Names: Narrows, Peterstown; County Boundaries - US Census Bureau/VOF; Other Conservation Land - VA DCR; all else - VOF.

Aerial Imagery

Spineless Cave Preserve



Giles County
222.21 ± Acres



Map created: 2/23/2026 by Emma Weaver
Projection: NAD 1983 2011 Virginia Lambert
Source data: Aerial Imagery - VGIN/VBMP acquired 3/6/2023;
Rivers/Streams - USGS-NHD; Roads - VDOT; all else - VOF.