



# Quick facts: Wetlands and the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund

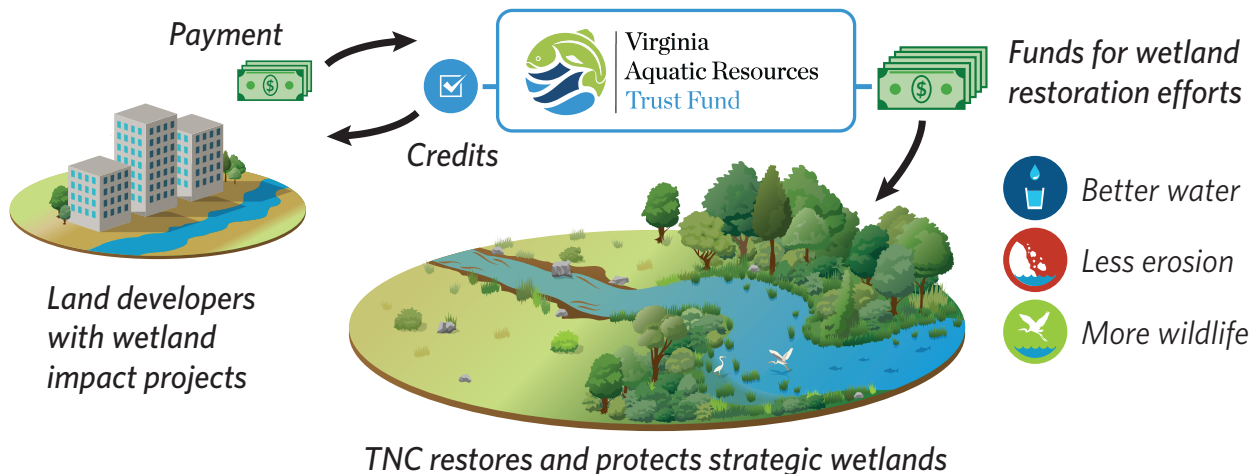
**Protecting lands and waters is key to our quality of life. In service of its mission, The Nature Conservancy restores and preserves wetlands across Virginia to safeguard against floods, purify water sources and improve wildlife habitat.**

## Making an important difference

Nearly half of Virginia’s wetlands have been lost since the 1600s, but TNC is making a positive difference now for future generations. Through our Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (VARTF), we compensate for wetlands lost to development by restoring and preserving others in ecologically important places.

## How do we do this?

When land is being developed in a way that impacts wetlands, a permit is required. State and federal agencies issuing those permits require the impacts to be offset. One way to meet this requirement is to purchase replacement credits from VARTF for each acre that is impacted. TNC uses purchase proceeds to construct restoration projects and protect lands in strategic places. Through this credit-based system TNC plays a crucial role for the community and the environment by fostering an ecological balance.



## An ongoing effort towards a legacy of restoration

To date, The Nature Conservancy has restored and protected thousands of acres throughout Virginia but there is much important work still to do. Our Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund makes a lasting impact, bringing financial benefits to landowners and enhancing habitat for all. (Below: Restoring the original topography of Virginia’s natural habitats to promote a better, healthier ecology)



Before: Wet, unusable farm field



Construction of wetland site



After: Thriving, forested wetland habitat

# Existing Wetland Restoration Projects

Since 1995 The Nature Conservancy has used funds through the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund to improve wetland habitats across the state. Each site provides ecological benefits to the local area.

Restoration photos (before and after)



## **Level Ponds, Accomack County, VA**

### **Wetland Restoration and Preservation in the Chesapeake Bay**

In 2010 TNC purchased this 49-acre tract impacted by centuries of deforestation and draining; about 25 acres of forest and wetland on the site had been converted and drained into open field. A year-long restoration project began in 2012 with regrading, field drains removed and ditches plugged so the site's hydrology would allow for wetland restoration. Restoring native vegetation involved planting 7,000 trees, spreading native seed and a program of invasive species control. As a result of the project, a re-established native wetland and forest now contributes again to the natural beauty and functioning of Virginia's Eastern Shore ecosystems.



## **Mattaponi River—Gwathmey, King William County, VA**

### **From an Abandoned Field to a Vibrant, Functioning Ecosystem**

Gwathmey was a 200-acre abandoned agricultural field whose wetlands had been drained through the construction of field ditches. These ditches increased erosion that moved excessive sediment into the Chesapeake Bay. TNC purchased a conservation easement on this privately-owned property in 2004, and VARTF began restoration efforts in 2006. Filling in field ditches, creating seasonal ponds and planting more than 54,000 trees helped to re-establish 70 acres of wetlands and preserve 67 acres of existing wetlands and upland buffers. This project has improved the local area's wildlife habitat, water quality and flood storage.



## **Meadow Creek, Charlottesville, VA**

### **Stream and Wetland Restoration in the City of Charlottesville**

The 72-acre Meadow Creek project addresses sedimentation, stream bank erosion and lack of forested buffers that threatened the health of Meadow Creek and the Rivanna River—a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Construction occurred in 2012-2013. The unstable channel was improved to create stable meanders and reduce the height of streambanks. Rock and log structures were installed in the stream to provide bank stability and prevent scour, while riffles and pools were created to provide healthy habitat for aquatic insects and fish. The floodplain and wetlands, key components of the stream system, were also enhanced, and more than 15,000 trees and shrubs were planted to restore native forest habitat and enhance stream stability. The project continues to provide opportunities for education and engagement. Since 2013, hundreds of volunteers have assisted with the removal of several tons of trash from the project corridor. In addition, University of Virginia and countless student groups have used the project as a living classroom and research site.



Virginia  
Aquatic Resources  
Trust Fund