

NATURE

VIRGINIA

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Locke Ogens © Kyle LaFerriere

Vision and Generosity

I am deeply gratified that The Nature Conservancy has been able to count on supporters like you, especially during this past year of immense challenges. You propelled us toward some big conservation victories that would be remarkable at any time. Topping the list is the work of our Allegheny Highlands team, who helped landowner Fitz Gary realize his vision for the future of his property. And thanks to Mr. Gary's generous land donation, TNC acquired 1,800 acres of extraordinarily diverse mountain habitat and made exceptional progress toward our larger goal of creating a vast forest corridor that links national forests in Virginia and West Virginia. Working with our many partners and supporters, we can make all the difference in the world. Thank you for helping us foster a future for people and nature to thrive together.

Locke Ogens, Virginia Director



Stream flowing below cave entrance on donated property © Daniel White/TNC

Far Out!

Protected corridor expands in Allegheny Highlands

"We were young hippies learning to live back in the sticks," says Fitz Gary, describing life with his first love in a remote corner of Highland County during the 1970s. For Gary, venturing into the Blue Grass valley for the first time was "almost as overwhelming as driving into Yosemite—that same quiet awe." He purchased property there in 1972 and, in late 2019, finalized a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy to protect the entire 1,839 acres. Now, Gary has donated outright all but 15 acres of the diverse habitat, which ranges from cave systems to beaver meadows. The project also helps connect a mosaic of surrounding conservation areas, including two national forests. Learn more about the project's impact at nature.org/protectingalleghenyhighlands.

Highlights of the Year

It's often said that a crisis doesn't build character; it reveals it. Despite the anxious times we all faced in 2020, our TNC supporters showed remarkable resilience, as well as true dedication to our mission. Review some of the top conservation highlights you made possible during the past year, and download our 2020 *Virginia Impact Report* (available in English and Spanish) at nature.org/virginia.



Bay scallop in restored eelgrass habitat © Jay Fleming

Transportation Produces Half of the Carbon Dioxide Pollution in Virginia — More Than Any Other Sector



29% of carbon dioxide pollution in VA is from the electricity sector

37% of carbon dioxide pollution in VA is from personal vehicles alone

Virginia needs policies to

Reduce personal vehicle miles traveled

Investing in more convenient, reliable public transit and access to safer biking and walking options will lower emissions, create job opportunities, and improve public health.

Transition quickly to electric vehicles

Powering an electric vehicle creates only 1/3 the carbon dioxide emissions of an average gas-powered one.

Infographic Sources: US Energy Information Administration, US EPA, Union of Concerned Scientists

Electrifying Journeys

Reducing carbon pollution from personal vehicles

No one enjoys sitting in traffic. No one likes smog or breathing polluted air. And no one wants to see climate change become an even greater threat to our communities. But all those cars and trucks you see on the road—did you know they are the single largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in Virginia? In fact, personal vehicles are responsible for 37% of Virginia's carbon pollution, far outpacing the entire power sector. Therefore, any hope of avoiding the worst impacts of climate change depends on reducing carbon emissions from the transportation sector. Fortunately, two achievable solutions are available to Virginia right now: adopting the Clean Cars Standard and joining the Transportation and Climate Initiative. The Nature Conservancy is supporting these policies, which can alleviate traffic congestion, bring Virginians more and better choices for getting around, and even create economic growth. Learn more about how we're tackling climate change at nature.org/vaclimate.

Restoring Wetlands and Streams for 25 Years

"Our Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund has conserved more than 20,000 acres, nearly half of which is now public land," says program director Karen Johnson, summing up the program's 25-year record of success. To learn more about the trust fund's accomplishments, read "In Water We Trust" at nature.org/vatrustfundhistory.



Vandell Preserve © Daniel White/TNC

NATURE VIRGINIA

Voorhees Welcomes You



Jeff Wright at Voorhees Preserve © Kyle LaFerriere

A new and improved Voorhees Nature Preserve is now open to visitors year-round, thanks to the generous support and on-the-ground leadership of volunteer Jeff Wright. Working with the Virginia stewardship team, Wright spearheaded the design and construction of a new parking area, entrance trail and spur overlooking scenic beaver ponds. Wright and his wife, Kathy, also helped fund the project. Learn more about visiting this Rappahannock River preserve at nature.org/voorhees.

Fighting Floods with Forests



Forest wetlands in Virginia Beach © Byron Jorjorian

New research conducted by scientists from Virginia Tech with support from The Nature Conservancy is informing the City of Virginia Beach's strategic use of nature-based solutions that are designed to reduce the risk of recurrent flooding. The study is the first to quantify the magnitude of water storage and use that occurs because of the city's forest cover. The next study phase will apply this data to the city's stormwater management models and forest conservation plans.