



# Sunken Meadow Open House

February 2026

**VIRGINIA**  
STREAM AND WETLAND  
MITIGATION PROGRAM

The Nature  
Conservancy   
Protecting nature. Preserving life.

The Nature  
Conservancy



STREAM AND WETLAND MITIGATION PROGRAM

Helping restore Virginia's wetlands and streams through strategic large-scale conservation.

# MARVEL

LANDSCAPE, ARCHITECTURE, URBAN  
PLANNING



**Design Everywhere for Everyone**

# PROJECT TIMELINE





MARVEL



# Ecology & History

## WILDLIFE, WATER & FLOODING

- Migrating eels, deer, wild turkey, possums, ducks, geese, swans, fish, frogs
- Debris from the hurricanes present on site
- Memory of frequent flooding
- Artesian wells on property
- Many were surprised by the pre-dam historical maps that illustrate stream networks

## COMMON QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

- Why conduct restoration on existing ecology?
- What are the benefits?
- What is the restoration process post dam removal?
- Will it look like Davey's drained pond?



# Access & Ownership

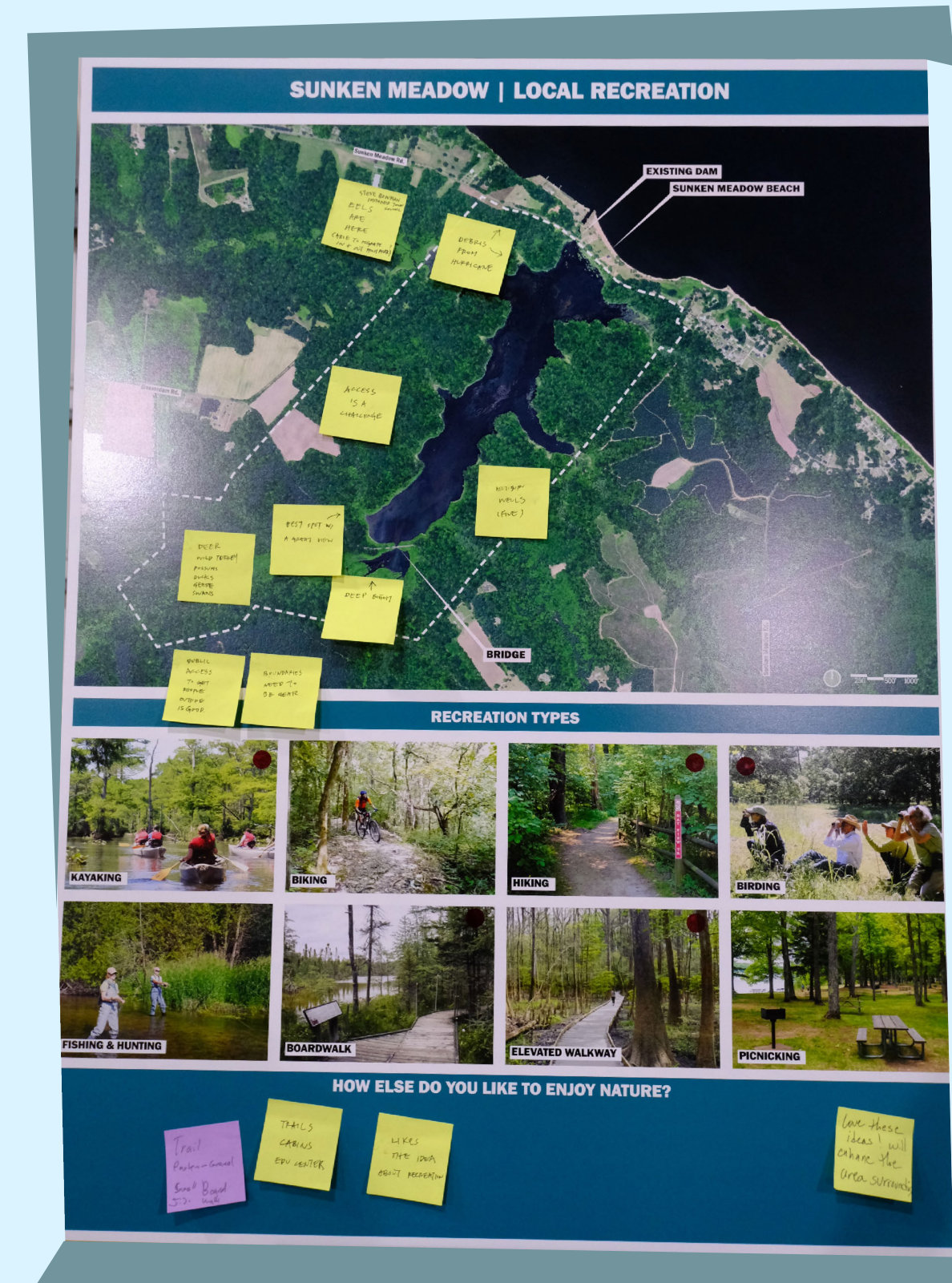
## STRONG INTEREST IN PUBLIC ACCESS

Interest in creating public spaces for recreation:

- Trail network & parking
- Access to water (boardwalks, fishing)
- River viewshed
- Education center
- Cabins

## COMMON QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

- No place for public parking
- Boundary between adjacent private properties is not clear
- Unclear who will have access to the site



# TNC Motivation & Intent

## COMMON QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

- Why did TNC buy the property?
- Why does TNC want to remove the dam?
- What's TNC's plan?
- Is TNC is profiting from Wetland Credits?
- Who's benefiting from this project?

## OWNERSHIP AFTER TNC RESTORATION

- Who will own the land?
- Will they be able to develop?
- How will it be conserved?

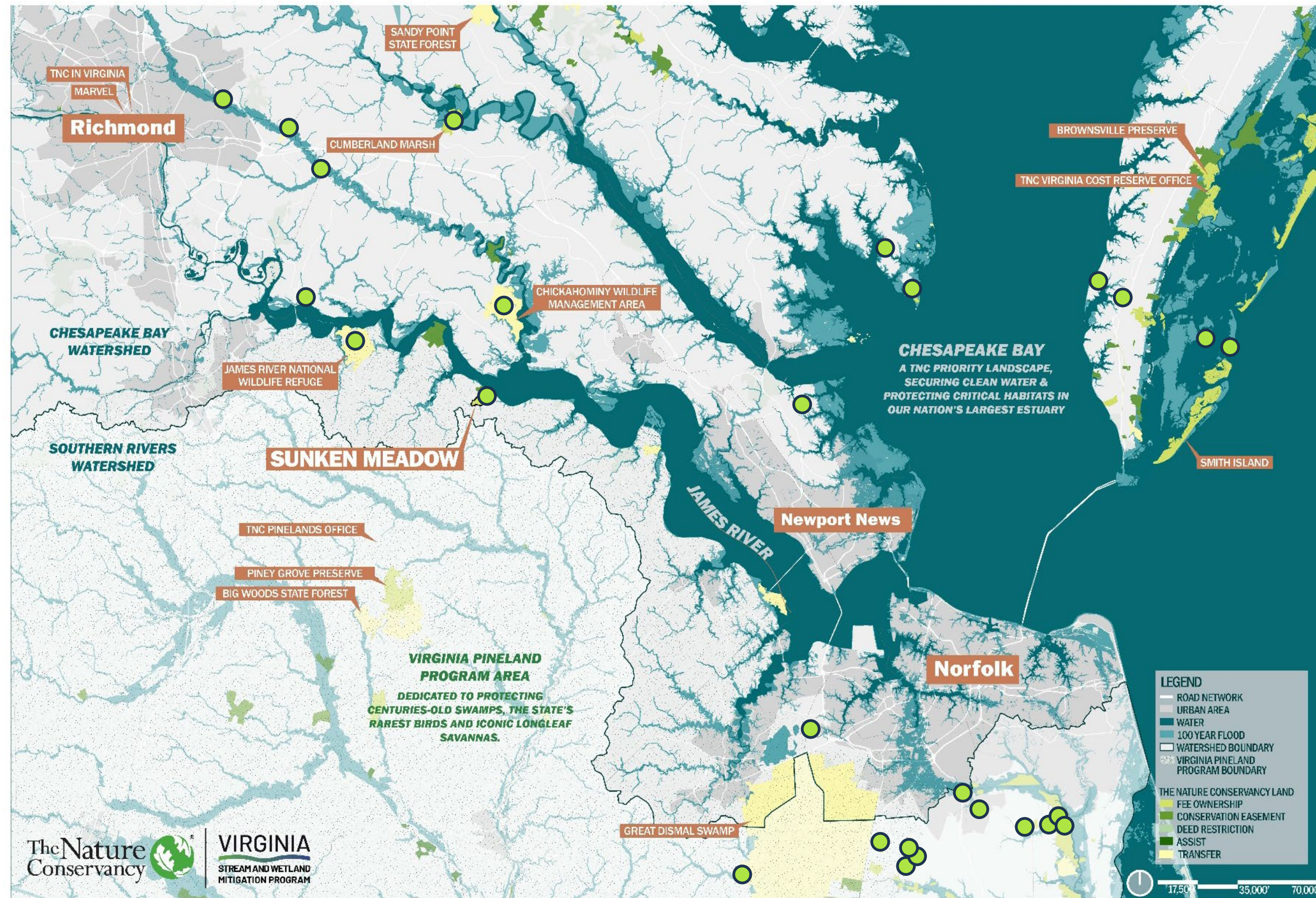


# THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

- 01. Established in 1951
- 02. Science based – 1,000+ scientists
- 03. All 50 states, over 80 countries
- 04. Protection of more than 20 million lands and waters in the U.S.



# TNC Virginia



# Virginia Stream and Wetland Mitigation Program

- Well established ILF program in Virginia
- Documented history of success
- Leader and model program
- Conservation benefits are target and highlight of the program



# MITIGATION HOW IT WORKS

Federal and state laws protect waters of the US and the Commonwealth

Impacts to waters (wetlands and streams) are regulated and must be permitted

Compensatory mitigation offsets the impacts to our lands and waters from development.

TNC is NOT a regulatory agency

```
graph TD; A[Avoid Impacts] --> B[Minimize Impacts]; B --> C[Compensate for Impacts];
```

**Avoid  
Impacts**

**Minimize  
Impacts**

**Compensate  
for Impacts**

# MITIGATION NOW WORKS



*Impacts through development*



*Compensation through restoration*

**Mitigation bank**

**In-lieu fee programs**

**Permittee responsible**

**SWMP**  
←

ILF – funds and mitigation requirements from multiple projects pooled together and used to implement larger, significant projects.

# MITIGATION & TNC

TNC involvement with SWMP is a mechanism to direct mitigation to ecologically important areas

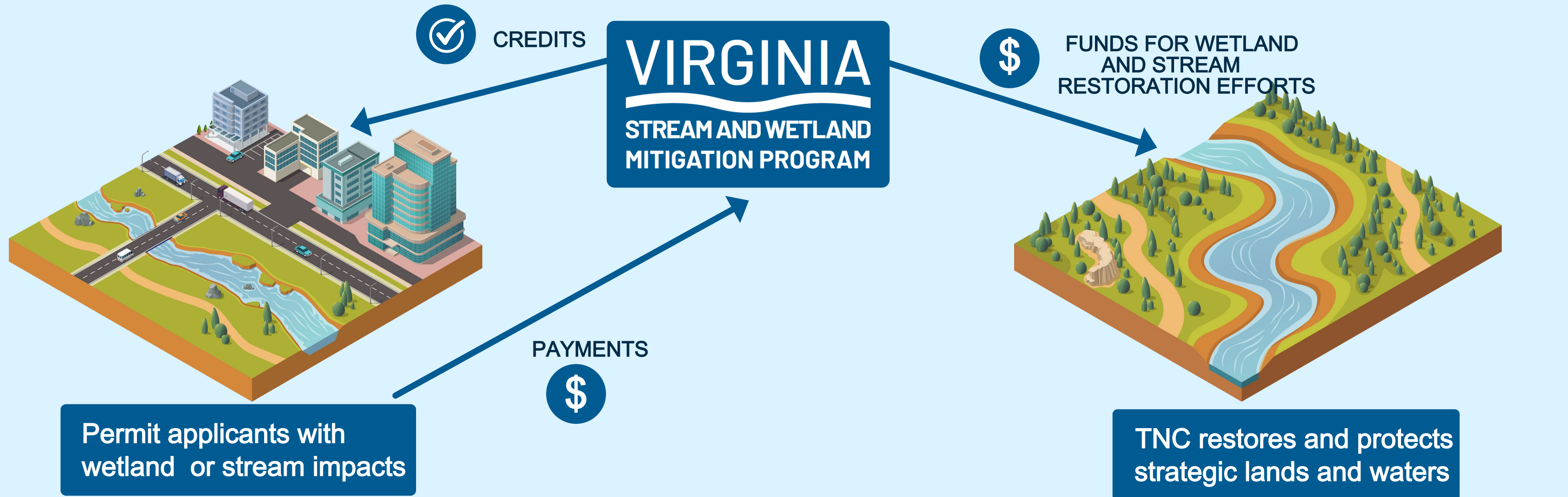
## High leverage projects that

- Advance conservation objectives
- Serve as models for landscape-scale mitigation
- Advance the practice of compensatory mitigation

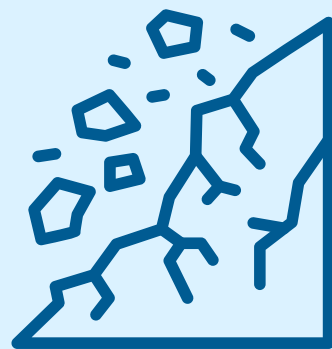
As a leader in mitigation, TNC is uniquely positioned to work with partners to strengthen mitigation and improve conservation outcomes.



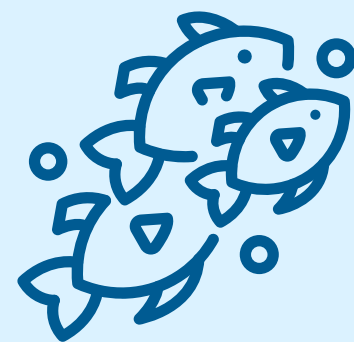
# A SUCCESSFUL MODEL



**BETTER  
WATER**



**LESS  
EROSION**

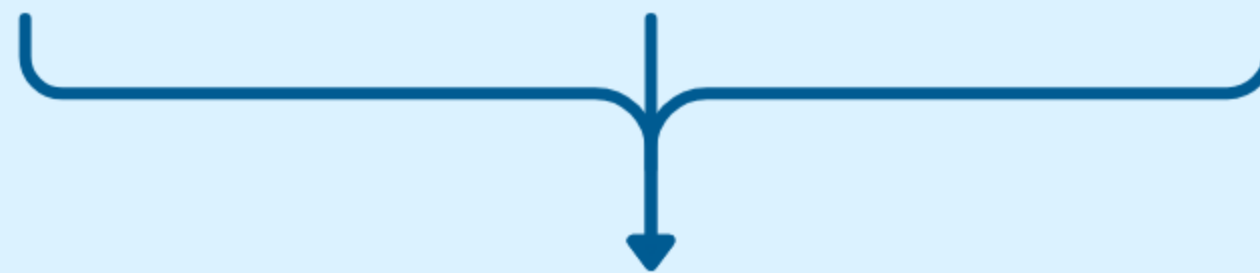


**MORE  
WILDLIFE**

# AGENCY INVOLVEMENT



US Army Corps  
of Engineers



**VIRGINIA**  
STREAM AND WETLAND  
MITIGATION PROGRAM



# SWAMP PROJECT

## SWAMP PROJECTS

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# OUR CONSERVATION IMPACT In Virginia

**150+** Conservation projects  
pursued statewide



**22,000 Acres** including 10,000  
acres of parks and other public land



**21 Miles**  
of streams restored



**\$90M+** Invested  
in Virginia's conservation efforts



**1500 Acres**  
of wetlands and buffers restored



Habitats of **200+** rare and  
at-risk species protected



PRESERVATION  
& RESTORATION

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720  
ACRES

RESTORED

---

4,350+  
ACRES

PRESERVED





PRESERVATION  
& RESTORATION

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92,000+  
LINEAR  
FEET

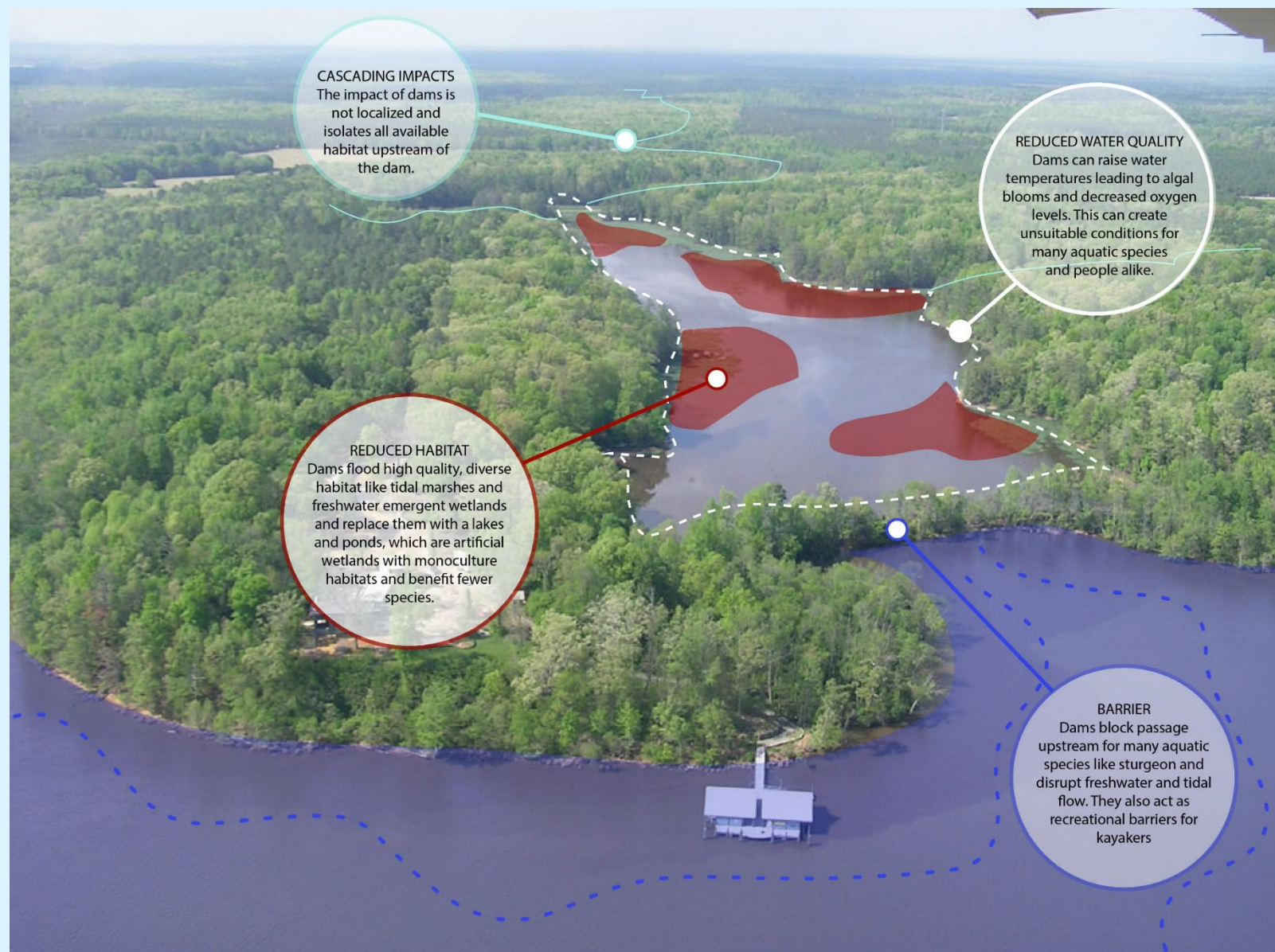
OF WATERWAYS  
RESTORED  
OR ENHANCED

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# Case Study: VCU Rice Rivers Center



# PROCESS OVERVIEW

## Credit Transaction

Funds received.

Creates opportunity and responsibility to develop new restoration projects.

## Project Development

Guided by TNC science.

Focus on strategic, high-priority locations.

## Project Approvals

Reviewed by Conservation and Grant Review. Committees, and TNC Board.

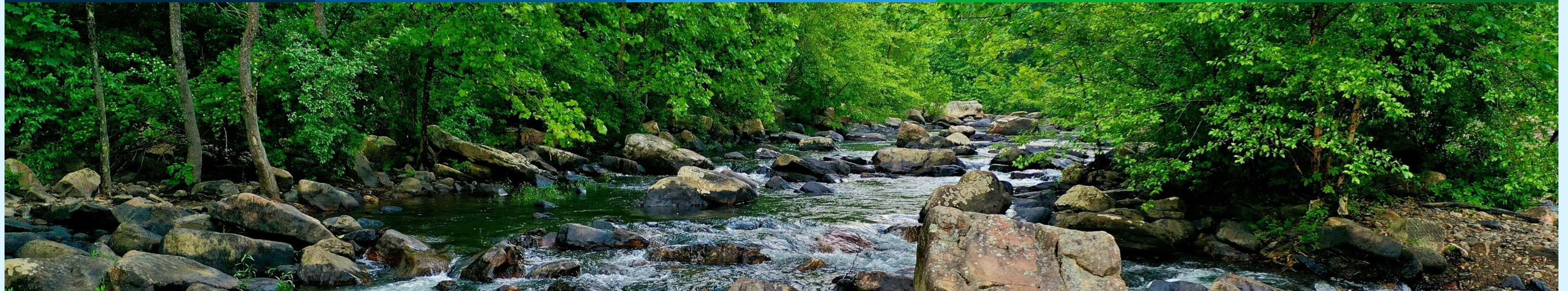
Coordinated with Corps and DEQ for plan approval and funding.

## Project Monitoring

Restoration success monitoring for 10 years.

## Long-term Commitment

Sites are protected through easements or stewardship on TNC preserves.

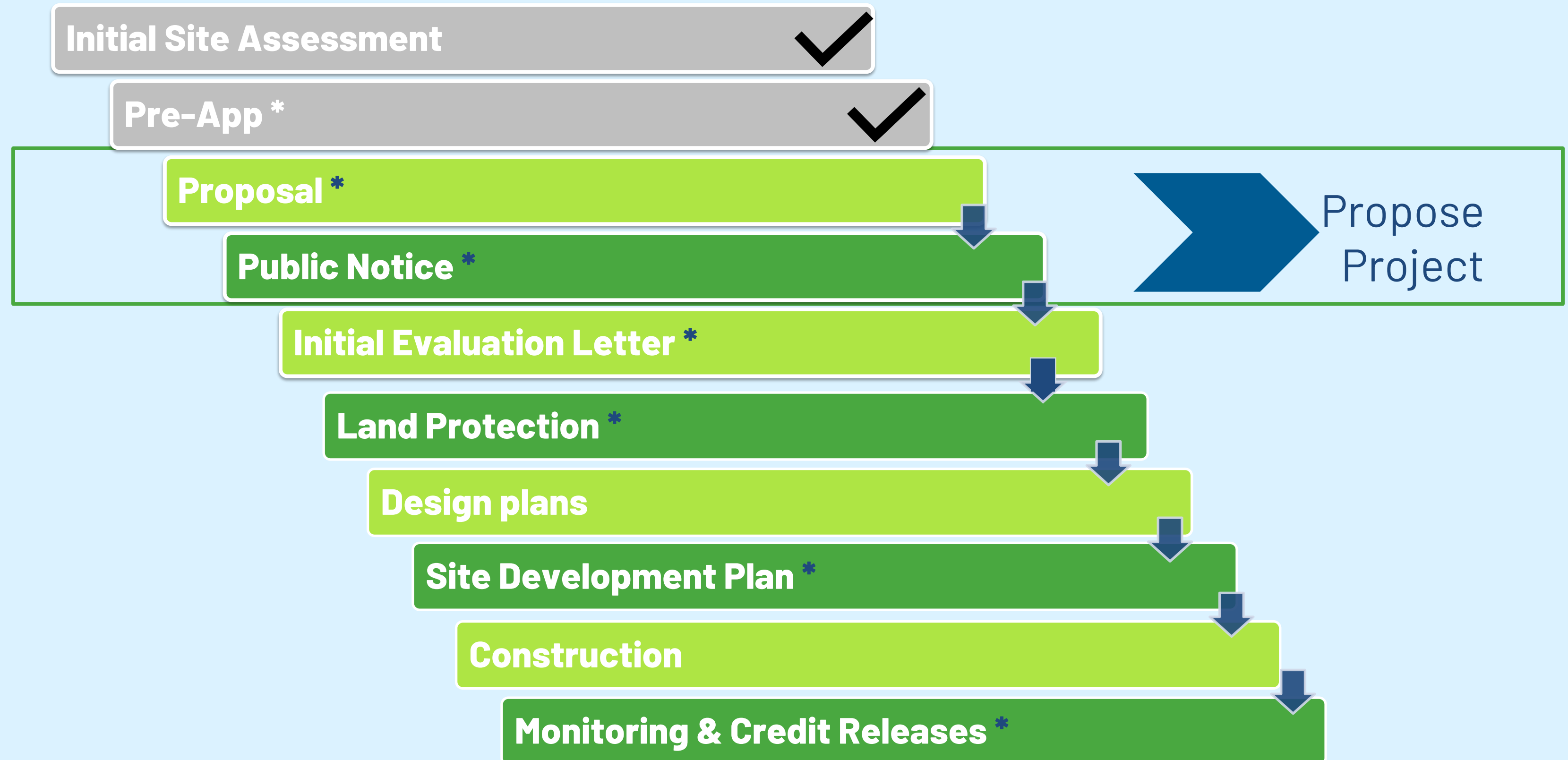


# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



\* Indicates Agency Coordination and Approval

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# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Initial Site Assessment ✓

Pre-App\* ✓

Proposal\* ✓

Public Notice\* ✓

Initial Evaluation Letter\*

Land Protection\*

Design plans

Site Development Plan\*

Construction

Monitoring & Credit Releases\*

Project  
Development

\* Indicates Agency Coordination and Approval

# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Initial Site Assessment ✓

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Site Development Plan\* ✓

Project  
Implementation



Construction

Monitoring & Credit Releases\*



\* Indicates Agency Coordination and Approval

# WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- Land trusts
- Cities and counties
- Parks departments
- Local interests
- Watershed groups
- Federal agencies
- State agencies



# 10,000+ acres Public Lands

- 5 Natural Area Preserves
- 4 Deed of Dedication



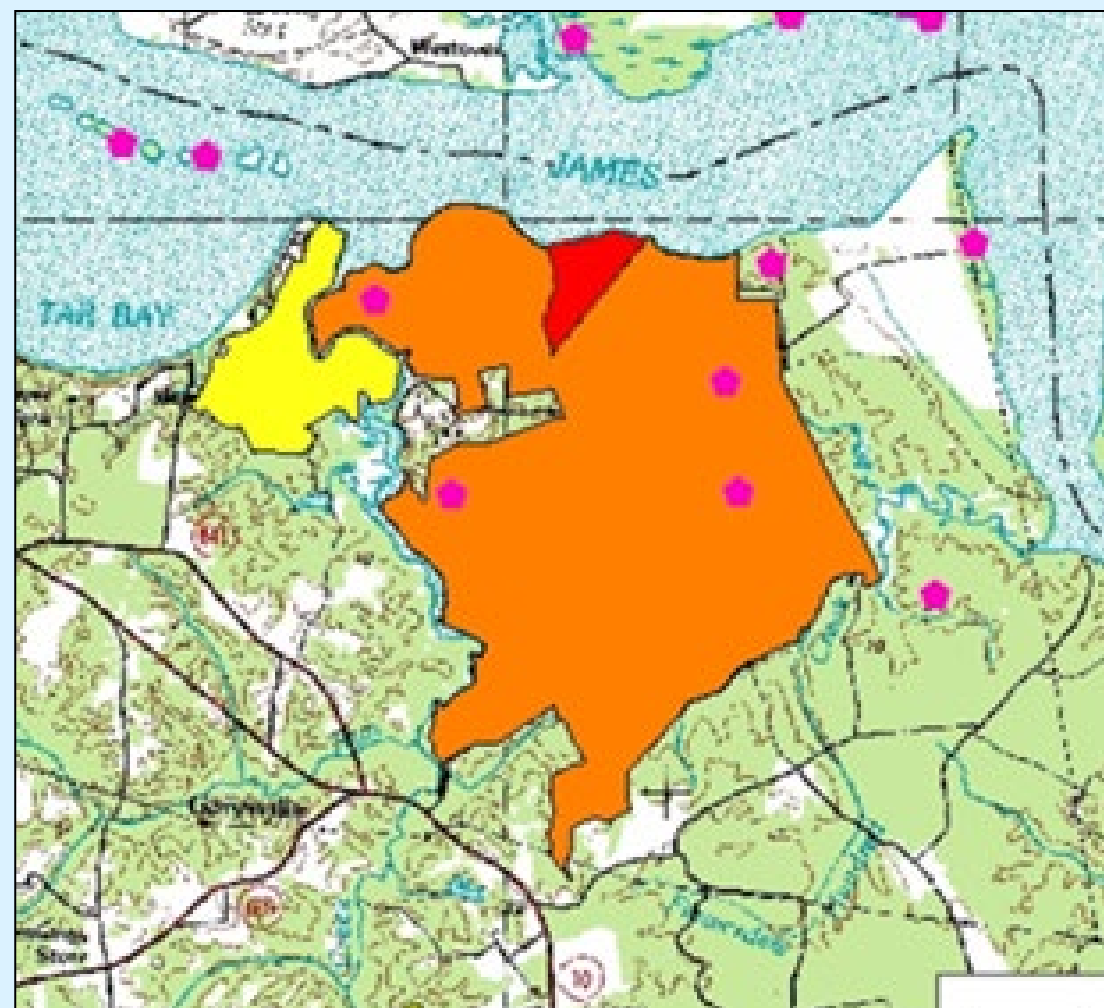
- 2 acquisition of NWR lands
- 2 funded FWS easement acquisition



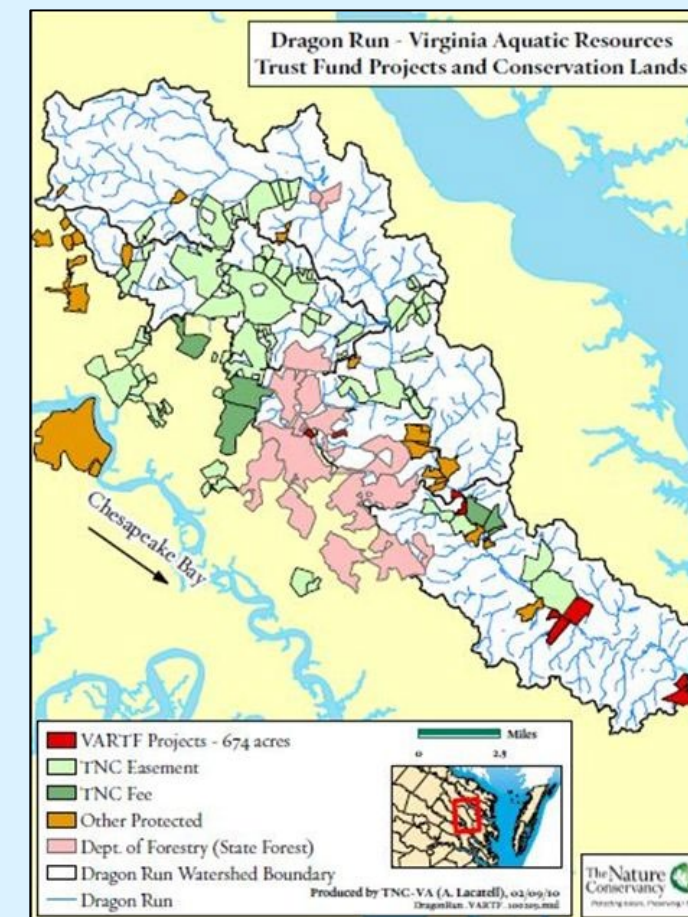
- 5 Transferred to DOF



- 2 sites planned for transfer to DGIF
- 1 funded easement co-held by DGIF



- 2 sites sold to NPS for inclusion in Parkway
- 1 project planned for transfer upon completion of restoration

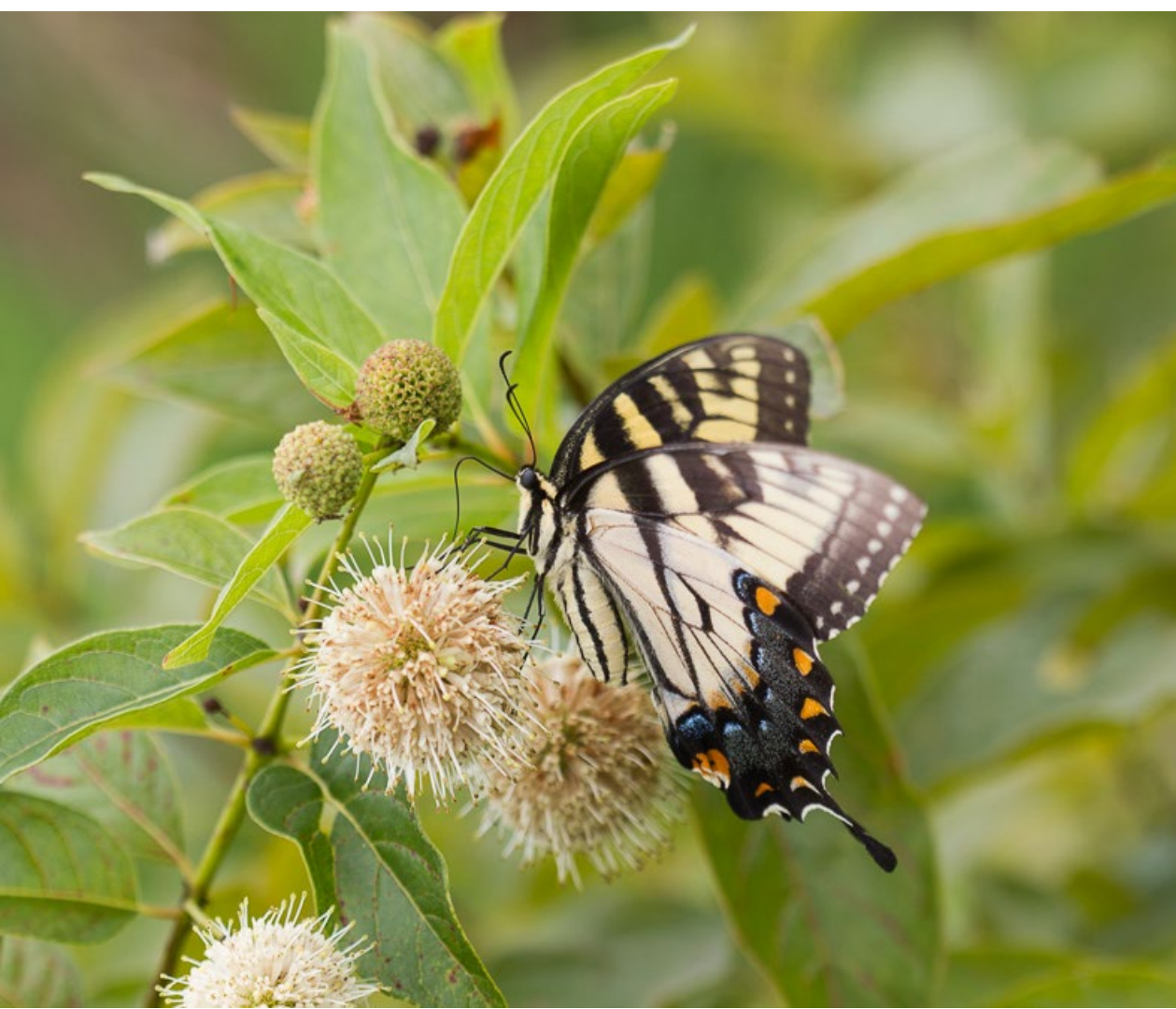




# ADDED BENEFITS

- Volunteer opportunities
- Educational tours
- Demonstration sites
- Recreation and expansion of public lands
- Research and university partnerships
- Innovative practices





# SWMP Resources



### Looking to the Future

As Virginia continues to grow, it's more critical than ever to balance economic development and environmental protection. Over the next decade, SWMP will:

- Expand efforts to restore more wetlands and streams
- Reconnect fragmented habitats to improve biodiversity
- Improve and restore habitat for species at risk
- Strengthen climate resilience in Virginia's watersheds
- Expand partnerships and community engagement with stream and wetland restoration projects in Virginia

## 30 YEARS OF WETLAND & STREAM RESTORATION AND IMPACT

Protecting Nature. Restoring Vital Habitats. Ensuring a Thriving Future.

JULY 2025

**VIRGINIA**  
STREAM AND WETLAND  
MITIGATION PROGRAM

**The Nature Conservancy**

**Get Involved**  
SWMP's work is making a difference, and you can be part of it.

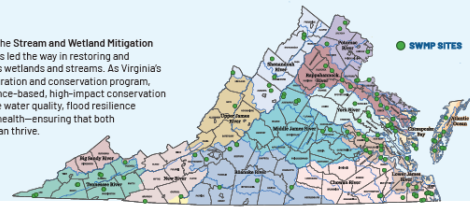
[nature.org/SWMP](https://nature.org/SWMP)

The Nature Conservancy in Virginia  
@nature\_va  
The Nature Conservancy Virginia

Scan the QR code for more information



[joyqr.com/I/NZWY5](https://joyqr.com/I/NZWY5)



### Why Does This Matter?

SWMP-sponsored projects deliver tangible, lasting benefits for Virginia's ecosystems, landowners, policymakers, conservation groups and the public:

- Healthier Watersheds** - Restored streams and wetlands filter pollutants, improve water quality and replenish groundwater supplies.
- Wildlife Habitats** - Wetlands and streams provide essential nesting, breeding and foraging areas for birds, fish, amphibians, insects, plants and countless other native species.
- Stronger Communities** - Healthy wetlands and restored streams reduce flooding risks, protect drinking water sources and support recreation-based activities and economies.

### Our Impact Over 30 Years

- Protected over 21,000 acres of wetlands, streams and riparian buffers.
- Over 10,000 acres added to publicly accessible or managed lands within Virginia.
- Restored more than 20 miles of streams and waterways.
- Enhanced flood resilience in at-risk communities by restoring natural floodplains.
- Invested millions of dollars into conservation projects that support local economies and outdoor recreation.

### What is SWMP?

SWMP is a statewide wetland and stream mitigation in-lieu fee program, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy and managed in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The program helps offset unavoidable environmental impacts from infrastructure and development by investing in and implementing high-quality restoration and conservation projects that benefit Virginia's communities and ecosystems.

### What Makes SWMP Unique?



SWMP stands apart by prioritizing conservation-driven, science-based solutions over cost-driven mitigation.

- Statewide Program** - From the Appalachian Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, SWMP is helping to restore Virginia's diverse landscapes.
- Science-Driven Restoration** - Our projects use cutting-edge ecological data to ensure long-term environmental success.
- Beyond Compliance** - SWMP focuses on ecological uplift and added benefits, not just regulatory minimums.
- Strong Partnerships** - SWMP collaborates with state and federal agencies, conservation groups, local governments, educational communities and local landowners to achieve shared conservation goals.

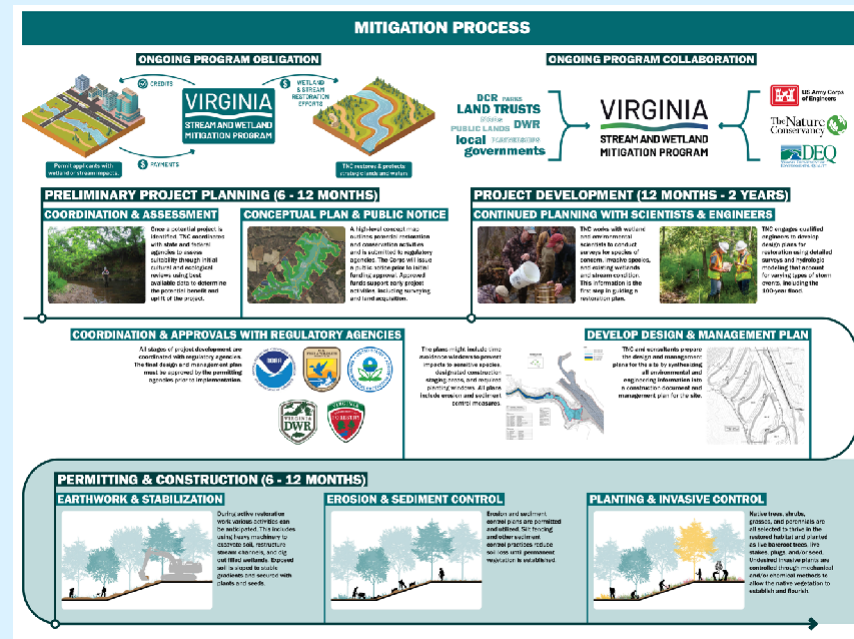
### How Does It Work?

When wetlands and streams are affected by development, federal and state regulations require compensation for these environmental impacts. SWMP provides a streamlined, science-driven solution that ensures compliance for permitted impacts while maximizing ecological benefits.

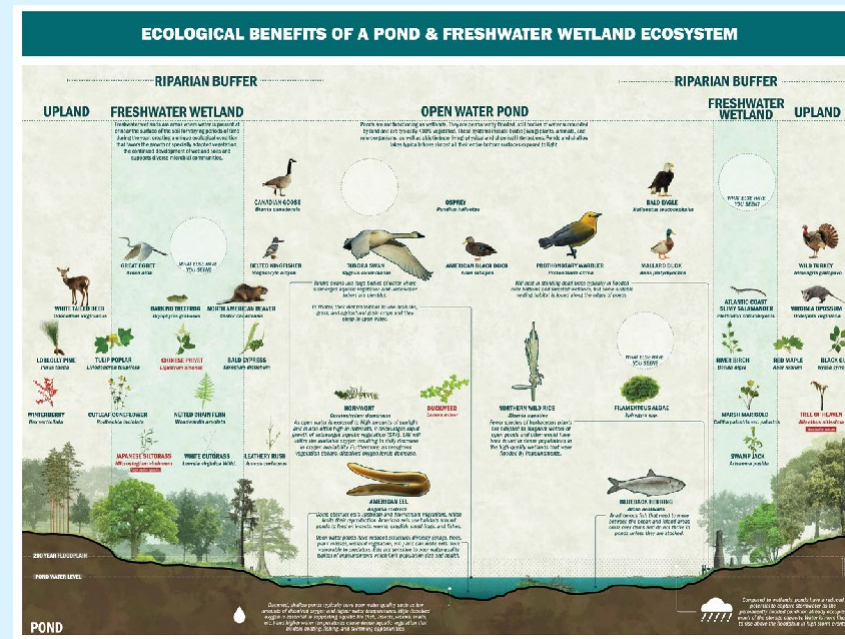
- 1 Regulatory Approval**  
Applicants impacting wetlands and streams must avoid, minimize and then compensate for those impacts through the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Permits must be obtained to move forward with the projects causing those impacts.
- 2 Purchasing Mitigation Credits**  
In lieu of attempting to create their own small-scale mitigation projects, applicants purchase "replacement credits" from SWMP for each resource affected. The amount of mitigation credit required is determined through the permitting process with the regulatory agencies.
- 3 Strategic Conservation Investments**  
SWMP pools funds from multiple applicants to implement science-driven restoration within the same watershed of wetland and stream loss to provide significant ecological benefits in priority conservation areas.
- 4 Implementation & Oversight**  
Restoration projects are carefully planned, executed and monitored to ensure that they are permanently protected and deliver long-lasting and sustainable environmental benefits.



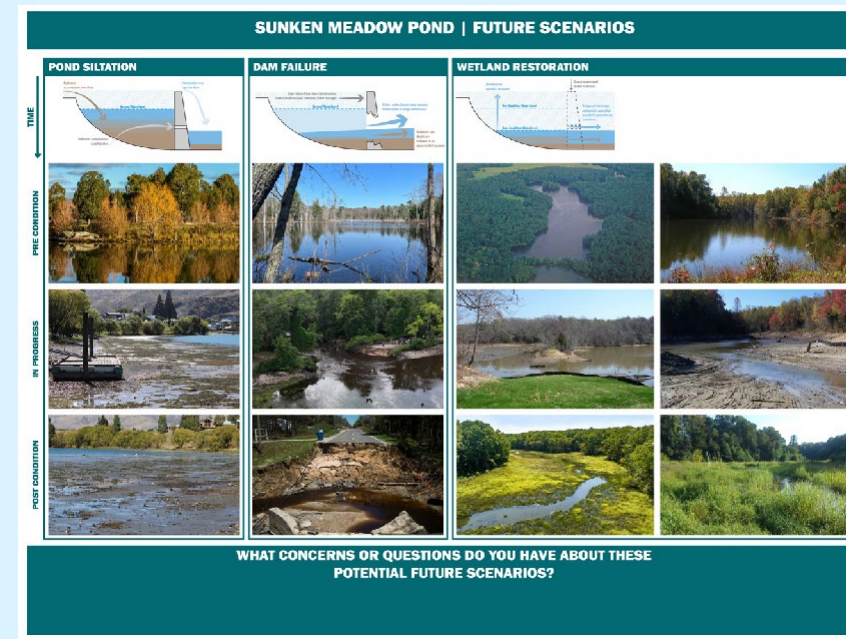
# NEXT UP:



**CLARIFY:**  
TNC's intentions & approach



**DEMONSTRATE:**  
Benefits of a restored wetland; The restoration process



**DISCUSS:**  
Future scenarios & compare the pros/cons