

# Virginia Environmental Endowment

## James River Water Quality Improvement Grant Program

### GOAL

The goal for this new \$15,595,000 grant program is to produce significant water quality improvements in the James River and its watershed within the next 10 years.

### GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Proposals for water quality improvement initiatives and projects located within the entire Virginia portion of the James River watershed are eligible to receive funding. Consideration will also be given to proposals focused on improving the water quality of the River in the region just upstream and downstream of Jamestown.

### GRANT SIZE AND TERM

In the James River Water Quality Improvement Grant Program, VEE will establish a minimum funding level for proposals for any one-year project initiative. See [www.vee.org](http://www.vee.org) for specifics. Multi-year projects with a completion date of one to three years are eligible.

### FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Funds from this program are available solely for the purpose of improving the water quality of the James River and its tributaries in Virginia. In order to maximize investments in the implementation of water quality improvements, VEE funds will not be available for monitoring outcomes.

None of the funds provided by VEE shall be used for general support, overhead, indirect costs, capital projects, land purchases, building construction or renovation, endowments, or lawsuits. Any proposal containing an element or project which is included as a compensatory mitigation requirement of a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit issued by the US Army Corps of Engineers shall be ineligible to receive funding from this program.

While VEE will not require funding match for the investments made in this program, it strongly encourages the leveraging of its James River grant resources with public or private funding. VEE will preferentially review proposals that leverage its James River grant funds.

### INITIAL GRANT CYCLE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

VEE has established several strategic investment priorities for the 2018-2019 grant cycle. Other potential strategic investments can be found in the Strategic Investment Plan for the program, located on the VEE website. [www.vee.org](http://www.vee.org). Proposals which differ from the initial 2018-2019 funding priorities must demonstrate the significance and cost effectiveness of the proposal in improving the water quality of the James River. A summary of the initial funding priorities is contained in this fact sheet.

# **JAMES RIVER WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARY OF INITIAL FUNDING PRIORITIES**

## ***Riparian Buffers***

A top priority for investment is the implementation of riparian forested or vegetative buffers, with a focus on agricultural and rural lands where there are restoration area opportunities which will generate significant pollution reductions, based on precision conservation mapping tools. Permanent protection and long term maintenance of the riparian buffers will be a critical review element of this investment priority.

## ***Improved Technical Assistance to Accelerate Implementation of Agricultural Pollution Reduction Practices***

The development of sustainable regional or multi-jurisdictional technical assistance programs, particularly for soil and water conservation districts, in areas of high agricultural intensity within the James River watershed will improve water quality. VEE will look to invest in programs that enhance and accelerate the delivery and implementation of cost-effective farming and other land practices that improve water quality. Such programs may include administrative support for on-the-ground technical assistance providers in order to increase the amount of time they have to work with farmers and landowners on implementing practices that reduce agricultural pollution.

## ***Living Shorelines***

VEE has included a priority on investing in living shoreline projects, particularly in the Lower James River region. Living shorelines provide a natural alternative to “hard” shoreline stabilization methods like bulkheads; state law contains an express preference for living shorelines. The use of regional and county-level conservation and shoreline management plans will be factors in looking at priority restoration opportunity areas for funding.

## ***Stream Restoration***

Restoration of a stream can produce improvements in a stream’s pollution reduction capacity, accelerating removal of nutrients and sediments. As investments in stream restoration can be among the most expensive strategies to implement, VEE will carefully examine proposals to determine the rationale for selecting any location proposed for restoration; the inclusion of riparian buffers in any stream restoration proposal; and the co-location of other water quality improvement efforts with any stream restoration project.

## ***Investments in the Jamestown Region***

The “Area of Potential Effects,” or APE, is a region surrounding the site of the utility line crossing near Jamestown, on both sides of the James River, 10 miles upstream and 13 miles downstream, targeted for special consideration under the mitigation agreement covering construction of the utility line, which is the source of funding for this new program. In addition to investments in the four strategic priorities above, VEE investments in the APE will additionally focus on remediation of both illicit sewage discharges (“straight pipes”) and failing septic systems as well as a limited number of cost-effective stormwater management initiatives.

***For more information, including proposal criteria and required application documentation, see the James River Water Quality Improvement Program page and Application for Funding at [www.vee.org](http://www.vee.org). Questions may be sent to [jrwqip@vee.org](mailto:jrwqip@vee.org).***