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Virginia Environmental Endowment

Contact:

Joseph H. Maroon

info@vee.org

(804) 644-5000

THE VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL ENDOWMENT AWARDS NEARLY \$300,000 FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH

Grantees will focus on enhancing water quality, restoring the Chesapeake Bay, and the advancement of sustainable land use, conservation, and environmental education

May 20, 2014 - The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) today announced awards of nearly \$300,000 to protect and improve the state's natural resources and environment. When combined with matching funds, grants awarded by VEE since 1977 represent an investment of over \$75 million in environmental improvements statewide.

"The Endowment is honored to partner with so many outstanding organizations focused on tangible water quality improvements, the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, sustainable land use and conservation, and environmental education across Virginia's diverse landscape," said Joseph H. Maroon, Executive Director. "The quality of our environment impacts every citizen throughout the Commonwealth." Maroon also noted that the latest grant round involved the largest number of applications since 1999, and that six of the recipients are receiving VEE grants for the first time, or for the first time in at least ten years. All the grants are tied to the Endowment's new strategic priorities adopted in 2013.

VEE GRANT AWARDS

Improving Local Water Quality and the Chesapeake Bay

- Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission: Support to enable regional localities to better address illicit discharges (e.g., leaks from aging pipes; dumping waste in storm drains), a lesser-known but important source of pollution to streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay (\$24,200).

- Trout Unlimited: Support for the Upper James Home Rivers Initiative to protect and restore critical cold water habitat by implementing riparian farmland best management practices on targeted streams (\$25,600).
- The Nature Conservancy, Virginia Chapter: Support for the restoration of large-scale reefs in the Piankatank River to enhance water quality and contribute to a healthy oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay (\$30,000).
- StreamWatch: Support for the enhancement and expansion of water quality monitoring programs in the Rivanna River (\$16,000).
- W.M. Keck Environmental Field Lab at the College of William and Mary: Support for research to examine the extent to which variation in nutrient pollution loads and sediment discharges are related to different types of land uses and best practices (\$13,842).
- Wetlands Watch: Support for a collaborative effort in Maryland and Virginia to develop a certification program for Chesapeake Bay landscape professionals using common standards to improve the design, installation and maintenance of low impact conservation practices (\$20,000 Challenge Grant).

Conserving Virginia's Lands

- Piedmont Environmental Council: Support for the engagement of farmers and landowners in key Piedmont region watersheds to implement stream restorations and accelerate the installation of riparian buffers and other best management practices (\$20,000).
- Land Trust Alliance: Support for the expansion of nationally acclaimed leadership, coaching, training, and assistance programs for Virginia's land conservation organizations, including support for the formation of a possible new land trust in Southern Virginia (\$25,000).
- Potomac Conservancy: Support for the expansion of land conservation projects in the northern Shenandoah Valley (\$15,000).
- Land Trust of Virginia: Support for the Blue Ridge Conservation Priorities Initiative to identify and eventually permanently protect additional lands along the Blue Ridge Mountains in Fauquier, Clarke, Loudoun, and Warren counties (\$15,000).

Enhancing Environmental Literacy and Outreach

- Chesapeake Experience: Support for professional development courses and hands-on training for Hampton Roads teachers (\$3,544).
- StreamWatch (Water Quality) and the Land Trust of Virginia (Conserving Virginia's Lands) will also conduct public outreach in addition to the aforementioned programmatic areas of focus (grant amounts noted above).

Emerging Environmental Issues

- Southern Environmental Law Center: Support for the defense of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through implementation of the Bay TMDL, as well as the response to emerging challenges associated with threats to vulnerable landscapes and natural gas extraction in coastal Virginia (\$40,000).
- Virginia Coastal Policy Clinic at the College of William and Mary Law School: Support for the clinic's work to improve the Commonwealth's response to recurrent flooding by assisting localities and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation in their compliance with new federal flood insurance rules, as well as support for the Clinic's second conference focusing on flooding and coastal change for state and local leaders (\$30,000).
- The Education Fund of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters: Support for efforts to educate the public and decision-makers about the potential hazards from hydro-fracking in the Taylorsville Basin (located, in part, under the Middle Peninsula) and the Northern Neck, considering water supply concerns and sensitive Chesapeake Bay environs (\$20,000).

To learn more about awardees or to obtain more specific information about the projects, please contact Joseph H. Maroon at info@vee.org or (804) 644.5000.

The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) is a non-profit, grant-making foundation focused on improving the quality of the environment by using its capital to encourage all sectors to work together to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources and promote environmental literacy. You can learn more about VEE by visiting vee.org.