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VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL ENDOWMENT LAUNCHES NEW GRANT PROGRAM AIMED AT IMPROVING THE JAMES RIVER

April 12, 2018 - The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) is pleased to announce the creation of a new \$15.595 million grant program designed to improve water quality in the James River watershed.

“VEE is enthusiastic about the potential of this new grant program to accelerate and advance significant water quality improvements throughout the James River watershed,” said Joseph H. Maroon, VEE Executive Director. “The James River has made remarkable improvement over the past 40 years but there remains considerable need for reductions in nutrient, sediment, and chemical pollution if we are to fully restore the River.”

The new James River Water Quality Improvement Program will be guided by a strategic investment plan developed with the advice of a 30-member, broad-based advisory team and by an innovative conservation mapping tool designed by the Chesapeake Conservancy’s Conservation Innovation Center specifically for the James River watershed. Called the “Restoration Planner,” the new web-based tool will enable VEE and its partners to target its investments more effectively and with greater geographic specificity.

VEE is now accepting applications; June 15 is the due date for submission of proposals. The Board of Directors will make the first grant awards in October.

VEE has selected five strategies as priorities for investment for the Program’s initial 2018 – 2019 grant cycle. The initial funding priorities are:

- **Riparian Buffers**: A top priority for investment will be 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.
- **Accelerated Implementation of Agricultural Pollution Reduction Practices**: VEE will look to invest in programs that enhance and accelerate the delivery and implementation of cost-effective farming practices that improve water quality.
- **Living Shorelines**: VEE has included a priority on investment in living shoreline construction, a natural alternative to harden shoreline stabilization, particularly in the Lower James River region.
- **Stream Restoration**: These projects include a variety of actions to improve the functionality and health of a stream and in so doing, increase the removal of pollutants and sediments.
- **Investments in the Jamestown region**: The Program targets for consideration the greater Jamestown region where, in addition to investments in the priorities above, VEE will also focus on remediation of illicit sewage discharges (such as “straight pipes”) and failing septic systems as well as a limited number of cost-effective stormwater management initiatives.

VEE will consider proposals that do not align with these priorities; however, proposals which differ from the initial funding priorities must demonstrate the significance and cost effectiveness of the proposal in improving the water quality of the James River.

Proposals for water quality improvement initiatives and projects located within the entire James River watershed are eligible to receive funding. Those located outside of the watershed remain eligible for funding under VEE's general [Virginia Program](#), as do any proposals that do not meet the proposal criteria contained for the new program.

To learn more about the Endowment or this new grant program, visit www.vee.org or contact jrwqip@vee.org.

The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) is a non-profit, grant-making foundation based in Richmond, Virginia that is focused on improving the quality of the environment by using its capital, expertise and resources to encourage all sectors to work together to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources and promote environmental literacy. The Endowment celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2017.