



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
**FORESTRY**

# **The State Farm Conservation Initiative**

2020-2026

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Program Coordinator  
Riparian Forests for Landowners (RFFL)  
Virginia Department of Forestry  
June 5, 2026

# State Farm Conservation Initiative

## Presentation agenda

- Introduction - How the Conservation Initiative Started
- Summary of the State Farm operations and challenges – Luke Moore, DOC - Quality Assurance Specialist
- Conservation Initiative Areas of Focus
  - Goals, Accomplishments and Next Steps



# State Farm Conservation Initiative

How it started... A landscape in need of help.





# State Farm Conservation Initiative

- Spring 2020, Governor Northam tasked Ann Jennings, Deputy Secretary of Natural and Historical Resources, to initiate conservation practices on the State Farm.





# State Farm Conservation Initiative



Motivation for change but challenges to overcome.





# State Farm Task Force

Est. July 2020



Department of Corrections



Department of Forestry



James River Association



Soil & Water Conservation Districts



The Nature Conservancy



Virginia Cooperative Extension





# State Farm Conservation Initiative

## First Steps:

- Get the know the State Farm

## Identify:

- Needs
- Available resources

➡ Create a Conservation Plan







# VADOC Agribusiness

## Objective and Overview

# Mission

01

Provide training opportunities to staff and inmates

02

Enhance re-entry, reducing recidivism

03

Lower food costs associated with the VADOC





# Overview

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- Agribusiness: 150 staff across 26 locations
- Operations include: a gristmill, flash freeze plant, kosher meal packing facilities, a meat processing plant, a produce distribution center, a milk processing plant, and a beverage plant
- Farming operations include beef, dairy, swine, goats, fish, greenhouses, produce crops, grain crops, apple orchards, and pasture/hay land



# State Farm Agribusiness

Located in Powhatan and Goochland counties, divided by the James River.

The State Farm operation includes the beef, dairy, crops, milk plant, meat plant, buildings & grounds, & the garage department.

4500 acre farm operated by staff and inmates assigned to the neighboring institutions.

The State Farm operation is the largest farm managed by the DOC.





# State Farm Dairy

- Milks up to 200 cows twice per day
- DOC also purchases milk from the Virginia Tech Dairy Science Operation
- Currently ships over 1 million gallons of milk annually, as well as ice cream
- Inmates in the care of DOC receive 2 eight ounce servings of milk daily



# Beef Cattle Operations



- 14 prison sites around the Commonwealth raise cattle
- Rural land with marginal uses house the beef cattle herds while providing seclusion for the institutions
- The cattle are sold and the revenue is returned to the General Fund.
- Agribusiness holds a partnership with the Virginia-Maryland Vet School for A.I. and herd care by returning valuable research opportunities with feed and mineral trials





# Training Opportunities

Inmates working on the farm and production sites have the opportunity to receive certifications in:

- Beef Quality Assurance
- Artificial Insemination of Cattle
- Pesticide – Registered Technician
- ServSafe
- Forklift Operations
- CDL (class A and B)
- Welding Certifications
- Tractor & Heavy Equipment Safety & Operation

























# State Farm Conservation – Task Force Conservation Plan

## Goals



Reduce soil erosion  
rate



Improve water quality  
protection



Improve nutrient  
management



Maintain farm  
production efficiency  
and cattle health



Improve stream health



Support inmate  
training goals



# State Farm Conservation Initiative –Task Force

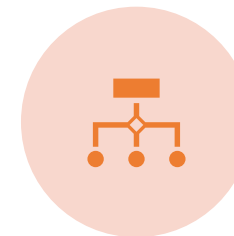
## DOC Needs



FUNDING



TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE



COORDINATION

# State Farm Task Force – Areas of Focus



**Department of Corrections**  
Property Owner



**James River Association**  
Coordination



**Department of Forestry**  
Riparian Forest Buffers



**Virginia Cooperative Extension**  
Training



**Soil & Water Conservation Districts**  
Agricultural Infrastructure



**The Nature Conservancy**  
Wetlands + Streams



**Department of Environmental Quality**  
Water Quality Monitoring



**Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**  
Stream Health





## Leveraging Funding Sources

Funding Source	Amount Spent	Amount Available	Fiscal Agent	Use
Total	\$480K	\$2.4M	ALL	
DOF State Lands Fund	\$111,106	\$111,600	DOF	Fencing material and/or labor, buffers, buffer maintenance
VEE-JRWQIP	\$43,557	\$0	DOF	Forest buffers
DOF Forest Health - Invasive	\$14,000	\$0	DOF	Invasive species management in forest buffers
VA Aquatic Resource Trust Fund	\$0	\$1,200,000	TNC	Wetland restoration
VA Aquatic Resource Trust Fund	\$0	\$500,000	TNC	Stream restoration, buffers, exclusion fencing
DEQ State Lands WIP Funding	\$211,830	\$0	DOC	Water system install
NFWF-INSR 2021	\$100,000	\$0	JRA	Water lines, heavy use areas, crossings
NFWF-INSR 2026-2028 (pending)	\$0	\$553,900	JRA	Exclusion fencing, crossings, water system install

Above is restoration project expenses only. There are additional resources for staff + partner time





# State Farm – Areas of Focus – Goals – Accomplishments – Next Steps



- **Agricultural Infrastructure**
- **Forestry – Riparian Forest Buffers**
- **Wetlands and Stream Enhancement**
- **Water Quality Monitoring + Stream Health**
- **Training**







# Agricultural Infrastructure

## Goal:

100,000+ ft in exclusion fencing

## Accomplishments:

- 14000' installed thus far
- Install Watering System in Goochland

## Next Steps:

- Acquire additional infrastructure funds NFWF
- Additional fencing and watering systems on Powhatan side



## Partners:





# Agricultural Infrastructure

- Current livestock population
  - 200+ Dairy
  - 400 cow-calf pairs
  - 1200 steers
  - 40+ retired horses

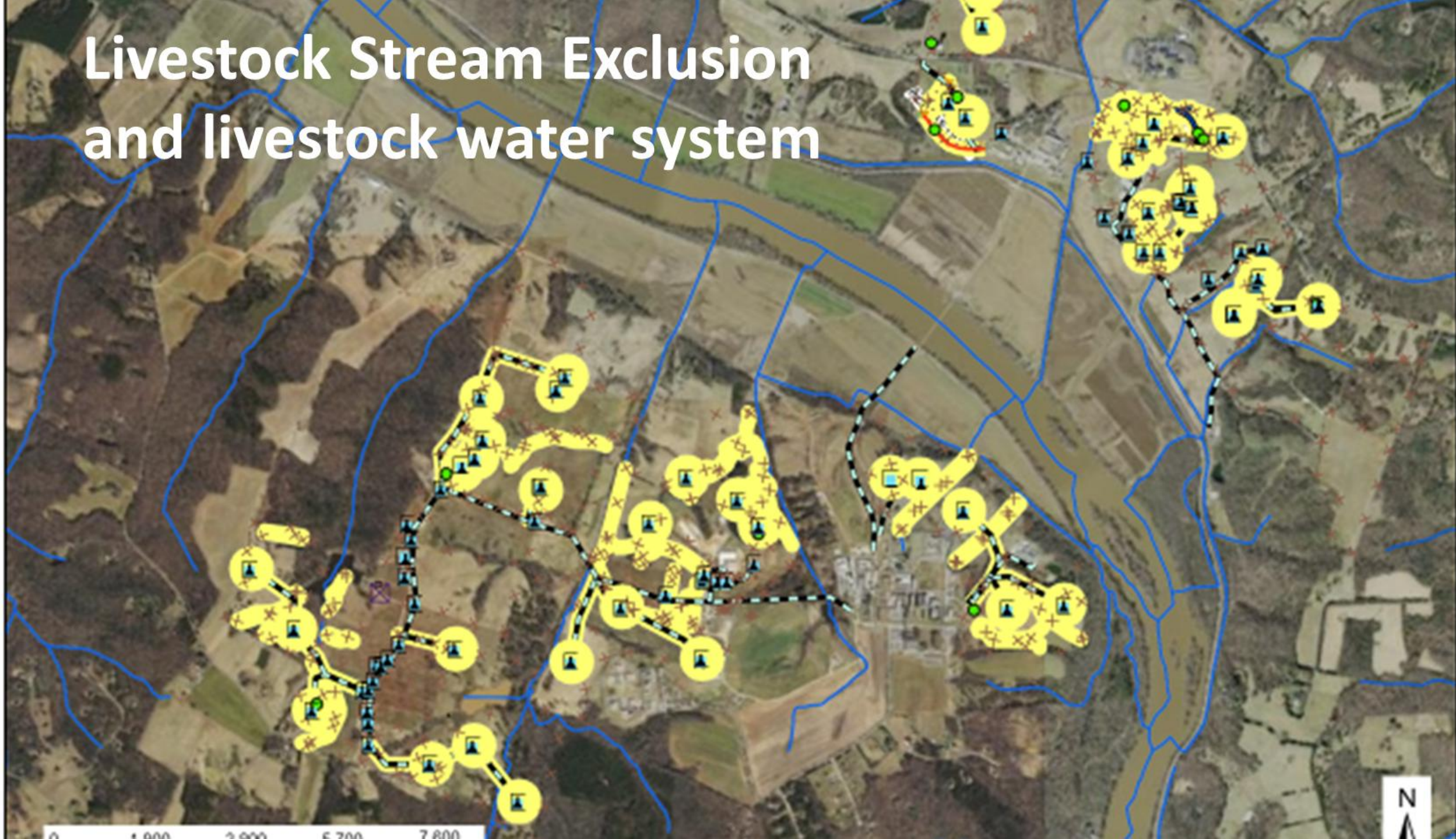


# Agricultural Infrastructure – Potential NFWF Grant

- Goals
  - Improve ~400 acres of pastureland
  - Install
    - ◆ 19,380 ft of fence
    - ◆ 15000 ft of pipeline
    - ◆ 17 water troughs
    - ◆ 8 stream crossings

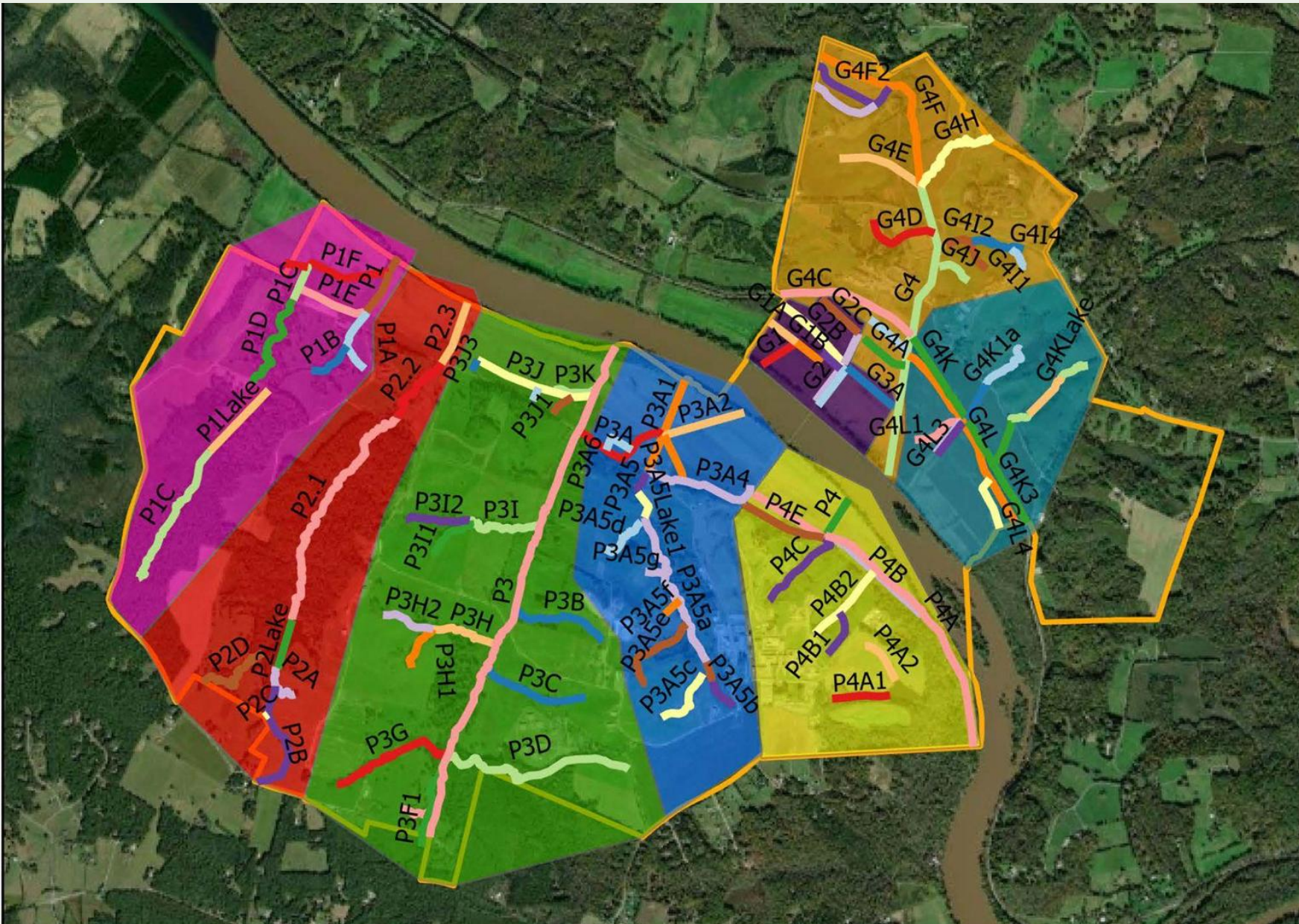


# Livestock Stream Exclusion and livestock water system





# Fall 2022 Stream Inventory













# Forestry

**Goal:** 100+ acres of riparian forest buffer

**What we've accomplished:**

2021- 2023 – 64.3 acres total

- 33 acres in Goochland and 31.3 acres in Powhatan
- Utilized a combination of natural regeneration and planting hardwood and/or pine
- Maintenance on 25 acres
- Invasive species management on 11 acres



**Partners:**

James River Buffer  
Program - VEE













# State Farm Riparian Forest Buffer Establishment 2018-2023

Summary acres per establishment type			Establishment type - details	Acres
planted (2018)	2.5		planted mix hardwood w/shelter and pine	12.4
planted (2021)	12		planted pine	5
planted (2023)	11.5		planted hardwoods with shelters	7.8
natural regeneration	38.3		planted hardwoods without shelters	0.8
<b>total</b>	<b>64.3</b>		natural regeneration in progress	22
			natural regeneration - site prepared	16.3





# Powhatan Buffer 1

## Fall 2023

### State Farm

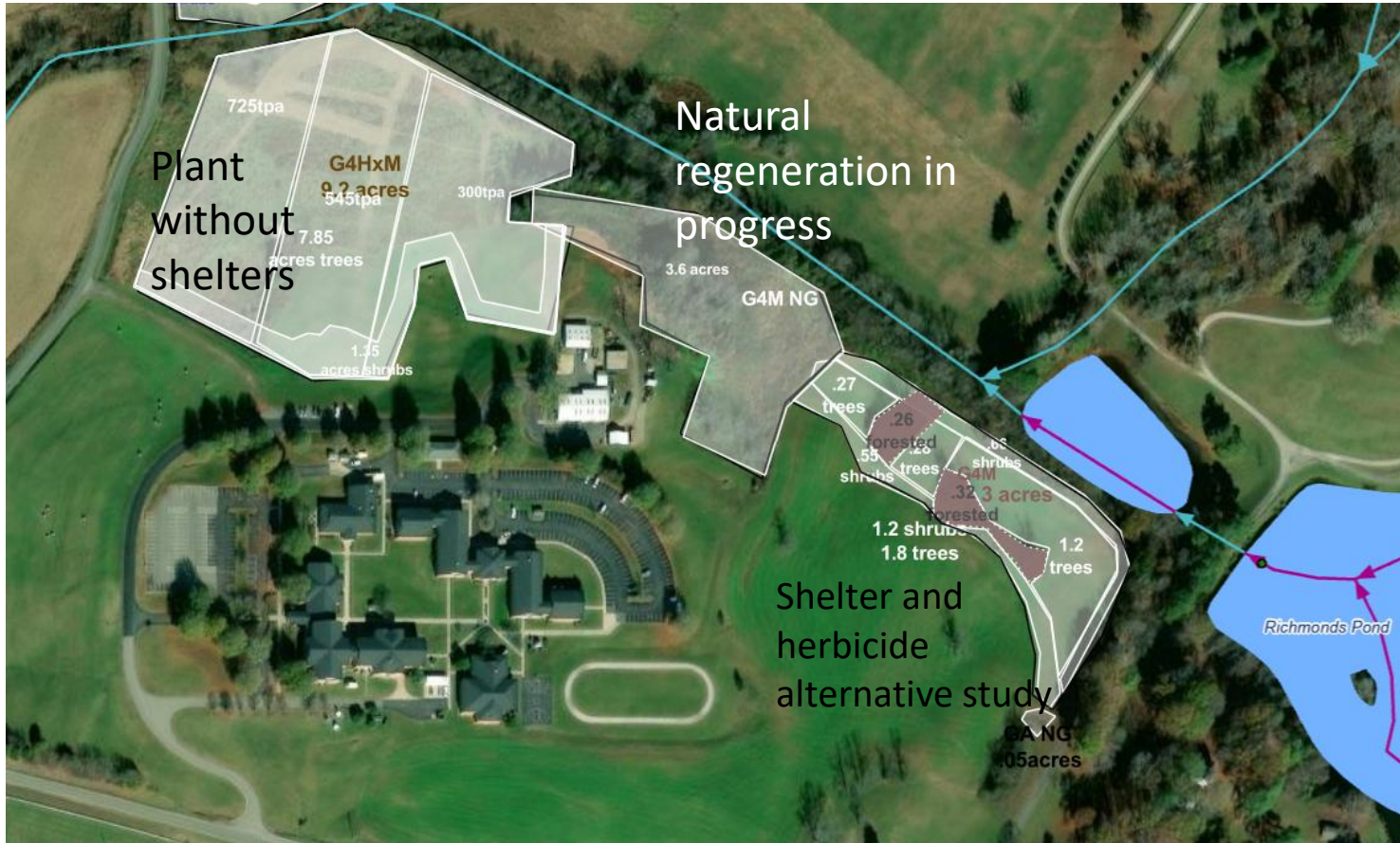
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1/29/2024





# Forested Riparian Buffers – Future projects- Research

## State Lands Funds Available



## Research Focus – Potential Study

- Natural regeneration site prep methods
- Planting without shelters
  - Different densities
- Shelters and competition control
  - Bio-degradable shelters
  - Coir fiber mats
  - Wood chips
  - Perhaps add in: Pre-emergent in tubes

Something else??

Up to 48 more acres are available once the infrastructure project is complete



# Wetlands + Stream Enhancement

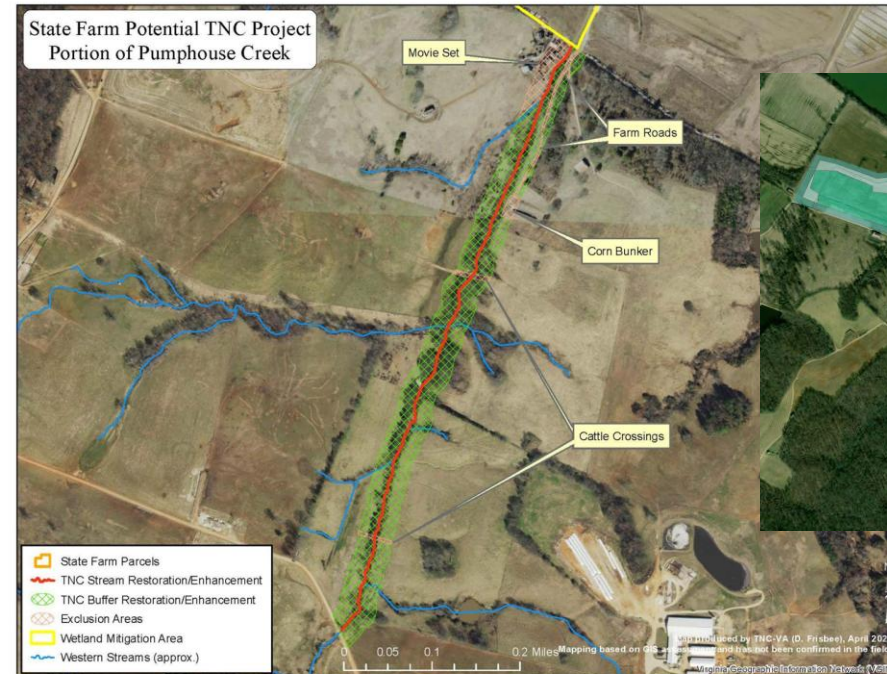
**Goal:** **18+** acres of restored wetlands and **22** acres of wetland buffers in floodplain

## What we have accomplished:

- Design complete for wetland
- Engineer selected for wetland
- Updated the design

## What's next:

- Modify contract based on the updated design
- Submit Site Development Plan (SDP) to the agencies



Partners:



Additional State and Federal Agencies

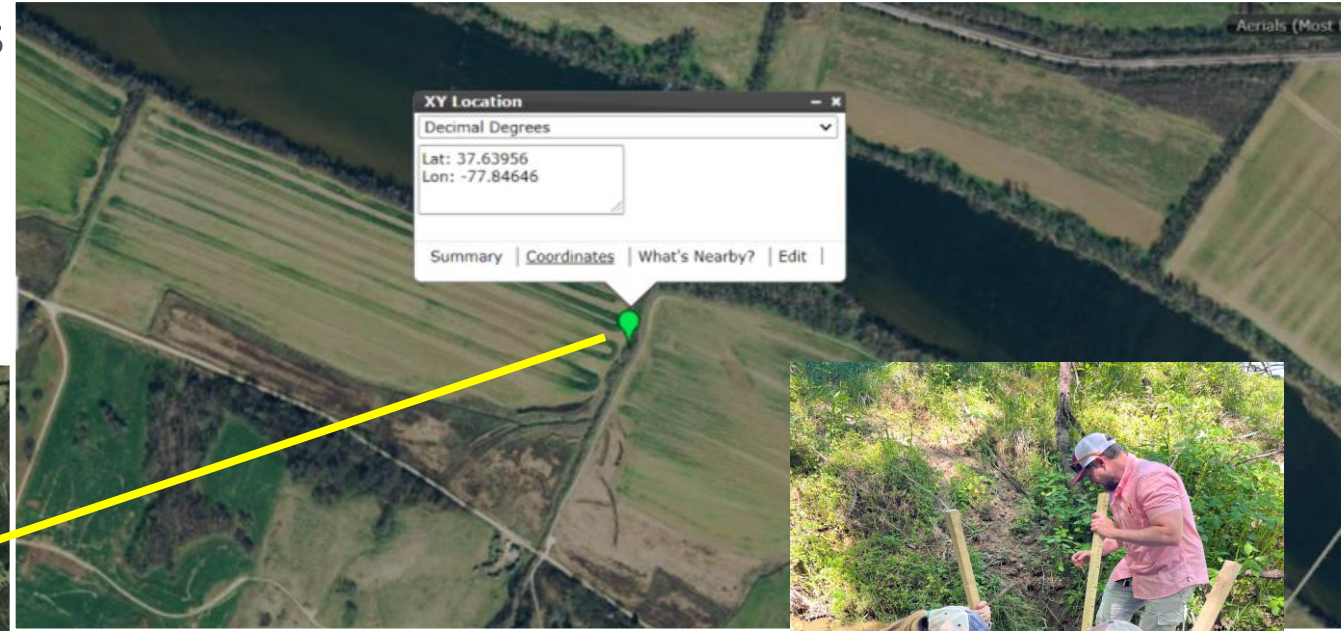
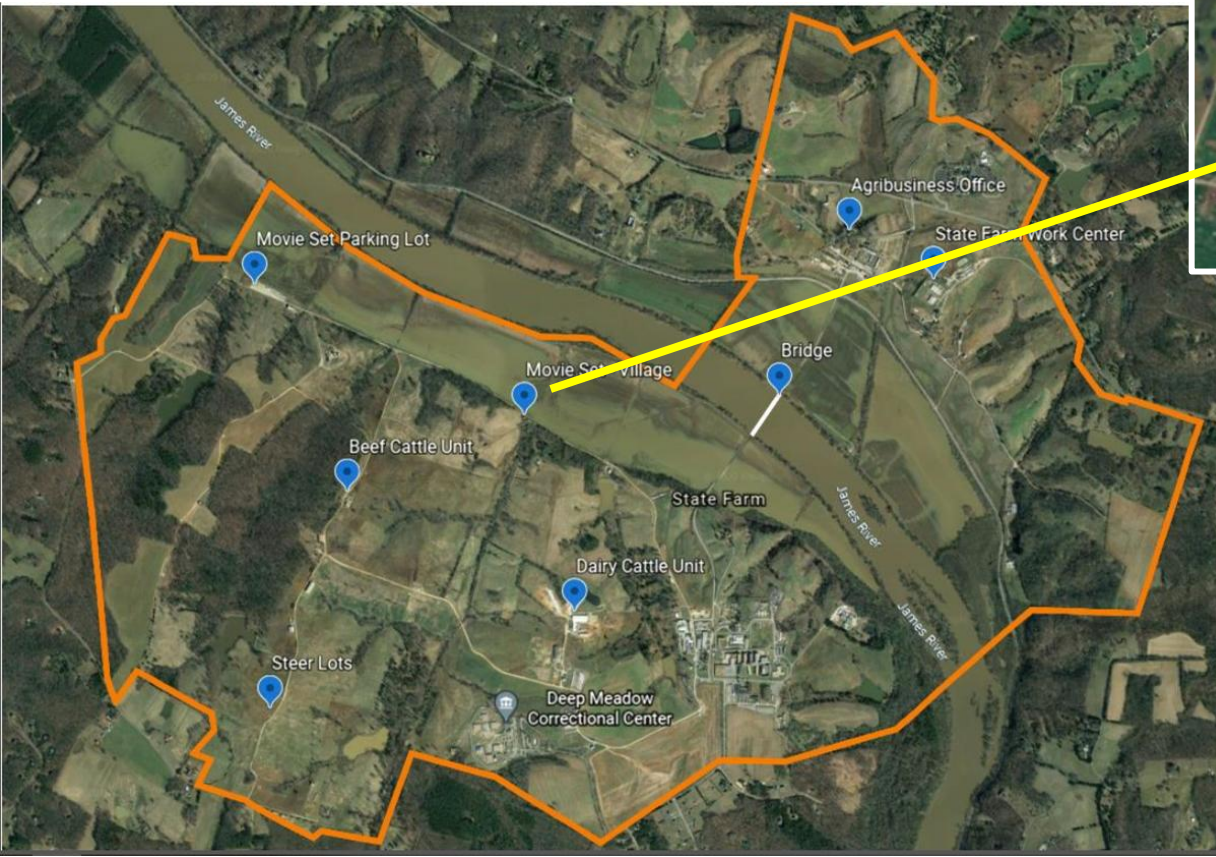






# Monitoring

- Temperature
- pH
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Conductivity
- Nutrients
- Total Suspended Solids
- Ions
- Metals
- And More!



Partners:  **ALLIANCE**  
for the Chesapeake Bay





# Training

## Goal: Pilot CBLP-Buffers Certificate and Fencing Training

### What we've accomplished:

- October 2020 Fixed-Knot Fencing Workshop for 6 inmates and 4 staff.
- An 18-hour Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional training program on riparian buffer planning, installation, and maintenance
- 2 Rounds of CBLP-Buffer Trainings resulting in 18 CBLP-Buffer Attendees and 13 CBLP-Buffer Certificates

### What's next:

- Identify training coordinator
- Plan fall 2026 training



## Partners:





# 2022 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Collaboration Excellence Award





# State Farm Task Force

## June 2026



### Department of Corrections

Keith Schinabeck/Luke Moore/  
Kenny Raidford



**James River Association**  
Amber Ellis



### Department of Forestry

Deya Ramsden



**Dept. of Environmental Quality**



### Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Keith Burgess/Maddie Wiley



### The Nature Conservancy

Maggie Jamison/Chris Dubois



### Virginia Cooperative Extension

Skye Brickhouse/John Few



**Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**  
Maya Sterett





A group of people, including several in khaki uniforms, are walking through a field of tall green grass and yellow wildflowers. In the background, a large brick building with multiple wings is visible, surrounded by trees. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text "Thank you partners!" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Thank you  
partners!





# Questions?

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