

To: Preservation Trust Fund Committee

From: Leslie H. Grayson

Re: Allocation of Remaining FY 2017 funds

Date: June 5, 2017

Background

At the February 9, 2017 meeting in Henrico County, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) board of trustees approved the allocation of nearly \$1.55 million from its Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund to help fund 11 conservation projects that would use open space easements to increase public access for outdoor recreation and education. The projects are in 11 jurisdictions spread across the state and include three in localities – the cities of Richmond, Charlottesville and Alexandria – where VOF currently does not hold an easement.

The Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) was created in 1997 to help cover the costs of acquiring open space easements. Most funding comes from state appropriations and varies by year. In fiscal year 2017 PTF received its largest amount of funding ever of \$2 million. The VOF board passed a resolution at its June 2016 giving the highest priority for purchased easement projects that provide public access. The board also directed staff to reserve enough PTF funds to assure that eligible applicants for Cost-Only projects would be covered throughout the year. In FY 2017 every Cost-Only PTF eligible project that applied for funding was funded.

To date during FY 2017, the Trustees have approved sixteen Cost Only projects for a total of \$149,000. At the March 30, 2017 meeting the Board approved updates to the PTF Grant Manual that enables a staff committee made up of the PTF Program Administrator, Deputy Director of Easements, and Deputy Director of Policy & Acquisitions to make PTF Cost-Only awards based on the criteria for income categories and award guidelines approved by the Trustees. This modification will enable potential Cost-Only projects to move forward in the easement process knowing with certainty that a grant will be made available for associated costs.

The remaining 2017 PTF fund balance of \$327,000 will fund seven Cost-Only PTF awards through the updated grant process for June, and two expected to be ready for the September meeting, as well as one Board approved project in need of survey work. SEE PTF worksheet*

In addition, there is one easement purchase project which the board will review at the June meeting for PTF purchase grant funds. The PTF board committee directed staff to give priority to the 11 public access projects that received grant funds in February for additional allocations of any remaining FY 2017 funds available at the June meeting. Please see the Hottel-Keller project materials which staff is recommending for receipt of additional PTF funds.

As background, the request for purchase of easement proposals in early December 2016 resulted in more than 25 inquiries and submissions for projects. The proposals were reduced to the final 11 recipients based on the four main criteria used in evaluating purchase of easement projects;

extent of public access, population served, conservation value, and demonstrated community support and readiness. The 11 final project proposals received \$1.5 million in funds at the February meeting. Staff recommended full funding for five of the projects and reduced funding for the remaining six finalists at that time. The Hottel-Keller project would also receive full funding for its request if the Board approves the additional funds proposed at this June Meeting.

Summary of 11 Trustee approved public access easement purchase projects and updates

Project name: Murray-Dick-Fawcett House

Locality: City of Alexandria **Acres:** .3

PTF funding approved: \$350,000. VLCF funding: \$900,000

Update and Status: City of Alexandria closed on property April 27. VOF and VDHR co-held easement to be recorded as soon as possible after VDHR board final review at June 15 meeting. VOF PTF funds will be dispersed when easement records.

Description: The Murray-Dick-Fawcett House is an 18th century home and garden, recognized as one of the oldest, and most authentic pre-Revolutionary buildings remaining in the city within the Alexandria Historic District. The City of Alexandria proposes to purchase the property and manage it as a public museum and garden. This site, originally used as a residence and commercial livery, will enable the city to interpret the life and times of ordinary residents during the 18th and 19th century. Partners include the City of Alexandria, the Office of Historic Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust(NVCT), Historic Alexandria Foundation, Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, in addition to VLCF, VDHR, and VOF.

Project name: Charley Close Property

Locality: City of Charlottesville **Acres:** 2.8

PTF funding approved: \$50,000. VLCF grant \$82,600 and City funds \$125,000 +

Update and Status: Easement in final review. City acquisition is imminent. Recordation to follow shortly thereafter

Description: This property is located on Moore's Creek, a tributary of the Rivanna River, in the City of Charlottesville. The 2.8-acre parcel will be a key link in an existing trail network that connects Hartmann's Mill, Jordan Park and several communities. The trail completion will provide year round access to open space, and further goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan for water quality, open space, transportation (walkable and bikeable communities) and economic development. The city plans to build a parking and access area and maintain the trail network through the property.

Project name: Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT)/ Hansbrough's Ridge

Locality: Culpeper County

Acres: 174

PTF funding approved: \$250,000. American Battlefield Protection program grant \$462,000

Update and Status: CWPT acquired property July 2016. Draft deed of easement in review with VOF, VDHR, and National Park Service. This project was approved by VDHR in September 2016 but will be reconsidered on June 15 to add VOF as co-holder. Record as soon as final review and approval complete.

Description: The Civil War Trust proposes the placement of a conservation easement on its Hansbrough's Ridge property, on Route 3 in Culpeper County. The property is notable for the presence of intact archaeological sites and features related to the 1863-1864 Union Army winter encampment. The grant will enable the Trust to facilitate access to the property, and construct amenities such as interpretive trails and signage. The preservation of the Hansbrough's Ridge project involves support from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, the Supervisors of Culpeper County, the Brandy Station Foundation and the Friends of Cedar Mountain.

Project name: Hazel Hollow Tract

Locality: Pulaski County

Acres: 11.925

Update and Status: Pulaski County close to closing on acquisition of property. Ruth Babylon (VOF) has draft of easement deed in review with county attorney.

PTF funding approved: \$142,500. VLCF funding 2014 grant \$125,000 + county funds.

Description: The Hazel Hollow tract is located on the New River just upstream from the community of Fairlawn. Pulaski County plans to acquire the land for a public park and extend the planned bicycling/walking trail from a nearby former school site through the VOF-owned Smith Farm and along the river onto the property. The property also creates the opportunity to link trails on the north side of the river via a pedestrian bridge on four piers and connect with the City of Radford's Bisset Park and trails to nearby Wildwood Park, which is also under VOF easement.

Project name: Eastern Branch Restoration Park

Locality: City of Virginia Beach

Acres: 8.8

PTF funding approved: \$55,000. VLCF grant \$141,525. Living River Restoration Trust \$43,475 +. Va. Beach \$75,000 +

Outdoors Foundation and the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy and provides recreational trails to the population of nearby Salem and Roanoke. The project would provide the opportunity for users to bicycle, walk, or ride horses from the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail to Carvin's Cove, thus connecting an urban area to a very rural, natural preserve. Key partners for this project are Pathfinders for Greenways, Inc., Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, and Roanoke County.

Project name: Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc.

Locality: Shenandoah County

Acres: 391.066

PTF funding approved: \$200,000

Update and Status: Additional PTF funding recommended at June 22, 2017 meeting: \$200,000 for total of PTF \$400,000 which provides full funding for the request

Description: The 391 acre property is situated in western Shenandoah County between Woodstock and Strasburg. This historic homestead surrounded by fields and forest adjoins the GW National Forest and is owned by Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc., a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of early Germanic immigrants into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The grant will enable the organization, run by volunteers from the community, to improve and expand public access to the farm and buildings and create hiking or birding trails. The organization, which has owned the property since the late 70's, want to restore the late 1800's era farmstead, add a museum building for collections, displays and classrooms and create a loop trail to connect with the Big Blue Trail in the National Forest. The property also contains a portion of the Toms Brook battlefield and a named cave which has been gated and protected. Easement preliminary value appraised at \$865,000+

Project name: Four Winds / Rappahannock River Access

Locality: Caroline County

Acres: 306 acres

PTF funding approved: \$80,000. US Fish and Wildlife Service \$127,000+. A.P. Hill ACUB program \$873,000+. Trust for Public Land (TPL) \$ due diligence costs

Update and Status: The project is moving forward with Army ACUB processing through their system to fund an easement acquisition. Easement drafting and appraisal work underway. TPL has land under contract.

Description: TPL is working with the property owner and VOF to purchase a conservation easement on 306 acres of wetlands and forestland situated on Skinker's Neck, the first big bend in the Rappahannock east of Fredericksburg. The VOF PTF grant will facilitate providing public shoreline access to the Rappahannock River as part of the project. The property is located within a priority area for the Fort A.P. Hill Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program and the County who is seeking public access to the river and will also partner in this project.

Project name: Malvern Hill Farm

Locality: Henrico and Charles City counties **Acres:** 878

PTF funding approved: \$100,000. VLCF funding \$687,500. Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund \$400,000. Cabell Foundation \$500,000 two-to-one match. Mary Morton Parsons Foundation \$500,000 two-to-one match. Additional funds being sought by Capital Region Lands Conservancy (CRLC).

Update and Status: CRLC holds purchase contract. Closing anticipated in August. Upon closing there will be motivation to plan for various parcels, including the piece that will become the canoe/launch James River Association parcel with VOF easement.

Description: CRLC seeks to acquire this significant 878-acre property southeast of Richmond. A portion of the property is within the National Parks Service acquisition boundaries property and will become part of the Malvern Hill Battlefield interpretive area. The remaining portions of the property are anticipated for public use (James River Association and possibly County as owners) and will include a public access area with trails and a canoe/kayak launch into Turkey Island Creek.

Project name: Belmead on the James

Locality: Powhatan County **Acres:** 2,265

PTF funding approved: \$100,000. BOJI is actively fund raising.

Update and Status: Belmead on James, Inc. (BOJI) has made an offer for the property, but no word yet on whether the offer will be accepted. We are in holding pattern.

Description: Belmead on the James, just west of Richmond, is one of the Commonwealth's most historic properties with 2,265 acres, historic buildings, and 2.8 miles of frontage on the James River. 1,000 acres is currently protected by a conservation easement held jointly by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the James River Association. The nonprofit Belmead on the James, Inc. (BOJI) is working to acquire the property with the intention of preserving it and to make the entire property accessible to the public by providing trails on the property. Additionally, a partnership with Powhatan State Park and Powhatan County is expected to provide river access accommodating paddlers between the State Park and Belmead.

Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund Summary of Cost Only Awards

Stage 2: 5/23/17 & 5/24/17

Cost-Only Awards Approved:					
Name:	Locality	Acres	Staff	Total Award	Award-% of landowner costs (VOF fees 100%)
Airy Mont Farm, LLC	Campbell	170.7	SB	15,000	100% up to \$10,500
Clowdis Farm, LLC	Campbell	414	SB	14,500	100% up to \$9,500
Johnson, Sally	Washington	60.56	NK	11,500	100% up to \$7,000
Martin, Robert & Jeanne	Franklin/Floyd	62.4	RB	12,500	100% up to \$8,000
Miles, Wyatt & Jody	Campbell	111.3	SB	11,500	100% up to \$6,500
Pearl Valley Land and Livestock LLC	Rockbridge	210	LT	11,500	100% up to \$8,000
Smith, Floyd & Cindy	Caroline	753.1	ET	19,000	100% up to \$14,000
Early Decision (Sept Brd Mtg):					
Davis, Raymond T. & Christine	Carroll	521.6	RB	11,500	100% up to \$7,000
Brinkley	Bath	56.62	LT	11,500	85% up to \$6,500

9 2360 118,500

VLCF Funds Available:	327,000
Less Awards:	(118,500)
Hottel-Keller (see memo)	(200,000)
Brooks Farm Survey (see memo)	(10,500)
Balance: *	(2,000)

* FY2017 VLCF funds must be committed by 6/30/2017 or returned to VLCF. This "deficit" will be covered by FY2018 VLCF.

Summary of 2017 Activity to date

31 Cost-Only easements recorded, adding 9,300 acres; \$293,089 in cost awards
 Funds committed (incl. awards above): 20 Cost-Only; \$238,121; 5,182 acres
 15 Partial Purchase; \$2,376,365; 3860 acres

Since 1997, the PTF fund has helped to preserve 93,000 acres with \$13M in funding for conservation.