

NATURE

VIRGINIA

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An Art and a Science

We're known for grounding our work in science. Where we find gaps in the science that we need to guide us—or build broader support—our scientists and research partners work to grow that knowledge, as with our groundbreaking seagrass study. As a supporter, you can be proud of our commitment to science and the credibility it affords us to foster powerful collaborations. You can also take pride in the fact that TNC reaches out to meet people where they are, including the arts. As a lover of literature, I hope you'll be as inspired as I am by our recent collaboration with poets to capture our lands in beautiful language. Thank you for supporting the art and science of conservation!

Bettina K. Ring, State Director



SUPPORT NATURE

To learn more and support our work in Virginia, use the QR code or go online to nature.org/virginia.



Volunteers participating in 2024 seagrass collection workday on the Eastern Shore © Bo Lusk/TNC

Green Grass and Blue Carbon

New study measures benefits of seagrass restoration

In May, dozens of volunteers once again braved the chilly seaside waters off Virginia's Eastern Shore to participate in the largest, most successful seagrass restoration project in the world. TNC and partner efforts have returned seagrass meadows to 10,000 acres of bay bottoms since the habitat's near-disappearance in the 1930s. Our understanding of seagrass' benefits has also expanded dramatically thanks to a two-year study recently completed by TNC scientist Mariana Camacho. Camacho is now preparing final reports that quantify the myriad benefits from our seagrass restoration, including "blue carbon" storage, the long-term containment of carbon dioxide within the seagrass itself and the soils from which it grows. Explore our Eastern Shore work at nature.org/vvcr.

OktoberForest Fest: Save the Date!

This summer, TNC and collaborating brewers carefully foraged seagrass and other native ingredients from conservation sites to create beers celebrating Virginia's special lands and waters. This year's brews will debut at our annual OktoberForest celebration, which will be held on the beautiful grounds of Fine Creek Brewing near Powhatan on September 15.



Seagrass foraging © Kyle LaFerriere Photography



In stillness,
even you can hear
her bright green needles
sharpening—
the land belongs to itself
a secret
the forest knows.

—J. Indigo Eriksen

Poet Doug Van Gundy at Warm Springs Mountain © Daniel White/TNC; Longleaf pine © Erika Nortemann/TNC



Writing the Land

Virginia preserves inspire new poetry

Throughout 2023, our Virginia team collaborated with six poets, each of whom “adopted” a TNC preserve or project to visit periodically for literary inspiration. The poems they created from these experiences in nature have been published in a new anthology, *Writing the Land: Virginia*, which also includes poetry from 11 similar collaborations across the state and a foreword by TNC trustee Dr. Mamie Parker. The poets who worked with TNC are former Virginia Poet Laureate Luisa A. Igloria and Chelsea Krieg (Volgenau Virginia Coast Reserve), Doug Van Gundy (Warm Springs Mountain Preserve), J. Indigo Eriksen (Piney Grove Preserve), Tramere Monroe (Clinch Valley) and Jonathan Cannon (Buck Mountain Creek Conservation Easement, his family farm). TNC also played various roles in conserving several other featured lands, such as Northern Virginia’s Bull Run Mountains and the Crow’s Nest Natural Area Preserve. Learn more about Writing the Land and how to order books at writingtheland.org.

Explore Virginia’s Literary Landscapes

Want to see the lands and waters that inspired our *Writing the Land* poets? From our wildlife and birding trail at Brownsville Preserve on the Eastern Shore to seemingly endless vistas atop Warm Springs Mountain in the Allegheny Highlands, TNC invites you to explore the places you help us protect. Learn more at nature.org/vaplaces.



Dawn at Brownsville Preserve © Mary Porter

NATURE VIRGINIA

A New Training Center for Appalachians Conservation



Hobby Horse Farm © Daniel White/TNC

As TNC programs at Warm Springs Mountain Preserve and Hobby Horse Farm converge, our Allegheny Highlands Program is reaching a pivotal moment in Appalachians-wide conservation. The farm’s rustic horse barn already serves as a training site for regional fire training and land protection initiatives, but a new vision will expand training space and elevate it into a central hub for Appalachians science and conservation. The planned renovation features flexible configurations for up to 32 participants, digital presentation technology and an outdoor gathering space around a fire pit. With architectural renderings complete, we are now soliciting bids from contractors and raising philanthropic funds to bring this vision to fruition.



Architectural illustration of the barn renovation

2024 Interns STEP Up

Our Short Term Experience Program (STEP) welcomed 11 talented interns this summer who helped us advance conservation goals and engage with communities. Learn more at nature.org/learningVA.