



About 80 percent of the forestland in Virginia is owned by private individuals, but the decisions they make affect us all. Actively engaging in good forestry practices helps ensure forests and the benefits they provide will be around for generations.

Development of the nation's forested areas poses an increasing threat to maintaining the integrity of our country's valuable forestlands. Intact forestlands supply timber products, wildlife habitat, soil and watershed protection, aesthetics and recreational opportunities. However, as these areas are fragmented and disappear, so do the benefits they provide. While local governments commonly guide development away from the most sensitive areas through traditional land-use controls (like zoning), sometimes these measures are not sufficient to fully protect the forested component of our natural resource base.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For More Information

For more information about the Forest Legacy Program or VDOF services, please contact your local Virginia Department of Forestry office or visit www.dof.virginia.gov.



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VDOF P00200; 09/2011

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FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM

*Protecting Private Forestlands
from Conversion to
Non-Forest Use*



Virginia Department of Forestry
www.dof.virginia.gov



Program Overview

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a federally-funded grant program for land conservation in partnership with states, supports state efforts to conserve forestland from development and provide a sustainable forest resource for future generations. FLP is administered by the USDA Forest Service, and is a voluntary program that focuses on conserving environmentally-important forestlands that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.

The lead state agency for the FLP in Virginia is the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). The FLP and VDOF encourage partnerships with local governments and land trusts, recognizing the important contributions landowners, communities and private organizations make to conservation efforts.

Public Purposes

The FLP on a national scale complements private, federal and state programs for land conservation. The state FLP program focuses on the conservation of lands important to Virginians. FLP-funded projects serve public purposes identified by Virginia and agreed to by the landowner, such as providing open space; providing sustainable forest products to support the local or regional economy; protecting important

natural habitats; providing increased wildlife habitat; enhancing water quality, or protecting the viewsheds of important state scenic roads or rivers.

Methods of Acquisition

The FLP is utilized in Virginia to purchase partial interest in privately-owned forestlands through conservation easements, and to purchase important forested lands for state ownership. In the case of a conservation easement, the ownership remains with the landowner, but the easement (a recorded deed that is a legally-binding agreement) restricts development; requires sustainable forest management, and protects other conservation values of the property. The FLP is also utilized for purchases of additional land as State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, Natural Area Preserves and other important forestlands conserved by state ownership.

Application Process

The FLP is a competitive grant program. Application materials are available from the VDOF annually in March. Applications are received by late June, and then ranked at the state level. Top-ranked state projects are offered for national competition, and projects that rank highly at this level receive grants the following year. Once a grant is made, the acquisition process (deed language negotiation, title work, appraisal, appraisal review, etc.) usually takes about two years.

Program Requirements

The FLP pays a maximum of 75 percent of the appraised value with the remaining funding coming from other state or private sources, or through the landowner accepting less than the full appraised value (a bargain sale). A landowner may receive tax benefits by agreeing to a bargain sale. The landowner is required to have a written, multiple-resource forest management plan as part of a conservation easement acquisition, and to have the plan updated periodically.

The minimum acreage for FLP participation is 50 acres, of which 75 percent must be forested. The title to the property must be free of any liens or encumbrances, and the property must lie within the Forest Legacy Area (FLA) of the state. The most current map of the eligible FLP areas for the state can be found at www.dof.virginia.gov.