

Introduction

In 2008, the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) launched a unique partnership with the Virginia Historical Society (VHS). In that year, the endowment's board awarded a multi-year grant to the VHS to establish at its facilities in Richmond, Virginia, the Robert R. Merhige Jr. Environmental History Archive, with the VEE's collection serving as its foundation piece. This three-pronged effort began with the collecting, processing, and cataloging of the VEE's extensive archive, documenting its first thirty years of operations. This present volume (along with its online version) serves as a guide to that specific material. Secondly, the grant enabled VHS project staff to conduct and transcribe oral interviews of twenty individuals connected with the founding and early history of the VEE, the original versions of which are included in the VEE records and available to researchers. Finally, the grant also funded the processing of a variety of collections in the VHS holdings that contain extensive material relating to the environmental history of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as the compilation of an online guide to those and other environmental history resources in the manuscripts holdings of the VHS, all of which are considered part of the Merhige Archive. The VEE board's vision in supporting this project was to foster the study of the environmental movement generally, VEE's particular role in that story, and environmental history more broadly through the centuries of Virginia's past. With the completion of this project and the appearance of this volume, students of environmental history, along with a host of other potential researchers, may find access to an enormously rich cache of materials of great promise for future study.

"Leadership, leverage, legacy"

Since its inception in 1977, the VEE has had a profound influence throughout the Old Dominion. This introduction is primarily focused on the origins, mission, and accomplishments of VEE during its first three decades of environmental grant-making. Along with setting the VEE's records in context, it examines the effects of the endowment's grants on Virginia's environment. Sometimes described as "venture capital for environmental improvement in Virginia," the VEE's grants have played a unique role in the development of environmental research, education, and civic engagement. This summary addresses each of these aspects of its work and the large impact a relatively small foundation has had by focusing and leveraging its funds in a strategic approach to grants that has made the VEE a leader within the world of environmental philanthropy.



From 1977, starting with \$8 million and receiving an additional \$1 million in 1981, the endowment through 2010 has made more than 1,200 grants totaling about \$27 million. When combined with matching funds, grants awarded by the VEE to a wide variety of organizations represent an investment of almost \$68 million in environmental improvement. The history of the VEE covers a period of United States and Virginia history during which major advances in environmental research, education, law, and public policy occurred as never before. It is a story filled with people whose work has made a significant difference in the quality of Virginia's environment and in the lives of Virginians.

In describing key grants, this introduction will lead researchers and other interested parties to understand better the VEE's long-term approach: first, to research, identify, and define new opportunities to make a difference for Virginia's environment; second, to publicize its priorities through an annual report and web site, and invite proposals; third, to preach and teach about environmental issues through lectures, Op-Ed articles, conferences, and panel discussions; and fourth, to participate on relevant Virginia state policy boards and commissions.

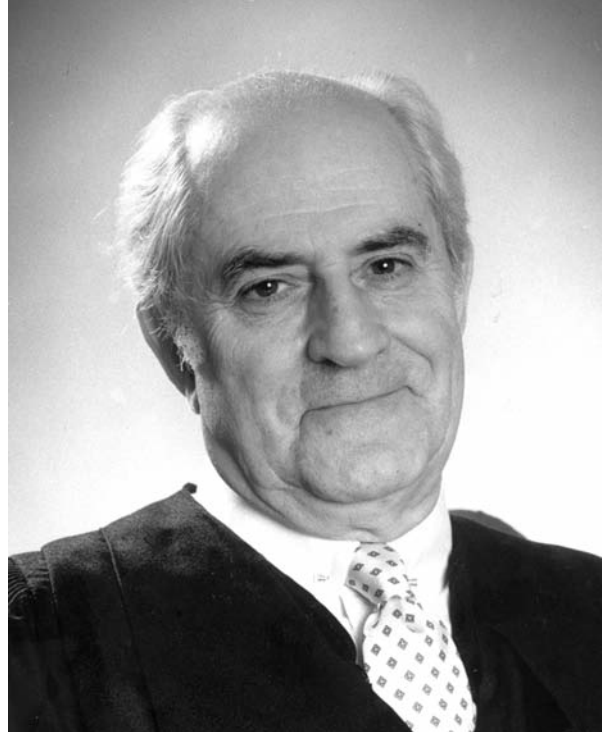
Origin of Virginia Environmental Endowment

The VEE came about in a unique way: by court order. On February 1, 1977, Federal District Court Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr., did something no federal court had done before: he turned the largest pollution fine in history into a creative way to benefit the people of Virginia. He had fined Allied Chemical Corporation \$13.24 million for polluting the James River with the insecticide Kepone. But instead of automatically requiring Allied to pay this fine in the usual



A scenic view along the William B. Cummings Trail in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. (Folder 944)

manner, he encouraged Allied to develop a way for the fine to be used to benefit Virginians. Allied decided to make a voluntary payment of \$8 million to start an environmental fund for Virginia. Judge Merhige responded favorably to this idea, and although he did not have to, he reduced Allied's fine by the same amount. Allied still paid out a total of \$13.24 million, but \$8 million was used to establish the Virginia Environmental Endowment. It paid the remainder to the federal treasury. The VEE has leveraged its funds into about \$68 million of environmental work; no one knows what effect, if any, the fine monies have had. The federal court had no authority to order such a payment, but Judge Merhige was determined to find a way to benefit the people of Virginia in the wake of the Kepone disaster. He encouraged the U.S. attorney and Allied to work out something positive and specific, and made this unprecedented settlement happen.



Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr. (1919–2005), federal judge for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia from 1968 to 1998, had a memorable career of landmark court decisions. (Kent Eanes/Style Weekly)

In addition to the uniqueness of its creation, the endowment was ahead of its time in a other way. Incredibly enough, when it was created the VEE became the only grant-making organization in the country that focused exclusively on environmental quality as its mission. Other foundations spent some of their money on the environment, but the VEE was the first to focus 100 percent on it, a historical footnote for Virginia. In the 1980s, the VEE helped start the Environmental Grantmakers Association and, in the 1990s, the Chesapeake Bay Donors Forum, both of which expanded grants for environmental purposes from 2 percent of all philanthropic awards to about 7 percent by 2009.

Board members

Judge Merhige was not only the VEE's "founding father," he also took responsibility for appointing its first board of directors. He did a superb job of selecting people to guide the endowment who were not experts but who had wide knowledge inventories, diverse backgrounds and experiences, and independent stature and judgment. William B. Cummings was serving as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. The judge appointed him as the VEE's first chairman—specifically to make sure the foundation focused on pollution prevention and environmental improvement and not in any way to alleviate Allied's responsibilities for remediation. Others on the board included Judge Henry W. MacKenzie, Jr., recently retired state circuit court judge in Portsmouth; George Yowell, president and CEO of Dominion Bank in Richmond; Admiral Ross Bullard, recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard as head of the



This photograph, taken in the 1980s, shows the board of directors of the Virginia Environmental Endowment. Seated from left to right are Henry W. MacKenzie, Jr., William B. Cummings, and Frances Lewis; standing from left to right are George L. Yowell, Sydney Lewis, Gerald P. McCarthy, Ross P. Bullard, and Thomas K. Wolfe, Jr. (Folder 95)

Port of Hampton Roads; Frances and Sydney Lewis, founders of Best Products Company and well-known philanthropists and arts patrons in Richmond; and Tom Wolfe, a Richmond native, author, and astute chronicler of American society, who succeeded Cathleen Douglas, a young attorney who was not able to continue her service after the first year. This board hired Gerald P. McCarthy as the endowment's executive director. McCarthy had been serving as chairman and administrator of Virginia's Council on the Environment, a state agency responsible for coordinating environmental policies. About two dozen trustees have served the VEE over the years, including former governor Linwood Holton, former first lady Jinks Holton, Alson H. Smith Jr., Patricia Kluge, Byron Yost, Jeannie Baliles, and Robert M. Freeman. Much of the VEE's story reflects the board's excellent judgment and ability to see where the endowment could really have an effect.

The VEE's current board members continue this strong tradition of leadership. It includes chairman Dr. Dixon Butler, a Richmond native who now lives in Washington; Mrs. Robin Baliles of Charlottesville; Paul Elbling of Richmond; Landon Hilliard, originally from Virginia Beach, now living in Oyster Cove, New York; Anna Lawson of Daleville; Nina Randolph of Alexandria; and Robert Smith of Washington.

Initial Decisions

So, how did the early board decide to make the best use of its opportunity? The board has always taken the time to ask “What needs doing?” and to think through how a relatively small foundation might best leverage its limited funds to make a difference for Virginia. Without a comparable role model to emulate, the board set its own unique course and also had the humility to seek help in doing so. In fact one of the board’s first decisions was to organize and operate in a way similar to a private foundation—as a grant-making philanthropic organization, not simply as a short-term panel charged with giving away \$8 million. This was an important choice for the board; it signaled that the endowment was going to give time and thought to address how best to use the funds entrusted to it.

The Council on Foundations, organized philanthropy’s national advocate, helped the board decide how to organize a grant-making foundation. Many petitioners for the funds assumed that the VEE would simply be a “pass through account” for dealing with Kepone-related issues, but the board was firm that the VEE was not going to be “a Kepone fund.” Instead, it listened to many people throughout 1977 who helped it to understand other current environmental issues, needs, and opportunities in Virginia. All of this helped to clarify what needed doing and how the VEE might proceed in positive, constructive ways. After several planning meetings and the development and publication of guidelines and criteria for grants, the board made its first grants in December 1977. Among the initial priorities were water quality and toxic substances pollution; law and public policy; and mediation and alternative dispute resolution. The board preferred statewide projects over local ones. It also decided to be a first-dollar grant maker, seeding ideas that showed promise.

Although Judge Merhige made it clear that the VEE was not to be used as a substitute for or addition to Allied’s responsibilities for remediation of the Kepone disaster, the board wished to examine where there might be an opportunity to advance the knowledge about Kepone where no one other entity was investigating. In fact, quite separate from remediation efforts, no state, federal, or private organization was investigating how Kepone might actually harm people. That circumstance led the board to make a series of grants in its initial years to Dr. Philip Guzelian at the Medical College of Virginia. The purpose of these grants was to establish the pathways of Kepone’s potential harm to humans. As a result, the scientific community learned that it was a derivative of Kepone, Kepone alcohol, that was the chemical that posed the most serious human health risk. This was a unique and valuable contribution to Kepone studies, and having done this, the board reemphasized its focus on toxic substances and water quality more broadly.

Listening to many voices over the summer and fall of 1977, the board realized that everyone agreed that pollution was a serious problem. These same people, however, disagreed over what should be done, who could do it, and who would pay the costs. This signaled an opportunity that was to pioneer an alternative new approach, whose purpose would be to mediate rather than litigate complex, multiparty environmental disputes.

To appreciate fully this innovation, one has to understand that in the 1970s litigation was the usual way to resolve environmental disputes. The Clean Air Act of 1970 and the Clean Water Act of 1972 (originally the Federal Water Pollution Control Act) provided newly established national nonprofit law firms ample opportunities to enforce these federal laws through

litigation. Although necessary from time to time, lawsuits were not always the correct answer for complex environmental disputes.

In 1980, the VEE established the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia. Dr. Richard Collins was its founding director, and Dr. Frank Dukes continues its fine work today. This decision was a specific manifestation of the endowment's middle-of-the-road approach to environmental issues: to make clear its philosophy that more could be accomplished by people working together than by fighting or suing each other. The Institute was the first such environmental mediation institute to be established at a university, and it is now one of the premier institutions of its kind in the world.

Another important early decision made by the VEE's board was to leverage endowment dollars so that they would go further and work harder. The board established a one-to-one matching requirement for grants to encourage other support and to double the value of its grants. Over the years the "Seal of Approval" attached to receiving a grant from VEE has been a great help to many grantees seeking additional funds for projects.

Priorities

The VEE's priorities have evolved over time, usually building on what came before. This active approach to grant making means that the board identifies needs, sets priorities based on those needs, informs people what the priorities are, and seeks out and offers grants to people who can implement them. The VEE also insists on accountability, requiring periodic narrative and financial reports of progress before paying grant funds.

For the most part grant spending has matched priorities very closely. Once in a while, the board does make exceptions when outstanding ideas emerge that are beyond the list of current priorities. The endowment's flexibility was demonstrated in one of the first grants the VEE ever made. It was a challenge grant to the Nature Conservancy to establish a headquarters on the Eastern Shore of Virginia to manage and protect its multimillion dollar investment in the offshore barrier islands and to establish its first community-based conservation program.

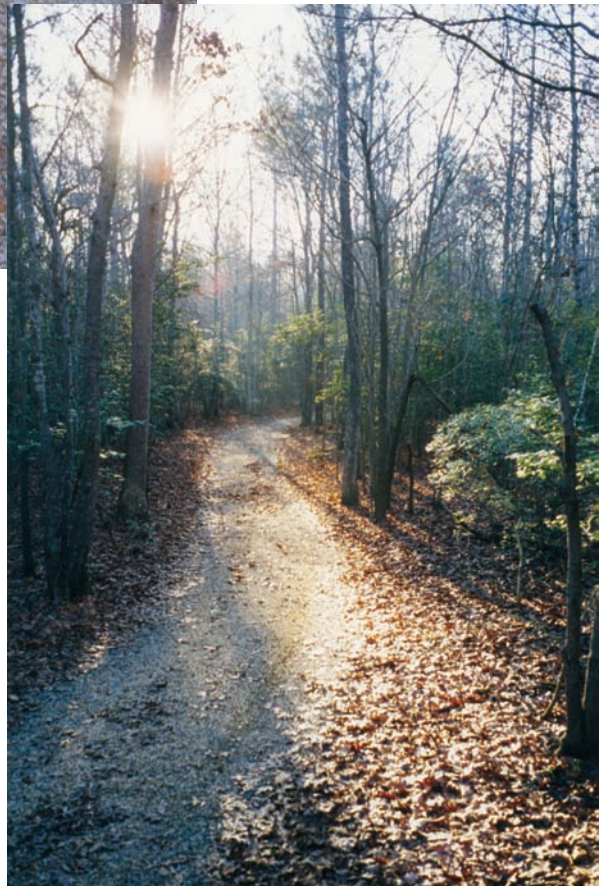
This grant was outside the initial priorities, but it was such a good idea—with excellent leadership, leverage, and partnership possibilities—that it was made. The late James C. Wheat Jr., led the Nature Conservancy's fundraising campaign. His challenge was to raise \$150,000 within Virginia to match the VEE's commitment, and in fact, he exceeded that and raised \$300,000! This took place in 1978 and would equate to a \$1 million campaign in 2010.

The rest of that story is a positive one for Virginia that continues today. These islands and adjacent marshes constitute one of the largest coastal wilderness areas remaining on the east coast of the United States. They have been designated an International Biosphere Reserve and a National Natural Landmark. Over the years the VEE has made twenty-one grants to and invested \$1.36 million in the Nature Conservancy's work all across Virginia, including recent research to determine the effects of rising sea level threats to the barrier islands and the Eastern Shore.

The creation of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation and the launch of the Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve each illustrate two other aspects of the VEE's grant making: the endowment is there at the beginning with first dollars and is often there to sustain outstanding programs over time.



Both images on this page are of the William B. Cummings Trail along the Eastern Shore in Virginia. The VEE and the Nature Conservancy with matching funds constructed a bicycling and hiking trail at the Virginia Coast Reserve. The trail was named in honor of William B. Cummings for his conservation leadership and service as president of the VEE. (Folder 944)



There was a third kind of early grant that would foreshadow a major ongoing interest in the empowerment of nonprofit conservation groups. In 1978 the endowment made its first grant to the Conservation Council of Virginia, a statewide coalition of dozens of mostly small, local environmental volunteer groups. The CCVA's principal operating function was to coordinate legislative lobbying by its member groups to improve public policy on the environment in Virginia. The VEE helped the council for three years, which allowed it to hire a professional, full-time executive director; publish a regular newsletter; and provide accurate information about legislative activities to its membership. It was the board's hope that over time the capacity of the CCVA would grow, especially if it developed strong board leadership from among its volunteers. It was eleven years before the VEE was asked to help again, and that led to the creation of the Virginia Conservation Network in 1990, an institution that now is flourishing.



Pictured above is a freshwater pond along the William B. Cummings Trail in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. (Folder 944)

Mission

The mission of the VEE is to improve the quality of the environment by using its capital to encourage all sectors to work together to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources, and promote environmental literacy. Like many useful mission statements this one evolved over time. It sums up the core purpose for which the VEE was created: to improve the quality of Virginia's environment, while also defining it more completely. At its August 19, 1977, meeting, the board adopted the following initial mission statement:

The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) is a nonprofit, independent corporation committed to the improvement of Virginia's environment. The endowment hopes to become a catalyst by using its resources to help citizens, industry, and government take constructive action to enhance Virginia's environment.

This statement signaled the endowment's willingness to work with organizations of all kinds that shared its interest in improving Virginia's environment.

In contrast to the vast majority of foundations, the VEE has always been engaged in public policy issues. It makes grants for research, education, and civic engagement to improve public policy on the environment. Among the reasons the VEE is so committed to this approach is because of the following clause in the state constitution:

Article XI. To the end that the people have clean air, pure water, and the use and enjoyment for recreation of adequate public lands, waters and other natural resources, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, develop, and utilize its natural resources, its public lands and its historical sites and buildings.

Further, it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands and waters from pollution, impairment or destruction for the benefit, enjoyment and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth.

Virginia was, in 1971, one of the first states to adopt a conservation clause in its constitution. Each state or local official in Virginia, when taking the oath of office, pledges to carry out Article XI. This article informs the VEE's mission and inspires its grant making.

Focus on Results

How have VEE grants had an effect on Virginia? When the endowment began in 1977, the opportunities for public participation in environmental policy development and implementation were limited. It is hard to imagine now, but at that time there was no Chesapeake Bay Foundation presence in Virginia and no Southern Environmental Law Center. There were no "Friends of the River" groups such as now exist on the Shenandoah, the Dan, and the Rappahannock. The James River Association was a volunteer board of landowners along the lower James River. The Virginia Conservation Network had not yet been developed. There was no Chesapeake Bay program or "Total Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) federal or state program to eliminate toxic pollution of Bay tributaries. Nor was there a Virginia Natural Heritage Program. The local land trust movement had not yet taken hold in Virginia. There was little, if any, environmental education being offered around the commonwealth. Few educators had been trained to teach about the environment, and there were even fewer curriculum materials avail-

able. All of these programs were launched with the help of the VEE.

Even though VEE assets are much smaller than those provided by government agencies, the relatively small size of the VEE's grants functions as part of a comprehensive strategy that is conceived and leveraged into the public policy arena in such a way that its effects can be maximized, thereby creating the most change with the least amount of resources.

Strengthening Nonprofit Conservation Organizations in Virginia

One way the VEE set out to accomplish that goal was to help assemble a group of conservation organizations in Virginia that would grow to be among the most talented and effective in the nation. As the records in this collection illustrate, the VEE has played a unique role in the development of strong, vital, and effective environmental conservation nonprofits. Endowment grants to build a conservation community have multiplied the initial investments many times over, and they have enabled tens of thousands of Virginians to participate in shaping and implementing state and federal environmental laws and policies.

For example, in 1979, when signs of problems with the Chesapeake Bay were beginning to be noticed, the VEE invited the Annapolis-based Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) to open an office in Richmond. The foundation did so in 1980. Later, when it saw how valuable the state office was in Virginia, CBF opened offices in Maryland and Pennsylvania. But Virginia had the first one, which Ann Jennings so ably directs today. In addition the VEE helped the Bay Foundation launch its highly effective environmental education programs in Virginia. Since 1980, the VEE has given CBF seventeen grants, totaling about \$557,000, to help advocate Virginians' interest in restoring the Bay.



Funded by a VEE Virginia Program Grant, Heritage Gardens, located in a gated park at historic City Point, created a Tranquility Garden (above) to encourage environmental awareness and provide outdoor environmental educational opportunities for area youths. (Folder 1188)

Another group the VEE helped establish is the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC). Rick Middleton, a University of Virginia and Yale Law School graduate, established this nonprofit law firm in 1986. Its mission is to use the power of the law to protect the environment of Virginia and the Southeast as well. Headquartered in Charlottesville, it also has a Richmond office, headed by Trip Pollard, and offices in five other southern states. Working with all three branches of government, the SELC shapes and enforces the laws and poli-

cies that determine the quality of air, water, landscapes, and communities in Virginia. Starting in 1986 and continuing today, the VEE has made fifteen grants investing \$1.60 million in the SELC's work, helping to make it a major force for protecting the environment in Virginia and throughout the South.

One story about the power of leverage and community concerns the Elizabeth River Project, based in Portsmouth, Virginia. Picture four friends sitting around a kitchen table in Norfolk one night in 1991, enjoying beer and pizza and each other's company. Over the course of the evening, they reached a remarkable conclusion: they agreed that the Elizabeth was the most polluted river on the East Coast and that they needed to restore it. A few days later one of them contacted the VEE office with a request to discuss this new opportunity for the endowment to make a difference. The Virginia Institute for Marine Science's photos of dead fish with cancerous lesions on them from the polluted Elizabeth defined what a challenge these folks were undertaking. Their determination to restore this historic Virginia river, named in the early 1600s during the reign of King James I in honor of his daughter Princess Elizabeth, proved a compelling tale.

The group said they wanted \$1,375 to start the restoration! That small seed grant has grown a million-fold since that first meeting. Today, led by Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, the Elizabeth



"Princess Elizabeth" christens the Learning Barge. The Learning Barge of the Elizabeth River Project made its splash in 2009 and is the largest environmental education vessel on the Chesapeake Bay. (Ander Photography)

River Project (ERP) maintains an annual budget that exceeds \$1 million and leads the lower Chesapeake Bay in grassroots restoration of Bay tributaries. Its most recent venture is another effort the VEE helped start with grants to the University of Virginia School of Architecture and ERP to work in partnership to design a new kind of learning environment. There is now a wonderful, first-of-its-kind “Learning Barge”—a floating classroom—that has already attracted not only students and teachers from around Hampton Roads, Virginia, to observe and learn but also visitors from Europe and the Far East. The Learning Barge is a solar-powered 120-by-32 foot environmental laboratory, constructed, in part, by a contribution of more than a quarter of a million dollars from Dominion Virginia Power. It was christened on September 14, 2009. More than 1,300 students from nineteen schools visited it in its first two months; it is booked solid through the academic year and has a waiting list of teachers and classrooms ready to pick up on any cancellation. There is also a program for families during the summer.

In 1983 the VEE gave the Lower James River Association, as it was then called, the money to hire its first professional staff. Since that time the VEE has made twenty-two grants to the James River Association, totaling \$515,000. Among the most significant must rank the establishment of the James Riverkeepers for both the upper and lower James and the launch of the James as a pilot project for a Chesapeake Bay-wide program of land and water conservation.

Strengthening the nonprofit sector one group at a time, however, was not enough. Virginia needed a more coordinated approach to achieve consistent results. After the 1989 session of the General Assembly, four legislators, including Delegate Tayloe Murphy and his Senate partner in environmental legislation, Joe Gartlan, came to see the VEE staff. They were frustrated about how the conservation organizations were not as effective as they could be in winning legislative battles over environmental legislation. They saw too much disagreement over too many issues, thus preventing the groups from presenting a united front to the legislature. They asked if the VEE would convene key conservation leaders for a series of meetings to discuss better ways of working together and, if necessary, creating a new organization to coordinate their legislative strategy and priorities. The endowment sponsored three such meetings during 1989. The end result was the formation of what is now known as the Virginia Conservation Network, which includes more than 120 conservation groups in Virginia and helps them collaborate, communicate, and compel attention to their priority issues.

Another example where VEE has made a difference is the land trust movement in Virginia. The Old Dominion has had since 1966 the only state-run land trust in the country. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation was created by the late state senator, FitzGerald Bemiss, with great help from George Freeman. But twenty years ago the Outdoors Foundation had few private partners beyond the Piedmont Environmental Council and the Nature Conservancy. The VEE helped change that situation. One of the first partners in land conservation was the Valley Conservation Council, which Faye Cooper and several of her neighbors in Augusta County started in 1990. Its service area encompasses Botetourt County on the south to Frederick County in the north. The VEE provided early money to help it get started, and it has invested almost a quarter of a million dollars since then to help its fine work. Working with the Outdoors Foundation and the national Land Trust Alliance, the VEE has helped many local land trusts in Virginia and also helped to create an organization called Virginia’s United Land Trusts, which numbers about thirty local groups in its network.



A student (above) visits the Learning Barge to learn about ecology and sustainability. The 120' x 32' barge (below) is powered by sun and wind and equipped with live wetlands and an enclosed classroom. (Above: Ander Photography; below: Courtesy of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority)

Public Science Policy

Another strategy the endowment pursues is the use of science to advance public policy on the environment. Efforts to protect and conserve the Chesapeake Bay illustrate this aspect of its work. When the VEE began, the Chesapeake Bay's restoration was not a priority for state government. That started to change during Gov. Charles Robb's term, when he established the Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future. This "blue-ribbon commission" had "Natural Resources" as one of its six focus areas. FitzGerald Bemiss, who made the Chesapeake Bay a priority for the commission, headed that committee. Senator Bemiss wrote a compelling natural resources chapter for the commission's final report that laid out what Virginia needed to do to protect the Chesapeake Bay. The VEE's board soon thereafter adopted the commission's recommendations for the Bay as the endowment's grant-making agenda for the next several years.



Fortunately, beginning in 1986, Virginia had a governor in Gerald Baliles who not only believed in saving the Bay but who also made it one of his signature priorities, revamping the federal-state partnership that oversaw the Bay cleanup program and leading the program to adopt a comprehensive clean up agreement in 1987. The 1987 Bay Agreement for the first time joined science and public policy in pursuit of the Bay's restoration. The VEE helped fashion that document because Governor Baliles appointed endowment director Gerald McCarthy to the Bay Program's Citizens Advisory Council, which he subsequently chaired during 1988–89.

One result of the focus on the Bay was the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, which was sponsored by Delegate Tayloe Murphy. Enacting such a law was critically important for making the connection between local land use decisions and scientifically based water quality standards. The Institute for Environmental Negotiation, which the VEE helped to establish several years earlier, facilitated the discussions among about twenty interest groups and helped forge the agreement that led to drafting the Bay Preservation Act. Once again Jim Wheat played a significant role as the chairman of this policy dialogue group. The group agreed on a draft bill after about eighteen months of tough negotiations. Delegate Murphy introduced the bill, and it became law in 1988.

One of the 1987 agreement's most important recommendations called for protecting and managing the Bay fisheries in more modern, science-based ways. These recommendations made up the Living Resources section of the 1987 Agreement. More recently, the Chesapeake Bay Year 2000 Agreement called for a plan to be developed by 2005 to manage the Bay's fisheries on a multi-species, ecosystem-based basis. Former governor Linwood Holton, one of the VEE's board members at the time, and a long-time champion of conserving the Bay's fisheries, convinced the board that this was an opportunity to help make that plan happen. Mr. McCarthy was told to find out what the VEE could do to help develop the plan. Many Bay fisheries scientists thought the idea of a new plan was a good one, but there was no consensus about how to do it. Scientists from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) thought they could make it work with a solid investment by the VEE.

The Bay fisheries are managed on a "one species at a time" basis. All too often the principal criterion for establishing the catch limits each year is "How much did you catch last year?" The Bay agreement called for a new approach, one based on integrating a variety of predator-prey relationships, the amounts and kinds of pollution, the various harvest levels of different species, the availability and quality of habitat, the age of the different species, and so on.

The scientists of VIMS are among the best in the country and the world at what they do, which is principally coastal and estuarine science. One of the researchers in 2001 was a young post-doctoral fellow named Rob Latour. The VEE board was so impressed with Latour's and with VIMS's willingness to develop this new way of managing the Bay's fisheries that in March 2001 it approved the largest grant the VEE had ever made: a \$639,000 grant to VIMS for Dr. Latour to develop a multi-species dynamic model in support of sustainable fisheries management in the Chesapeake Bay. Three years later, excited at the progress being made by the VIMS's scientists and their leadership position among the scientific community, the VEE invested another \$195,000 in this new model. Much progress has been made on the scientific side in the years since, and federal agencies have put millions of dollars into developing this approach. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which oversees fisheries management on the east-

ern seaboard, believes this approach is the clear way forward, but they are struggling with exactly how to implement it.

The Chesapeake Bay is not the only area where scientific research grants have informed public policy in Virginia. One of the more highly leveraged grants, in terms of policy changes both nationally and in Virginia, was a series of awards issued in the early to mid-1980s to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). The idea behind these grants was to document the nature of “poison runoff” going into rivers and streams from fields, farms, and urban locations. Culminating in the publication of a book entitled *Poison Runoff: A Guide to State and Local Control of Nonpoint Source Water Pollution* by Paul Thompson of NRDC in 1989, NRDC’s research highlighted the “total maximum daily load” portion of the federal Clean Water Act and demonstrated that not only was it being ignored, but it also spelled out what to do to make it effective. It still took until 1999 before governments at the federal and state level were ready to deal with this portion of the law, and the VEE gave it a big start in Virginia by funding the first-ever model “total maximum daily load” plan for Muddy Creek in the Valley of Virginia with a grant to the University of Virginia Engineering School. Hundreds of such plans have now been developed in Virginia and are a centerpiece of the Chesapeake Bay restoration program adopted at the end of 2010 by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Bay states.

At the University of Virginia, the VEE is currently supporting research by Dr. Lisa Colosi to determine whether there might be a water quality problem with all the hundreds of modern pharmaceuticals being discharged into state waters. Researchers at the College of William and Mary are examining the adequacy of storm water retention ponds as well as another project evaluating the effectiveness of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act’s 100-foot buffer requirement. The endowment is also helping Skip Stiles and Wetlands Watch analyze and make clear the results of higher sea levels on storm surges in Hampton Roads.

In the mid-1980s, working with the Nature Conservancy, the VEE was able to establish a project that the state eventually took over and renamed the Virginia Natural Heritage Program. This is a comprehensive effort to conserve Virginia’s native plant and animal life and the ecosystems upon which they depend. It was started by Michael Lipford, who is now the head of the Nature Conservancy in Virginia. It is one of the VEE’s soundest investments that has resulted in finding thirty species new to science, 300 species newly discovered in Virginia, sixty natural preserves covering 59,901 acres, and the protection of 527 exemplary natural community and rare species locations.

A couple of years ago the VEE put the first dollars into the “Flora of Virginia Project,” which will produce a massive volume—and a web site—that the University of Virginia Press plans to publish by 2012. This new Flora project will document and illustrate all the native and naturalized plants that grow from the Eastern Shore to the mountains in the southwest. Along with the web version, an application will be developed for “smart” phones. It will be a useful tool to botanists and other scientists involved with understanding plant life and their habitat, and it will provide up-to-date knowledge for Virginia’s Natural Heritage Program. It will also provide developers, land planners, and local decision makers with information to help them conserve Virginia’s natural resources and help teachers to meet the state’s Standards of Learning for environmental knowledge. This new “Flora of Virginia” will be the first one pub-



Camp Bethel, Fincastle, Virginia. Students learning to test stream quality.



Weems Elementary School, Manassas, Virginia. Environmental Studies.



Rappahannock River Studies.



1997 ANNUAL REPORT

Virginia Environmental Endowment 1977-1997

Venture capital for the environment. Investing in people, focusing on results.



Heritage High School, Lynchburg, Virginia. Outdoor Laboratory/ Nature Trail.



Governor's School Regional Center in Field biology, Clifton Forge, Virginia. Research on the Jackson River.



Oak Hill Elementary School, Herndon, Virginia. Outdoor Classroom Planting.



Living Classrooms Foundation, Teacher Training on the Potomac River.



J.G. Hening Elementary Chesterfield, Virginia. Installation of Wetland habitat at school.

Community Lutheran Church, Sterling, Virginia. Hedgerow Habitat Trail.

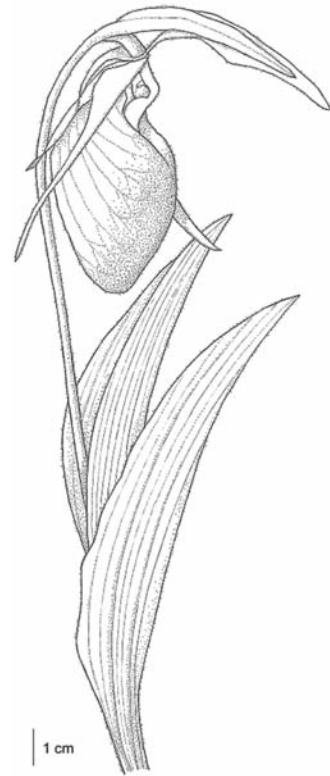
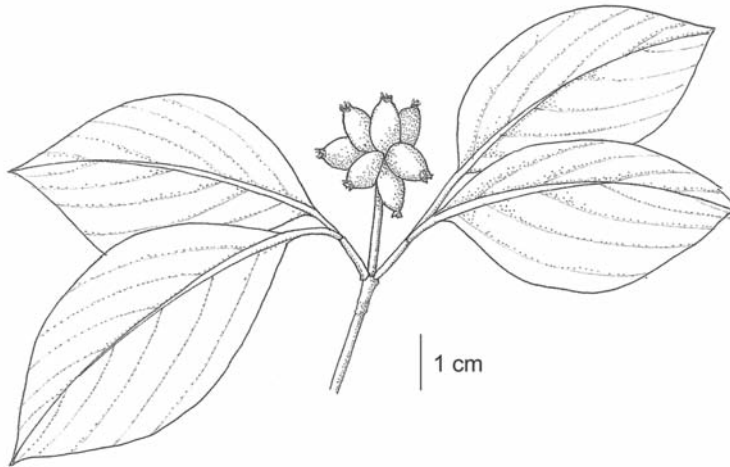


Colonial Beach High School, Colonial Beach, Virginia. Marine Biology Pier, Potomac River.



Marshmuckers from Accomack County, Virginia visit Parramore Island Project by The Nature Conservancy.





*Facing page: The cover of the 1997 annual report of the Virginia Environmental Endowment. These pen-and-ink illustrations of *Cornus florida*, the Flowering Dogwood (above), and *Cypripedium acaule*, the Pink Lady's Slipper (right), were commissioned expressly for the Flora of Virginia project. The project will describe the approximately 3,200 species of plants native to or naturalized in the commonwealth. (Facing page: Folder 112; this page: Lara Call Gastinger © Flora of Virginia Project)*

lished since Thomas Jefferson roamed the woods of Virginia in 1762, and the VEE agreed with many scientists that it was time for a new edition.

Surveying Public Opinion

Another way that the endowment has had an influence on public policy is its willingness to conduct public opinion surveys to help measure support for environmental improvement. This was first attempted in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy, when in 1992 the VEE made a grant to fund a poll to see how much support there was in Virginia for a Parks and Recreation Bond issue. It turns out there was quite a lot, and in the state election later that year the parks bond won with 67 percent of the vote. The poll results helped shape the conduct of the campaign to pass the bond referendum. In 1995, the VEE commissioned a well-known Republican Party pollster to survey Virginians' attitudes about the environment. That poll's results were splashed on all the front pages of the major papers in Virginia, in part because it was the first time such a comprehensive public survey of Virginians' attitudes about the environment had been published, but also because the results showed such overwhelmingly strong support for environmental protection among every segment of Virginia's population. It was quite a contrast to some of the prevailing policy rhetoric of the time, and it turned out to have national implications.

This was the last private job for the pollster, Richard Morris, before he joined the Clinton administration as a top advisor. What he told the president about the Virginia poll results con-



A pen-and-ink drawing of Symplocarpus foetidus, the Skunk Cabbage. (Lara Call Gastinger © Flora of Virginia Project)

vinced President Clinton to talk about the environment for the rest of his reelection campaign. The *New York Times* and *Newsweek* both published stories about the poll's influence on the national campaign discussion.

Today the VEE continues its surveying with Christopher Newport University, and again support for clean energy, conservation, and environmental protection remains very strong.

Money to make it all happen

All of this protection and conservation of Virginia's natural resources takes money, of course, and encouraging the commonwealth to do its share is another way the VEE affects public policy. The endowment had not previously focused on the money question, preferring instead to help develop new policies and laws that would protect Virginia from pollution, impairment, and destruction. The fact is, however, none of those policies or laws would be implemented effectively without state funds for such land conservation and water quality capital improvements as sewage treatment plants and cost-share programs with farmers.

In 2002, speaking at The Garden Club of Virginia's annual legislative forum, Gerald McCarthy encouraged the club to "put their two cents in" with the governor and General Assembly on the subject of money for environmental conservation. The idea was that if the Garden Club could just get the state's investment in natural resources funding up to two cents on the dollar—2 percent—it would really make a difference in protecting water quality and conserving natural resources.

In 2003, the VEE looked at how much Virginia was spending to carry out the mandate of Article XI. It found that there was a disconnect between the mandate and the money: the state



Sunrise on the Chesapeake Bay. (Photograph by Katelyn Thomas)

was investing just 0.6 percent of its General Fund budget in the Natural Resources Secretariat. This earned Virginia “last in the nation” status on per capita spending on the environment. The VEE concluded that a major new effort was necessary to increase the funding, especially for capital investments, such as land conservation, parks and recreation, and water quality improvements, all of which were funded at irregular intervals.

By 2004 an organization called “Virginiaforever” was in place. This is a unique partnership that includes board representation from Dominion, Philip Morris USA, and Smithfield alongside the Nature Conservancy, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the James River Association, among others. Its mission is to convince the governor and the General Assembly to provide significant General Fund support for natural resources conservation, particularly for land conservation and water quality improvements. To their great credit, Governor Mark Warner and Natural Resources Secretary Tayloe Murphy embraced this idea, held a Natural Resources Summit, and by the end of their term had seen to the investment of hundreds of millions of new dollars in land and water programs. Governor Tim Kaine also got on board. He established a goal of conserving 400,000 acres of land during his term and also found a way to finance a quarter of a billion dollars in new water improvements. At its recent height, the new level of natural resources spending reached 1.35 percent of the General Fund budget. The funds the VEE invested in this initiative were the most highly leveraged grants it had ever made: hundreds of thousands of dollars between 2002 and 2008 helped to gain hundreds of millions in new state support for Article XI’s mandate.



Above: VEE Virginia Program Mini-Grant funds provide students from Crestwood Elementary School in Chesterfield County with equipment to monitor and report on the water quality of Lake Page and nearby streams. (Folder 1541)

Mini grants

The VEE has made more than 275 mini grants, with amounts up to \$5,000 each, and totaling almost \$1 million over the past twenty years. These have been for such programs as outdoor school classrooms and local community water quality projects. The VEE has gotten a lot of “bang for its buck” with these grants and has stimulated literally hundreds of community-based environmental education programs all across Virginia. Further, in partnership with Dennis



Students from Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg through a Virginia Naturally Classroom Grant get hands-on environmental education experience. VEE partners with the Virginia Resource Use Education Council, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation to sponsor the Virginia Naturally Classroom Grants. (Courtesy of Virginia Naturally)

Treacy of Smithfield Foods, Ann Regn of the Department of Environmental Quality, and Suzie Gilley of the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, the VEE recently leveraged another \$75,000 into \$437,000 for more than 600 additional small, but highly productive, classroom grants to elementary, middle, and high schools in the commonwealth. Fifty-six of those grantees recently completed an online survey that, among other results, stated that they alone reached over 13,500 students.

Kanawha and Ohio River Valley Grant Program

In 1981 the VEE received \$1 million from a court settlement between the federal EPA and FMC Corporation, which had been discharging carbon tetrachloride into the Kanawha River just down river from Charleston, West Virginia. In accepting these funds, the VEE agreed not only to use them specifically for water quality purposes in the watershed of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers but also to expand its charter nationwide. The endowment has made approximately \$3 million in water quality grants since receiving the FMC settlement. Two of the major investments over those years led to the creation of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the only statewide nonprofit focused on improving that state’s water quality, and the creation of the Kentucky Watershed Watch, which operates a volunteer water quality monitoring program throughout all river basins in Kentucky.

Martins Ferry-Ohio River Grant Program

In 1990 the VEE received \$250,000 from settlement funds paid by the Wheeling-Pittsburgh

Steel Corporation. These funds were used over the next decade to benefit the Ohio River in the Martins Ferry, Ohio, area and to fund Ohio River educational programs in public schools serving Martins Ferry. From 1991 through 2000, the VEE approved ten grants in this program that totaled \$313,402.



Students from J. J. Kelly High School in Wise County obtain water for stream analysis of Glade Creek. (Folder 1579)

Conclusion

In the fall of 2009, the board of the VEE approved a significant grant to the VHS to establish the Robert R. Merhige, Jr., Environmental History Archives. This collection will include papers from former governors Holton and Baliles about their environmental initiatives, many corporate papers documenting such private environmental efforts as those of Reynolds Metals Company, materials from the VEE, and much more.

Since its founding, the VEE has worked hard to help Virginians improve the quality of their environment. It has done this by encouraging different interests to work together as a community with a shared interest in environmental conservation; by strengthening conservation organizations' ability to participate effectively in public policy development and decision making; by increasing Virginians' ability to monitor water pollution and restore health to all the state's waters; by redefining how the ecologically and economically valuable Chesapeake Bay fisheries are to be managed; by helping to expand the land trust community in Virginia; by helping to launch the Virginia Natural Heritage and the

Flora of Virginia programs; by starting environmental education programs and outdoor classrooms all across the commonwealth; by helping to secure additional hundreds of millions of dollars in new investments for Virginia's water quality and land conservation programs; and finally, by reminding those who temporarily occupy positions of public confidence that Virginians consistently support their efforts to improve the quality of Virginia's environment. The commonwealth now has one of the best groups of nonprofit conservation organizations in the country, and the VEE salutes these groups that do the important daily work of conservation in the nonprofit and educational arenas. Looking to the future, the VEE anticipates no lack of opportunities to continue to make a difference in Virginia.

Gerald P. McCarthy
Executive Director, VEE

Records of Virginia Environmental Endowment

The historical and operational records that constitute the VEE archive established at the VHS were gathered from the VEE's offices in Richmond over a period of several months. They have been categorized into series, reflecting how the VEE manages its resources, encourages proposals and issues grants, and promotes the study and discussion of environmental issues in the larger community. The guide to the records that follows this introduction presents the collection through these various categories of records, but it also provides more detailed information on specific aspects and contents of the records in order to extend accessibility. The VHS anticipates additions to the collection over the coming years as operational records can be moved to an archival status. The online version of this guide will track such alterations to collection content through future submissions of appropriate records to the archive.

Using This Guide

Each of the categories of VEE records in the collection, designated as "series," focuses on a specific aspect of the VEE's history or operations. Each series contains a brief introduction to its materials, followed by a listing of particular folders in that series and any subset of the records. In a number of cases, additional descriptive detail is provided, especially in regard to the focus, goals, and outcomes of specific grant-funded projects. A container list located at the conclusion of the folder listings provides essential information about locations of folders.

This guide is designed to alert potential researchers and other interested users to the contents of the VEE records at the VHS. Users in the society's library reading room may examine portions of the collection for research purposes by requesting materials by box or folder number. The VHS is also willing to photocopy, digitally photograph, or digitize reasonable amounts of specific materials for users who may request such copies on-site or remotely. Such requests may be made to the VHS reference staff via reference@vahistorical.org. Users should also be aware of VHS policies in regard to the provision and use of copied materials, which can be found on the reproductions page of the VHS web site (www.vahistorical.org/reproductions).

Following page: The cover of the 1991 annual report of the Virginia Environmental Endowment. (Folder 106; photograph by Karin Anderson)