

Virginia State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the six years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grants Program has played an important role in the conservation of Virginia's wildlife. The following are some of the projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:

Conservation: Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife Virginia's "Green Sea"



Cavalier Wildlife Management Area/ VDGIF

Habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation caused by human development are among the most serious threats to wildlife communities in Virginia. Using State Wildlife Grants and other funding, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries purchased 3,800 acres in southeastern Virginia that continue public and private efforts to safeguard the Great Dismal Swamp, which once covered more than 3,600 square miles. The Cavalier Wildlife Management Area provides habitat to over a hundred different neotropical migratory bird species and many other wildlife. Plantings of Atlantic white cedar and long-leaf pine at Cavalier will expand these unique habitats for many species found only in this part of Virginia. As Virginia's communities grow, this effort will help the state fulfill its responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

Restoration: Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas Freshwater Mussels



Musselrama/ VDGIF

The health of freshwater mussels is often an early indicator for disease and pollution that affect us all. Of the 81 species of mussels that live in Virginia, half are federally or state listed as endangered or threatened species and others are declining at an alarming rate. State Wildlife Grants are being used to propagate mussels in a hatchery and then release them into streams to bolster and restore these declining populations. Outreach to private landowners is also helping to restore and enhance mussel habitat. This is a proactive approach that will prevent more mussels from becoming endangered, and benefit the health of wildlife and people while saving taxpayer money.

Management: Proactive Measures that Benefit Wildlife and People Eradication of Zebra Mussels



Zebra Mussel Eradication / VDGIF

In 2002, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries confirmed the only known occurrence of invasive exotic zebra mussels in a quarry in western Prince William County. Escape of zebra mussels would result in costly impacts to water supply systems, power generating facilities, and other industries across the Commonwealth. Although zebra mussels affect a variety of wildlife species, the impacts to the state's native freshwater mussels would be catastrophic. Eradication of zebra mussels from this quarry, funded in part by State Wildlife Grants, was the first time that an open-water population of this size has been eliminated and completely removed zebra mussels from the Commonwealth. By eliminating this threat, we ensure the health and survival of many wildlife species so that future generations can continue to enjoy their beautiful sounds and colors.

Congress has appropriated \$8.6 million in State Wildlife Grants to Virginia since 2001. This has been matched with at least \$2.2 million state and partner dollars.