

Aug. 23, 2016 Press Release: Nature Conservancy, *VIRGINIAforever*, Trust for Public Land

Study: Return on Virginia investment in land conservation

An economic analysis conducted by The Trust for Public Land found that for every \$1 invested by the state in land conservation, \$4 in natural goods and services is returned to Virginia's economy.

The study, conducted in partnership with *VIRGINIAforever*, The Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy, quantifies and summarizes the significant economic benefits resulting from investments in state parks, natural areas, forests and working lands.

Land conserved in Virginia provides a host of benefits that have a measurable economic value to the Commonwealth and its communities. These benefits include generating jobs and growing local economies through support of outdoor recreation, tourism, forestry, farming and commercial fishing operations; improving quality of life and enhancing economic development through Virginia's scenic beauty; promoting fiscal health on land under conservation by avoiding costs of expensive infrastructure and other municipal services associated with residential property; and improving human health through physical activity of residents and workers who use parks and conserved lands.

A fact sheet highlighting the results of study is attached to this news release. The full study can be found at www.tpl.org/va-roi-report.

Kent Whitehead, director of The Trust for Public Land's Chesapeake Bay Field Office, stated: "In addition to Virginia's strong outdoor recreation economy, natural goods and services like water quality protection, air pollution removal, preservation of wildlife habitats and carbon sequestration are all direct results of land conservation. The results of this new study demonstrate that land conservation is incredibly valuable to the Virginia economy."

According to Nikki Rovner, vice chair of *VIRGINIAforever* and associate state director for external affairs of The Nature Conservancy, "Land conservation is critical for Virginia residents, our economy and for our future. *VIRGINIAforever* advocates for increased state funding for land conservation, and this study clearly shows that state appropriations made by the General Assembly each year benefit all Virginians and are truly providing a significant return on investment."

Virginia's business community is encouraged by the study's findings. Virginia Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Barry DuVal stated: "Protecting and conserving Virginia's natural, historic and recreational resources are key to the long-term goals for sustainable economic growth in *Blueprint Virginia*. This study supports the wisdom of that approach to making Virginia a terrific place to not only work, but also to live and visit."

The Trust for Public Land's study methodology included a thorough literature review of the natural goods and service provided by 15 ecosystems in Virginia that have been conserved with state funding and used the economic values of these ecosystems to estimate an economic return on the natural goods and services provided.

About *VIRGINIAforever*

VIRGINIAforever is a diverse coalition of businesses, environmental organizations and outdoor enthusiasts that advocates for increased funding for water quality improvements and land conservation across the Commonwealth. We are the only statewide organization that has a primary focus on increasing funding for natural resources protection. For more information, please visit www.virginiaforever.org.

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Millions of people live within a one-half mile walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. To support The Trust for Public Land and share why nature matters to you, visit <http://www.tpl.org>.

About The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect the lands and waters on which all life depends. Together with its more than 1 million members and 600 scientists, the Conservancy has protected 120 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers worldwide, and operates more than 100 marine conservation projects globally. The Conservancy works on the ground in all 50 U.S. states and more than 69 countries. To learn more, visit www.nature.org.