

**Increasing Participation of Socially Disadvantaged Farmers in Virginia
Department of Conservation and Recreation Programs and Services
by
Virginia State University- Small Farm Outreach Program (VSU-SFOP)**

VSU-SFOP wishes to partner with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to conduct an outreach and technical assistance project with a goal to increase participation of socially disadvantaged farmers (SDF) in Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) programs and services through outreach and technical assistance. Project area consists of 54 Virginian counties (*see-attached map*). The counties are zoned for easy navigation, and each zone has a resident VSU-SFOP Field Representative who provides services to the producers within the zone. These counties are selected due to the high concentration of SDF that operate their farming businesses in them (Out of the 2,897 estimated SDF in Virginia, 2,341 operate within this project area). Over the years, VSU has developed a good relationship with these producers in delivering USDA programs and services. Project team will apply strategies used for several years in reaching and providing technical assistance for this project. Therefore, VSU-SFOP will partner with DCR to conduct an outreach and technical assistance project to SDF, with the expected outcome of an increased participation in DCR programs and services. To achieve the desired outcome, the following activities will be conducted over a two-year period, with a budget of \$250,000 from DCR.

Activities:

- VSU-SFOP will collaborate DCR to assemble and disseminate outreach materials to enlighten 1,000 SDF on DCR programs and services. These materials will be disseminated through our mailing list and by VSU-SFOP Field Representatives who live within the communities that they serve.
- VSU-SFOP and DCR project teams will meet to discuss the project and to train VSU Field Representatives on DCR programs.
- VSU-SFOP will collaborate with DCR to plan and conduct 16 (8 per year) outreach meetings in all zones within the project area. These outreach meetings will enable the DCR team to discuss their programs directly with the producers and how to have access to their programs.
- VSU-SFOP Field Representatives alongside with DCR Representatives will conduct over 300 one-on-one farm visits to conduct outreach and technically assist SDF to access DCR programs.

Expected Outcomes:

- 500 will increase awareness on DCR programs and services
- 200 will indicate interest is applying for one or more DCR conservation programs
- 100 will actually apply for DCR conservation programs
- 50 will receive technical assistance on DCR Conservation programs

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WORLD

Founded in 1882, Virginia State University is one of Virginia's two land-grant institutions and is located 20 minutes south of Richmond in the village of Ettrick. VSU's College of Agriculture consists of three academic departments: Agriculture, Hospitality Management, and Family and Consumer Sciences. Integrated within the College are an Agricultural Research Station; Randolph Farm, a 417-acre research and educational facility; and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; Jewel E. Hairston, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.

Randolph Farm Demonstration Site:

Randolph Farm is VSU-College of Agriculture's largest outdoor classroom, research, and demonstration facility. At just over 416 acres, Randolph Farm's southern boundary is anchored by the Appomattox River. The farm's arable land is characterized by hydric soils and does have sub-drainage tiles installed. However, majority of this land remains perennially wet due to damaged or deteriorated drain lines and outflows, impenetrable soil pans, and(or) poor slopes. Over the years, we have work implemented various management practices to improve soil drainage, water and sediment runoff, and overall land productivity.

In 2019, the Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP) entered a three-year partnership to demonstrate on-farm livestock and grazing systems to small farmers with the Minority Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont (MVFP). While this partnership provides many tangible objectives in support of the tripartite land-grant mission of the University, it afforded an opportunity to implement long overdue conservation practices and improve existing infrastructure. Specifically, a comprehensive plan to improve grazing management, water and sediment runoff, and forage productivity was developed for Randolph Farm to support SFOP's partnership with MVFP, agricultural research studies, and extension demonstration projects.

Improvements and practices planned and demonstrated through this comprehensive plan include, but are not limited to:

- CCI-CNT- Continuous No-till Planting
- SL-8A- Protective Cover for Agricultural Cropland
- SL-15B- Continuous No-Till Forage Production System
- SL-6N- Stream Exclusion with Narrow Width Buffer and Grazing Land Management
- SL-11B- Farm Road, Animal Travel Lane, Heavy Use Area Stabilization
- SL-8H- Harvestable Cover Crop
- SL-10- Grazing Land Management

Note: Above practices listed were pulled from DCR's 2021 Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Manual.

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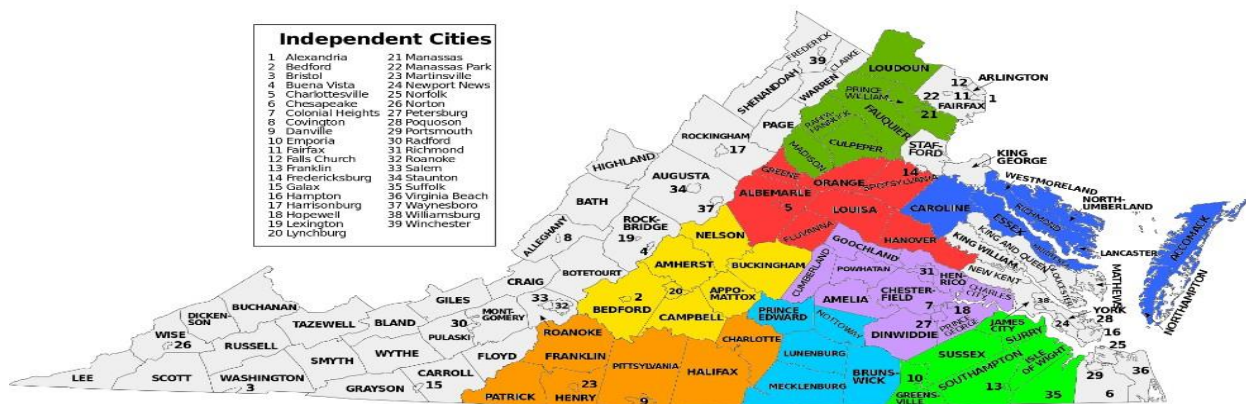
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VSU-SFOP Project Counties

Zones	Project Counties	# AAF	#HF	AP	AIF	NHF	Total
Zone 1	Charlotte, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania	372	52	9	28	7	468
Zone 2	Brunswick, Greenville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, P. Edward	251	35	0	8	0	294
Zone 3	Isle of Wight, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry, Sussex	154	12	5	7	0	178
Zone 4	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Buckingham, Campbell, Nelson	144	61	20	6	11	242
Zone 5	Amelia, Charles, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Henrico, P. George, Powhatan	225	43	21	9	1	299
Zone 6	Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Hanover, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania	142	40	26	11	0	219
Zone 7	Culpeper, Fauquier, Loudoun, Madison, P. William, Rappahannock	186	173	82	14	9	464
Zone 8	Accomack, Caroline, Essex, Lancaster, Middlesex, Northumberland, N. Hampton, Richmond, Westmoreland	96	55	17	9	0	177
	Demographic make-up in Project Counties	1,570	471	180	92	28	2341
	Total number of these demographic groups in Virginia	1,693	845	259	168	32	2,897

KEY: (Farmers) AAF-African American, AIF-American Indian, HF-Hispanic, NHF- Native Hawaiian, AP-Asian Producer

Table was deduced from: USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2017. Census of Agriculture – County data (Tables 48-54). www.agcensus.usda.gov/publication/county-level/virginia/index.asp



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