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Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund Established ILF – Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Karen Johnson

November 8, 2018

Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund

The Trust Fund - well established in-lieu fee mitigation program in Virginia with a documented history of success.

- Leader and model program within mitigation field
- Conservation benefits are the highlight of our program success
- Significant impact in Virginia and beyond





BACKGROUND

The Nature Conservancy

- Established 1951
- Protection of more than 20 million acres of lands and waters in the U.S.
- All 50 states
- 35 countries
- 400 scientists



VARTF – Establishment

1995 – MOU establishes program



2003 – MOU amended - streams



→ 2008 Federal Mitigation Rule published

2011 – VARTF Program Instrument

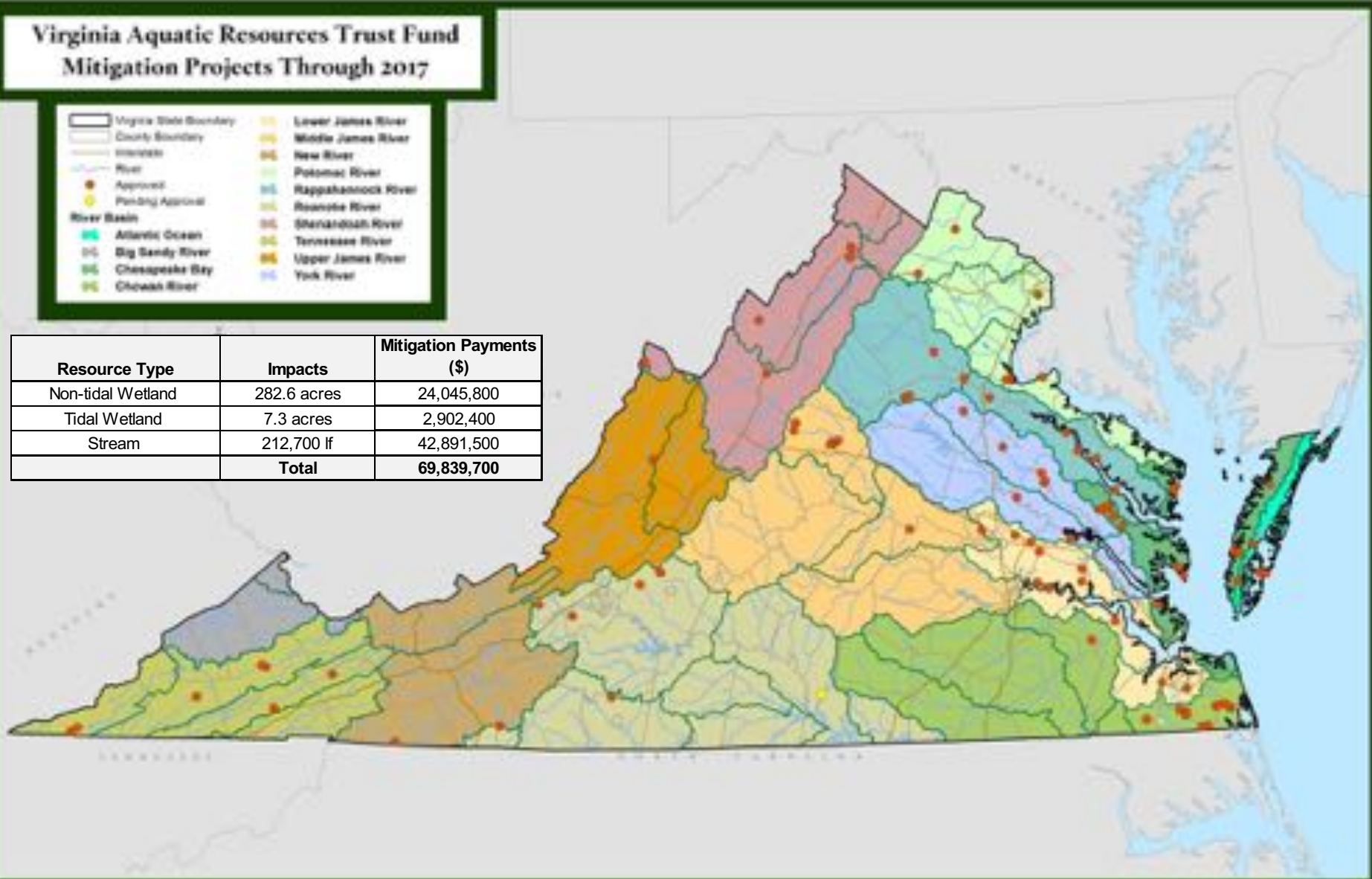


Program Scope – 120+ Sites

Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund Mitigation Projects Through 2017



Resource Type	Impacts	Mitigation Payments (\$)
Non-tidal Wetland	282.6 acres	24,045,800
Tidal Wetland	7.3 acres	2,902,400
Stream	212,700 lf	42,891,500
	Total	69,839,700



A photograph of a forest stream with water flowing over rocks, surrounded by dense green foliage. A semi-transparent white box is centered over the image, containing the word "OPERATIONS" in a dark blue serif font.

OPERATIONS

Program Operation

TNC's Role – identify, propose, implement projects



Program funds are used to cover ALL costs associated with each project

Restoration

Long-term
stewardship

Acquisition

Management

Trends

Advance Credit Sales

- Follow economy, development needs
- Areas with no mitigation banks
- Cyclical

Project Development

- Early – easier, increased partner
- Now – more strategic, challenging, timing

Regulatory

- 2008 regulatory changes
- Equivalent standards
- Impact on process



Program Highlights – Agency Use

- 5 – Natural Area Preserves
- 4 – Deed of Dedication



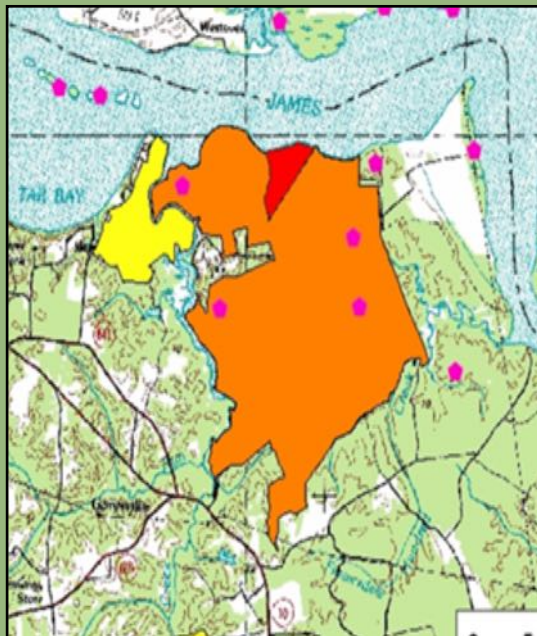
- 2 – acquisition of NWR lands
- 2 – funded FWS easement acquisition



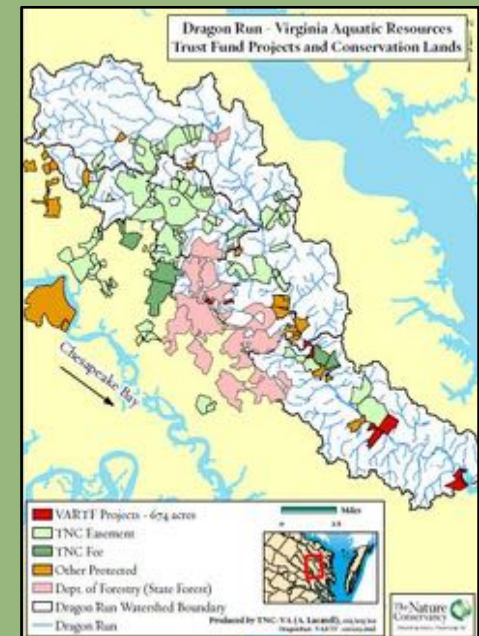
- 5 – Transferred to DOF



- 2 – sites planned for transfer to DGIF
- 1 funded easement co-held by DGIF



- 2 sites sold to NPS for inclusion in Parkway
- 1 project planned for transfer upon completion of restoration



A wide-angle photograph of a reforestation site. In the foreground and middle ground, numerous young saplings are planted in rows. Each sapling is protected by a light green, cylindrical sleeve. The ground is a mix of brown, dry grass and patches of blue water, suggesting a wet or recently flooded area. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains covered in sparse, leafless trees under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons Learned – Ways to Improve

→ Agency constraints

Prioritize agency workload

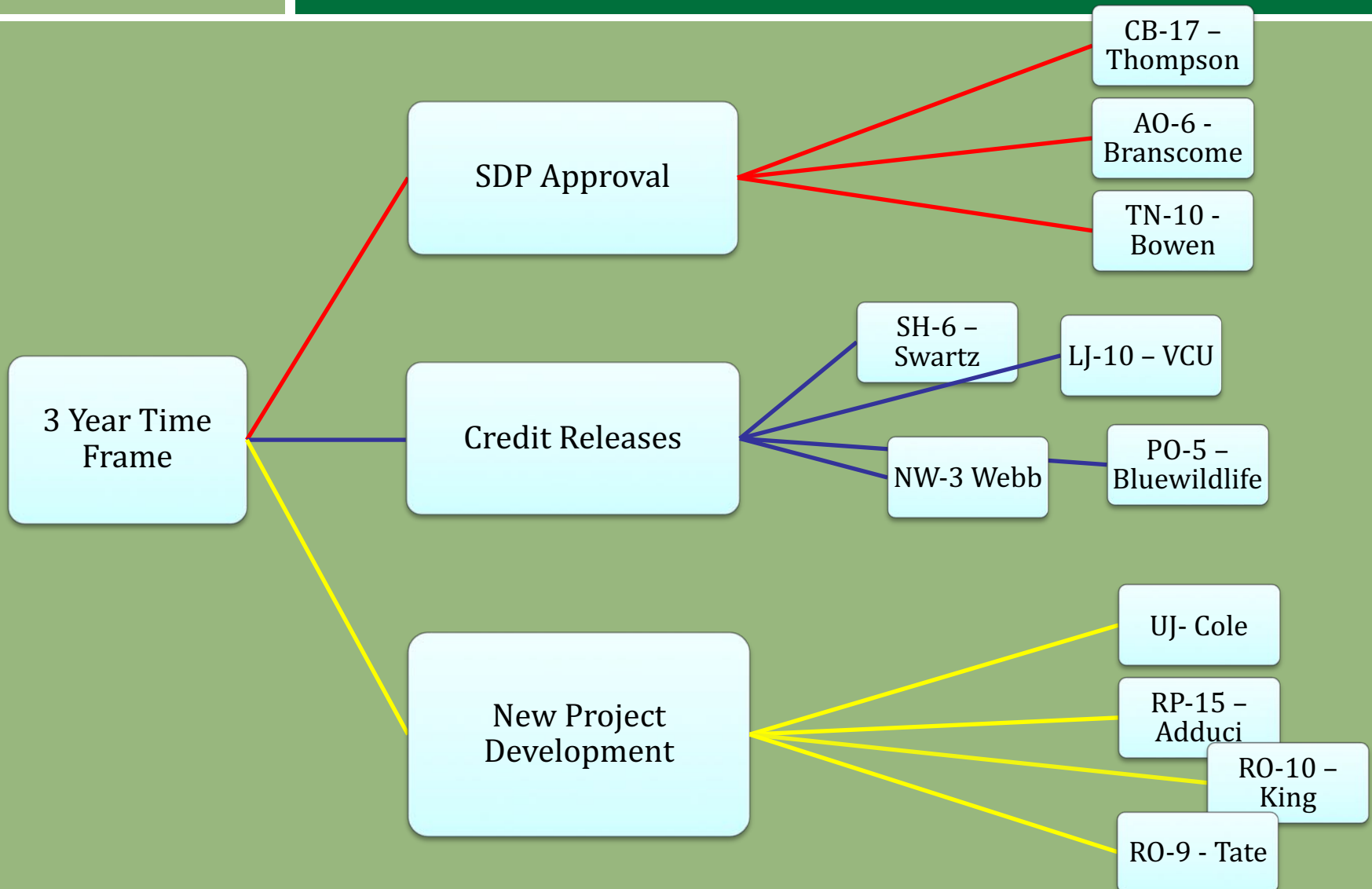
Recognize inefficiencies

→ TNC

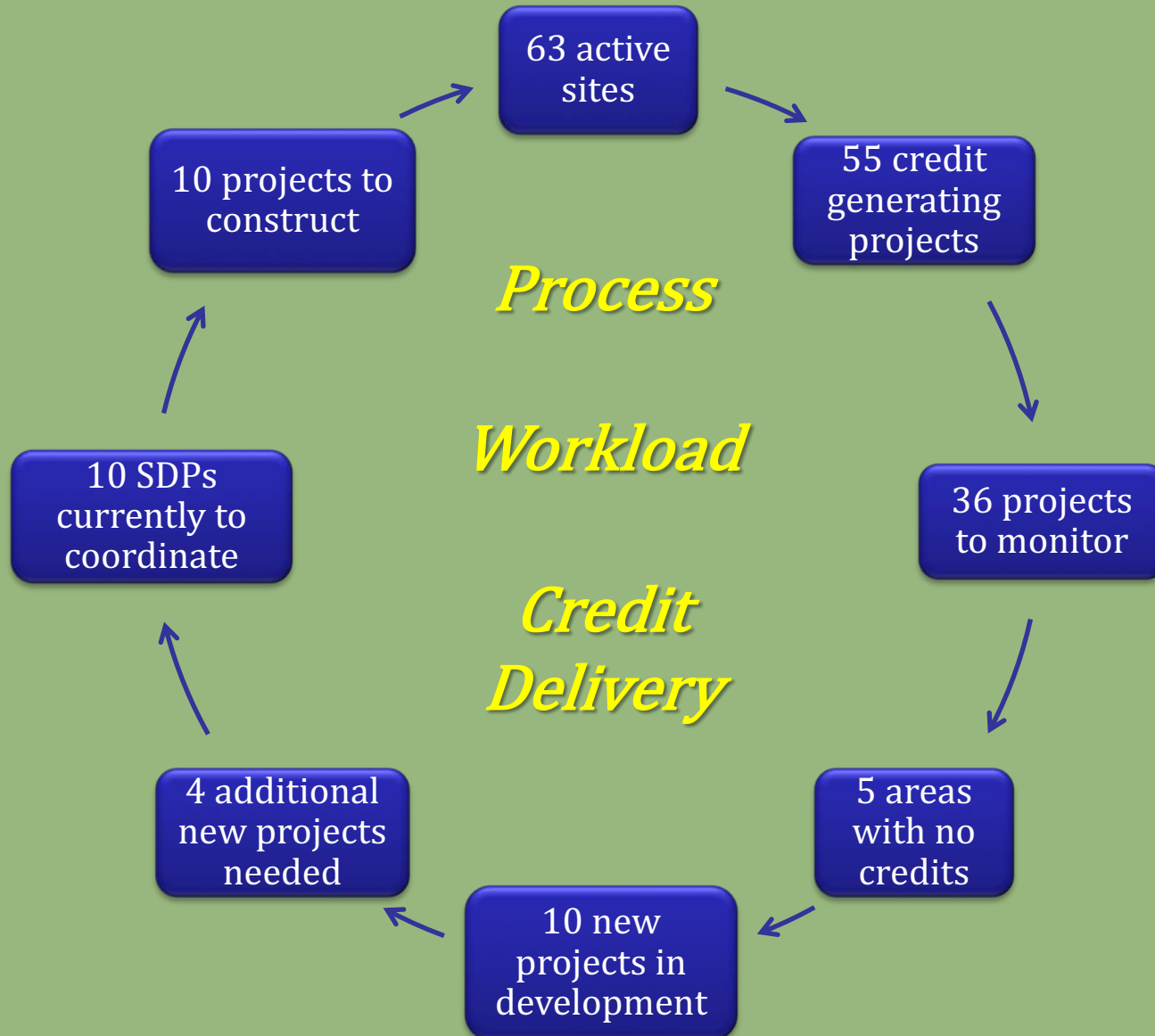
Fewer, larger projects

Start early

Workload Prioritization



Program Constraints



Best Practices



- Template documents
- Standard Operating Procedures

Modifications and revisions as needed

- Audit
- Regulatory challenges

Prioritization

- Communication
- Shared goals and objectives

Partnership

Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund

Questions??



www.nature.org/vartf

