



**VIRGINIA  
OUTDOORS  
PLAN 2024**

**Briefing for the Chesapeake Bay  
Commission**

**Virginia Delegation**

August 9, 2024







# What is the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)?

- A **Land and Water Conservation Fund** requirement
- A **5-year Commonwealth-wide** planning document
- Supports **grant funding prioritization**
- Reflects broader **policy initiatives**
- A **recreation centric** and **conservation-oriented** planning tool
- Includes a recreation-interest **survey of Virginia's residents** (Virginia Outdoors Survey)



# Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

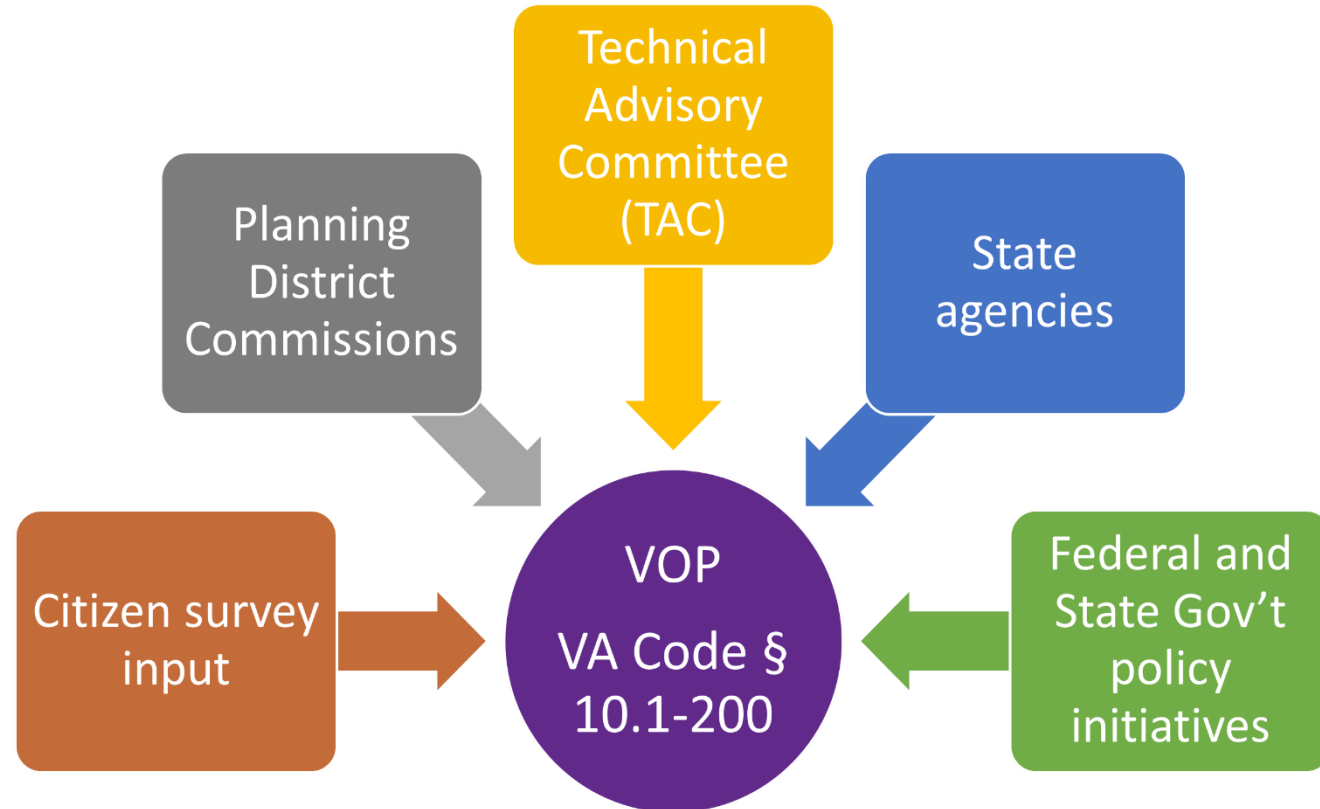
## LWCF Act of 1965

- Administered by the U.S. Department of Interior – National Park Service
- A Federal, State and Local Partnership with a **State Assistance Program**
- Provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of **public outdoor recreation areas and facilities**
- Property is **protected in perpetuity** for the purpose of outdoor recreation



# Best in Class Recreation For All

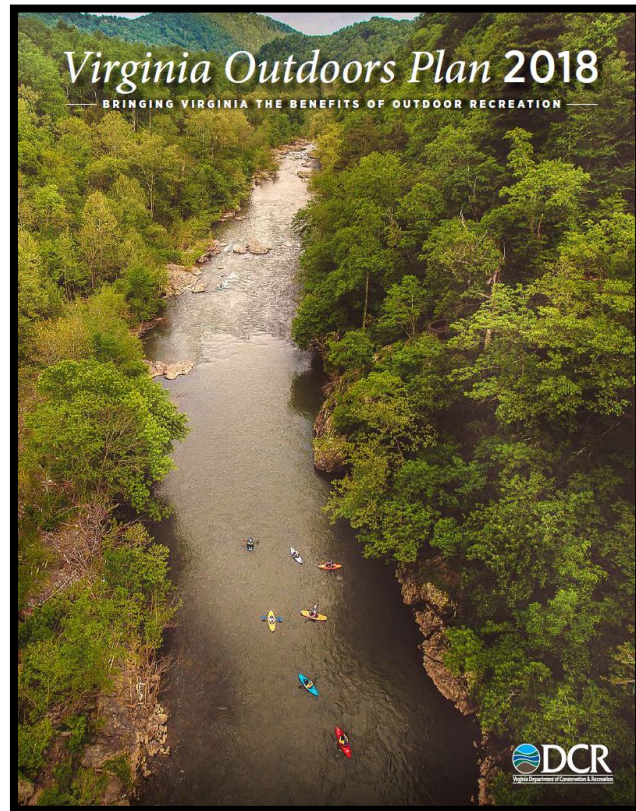
Developing the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan





# 2018 VOP vs 2024 VOP

From Print to Digital



Printed and electronic PDF



Web-based and navigable

# Past VOPs vs 2024 VOP

## Benefits of a web-based plan

### VOPs through 2018

- 250-800 pages, printed document
- Static – PDF only
- Limited mapping capability
- Chapters as Region-Planning District Commissions with the same information and duplicate recommendations in each chapter

### 2024 VOP

- Interactive and dynamic communication platform for VOP collaboration
- Will include a printed, *key* summary document
- More spatial and data tools to support planning and policy
- Recommendations and information organized by topic with regionalized and interactive data tools from the survey





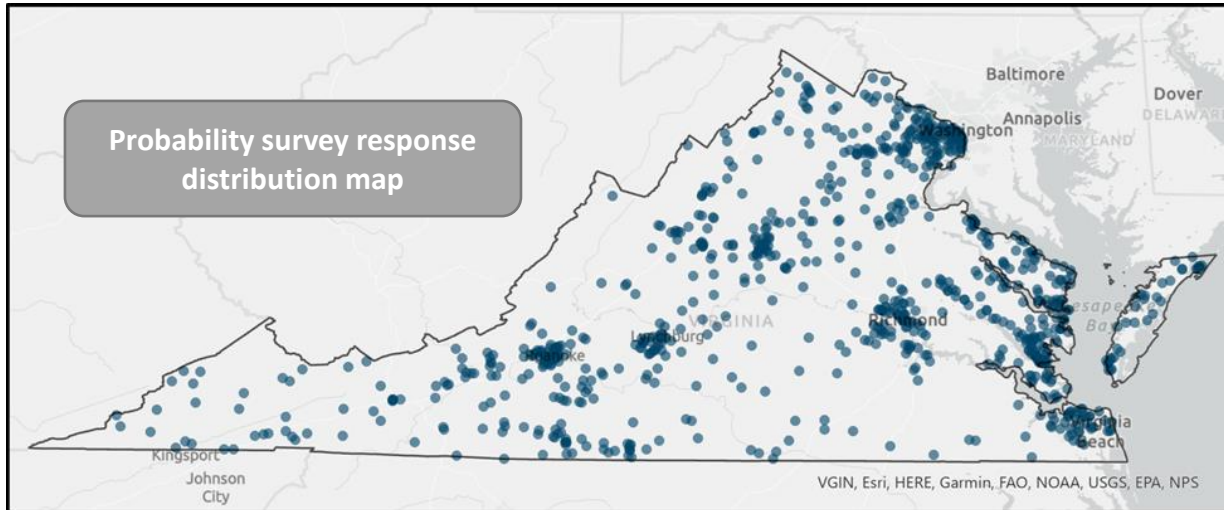
# The 2024 VOP is *Distinctive*

Uses community engagement software, data, and tools by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

- The **first-of-its-kind** statewide plan, this product is a digital, living document.
- It contains the latest linked resources and partnership opportunities to **plan recreation projects and find grants**.
- **Policy-makers** can use the site to learn about recreation and conservation projects, needs, and challenges across the state.
- As a **two-way communication platform**, this VOP allows stakeholder groups to join the platform for collaboration and information exchange.



*A navigation block on the VOP Home Page*



# The 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)

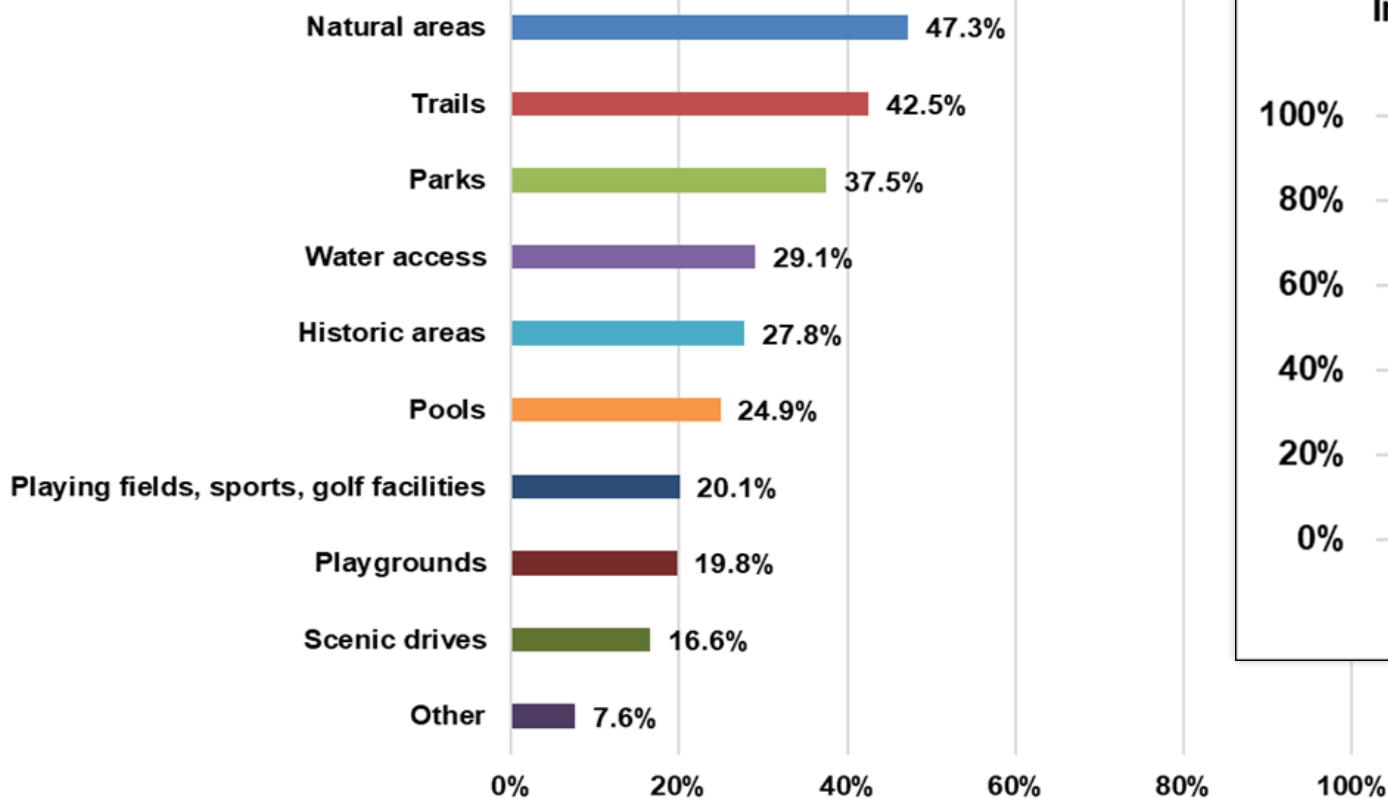
Led by Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Government and Public Affairs under lead researcher, Dr. Jim Ellis

- **Statistical-Probability** results for **accurate representation of Virginians by demographic and region**
- **Crowd-source online survey** captures recreation interests of the general population in Virginia and organized stakeholders
- **Survey results** reveal interests defined by:
  - geography and proximity to recreation resources
  - demographic variables
  - activities that residents enjoy
- Results **assist outdoor recreation providers, conservation partners, locality professionals and advocates** in
  - Planning
  - Grant-seeking
  - Policy

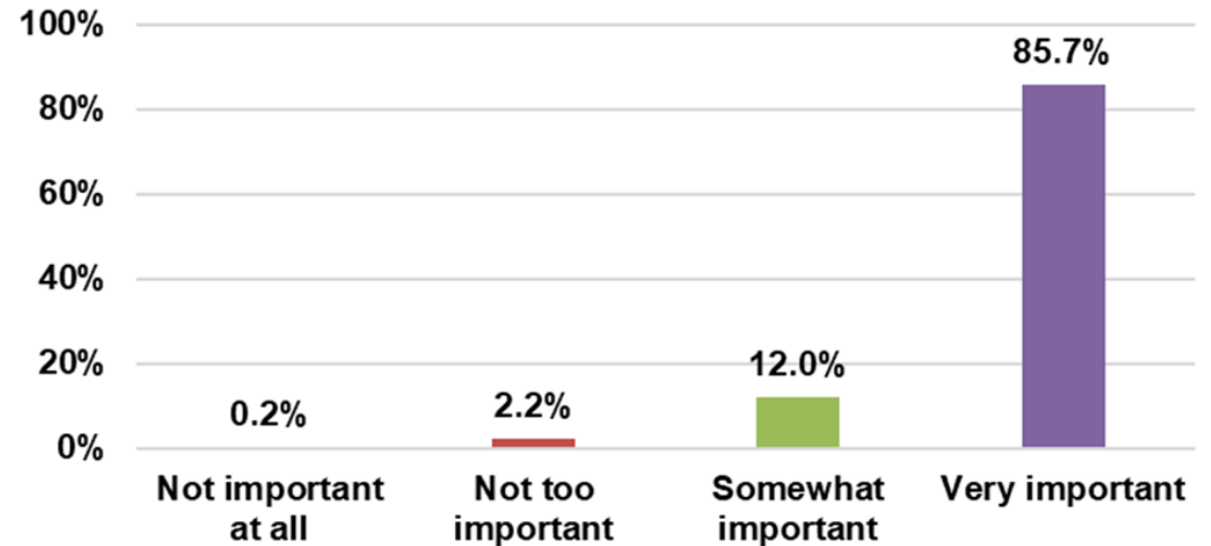


# Survey Results - What do Virginians value?

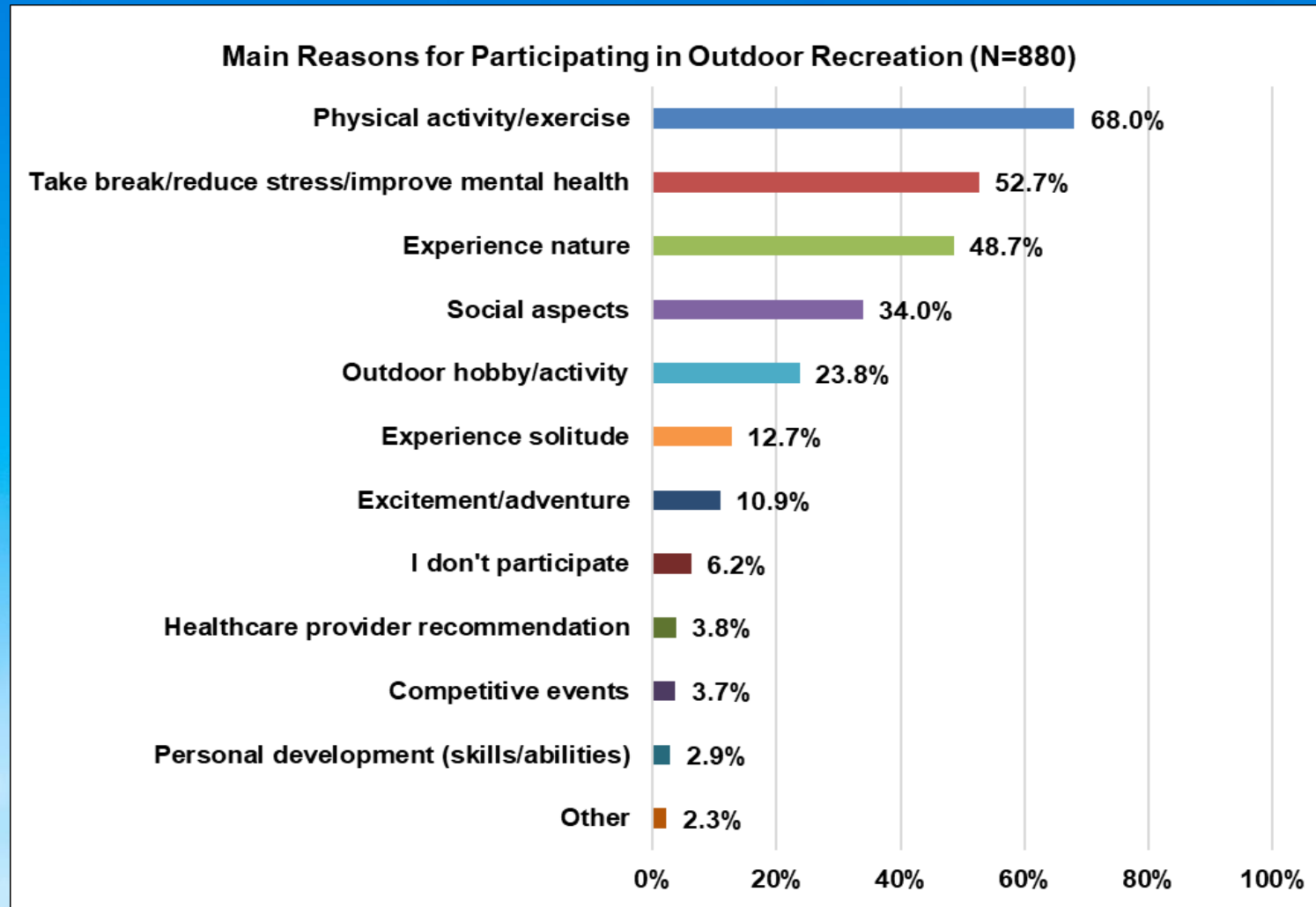
Most Needed Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Virginia (N=793)



Importance of Protecting Virginia's Natural and Open Spaces from Development (N=797)



# Survey Results - Why do Virginians participate in outdoor recreation?





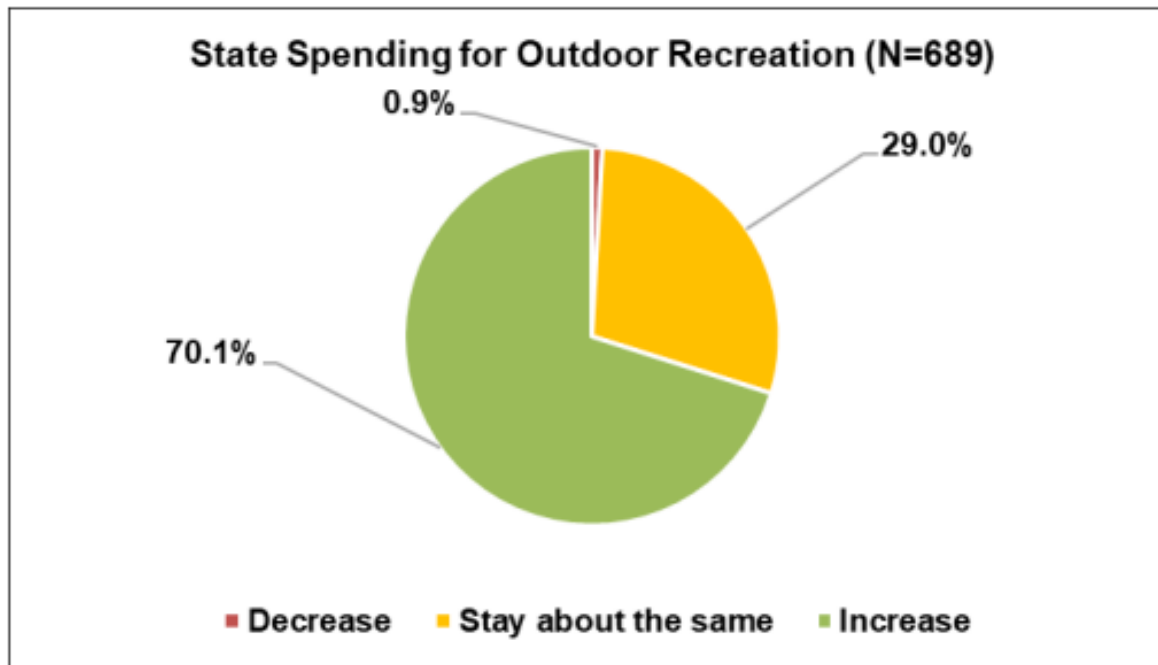
# Survey Results – Recreation Funding

## Recreation Funding and Amenities: Probability Sample

### State Spending for Outdoor Recreation: Probability Sample

In Question 47, a majority of probability sample respondents (70.1%) indicated that, given all the priorities for the state to fund, state spending for outdoor recreation should increase. Almost 3 in 10 (29.0%) suggested that spending stay about the same. See Figure 41.

**Figure 41: State spending for outdoor recreation, 2022 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* probability sample respondents**





# 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey Report of Results

Prepared for:  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
December 2022

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SERL0144

# Survey Results Only Available as Tables and Figures

Questions, responses, tables and figures are across more than 150 pages of the VOS Report.

2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey Report of Results

December 2022

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Table 15: Activities – Done in the last 12 months, 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey crowd-source respondents

Activities – Done in the last 12 months Crowd-source respondents	Overall total wCol %	DCR Region				
		Region 1 wCol %	Region 2 wCol %	Region 3 wCol %	Region 4 wCol %	Unknown wCol %
Walking for pleasure	70.0%	63.4%	69.1%	67.8%	74.5%	55.4%
Visiting parks (local, state, national)	64.5%	60.7%	62.3%	60.1%	69.3%	54.7%
Visiting natural areas	50.4%	42.0%	48.9%	48.1%	54.8%	39.9%
Viewing the water	49.8%	50.9%	42.9%	42.5%	56.6%	42.7%
Canoeing/kayaking	48.0%	51.8%	47.5%	51.7%	48.2%	44.2%
Nature-based tours/trails	47.5%	42.9%	40.1%	46.1%	51.9%	42.9%





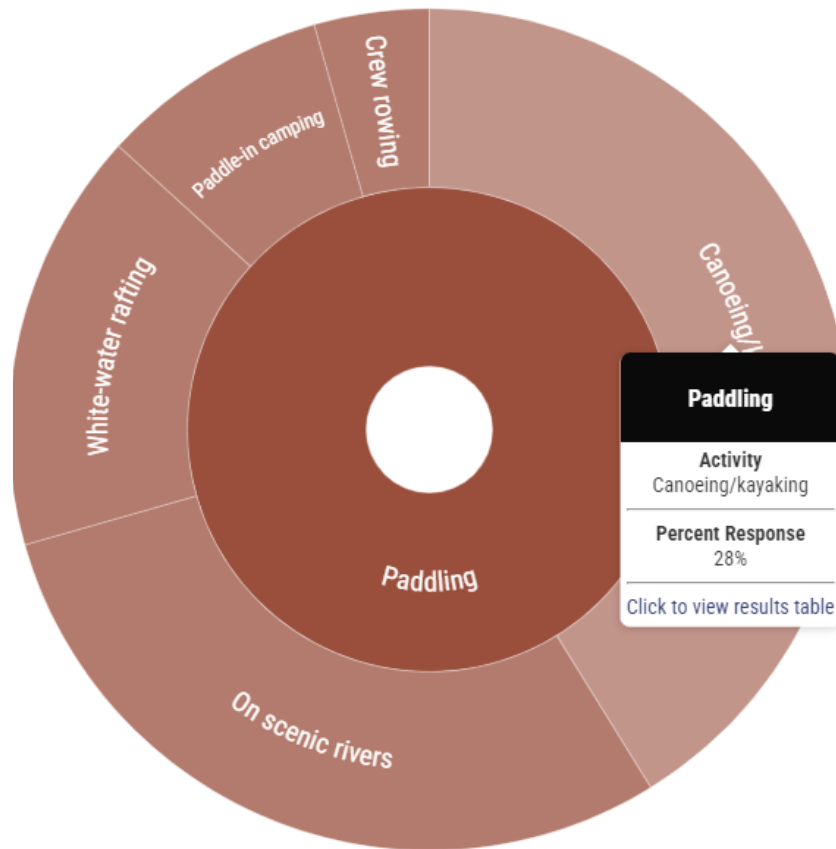
### Water-Based Activities VOS Respondents say are 'Most Needed'

Click on the wedges to reveal weighted statistical results for each activity within the group.  
Use the arrow to go back one step.



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Click on the wedges to reveal weighted statistical results for each activity within the group.  
Use the arrow to go back one step.



# Spatial and Interactive Survey Data

Results from the **2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey Report** are now *also* available as **interactive dashboards** that contain all the data once limited to individual tables or figures for each survey question.



# Spatial and Interactive Survey Data

Regionalized survey results are included with mapped recreation data for simultaneous **spatial analysis**.

A **demographic variables** dashboard shows questions and results that stood out between statistically weighted demographic groups – **a first for the Virginia Outdoors Plan**.

The screenshot displays the Virginia Outdoors Plan 2024 website interface. At the top left is the logo for "VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN 2024". To its right is a navigation menu with links: "Table of Contents", "Virginia Outdoors Survey (VOS)", "Federal and State Grants Guidance", "Maps and Plan Resources", "VOP FAQ", and "VOP Library". In the top right corner, a light blue box contains the text "Inside the VOP HUB".

The main content area is titled "Virginia Outdoors Survey Results and Regional Analysis Dashboards". It features a grid of interactive dashboard cards. On the left side of this grid is a vertical sidebar with icons for editing, settings, and refresh.

- Region 1 Analysis - Recreation Activities:** Includes a map of Region 1, a title, a subtitle "Dashboard - Virginia Outdoors Survey results. Region 1.", and a "Go To Dashboard" button.
- Region 2 Analysis - Recreation Activities:** Includes a map of Region 2, a title, a subtitle "Dashboard - Virginia Outdoors Survey results. Region 2.", and a "Go To Dashboard" button.
- Region 3 Analysis - Recreation Activities:** Includes a map of Region 3, a title, a subtitle "Dashboard - Virginia Outdoors Survey results. Region 3.", and a "Go To Dashboard" button.
- Region 4 Analysis - Recreation Activities:** Includes a map of Region 4, a title, a subtitle "Dashboard - Virginia Outdoors Survey results. Region 4.", and a "Go To Dashboard" button.

Below the regional analysis cards are two larger dashboard cards:

- VOP Regional Analysis - Recreation Values and Preferences:** Features a map of Virginia divided into West Virginia and Virginia, with a bar chart below showing data points: 42.1%, 45.8%, 42.3%, 42.7%, and 54.2%. The title is "VOP Regional Analysis - Recreation Values and Preferences". The subtitle is "A visual and interactive dashboard derived from reported data results in the 2022 Virginia Outdoors Survey." It includes a "Go To Dashboard" button.
- VOS Results - Demographic Variables in Responses:** Features a large circular icon with a white picnic table on a gold background. The title is "VOS Results - Demographic Variables in Responses". The subtitle is "Find and filter the questions and results of the Virginia Outdoors Survey based on certain demographic variables." It includes a "Go To Dashboard" button.



# The Chesapeake Bay Commission and 2024 VOP

## VOP Priorities

- A. Effective collaboration for outdoor recreation** planners, managers, and community members.
- B. Prioritize recreation facilities and amenities that improve recreation experiences for all:** underserved communities, improve safety, and enhance protection of natural, cultural, scenic resources. Make positive impacts to community health.
- C. Fund and prioritize facilities maintenance and appropriate development** on local and state recreation lands, and plan for the necessary staff and equipment to do the work.
- D. Improve ecological resiliency** and outdoor recreation facilities for long-term resiliency.

## Potential Shared CBC Areas of Interest

**Outdoor Recreation**  
**Water Quality Improvement**  
**Climate and Flood Resilience**  
**Invasive Species Management**



# Water Quality and Recreation

## Resources management for recreational enjoyment

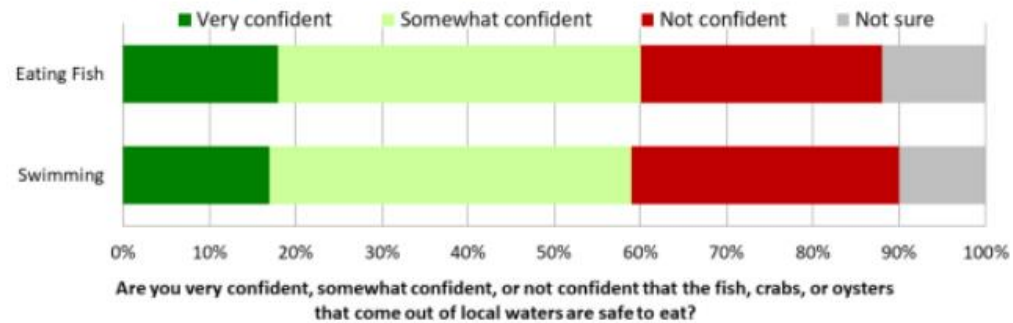
Many recreational activities depend on good water quality. Poor water quality, and public perceptions of poor water quality, directly impacts fishing, swimming, or floating in open water, and the presence of wildlife.



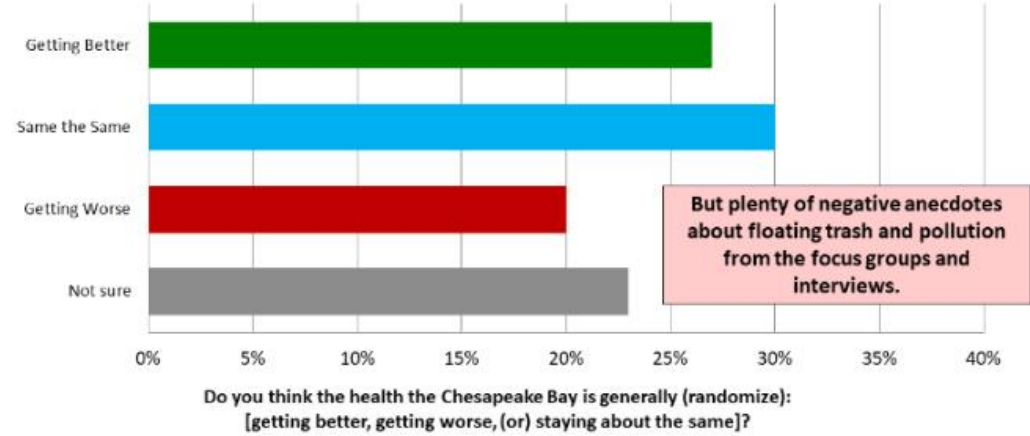
## Barrier #1: Pollution

### Lack of Confidence in the Local Waters

Safety of Eating What Comes Out of Local Waters and Swimming in Those Waters



## Emerging Positive Trend in Bay Health



Virginia's wetland systems support a variety of outdoor recreation experiences that include boating, fishing, wildlife viewing, and hunting. The state boasts about 1 million acres of wetlands, and the majority are located in the coastal plain\*. Degraded and fragmented wetlands do not support outdoor recreation activities that Virginians enjoy. To support long-term recreation enjoyment, wetlands should be prioritized for protection and be restored to connected and functional ecosystems.

\*Virginia Wetland Program Plan





# Flood Resiliency and Recreation Planning

### Coastal Resiliency

Floodwater impacts from higher and more intense precipitation – and changes to the tidal floodplain areas from sea level rise and geologic subsidence – are changing the way planners consider the landscape.

The Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan (CRMP) is a document to guide the Commonwealth's flood resilience in the face of sea level rise and coastal flood hazard exposure. It



## Coastal and Water Resources

### Dam Safety and Floodplains Open Data Hub

Open data hub for DCR Dam Safety and Floodplain Management

[Go To Map](#)

### CRMP Web Explorer

Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan, Coastal Resilience Web Explorer

[Go To Map](#)

## VOP Recommendations that support resiliency objectives

- Consider conservation values, purposes, and consider how the landscape may predictably change over time in project acquisition, planning, and design. (3.1.1)
- Virginia's state agencies and local governments that own and manage recreation land, trails, and water access sites should work together, and with non-profit experts, to enhance and restore public access areas for climate change and flooding resiliency. (3.1.5)



# Invasive Species and Resiliency

## Resources management for recreational enjoyment

Freshwater and saltwater recreational fisheries are further impacted by resources demand, invasive species like the blue catfish and Alabama bass, and structural barriers to fish migration. Virginia's in-shore and off-shore recreational fishing opportunities are impacted by human activity, increasing water temperatures, and declining habitat. Long-term recreational enjoyment is reliant on successful conservation and restoration efforts on land and in water, and responsible use and management of ecologically stressed marine resources.

## Invasive Catfish Workgroup

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique, regional partnership working together to meet the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net>



“

Parks are being overwhelmed by non-native invasive plants. I would estimate that half of the plants at one of the Virginia parks that I go to are non-native invasive plants. Invasive removal should be more of a priority in parks.

*Survey respondent, Virginia Outdoors Survey Report*

*An excerpt from the StoryMap,  
“Recreation Land Conservation”*

## VOP Recommendations that support invasive species management objectives

- Plant regional native plants and seek opportunities for habitat restoration projects and habitat management plans that facilitate more resilient landscapes with biodiversity. (3.1.5)
- The Virginia Invasive Species Working Group recommends funding and staff resource support for ecological restoration with invasive control and eradication across conserved and preserved lands, including developed parks and natural areas. (3.1.5)
- Fully implement the 2018 Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan. (3.1.5)





# Next Steps...

To publish by 2024 deadline

- Public Comment Period (ended July 31)
- Governor's approval
- A printed summary document
- National Park Service approval
- Go live!
- Continued engagement



# Thank You

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