



nature forward

Managed Conservation Landscaping in HOAs

How Virginia can benefit from HB528

Renee Grebe, Northern Virginia Conservation Advocate

June 5, 2024 | Presenting to the Virginia Housing Commission

HB528: Managed Conservation Landscaping in HOAs

Provide HOA residents the right to install managed conservation landscaping on their private property, if desired.



Photo credit: Melinda Soltys

Other state's HOA conservation landscaping laws

Focus on water conservation /
low-water usage gardening

- Florida ([2009](#))
- California ([2012](#))
- Texas ([2013](#))
- Colorado ([2023](#))



Other state's HOA conservation landscaping laws

Focus on water conservation /
low-water usage gardening

- Florida ([2009](#))
- California ([2012](#))
- Texas ([2013](#))
- Colorado ([2023](#))



Focus on rain retention /
low-impact landscaping /
habitat

- Maryland ([2021](#))
- Maine ([2023](#))





Mythbusting

MYTH:

Native plantings are messy.
They hurt property values



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Blogs > Economists' Outlook

Unveiling the Greener Future: Insights from the 2024 Sustainability Survey - Residential

May 23, 2024

📌 Sustainability

By: Sidnee Holmes

“The study's results suggest that the industry is right at the beginning of a "green revolution...Nearly half of the respondents noted that their clients expressed some level of interest in sustainability. This reflects a broader societal shift towards eco-conscious living... “

<https://www.nar.realtor/blogs/economists-outlook/unveiling-the-greener-future-insights-from-the-2024-sustainability-survey-residential>



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6 Ways to Improve Curb Appeal While Spending More Time at Home

June 29, 2020

📌 Curb Appeal

5. Right plant, right place

Selecting native plants ensures your landscaping will thrive, and it will also require less water and upkeep.

6. Plant for pollinators & wildlife

Native plants attract local pollinators and wildlife, adding an extra-special touch to showings.

<https://www.nar.realtor/blogs/styled-staged-sold/6-ways-to-improve-curb-appeal-while-spending-more-time-at-home>

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Better Homes & Gardens

These Are the Top Curb Appeal Updates for 2024, According to Experts

By [Kristine Gill](#) | Published on April 20, 2024

“When it comes to curb appeal, landscaping is king... landscaping should **incorporate native plants for your region**, incorporating any views on your lot as wow factors. “

<https://www.bhg.com/top-2024-curb-appeal-updates-8633461>

House Beautiful

Rewilding Is the Biggest Gardening Trend of 2024

Here's how to bring it home.

BY ARRICCA ELIN SANSONE | PUBLISHED: MAY 26, 2024



Photo credit: Renee Grebe

<https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/g60884562/rewilding-garden-trends-2024/>





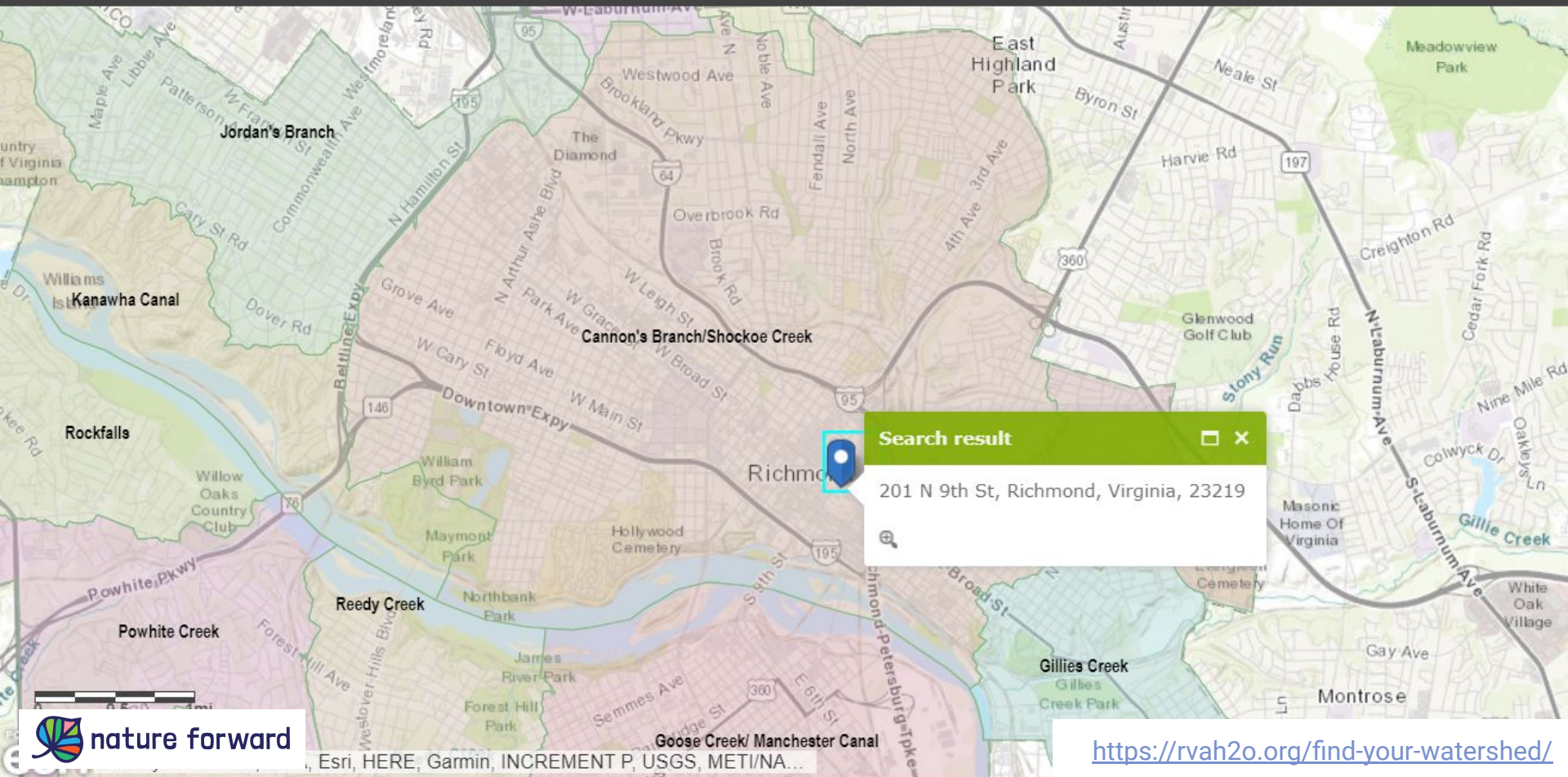
What do you think?

Mike & Sian Pugh's story (*Loudoun County*)

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair tied in a bun with a pink hair tie. She is smiling and drinking water from a silver outdoor fountain. Her eyes are closed, and her tongue is sticking out to catch the water. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

What is a watershed and why does it matter?

What's Our Watershed Address?

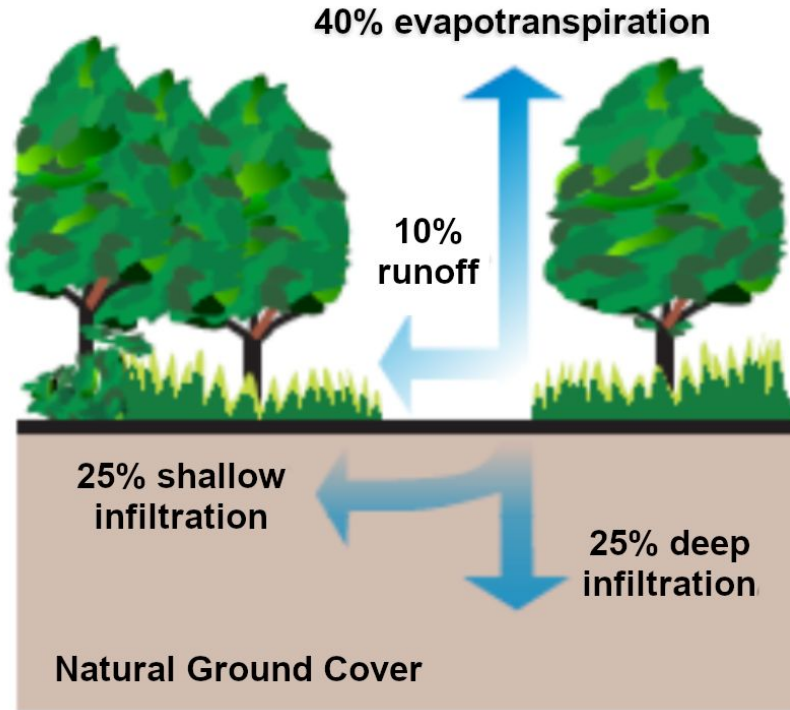


60% of Virginia
is in the
Chesapeake
Bay Watershed



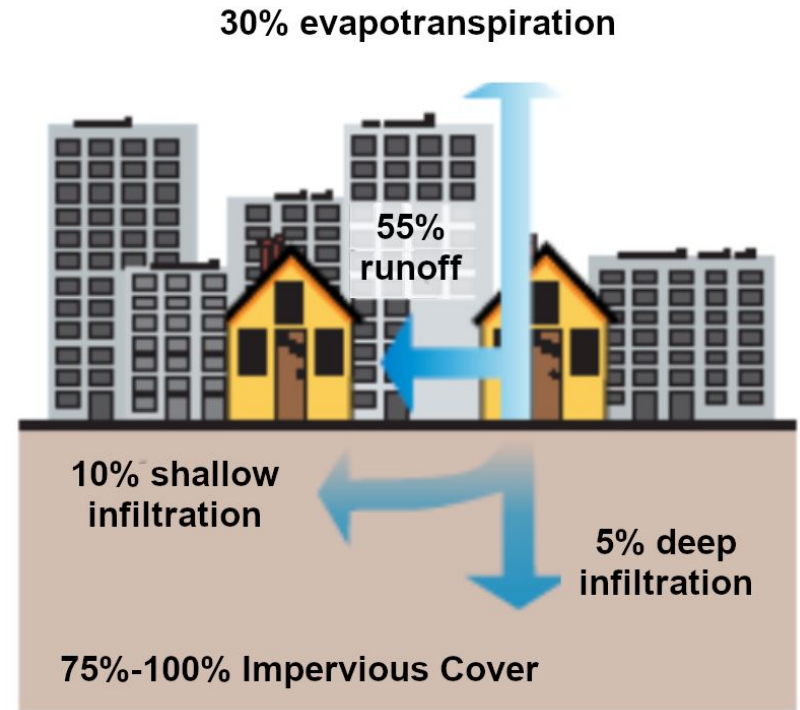
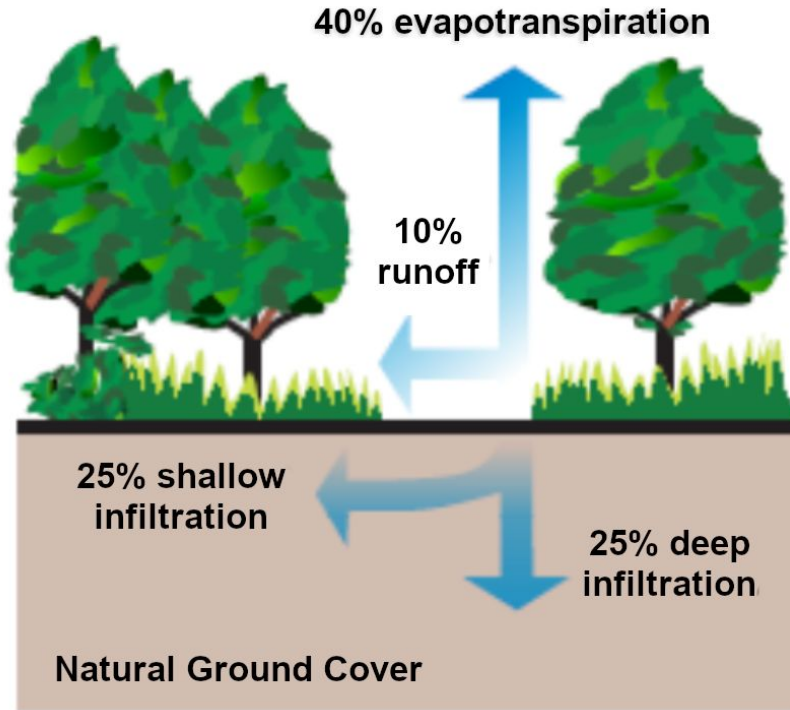
<https://dof.virginia.gov/water-quality-protection/learn-about-water-quality-protection/chesapeake-bay-watershed-and-virginia/>

Stormwater runoff impacts watersheds



https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/epa_swm_guidance.pdf

Stormwater runoff impacts watersheds



https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/epa_swm_guidance.pdf



MoCo DEP



Turkey Branch



Streambank erosion at Watts Branch in Potomac

\$1,300+ per linear foot to repair damaged streams



Turkey Branch



Streambank erosion at Watts Branch in Potomac

Millions to repair a stream segment



Turkey Branch



Streambank erosion at Watts Branch in Potomac

Two types of water pollution

Point source



Nonpoint source



Nonpoint source pollution impacts watersheds



75% of Bay pollution loads come from nonpoint source pollution

Point source



Photo credit: Renee Grebe

Nonpoint source



Photo credit: Pixabay.com

<https://virginiamercury.com/2023/05/10/report-details-why-progress-to-clean-up-the-chesapeake-bay-has-been-slow/>

75% of Bay pollution loads come from nonpoint source pollution

Point source

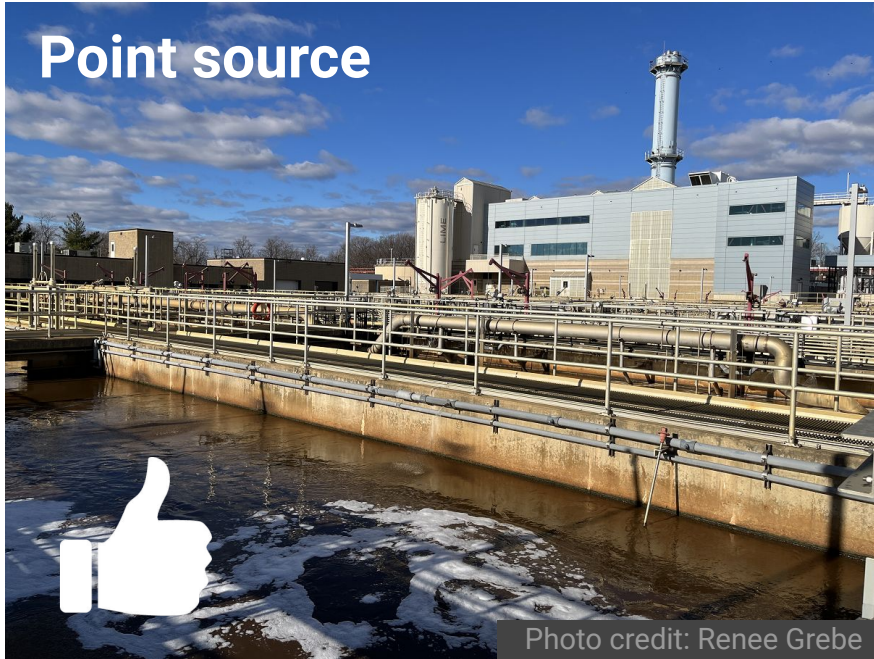


Photo credit: Renee Grebe

Nonpoint source



Photo credit: Pixabay.com

<https://virginiamercury.com/2023/05/10/report-details-why-progress-to-clean-up-the-chesapeake-bay-has-been-slow/>

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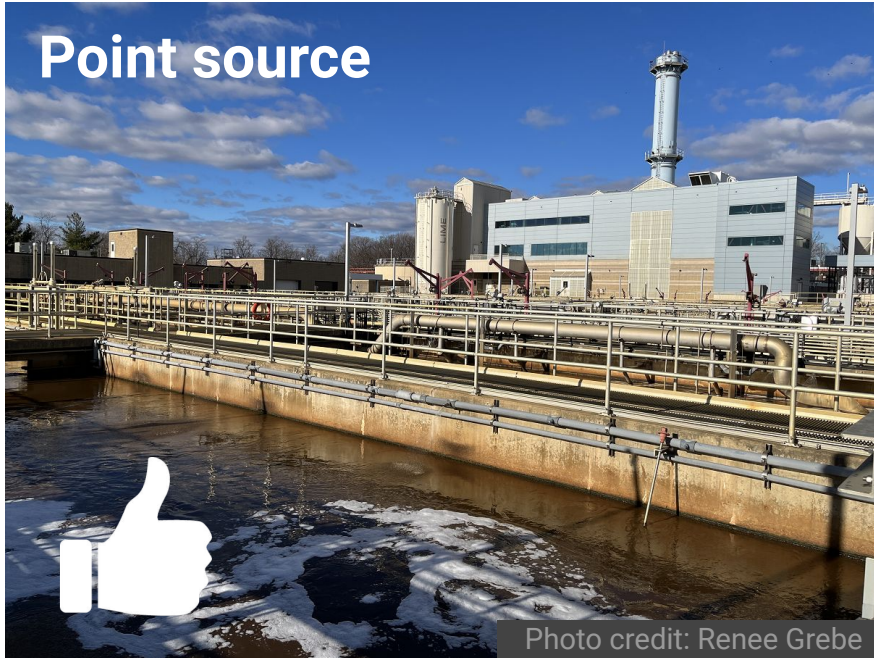


Photo credit: Renee Grebe

Nonpoint source



Photo credit: Pixabay.com

<https://virginiamercury.com/2023/05/10/report-details-why-progress-to-clean-up-the-chesapeake-bay-has-been-slow/>

2023 Virginia Stats about communities with associations



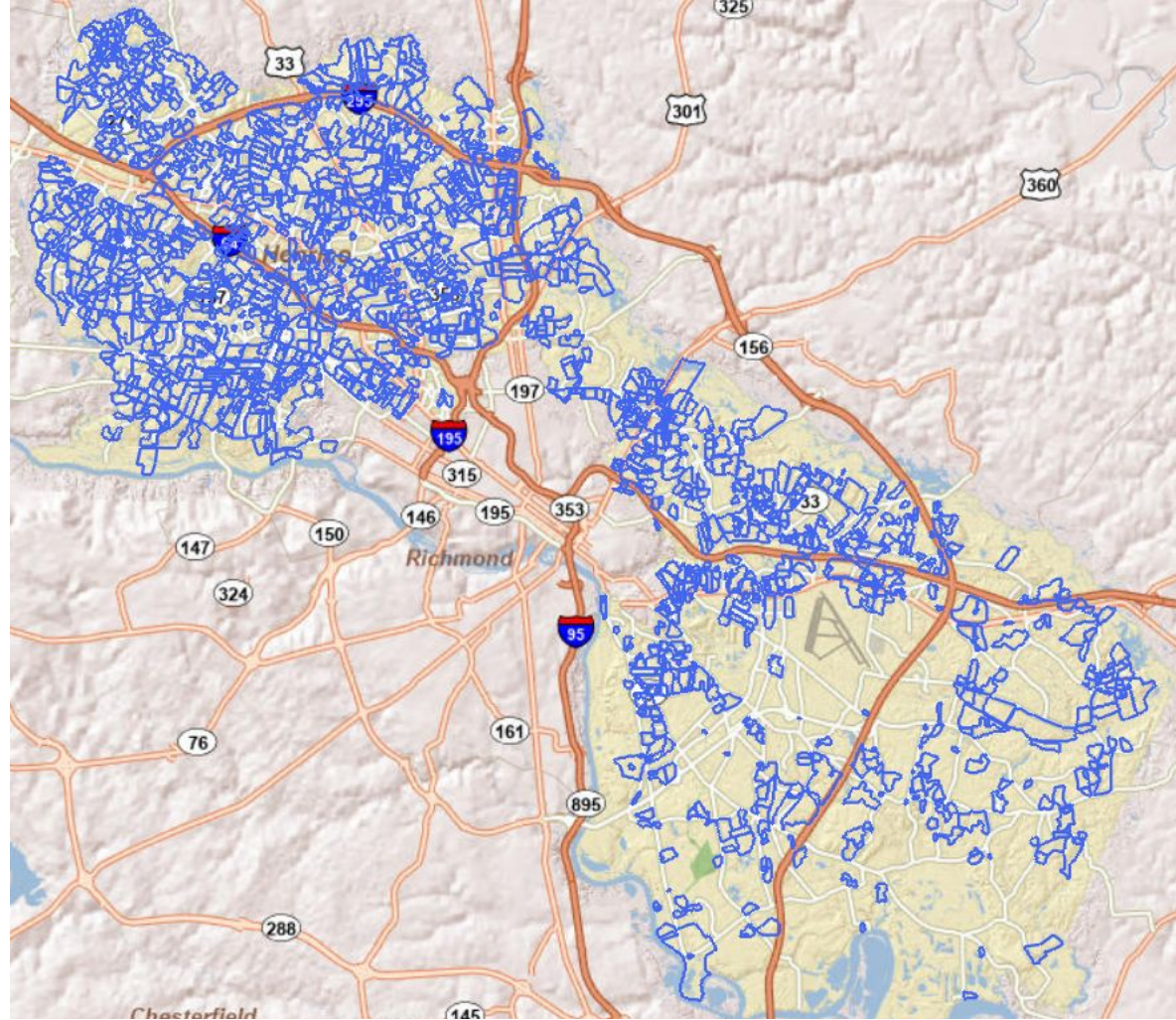
- 9,100 associations
(12th in the US for number of associations; 36th in state size)
- 2,050,000 residents living in associations
- 23%+ of Virginians live in associations



<https://foundation.caionline.org/publications/factbook/fact-book-2023-dashboard/>

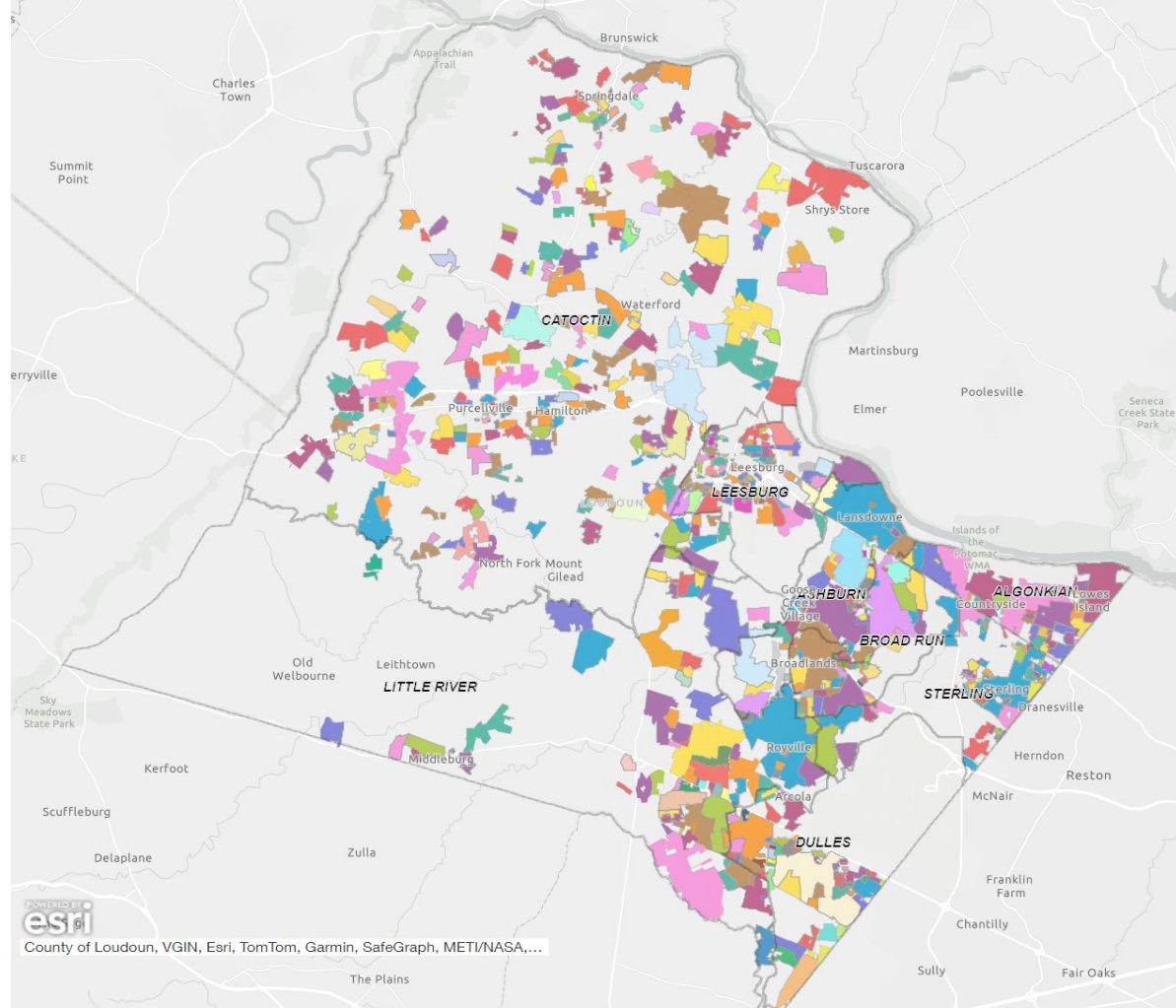
Henrico County HOAs

<https://henrico.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=82dec890f5b34854989eb51883a18409>



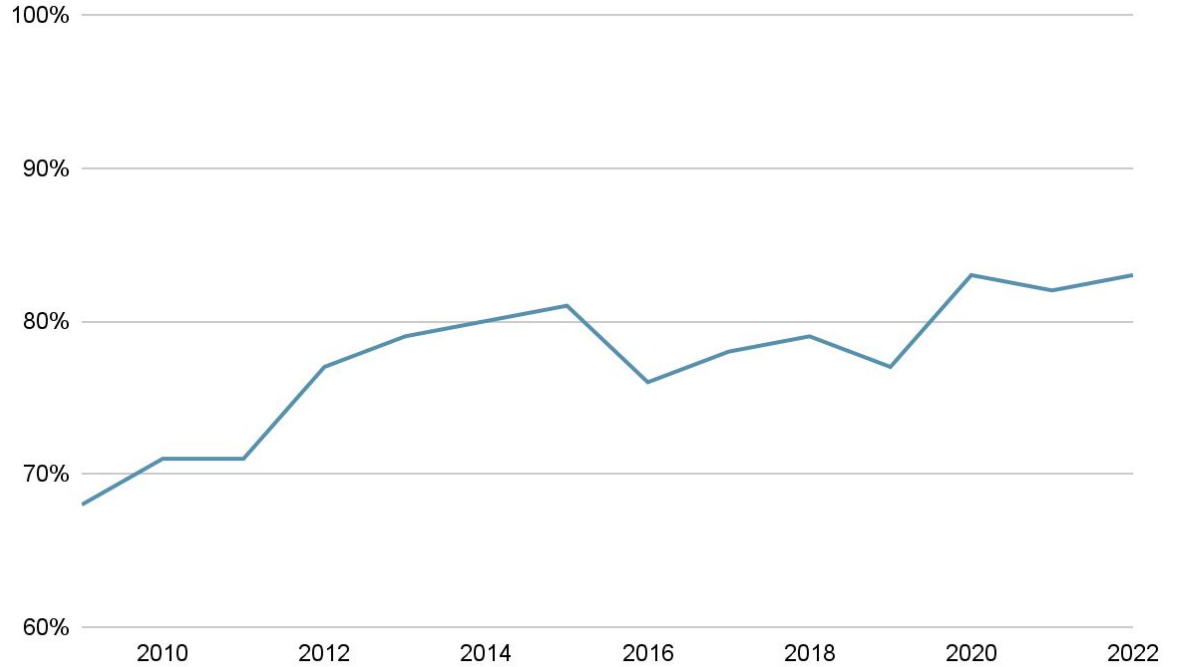
Loudoun County HOAs

<https://www.loudoun.gov/234/Communities-Homeowners-Associations>





2009-2022: % of newly built homes*, in associations, in the US South

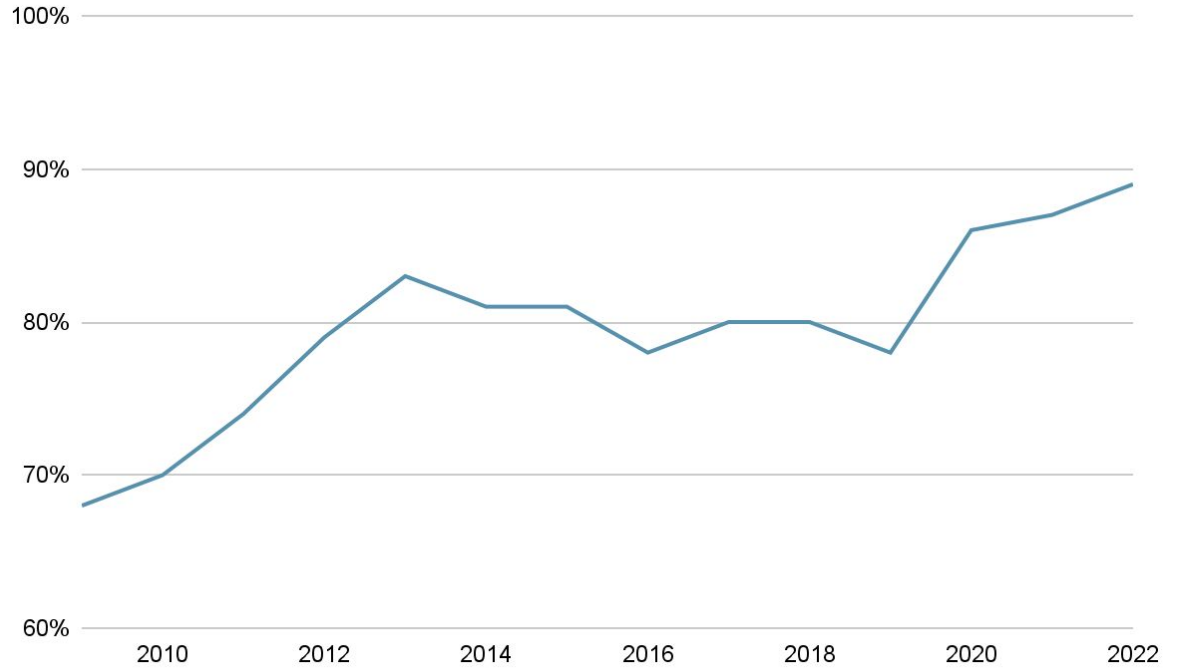


** Built for sale by developers (does not include contractor- or owner-built homes)*

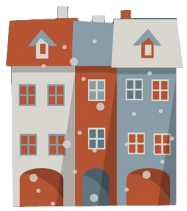
<https://www.census.gov/construction/chars/current.html>



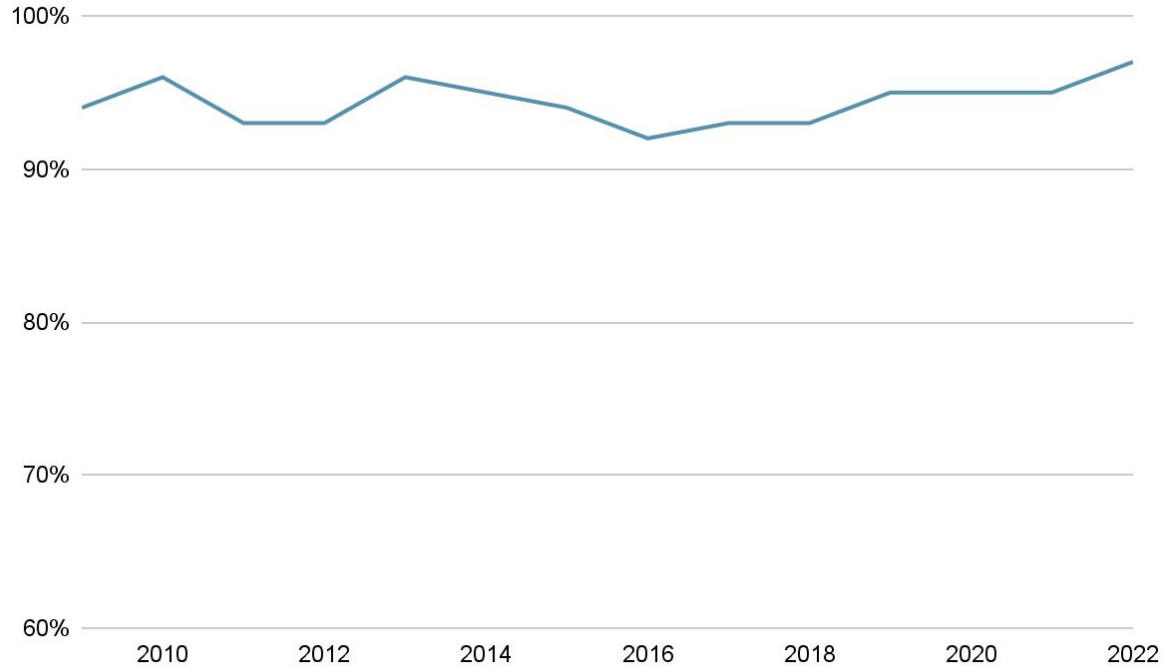
2009-2022:
% of
single-family
homes sold,
in associations,
in the US South



<https://www.census.gov/construction/chars/current.html>



2009-2022: % of *attached* single-family homes sold, in associations, in the US South



<https://www.census.gov/construction/chars/current.html>



Stormwater: Just how big of an issue is this?

Examples from a 5-'x20' (1,000 square foot) roof

1"



<https://web.archive.org/web/20231208090336/http://www.friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/description/roof.htm>

Stormwater: Just how big of an issue is this?

Examples from a 5-'x20' (1,000 square foot) roof

1"



623 gallons

<https://web.archive.org/web/20231208090336/http://www.friendsoflittlehuntingcreek.org/description/roof.htm>

The Virginian-Pilot

Natural disasters in Virginia increase by nearly 140% over past 20 years, new report says

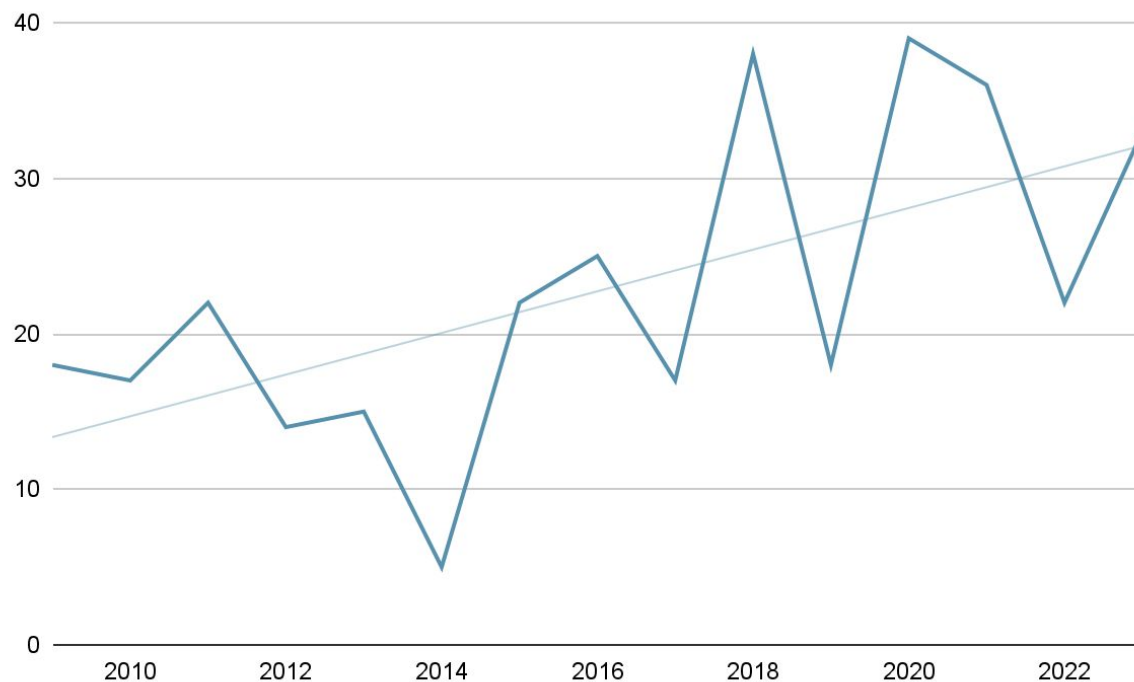
Eliza Noe, The Virginian-Pilot

Updated April 11, 2023 · 2 min read

A new weather analysis has found that billion-dollar natural disasters have increased in Virginia by nearly 140% over the past two decades.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/natural-disasters-virginia-increase-nearly-225400715.html>

2009-2023: # of days with Flash Floods in Virginia



<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/stormevents/choosedates.jsp?statefips=51%2CVIRGINIA>





Photo credits: Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

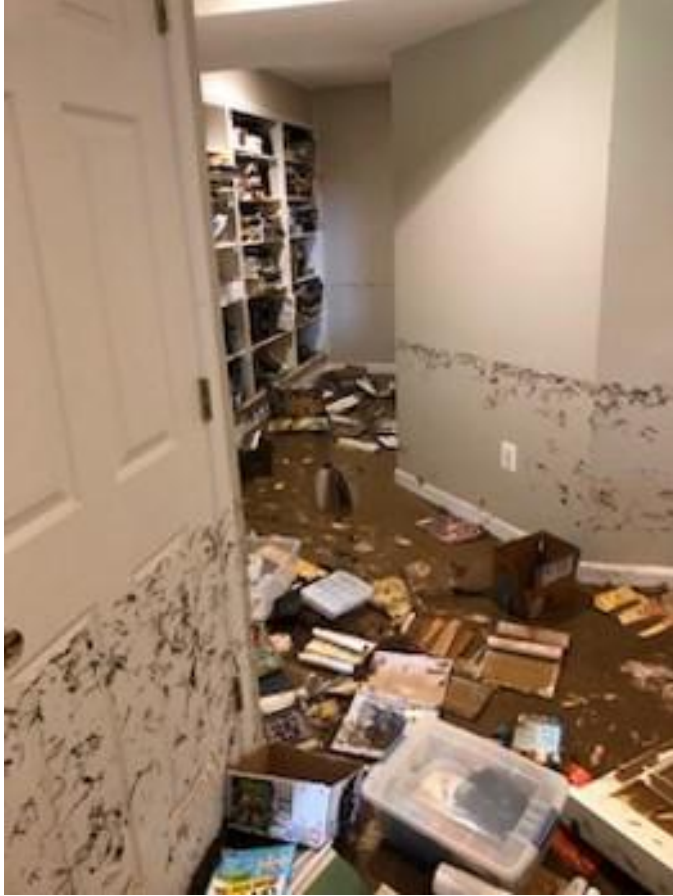


Photo credits: Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (left) & Fairfax County Fire and Rescue (right)
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/floodawareness>

Stormwater:



**Stormwater:
slow it down,**

**Stormwater:
slow it down,
spread it out,**

**Stormwater:
slow it down,
spread it out,
soak it in**

How a rain garden works

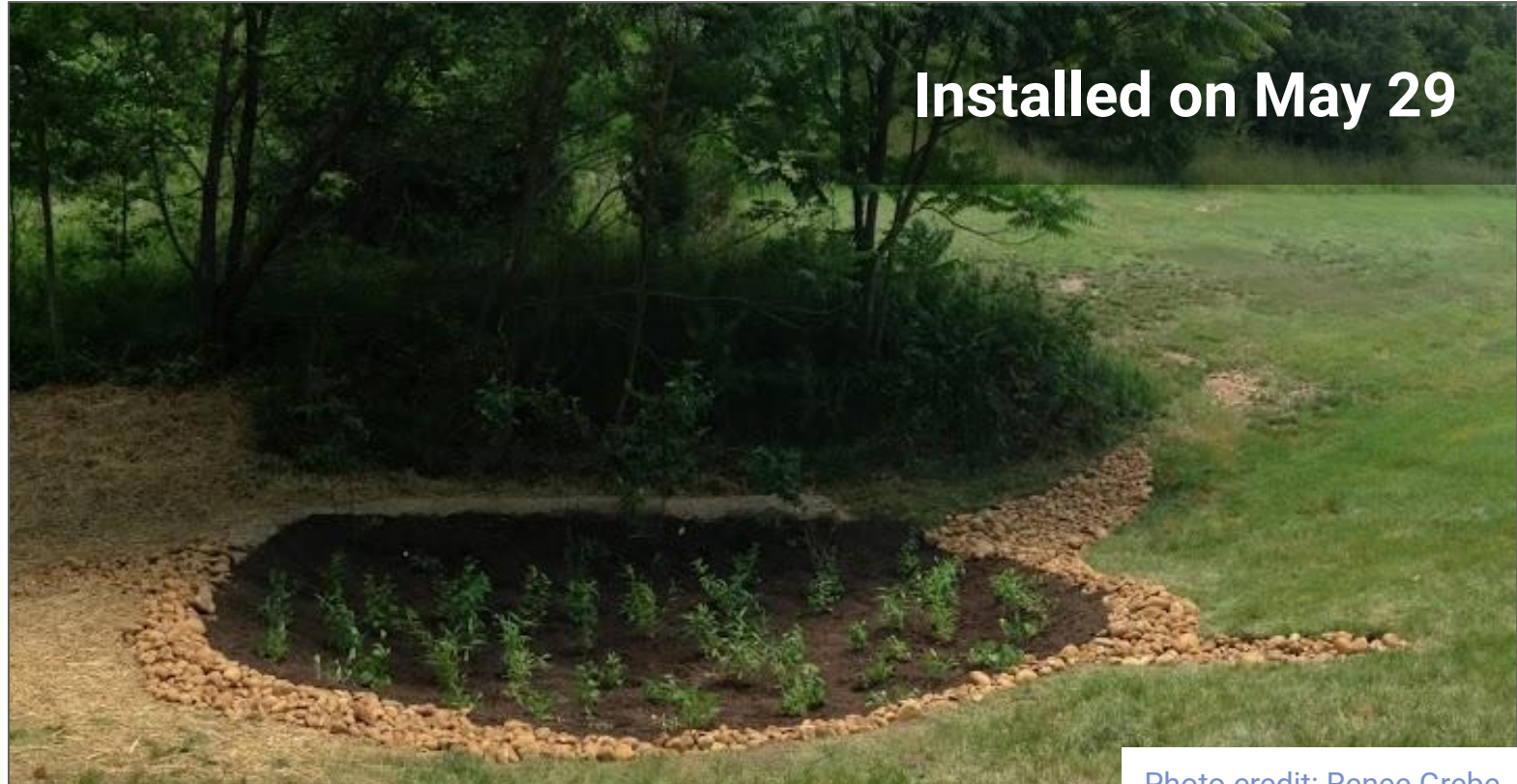


Photo credit: Renee Grebe

How a rain garden works



First big rainstorm: June 27

Photo credit: Renee Grebe



Virginia has not achieved their 2025 Bay goals

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

Signed in 2014, this landmark accord establishes goals and outcomes for the restoration of the Bay, its tributaries and the lands that surround them.



What Guides Us

Chesapeake Bay
Watershed Agreement

[ChesapeakeDecisions](#)

**2025 Watershed Implementation Plans
(WIPs) Outcome**

 **RECENT PROGRESS
INCREASE**
Updated April 2024

 **OUTLOOK
OFF COURSE**
Updated April 2024



<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/watershed-agreement>

<https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/outcome-status> | <https://www.chesapeake.org/stac/csr/>

VCAP grant program



Virginia Conservation Assistance Program

Presented by Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts



Water... but also native plants



Photo credits: Renee Grebe (left; rain garden) and Toni Genberg (right; catbird on elderberry)

Non-Natives



Natives



<https://stormwater.allianceforthebay.org/take-action/installations/rajn-gardens/attachment/root-depth-comparison-natives-nonnatives>

Non-Natives



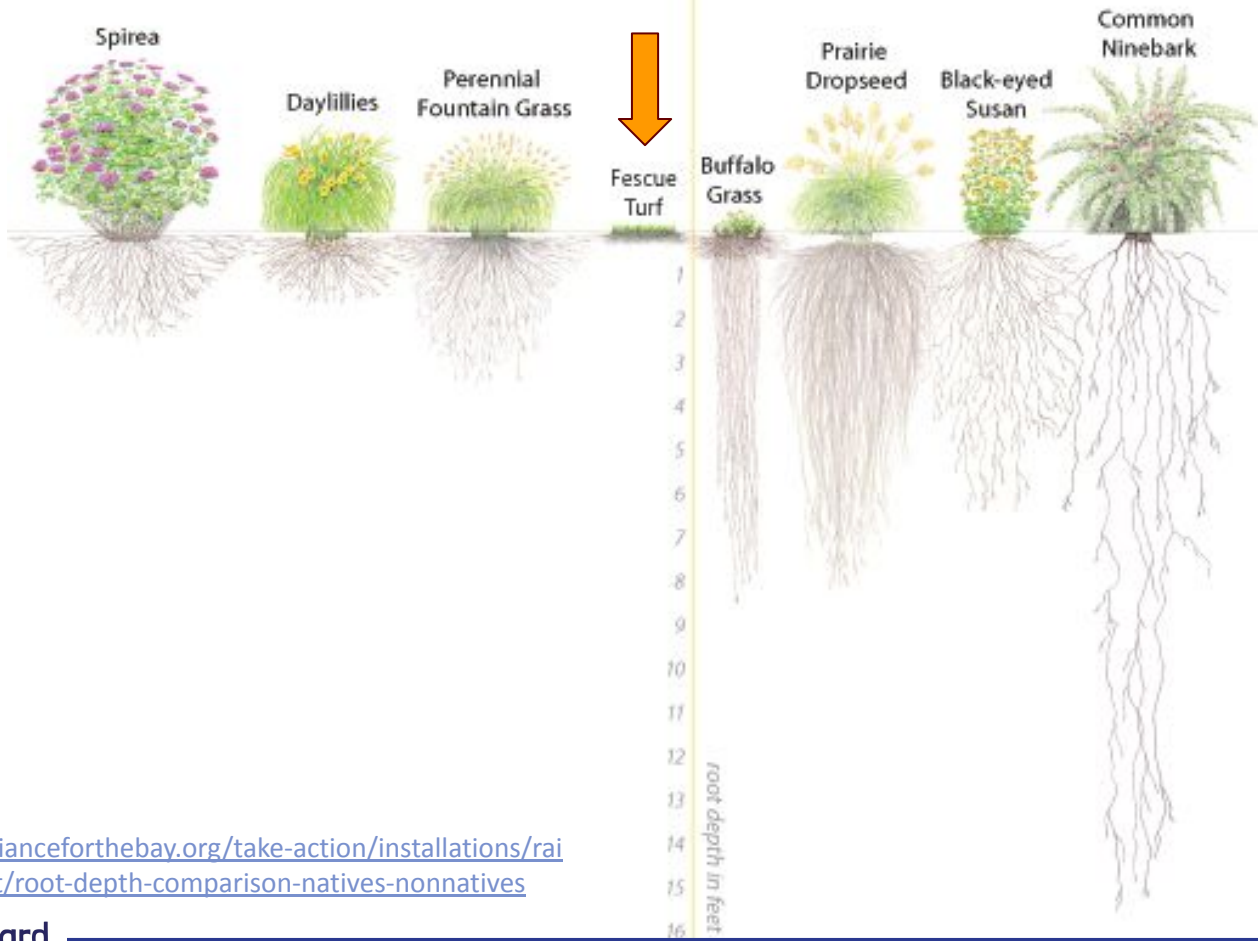
Natives



<https://stormwater.allianceforthebay.org/take-action/installations/rajn-gardens/attachment/root-depth-comparison-natives-nonnatives>

Non-Natives

Natives



<https://stormwater.allianceforthebay.org/take-action/installations/rajn-gardens/attachment/root-depth-comparison-natives-nonnatives>





96% of terrestrial birds
rear their young on insects

<https://nestwatch.org/connect/news/caterpillar-its-whats-for-dinner/> | Photo credit: Joe Valentine



90% of plant-eating insects are plant specialists







How many
caterpillars
does it take
to raise
a chickadee family?

390 - 570

caterpillars

*every
day*

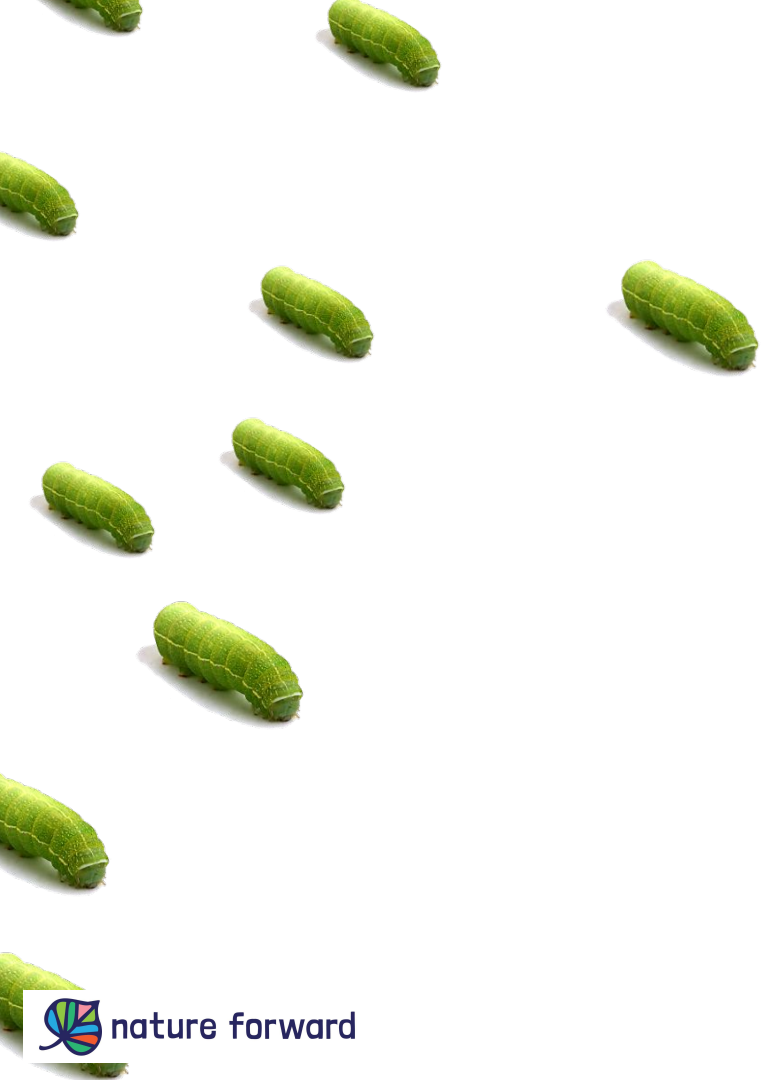


6,000 - 9,000

caterpillars

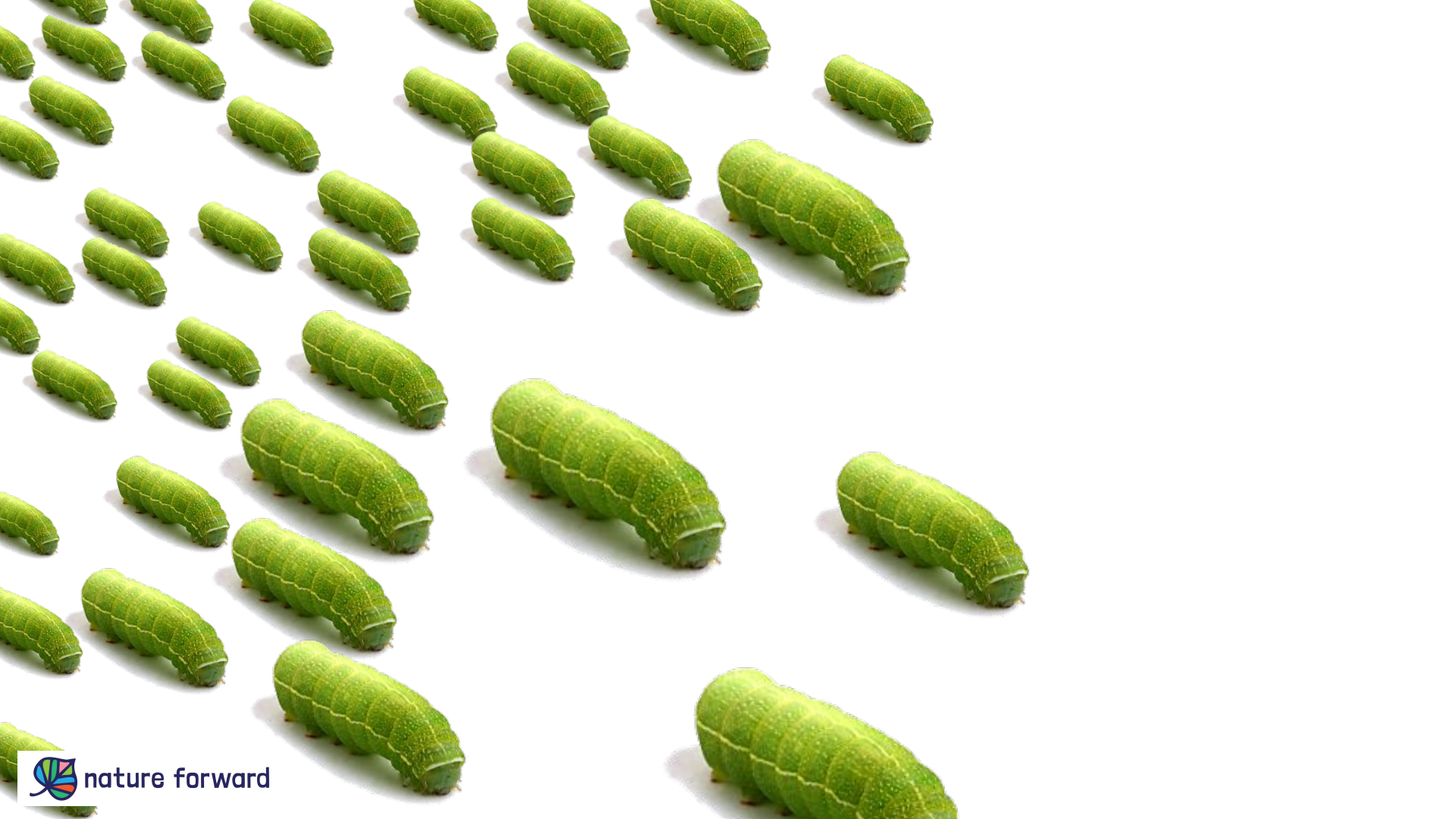


over
16 days



nature forward











Lawns aren't inherently bad, they should be useful



Lawns aren't inherently bad, they should be useful



Another suburban food desert



Another suburban food desert







Three billion birds have been lost in North America since 1970

Due to habitat loss, pesticides, and more, North America's springs are more silent than ever.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/three-billion-birds-lost-north-america>

Eastern Forest Birds

170
MILLION
EASTERN FOREST BIRDS
LOST SINCE 1970

-17%
POPULATION
LOSS IN EASTERN
FOREST BIRDS
SINCE 1970



6 IN 10
WOOD
THRUSHES LOST
SINCE 1970



Wood Thrush by Peter Kennerly/Macaulay Library, Eastern Forest by Nicholas Tonelli/Creative Commons

Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Source: Science, 2019



ANIMALS

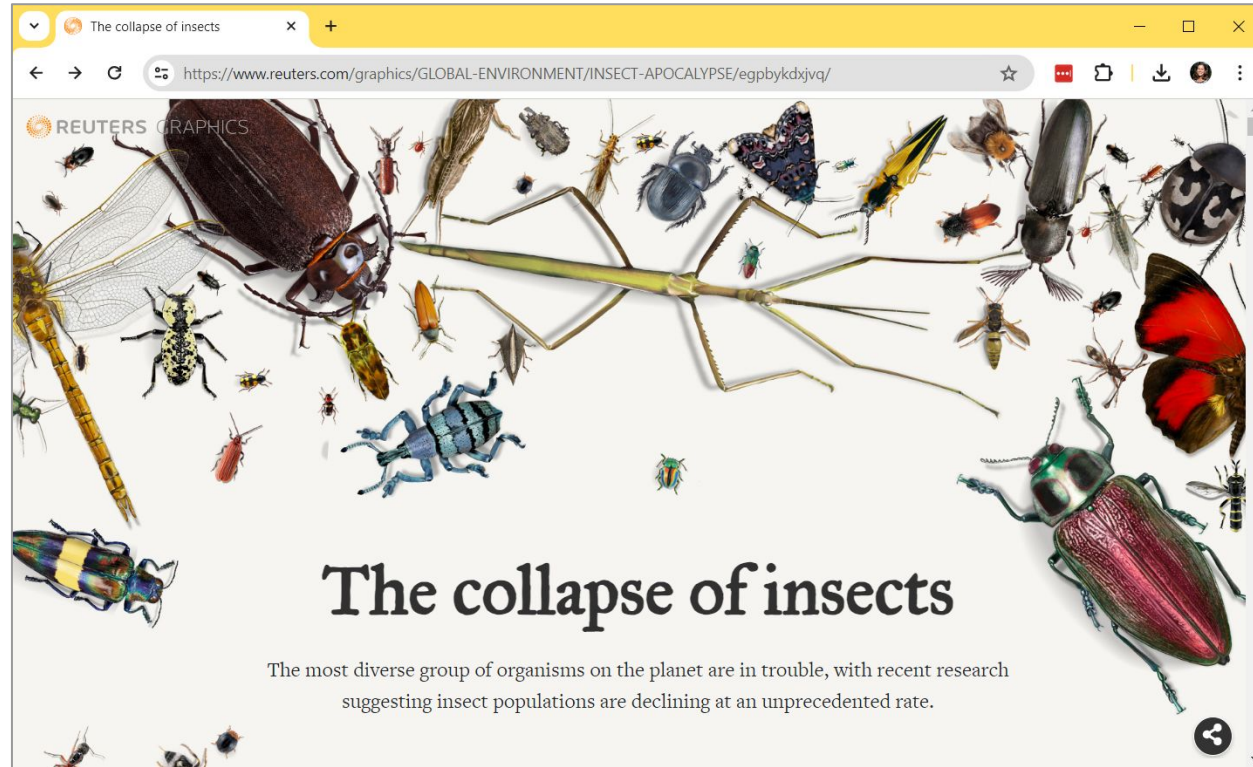
PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

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<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/three-billion-birds-lost-north-america>

Scientists say we are seeing a global Insect Apocalypse



<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/GLOBAL-ENVIRONMENT/INSECT-APOCALYPSE/egpykdxjvq/>

Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry

Annual economic impact: \$82.3B



Photo credit: Chesapeake Bay Program <https://flic.kr/p/YCBetc>
<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/markets-and-finance-agriculture-facts-and-figures.shtml>
<https://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden/pollinators>

Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry

...and it needs pollinators!



Photo credit: Chesapeake Bay Program <https://flic.kr/p/YCBetc>
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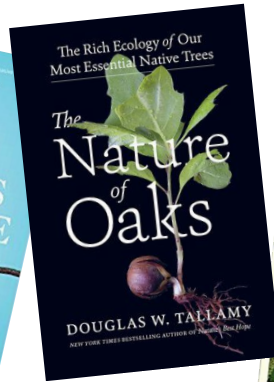
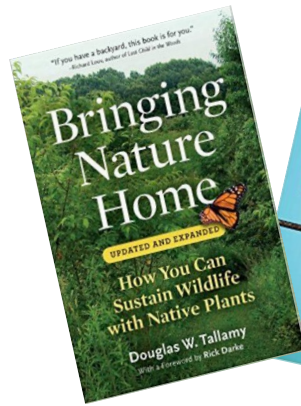
More than half
the native bee
species in North
America are in
decline.

One in four
species is at
risk of extinction.



Photo credits: Toni Genberg

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/insights/protecting-the-pollinator-population>



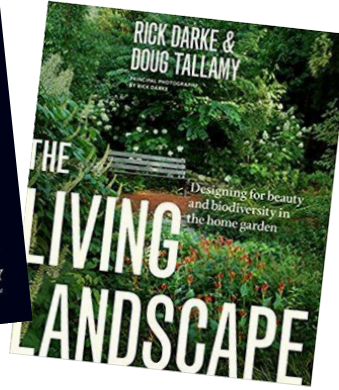
Doug Tallamy

co-founder HNP

In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty. Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators and manage water.



<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>



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<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

Community Associations Institute Collaboration



Townhomes

Single
family
homes



Larger, multi-acre
properties



Community Associations Institute Collaboration

Concerns discussed included that managed conservation landscaping should:

- (1) Not include turf grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state.
- (2) Not adversely affect drainage on neighboring properties
- (3) Not impede public rights-of-way such as sidewalks or roads
- (4) Be routinely maintained

Community Associations Institute Collaboration

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Community Associations Institute Collaboration

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(2) Not adversely affect drainage on neighboring properties

(3) Not impede public rights-of-way such as sidewalks or roads

(4) Be routinely maintained

Many things can adversely affect drainage



Many things can adversely affect drainage

Cutting down mature trees



Many things can adversely affect drainage

Cutting down mature trees



Expanding a driveway



Many things can adversely affect drainage

Cutting down mature trees



Expanding a driveway

Installing a patio



Community Associations Institute Collaboration

Concerns discussed included that managed conservation landscaping should:



(1) Not include turf grass lawns left unattended for the purpose of returning to a natural state.



(2) Not adversely affect drainage on neighboring properties



(3) Not impede public rights-of-way such as sidewalks or roads



(4) Be routinely maintained

Avoid impeding ROWs and routinely maintain



Conservation landscaping inspiration

Photos from
residents
across Virginia

Conversion of lawn to native plant beds



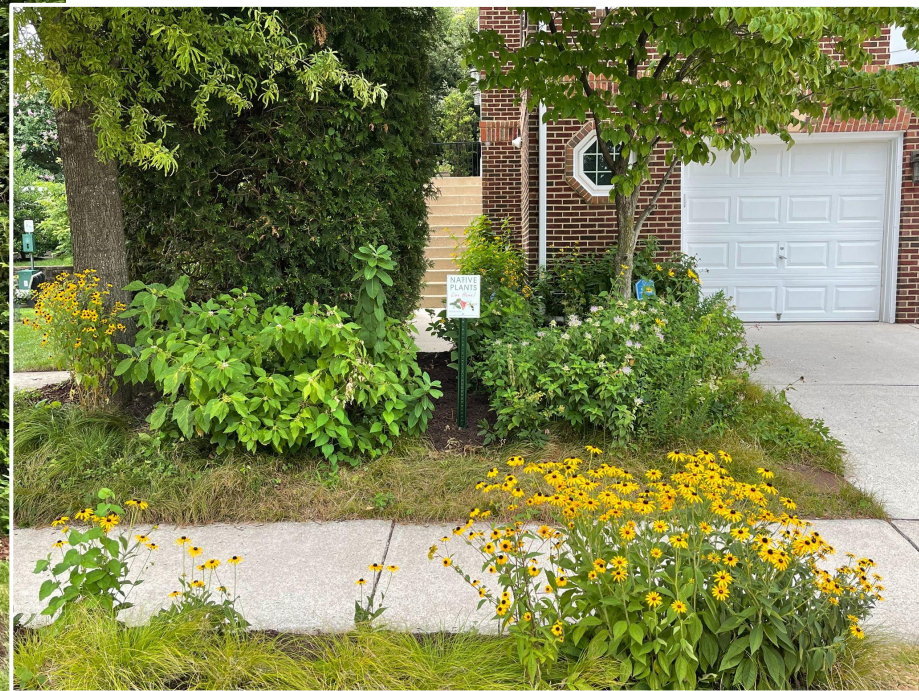
Before



After



Side lawn reduction, foundation plantings with natives, front lawn replacement, sidewalk strip plantings



Removal of deck and non-native landscaping, replaced with conservation landscaping



Before



After

Photo credits: Terri Gorman (Virginia Beach, VA)

Replacement of non-native foundation plantings with native plants and additional native plantings along walkway and sidewalk



Before



Photo credits: Jennifer Schee (Charlottesville, VA)

After

Replacement of unwieldy non-native roses with native shrubs and plants



Replacement of invasive Japanese Barberry with native perennials

Before



After

Photo credits: Alys Jarvela (Loudoun County, VA)

Planting of natives on hillside to prevent erosion



Before



After

Conversion of lawn to native plant beds



Lawn conversion to native plants



Site prep



First year plantings



Full grown



Removing 1/3 of concrete driveway and expanded conservation landscaping

Before



Lawn conversion and tree plantings
along fence and property line

After



Before



Lawn conversion to native plant garden

After





Before

Lawn conversion to native plantings with walkway



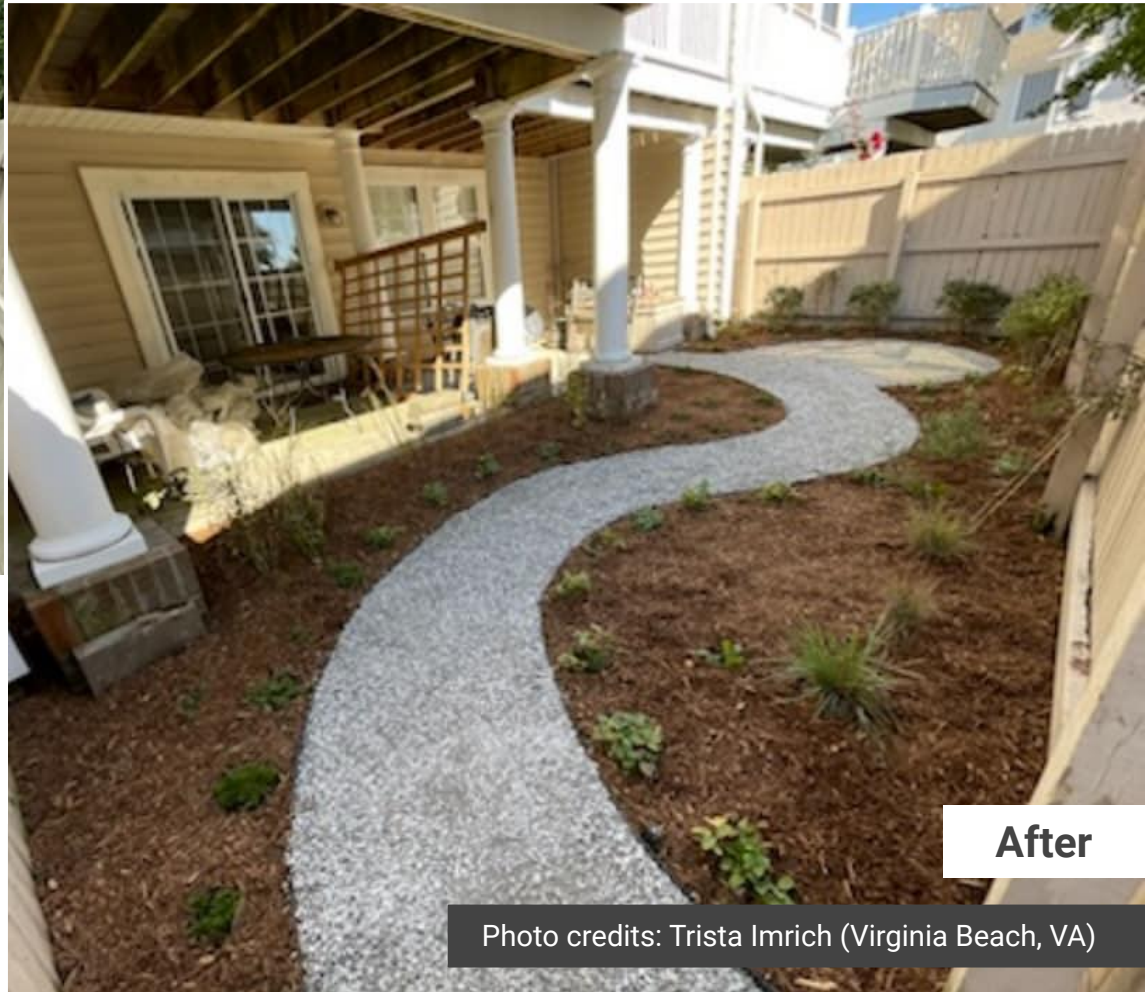
After

Before



And.... lastly....

Lawn conversion to native plantings with walkway



After

Key takeaways



Nearly 1 in 4 Virginia residents live in an HOA.



Virginia would *not* be the first state to pass a similar law supporting HOA conservation landscaping.



Virginia is seeing a trend in weirder, wetter weather, bringing excess stormwater, which causes economic impacts.



Managed conservation landscaping is not just beautiful, it's practical and can help us meet our clean water goals and enhance biodiversity, and ultimately saving Virginia money.



HOA residents need legislative support to allow them to pursue conservation landscaping projects on their private property.



Renee Grebe
renee.grebe@natureforward.org

*Northern Virginia
Conservation Advocate,
Nature Forward*

Thank you!