

Water Equity Taskforce

Thursday, May 21st, 2020



Introductions

Name
Your Organization

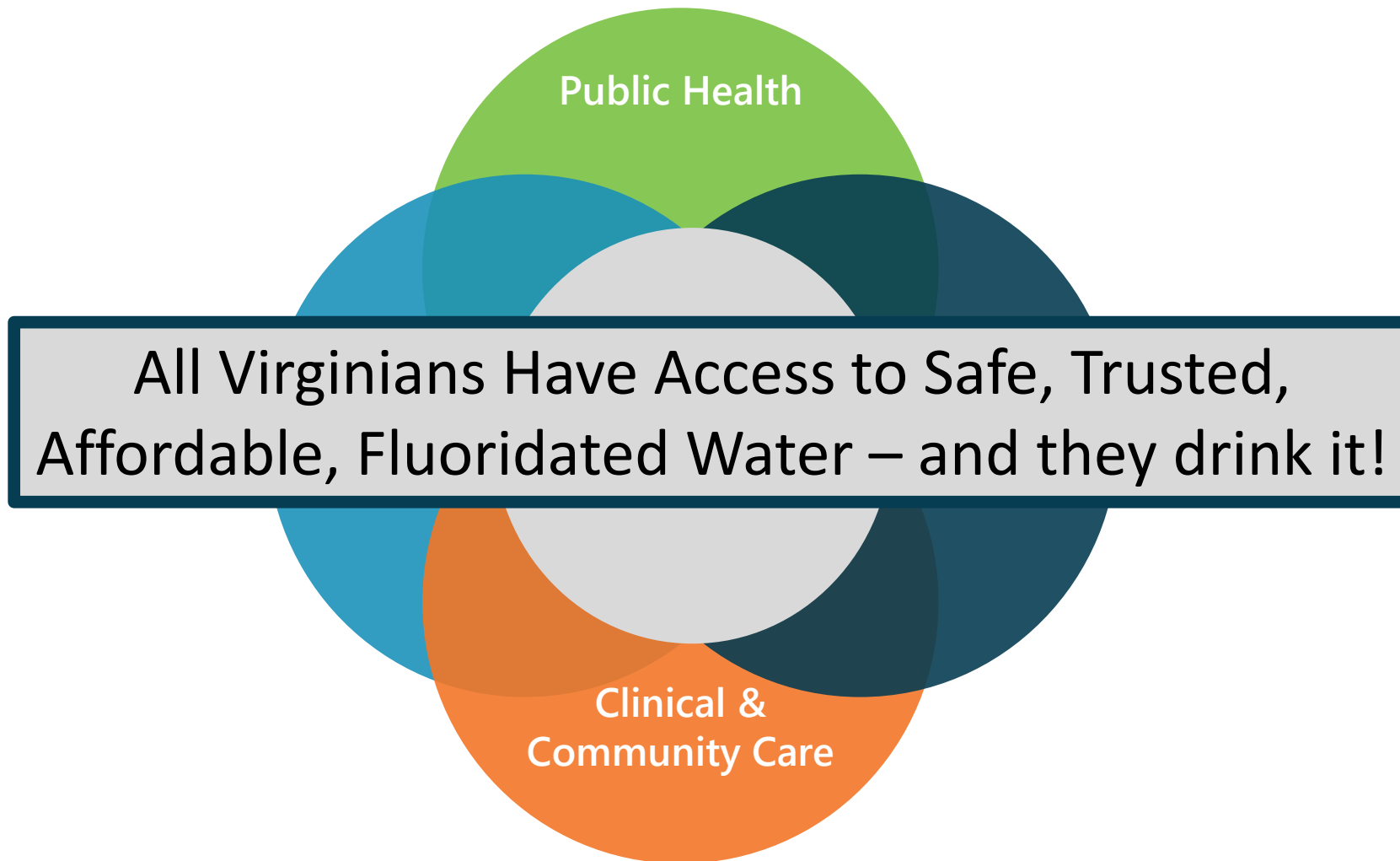


Desired Outcomes

- Understand the impacts of COVID-19 on water issues
- Learn about the important roles protecting Virginia's forests plays in meeting our mission
- Collectively decide on WET structure moving forward



What is WET?



COVID-19 Effects on Water

EDITORIAL OPINION & COMMENTARY

Editorial: Protecting land, water should be a national priority



By THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT & DAILY PRESS EDITORIAL BOARD
THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT | MAY 04, 2020 | 12:15 AM



COVID-19 CRIMINAL JUSTICE + POLICING HEALTH ENERGY + ENVIRONMENT GOVERNMENT + POLITICS EDUCATION GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

COMMENTARY ENERGY + ENVIRONMENT

Clean air and clean water are more important now than ever

By Guest Column - April 24, 2020

How Do You Fight the Coronavirus Without Running Water?

Entire communities around the country face this terrifying virus without being even able to wash their hands.

May 21, 2020



COVID-19 Effects on Water: Petersburg

WATCH NOW: Virginia's top health official orders Petersburg to restore service to 46 households without water in pandemic

By JESS NOCERA Richmond Times-Dispatch May 10, 2020



State Health Commissioner Norman Oliver says running water is key to fighting the coronavirus.
DANIEL SANGJIB MIN/RTD

MORE INFORMATION



Virginia's top health official orders Petersburg to restore service to 46 households without water in pandemic

Water service cutoff

Williams: Residents need running water during a pandemic. That should be Petersburg's bottom line.

MICHAEL PAUL WILLIAMS
mwilliams@timesdispatch.com 17 hrs ago

State promises Petersburg's water answer 'very shortly'



Discussion

How have you seen COVID affect water equity?





Virginia Department of Forestry Forests, Watersheds and Water Quality

Water Equity Taskforce Meeting

May 21, 2020



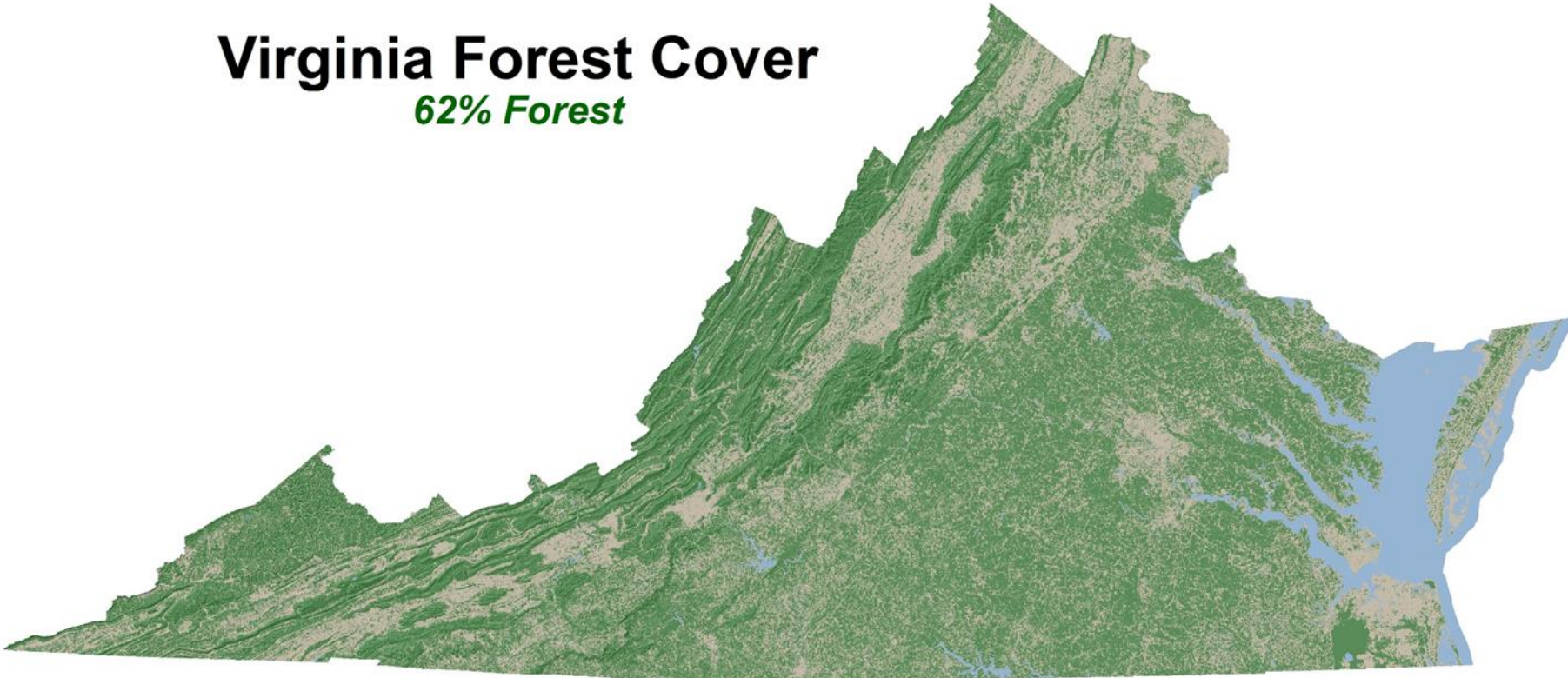
Drinking Water From Forests – Southeast US

- 50% of drinking water in South comes from forests (418 billion m³/year)
- 44% comes from S&PF (370 billion m³/year); Family Forests is largest contributor among all forest ownership (27% of total)
- 245 million acres (40% of total land area in S); 86% of Southern forests are privately owned
- National Forests provide more than 50% of water supply for 50 communities serving 820k people
- S&PF provide more than 50% of water supply for 641 communities serving 13 million people
- 58 million people get some portion of their drinking water from S&PF



Forests at a Glance

Virginia Forest Cover *62% Forest*

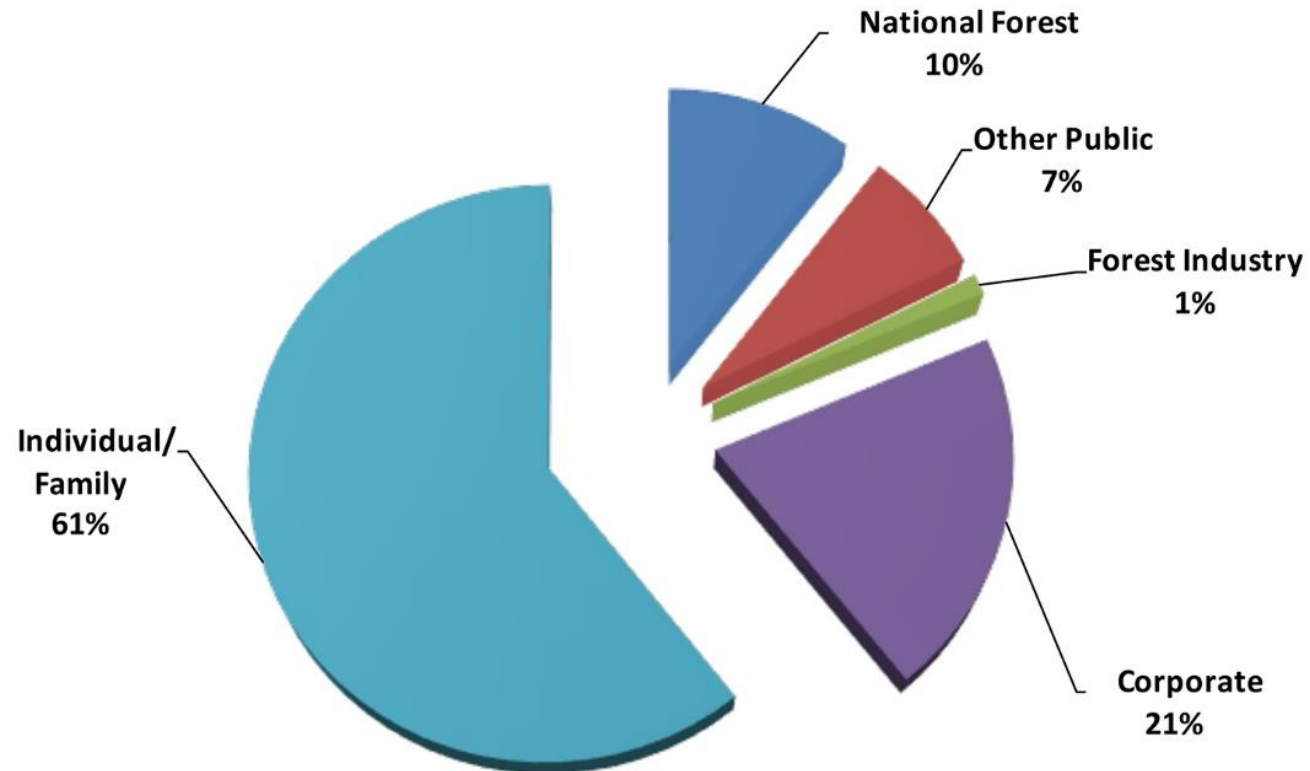


2011 National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD)



Who Owns Virginia's Forests?

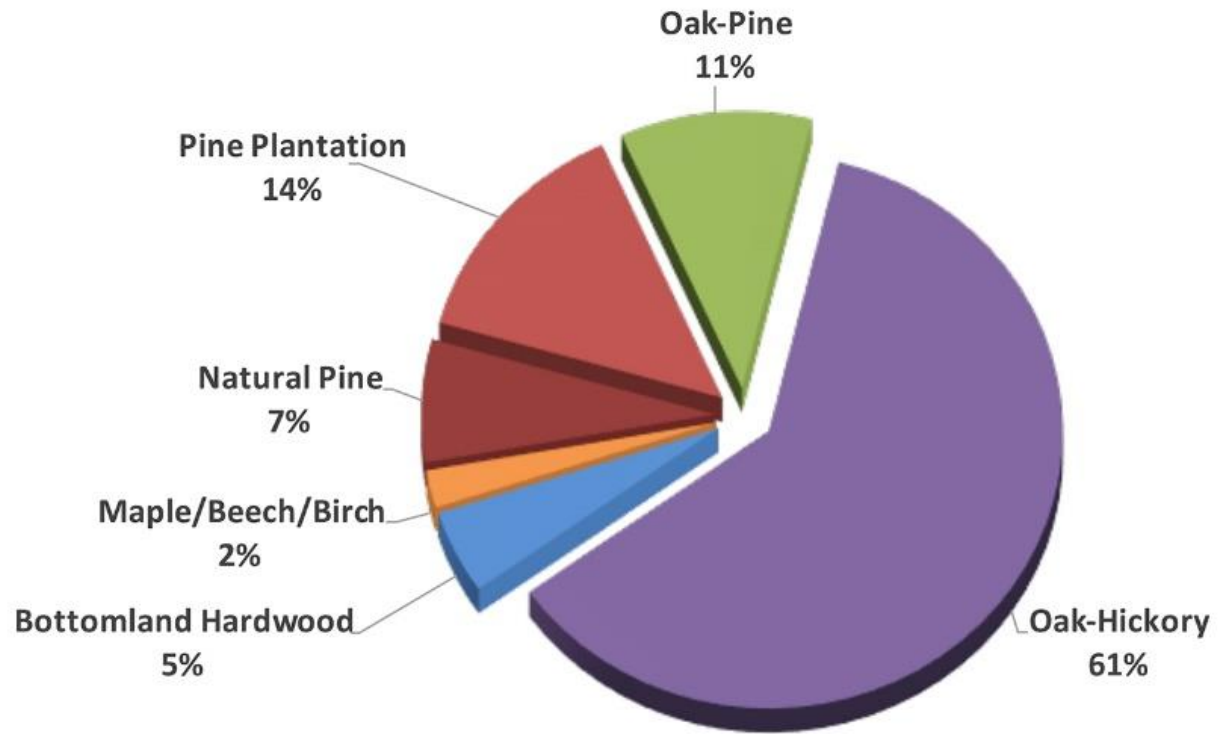
Forest Ownership in Virginia





Forest Types

Forest Types in Virginia



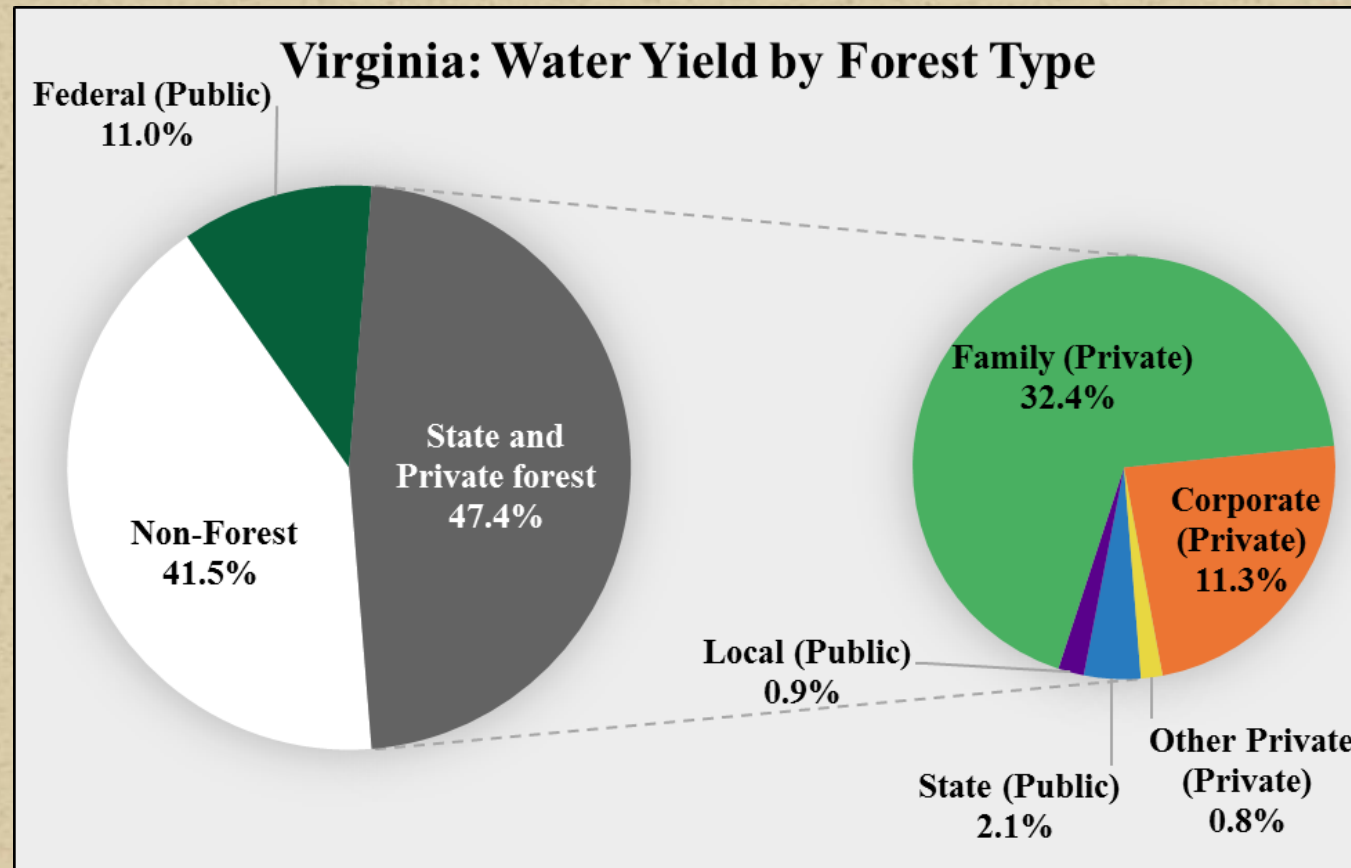


In Virginia

- 62% of VA is forested (16.3 million acres, 9.13 million private, 561,000 state)
- 68% is owned by SPF
- SPF accounts for 68% of surface water
- 47% of all surface water originates on SPF
- 429 surface drinking water intakes, serving 52% of the total population (4.3 million)
- 300 surface water intakes serve an additional 5.9 million people outside of VA in 196 communities (AL, IL, IN, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OH, SC, TN, WV)



Drinking Water From Forests – Virginia

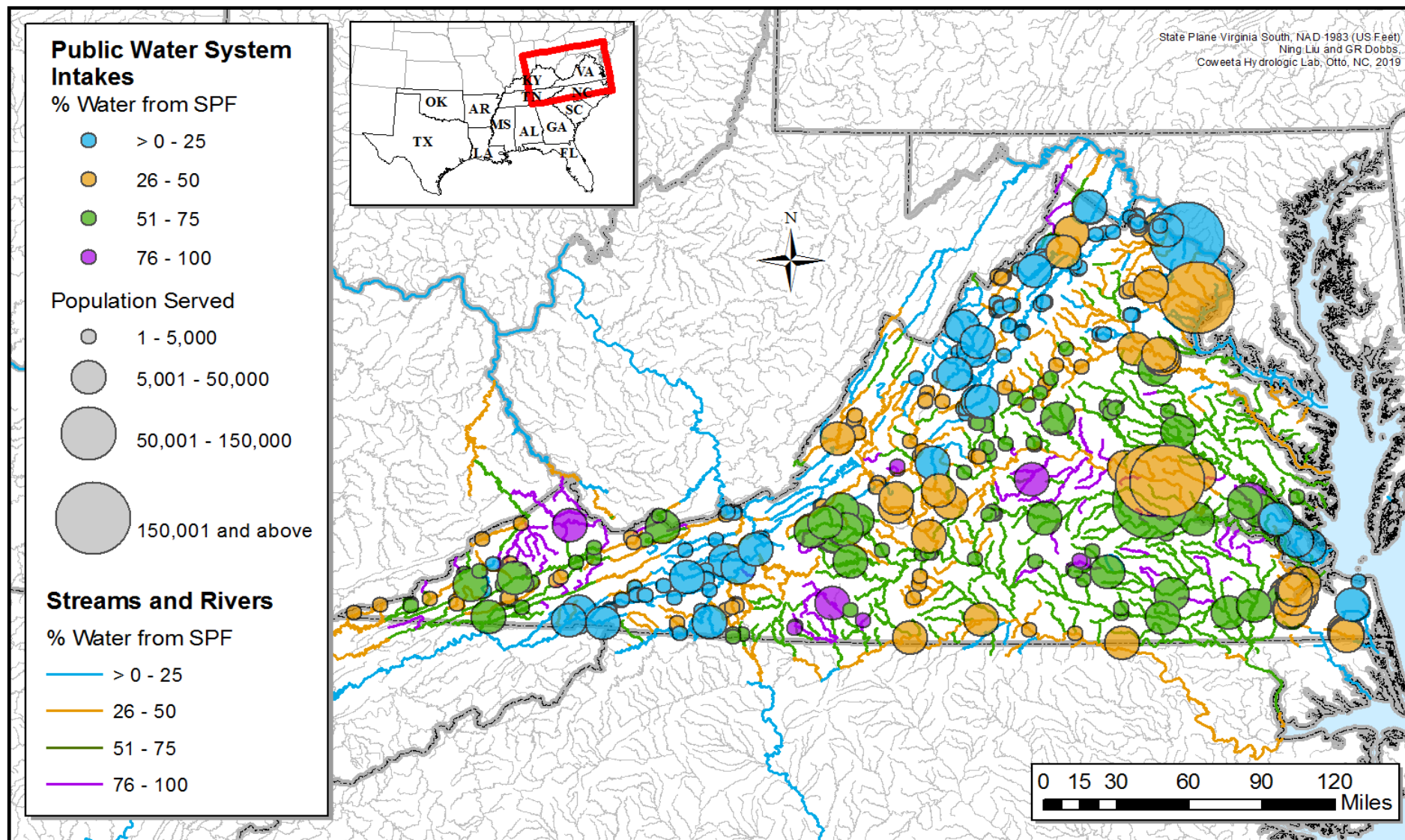


Source: Liu, et.al. – USFS Southern Research Station



State of Virginia

Streams and Intrastate Public Water System Intakes Receiving Water from Virginia State and Private Forests





Other Forest Connections

- Provisioning
 - ◆ Water supply, timber production, food, biomass for renewable energy production
- Regulating
 - ◆ Water filtration, flood mitigation, temp. regulation, air quality, carbon, erosion
- Supporting
 - ◆ Soil fertility, wildlife habitat, pollination
- Cultural
 - ◆ Recreation
 - ◆ Scenic beauty
 - ◆ Tourism



Value of Our Forests

ECONOMICS!

- 108,000 jobs
- \$21.5 Billion (#3 industry)
- A prosperous and diverse forest industry depends on healthy, sustainable, working forests.
- Forests require investments



Quick Example

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfqOOqz0RhU&feature=youtu.be>



Key Messages

- Healthy Forests = Clean Water
- Watershed condition affects water quality/quantity
- Clean water is less expensive to treat
- Loss of forests can impact water resources
- Healthy forested watersheds provide numerous improvements to our quality of life.
 - ◆ Air
 - ◆ Water
 - ◆ Habitat
 - ◆ Carbon sequestration
 - ◆ Recreation
 - ◆ Health



Questions?

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Water Equity – Nat'l Framework

(with some Virginia tweaks!)

Our Mission: All Virginians have access to safe, trusted, affordable, fluoridated water – and they drink it!



- All people have access to clean, safe, affordable water
- There is community resilience in the face of a changing climate
- The community and economic benefits of water infrastructure investment are maximized



Virginia-specific:

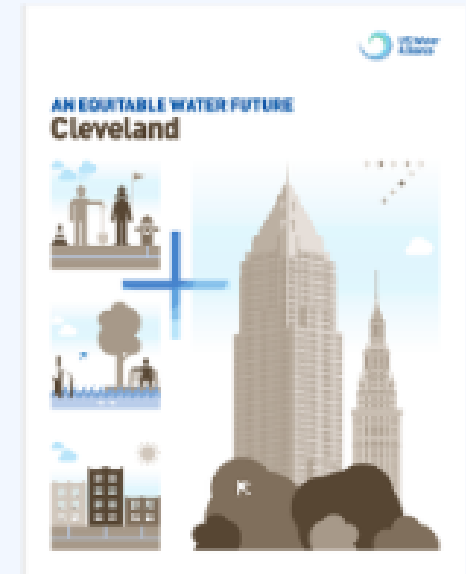
Virginians choose tap water as their preferred beverage



Water Equity Roadmap

An Equitable Water Future Cleveland

January 2020 —This roadmap was developed by the Cleveland Water Equity Team to build shared understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and priorities for action to secure an equitable water future for all Cleveland residents. [More >](#)



WET Cleveland Roadmap Example

Background

Poverty

Economic status is one of the strongest predictors for compromised health and capacity to recover from disruptions. In 2015, 42.5 percent of people of color in Cleveland lived below twice the federal poverty level, compared to 24.1 percent of white Clevelanders.¹² According to a 2019 study, two-thirds of low-income Cuyahoga County residents (residents with annual household incomes below \$25,000) had serious difficulty paying for at least one necessity in the past year. Thirty-four percent reported having to choose between paying for food or utilities in the past year, and 30 percent said they would not be able to pay for a \$400 emergency.¹³

- Housing and Residential Segregation

Challenges

Water quality

Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio region have consistently high-quality drinking water. Recent water quality crises in Flint, MI and Toledo, OH have affected public perceptions about drinking water, but Cleveland is not as vulnerable to lead and algal bloom issues as those cities. As is the case with many older US cities, some homes in Cleveland and the surrounding suburbs have lead service lines or plumbing fixtures. Cleveland Water takes several actions to reduce the risk of lead leaching into drinking water, the most successful of which is the addition of ortho-phosphate to the water treatment process, which began in 1997. Since then, lead testing results have been well below EPA's action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb).

Service lines, plumbing components, and fixtures that contain lead are more likely to be found in homes built before 1986. In addition, some pre-2014 faucets and fixtures can still contain up to eight percent lead. The risk of lead leaching into water increases when plumbing is poorly or improperly maintained. While Cleveland Water proactively replaces all lead city-owned service lines and connections during water main repair and replacement projects, customers are responsible for maintaining and replacing their service lines, home plumbing, and

Priorities for Action

Affordability

Both Cleveland Water and the Sewer District offer homestead and affordability programs, which reduce rates by 40 percent for ratepayers who qualify based on income, age, and/or disability. The Sewer District offers crisis assistance (one-time bill assistance to customers affected by major life events), and a "summer sprinkling" program that bases summer use (and bills) on average winter consumption, which is typically lower. Both Cleveland Water and the Sewer District also offer plumbing repair assistance for low-income residents. These programs can be strengthened and expanded to make water and sewer services more affordable.

Expand existing cost-savings programs to renters.

Renters often pay their water bills indirectly as a portion of their rent payment, and most of the cost-savings programs that local utilities offer are aimed at property owners. Cost-savings programs should be modified to be more accessible to renters, who comprise nearly 60 percent of Cleveland's population. Cleveland Water offers a



Virginia's WET Roadmap

Background

- Population
- Race, Ethnicity, and Language
- Income
- Employment
- Poverty
- Educational
- Housing

Challenges

- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of well funding
- Water affordability
- Water quality in rural areas
- Forest preservation



Emphasis on nutrition and public health

Priorities for Action



Virginia's Water Equity Challenges

- Unequitable water bills
- Lead
- Natural & man-made disasters
- Harmful algal blooms
- Chemical spills
- Aging Infrastructure
- Unregulated contaminants
- \$8.1 Billion infrastructure challenge
- Unknown inventory and incomplete maps
- Infrastructure expensive to replace
- Private well regulation revisions
- Rainwater harvesting regulations
- PFOA/PFAS
- Ground water management areas
- Lack of funding for testing well water
- Lack of funding for fixing well water
- Lack of trust of tap water
- Confusing CCR



Discussion: how to develop Virginia's Roadmap?

- How to move forward

- Partners take the lead
- Shared work between partners and Catalyst
- Catalyst takes the lead

- New workgroup

- Roadmap Steering Committee (2 meetings)

- How to decide priorities for action

- Convene WET to decide
- Breakout session at Summit

- Timeline

- Finished by October 8th: Virginia Oral Health Summit



Thank you!

