

# The Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative

Supporting bird-friendly practices on working lands

## October Greenfield

The Piedmont Environmental Council  
[ogreenfield@pecva.org](mailto:ogreenfield@pecva.org)



Smithsonian  
National Zoological Park  
Conservation Biology Institute



# Meet VGBI



## ***Piedmont Environmental Council***

October Greenfield  
Lauria McShane



## ***Quail Forever***

Alison Menefee  
Cathryn McVicker



## ***Virginia Working Landscapes***

Dr. Amy Johnson  
Justin Proctor



## ***American Farmland Trust***

Jacob Gilley

# Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative Working Region

- Public Lands
- Conservation Easements
- Grasslands



0 25 50 Miles



## Why Grassland Birds?

- More than 80% of native grassland ecosystems across North America have already been lost
- Since the 1970's, we've seen over 50% decline in grassland bird populations
- No one reason for decline but effect of agricultural intensification is profound

# Incentives Program

➤ Financial incentive for farmers willing to adopt specific BMPs to protect the vulnerable nesting season (April 15 - July 1)

- ❖ Delayed Haying
- ❖ Summer Stockpiling

➤ Up to \$35 per acre to offset the initial costs of piloting these best management practices

➤ Application for 2025 will open in October!

[www.vagrasslandbirds.org/incentives/](http://www.vagrasslandbirds.org/incentives/)



# Field Suitability

**Size:** 20 or more acres are required.

**Shape:** Square or rectangle fields are preferred (but not required).

**Surroundings:** Fields surrounded by other hay fields or pastures are preferred over those bordered by forest or development.

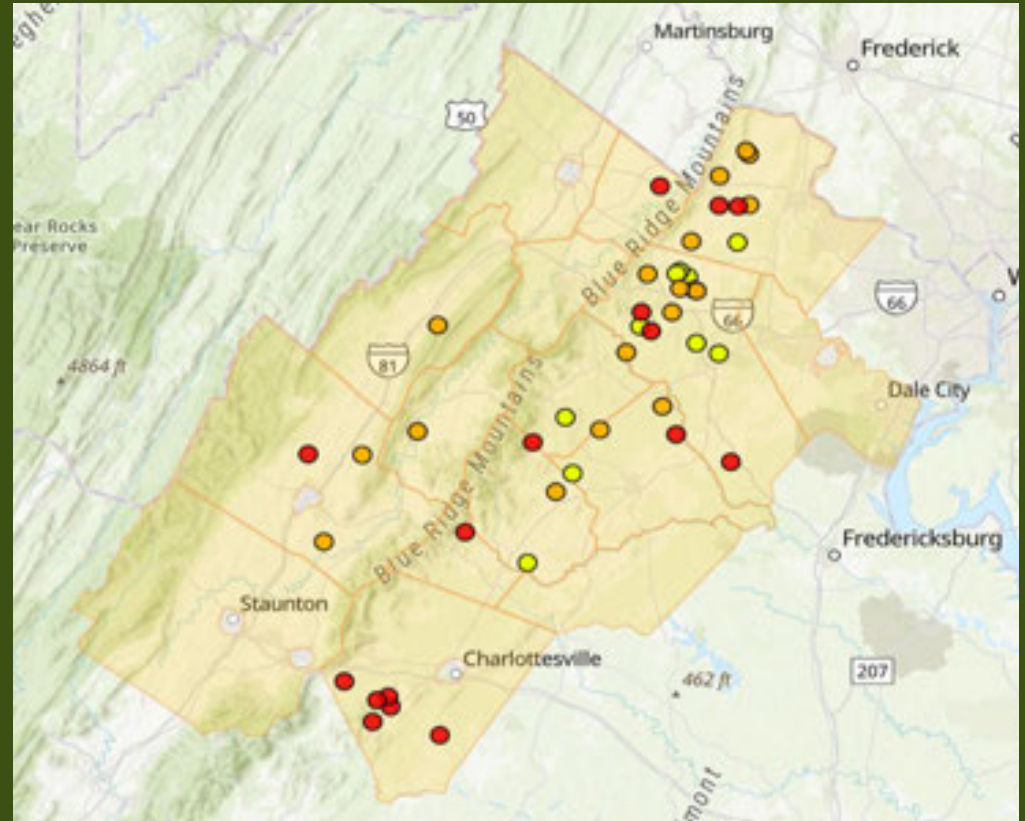


# Program Enrollment Stats

- **2022**: 500 acres across 10 properties
- **2023**: 1,000 acres across 18 new properties
- **2024**: 1,500 acres across 18 new properties

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# Research + Incentives Program → NRCS Cost Share



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- Offer technical assistance to producers
- Offer access to cost-share programs for producers

Incorporate VGBI research and knowledge from our incentives program into NRCS cost-share programs to make them more:

- Locally relevant for grassland bird conservation
- Feasible for farmer adoption

**EQIP 511B (Forage and Harvest Management)**

**CSP Enhancement EQIP 528D (Prescribed Grazing)**



# Other Offerings

- 1-on-1 site visits to provide advice on habitat management, including pastures, hay fields, meadows, wetlands, riparian areas, etc.
- Connect landowners with other technical service providers and cost-share programs.
- Landowner workshops across the region - visit [pecva.org/events](https://pecva.org/events) to learn more!

