

## GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY



The General Assembly convened January 13, 2021 and Conservation Lobby Day was January 21st.

“Lobby Day” is an annual tradition that welcomes Virginians to Richmond to engage lawmakers on issues during the General Assembly. Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) hosts the annual Conservation Lobby Day in Richmond, Virginia.

### **First, a little background....**

GCV partners with two organizations on conservation efforts. First is the **Virginia Conservation Network** or VCN ( <http://www.vcnva.org/> ) which represents over 125



conservation organizations and focuses attention on the same four areas:

1. Clean Water
2. Climate Change
3. Clean Energy
4. Land Use

These policy agendas combined are called “Our Common Agenda” and provide practical, state-level policy solutions for common conservation goals. GCV representation on the VCN board is Carol Carter, Albemarle GC member.

Every year, VCN's 125+ environmental organizations come together to ensure a strong conservation presence is felt during the legislative session. Volunteer advocates join professional staff to meet with state legislators and encourage them to support strong conservation policy. **This is known as Conservation Lobby Day.**

The VCN process to prepare for Conservation Lobby Day:

- Regional and workgroup meetings to determine priorities
- Common Agenda Launch in early fall
- Annual Meeting in October
- General Assembly preview: December

Of course, this year, Lobby Day was virtual this year. There were guest speakers and legislators in the morning followed by fifteen-minute Zoom meetings with Delegates and Senators.

This year's lobby day covered:

- Tackling climate pollution from transportation;
- Securing funding for our natural resources in order to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, protect our parks and natural landscapes & enhance our environmental agencies;
- Increasing utility accountability while meeting our clean energy goals;
- Improving environmental justice in the Commonwealth, and more.

To follow important conservation bills, click this link to see VCN's Bill Tracker:

<https://vcnva.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=77c62330bf9a7ae49c59caea9&id=0f98956f5c&e=d8ea222ec5>

The second group GCV affiliates with is **Virginia Forever** ([About Us](#)) is a consortium of businesses, conservation leaders, and outdoor enthusiasts. They focus entirely on the funding side of environmental programs for improving water quality and land conservation with the goal of bringing different entities together to find common ground on environmental spending. GCV representation on this board is Allison Clock.

Lastly, GCV has “position papers” which are formal, detailed statements showing what, where and why GCV supports a particular conservation issue. [Click this link for the position papers: GCV Position Papers 2021](#)

One particular project which GCV is adopting this year is [Save River Farm](#). In summary, this tract of undisturbed land was originally a parcel of George Washington’s and it is up for sale. GCV is partnering with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust to help purchase the land to save it from development.

To learn how a bill becomes a law, go to the “Understanding the Legislative Process” section on this webpage. Scroll down to Understanding the General Assembly.

To learn how to advocate, watch Cabell’s video and go to the “All About Advocacy” section on this webpage.