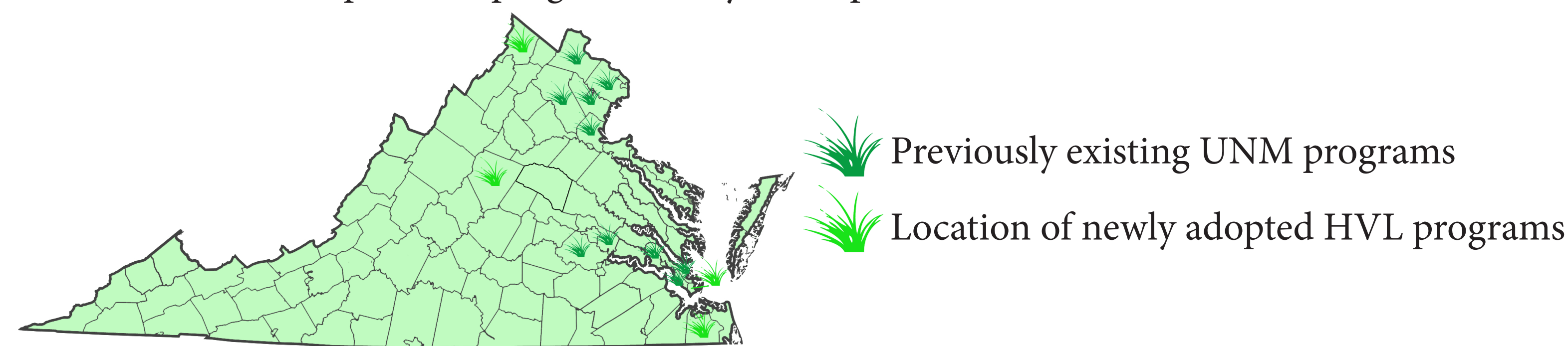


DEVELOPING & IMPLEMENTING THE HEALTHY VIRGINIA LAWNS INITIATIVE

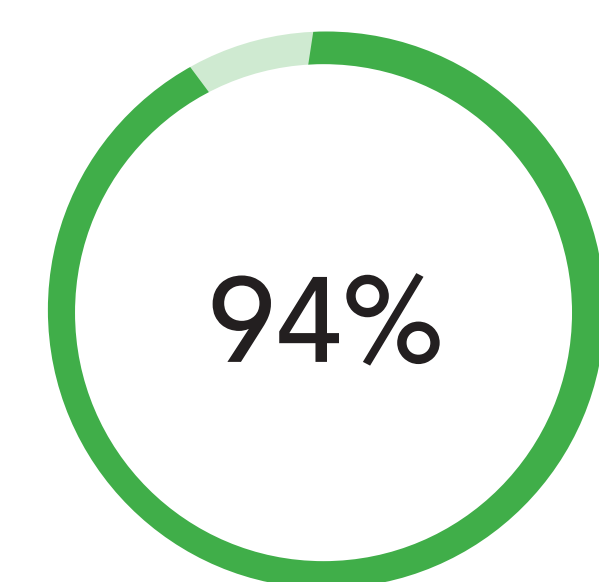


A program of Virginia Cooperative Extension

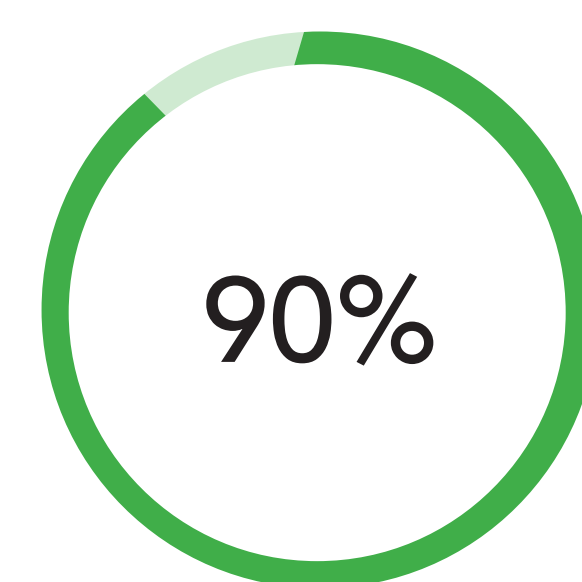
RESPONSE: A partnership was forged between Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The overall goals of this partnership are to increase the number of Extension units offering UNM programs to their residents and to ultimately reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the Chesapeake Bay. These efforts resulted in the creation of the Healthy Virginia Lawns (HVL) initiative from a combined effort of Agents, volunteers, DCR representatives and others. Local practices and procedures were shared and consolidated, resulting in a single set of program guidelines for statewide use for either existing or newly developed programs. Four more Extension units have adopted this program locally for implementation.



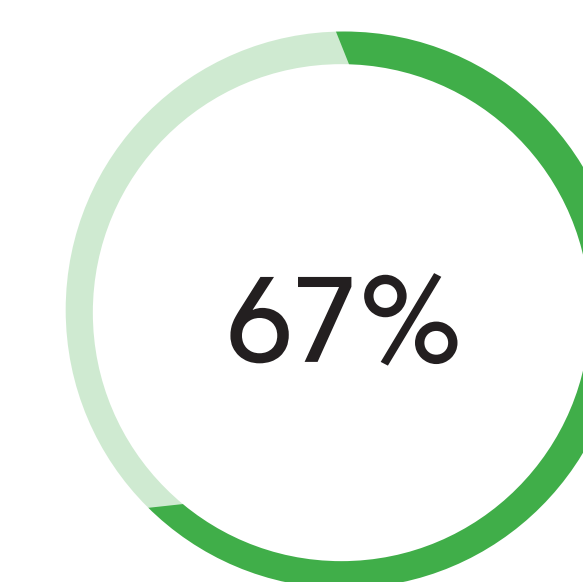
RESULTS: An in-service training was held for the Healthy Virginia Lawns program locally. A total of 30 Extension agents, local Master Gardener Coordinators, and interested EMG volunteers participated. Partners from the DCR and the Prince William County Department of Public Works presented information on relevant aspects of the UNM program. From evaluation respondents (17):



Thought centralized access was useful or very useful



Of those not already engaged in UNM were interested in starting a program



Stated funding for a part-time position would be beneficial

The formation of the statewide HVL initiative has brought together existing resources and encourages the formation of new UNM programs leading to even more significant impacts to the EPA standards for the Chesapeake Bay.



ABSTRACT

Extension agents representing nine existing Urban Nutrient Management programs involving Extension Master Gardener volunteers met for a series of meetings with Extension Specialists to develop a statewide urban nutrient management initiative. These facilitated meetings were used to glean from existing programmatic resources to create a new turn-key program kit to support new Extension units wanting to establish the program. Also, with the assistance of a social marketing company, OpinionWorks, we also developed a new name for the initiative: Healthy Virginia Lawns. We hosted an in-service training to introduce agents, local coordinators, and interested Extension Master Gardener volunteers to this new initiative. The overall purpose of this initiative is to equip homeowners with a certified nutrient management plan and information they need to properly manage their residential turf using best management practices to prevent excessive nutrients from entering the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. One goal of the initiative is to teach homeowners how to properly apply appropriate nutrients at the appropriate time of year in the appropriate amounts to their landscapes, primarily turf. This project has been funded by a grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

CONTRIBUTORS

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IMPACT

RELEVANCE: 75% of Virginia is in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It is imperative that municipalities, businesses, and consumers employ Best Management Practices (BMPs) in urban fertilization. For more than 20 years, some Extension offices have been providing services to their residents through Extension Master Gardener (EMG) programs focused on urban nutrient management (UNM). All of the existing programs operated locally with no uniform guidelines, reporting, or support.

PERSONAL STORY: Here are a few comments captured from our Healthy Virginia Lawns in-service evaluation:

“Having a statewide program will increase its familiarity among the public as well as government planners, managers and other officials...”

“The statewide push will help to better articulate the need for smart use of fertilizers and better placement of plants to improve our rivers and streams and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.”

“Great program... refreshing and nice to have a program that is largely built but just needs to be tweaked locally and implemented.”

HEALTHY VIRGINIA LAWNS PROGRAM ELEMENTS/COMPONENTS

- Program Application & Pre-Survey
- Site Evaluation Procedures
- Site Evaluation Form
- Turf Report Components
- Program Post-Survey Questions
- Healthy Virginia Lawns Logos
- Healthy Virginia Lawns Brochure
- Healthy Virginia Lawns Promo Video – Internal Audience
- Healthy Virginia Lawns Promo Video – Public Audience

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM
<http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/>
HEALTHY VIRGINIA LAWNS PROGRAM
<http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/master-gardener-coordinators/healthy-virginia-lawns/>

