

Test on Jan. 8th

# Virginia's Natural Resources Study Guide

## Natural Resources:

People use both natural and human-made resources to meet their wants and needs.

**Natural resources** are resources that come from nature, like water, coal, minerals, and wood. Natural resources are different from **human-made resources**, such as paper, plastic, and rubber.

Virginia has a wide variety of natural resources, including:




- forests
- sand and aggregate
- aquatic organisms
- farmable land
- animal and plant
- clean water and air
- coal
- wildlife
- beautiful scenery

## Water Resources:

Virginia's water resources include groundwater, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, bays, and the Atlantic Ocean.

- **groundwater**: water that naturally seeps below the surface of the ground
- **reservoir**: a place where water is collected and stored until needed

Virginia has many rivers, lakes, and bays. They are sources of food, transportation, and recreation.

Water Feature	Characteristics	Example
<b>bay</b>	a large body of water, partially enclosed by land, that has a wide mouth connecting it to an ocean or sea	Chesapeake Bay 
<b>lake</b>	a large body of water surrounded by land	Lake Anna 
<b>river</b>	a large, natural stream of water that flows in a certain path to a lake, sea, or other body of water	Rappahannock River 

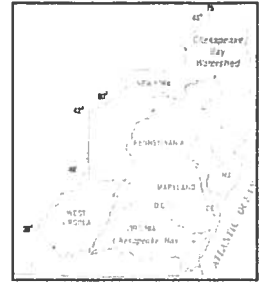
## Watersheds:

Precipitation is not the only way that water moves through an ecosystem; water constantly moves across the land as **surface water**, and underneath the land as **groundwater**.

A **watershed** is a geographic area in which all surface water (and the materials it carries) and groundwater eventually flow into a common body of water. There are over 2,000 watersheds, or drainage basins, in the United States.

Virginia has three major watershed systems. No matter where you are in Virginia, you are in a watershed! The three major watersheds are:

- the **Chesapeake Bay watershed** - this covers approximately half of Virginia's land area; it includes Virginia's four major rivers
- the North Carolina Sounds watershed
- the Gulf of Mexico watershed (via the Mississippi River)



"We all live downstream." This means that what happens at the higher elevations of a watershed affects everything else downstream. As water travels over the land, it picks up soil sediments, minerals, animal waste, pollutants, and litter. These additions to the water will affect the water quality and wildlife downstream. Therefore, it is very important that we try to decrease pollution and take care of our water resources.

### **Mineral Resources:**

**Mineral resources** are solid materials that come from the ground. Each has its own characteristics (color, texture, shape, etc.) and can be used in a number of ways. Virginia's mineral resources include coal, limestone, granite, sand, gravel, and aggregates. They each come from different parts of the state.

- **coal** is a natural energy source and is used to produce electricity and heat buildings
- **granite** is used to make countertops and decorative stonework
- **gravel** is used for construction purposes like making driveways and roads
- **limestone** is used to make construction materials like cement, mortar, and stones for building
- **sand** is used in construction and to make glass and sandpaper
- **aggregates** are crushed stones and are used to make construction materials like concrete and to provide a foundation under roads and drains

### **Forests, Soil, and Land Resources:**

The soil and land in Virginia support a great variety of plant and animal life, provide space for many economic activities, and offer a variety of recreational opportunities. Different areas of the state have different types of land, including wetlands, marshes, rolling hills, valleys and ridges, mountains, and plateaus. There is a lot of **arable, or farmable, land** with nutrient-rich soil throughout Virginia.

Natural and cultivated (manmade) **forests** are also important resources in Virginia. They provide habitats for many diverse types of plants and animals. They also help manage the run-off from nearby rivers. Forests are used for timber and other wood products and are an important part of Virginia's tourism and recreation industries.

