



nine**b** group

# BIENNIAL BENEFIT REPORT 2020-2021

9b Group, Inc.  
A VIRGINIA BENEFIT CORPORATION

[www.9BGROUP.com](http://www.9BGROUP.com)

# INSIDE THE REPORT

---

01 | WELCOME 4

02 | BENEFIT CORPORATION  
GENERAL AND SPECIFIC BENEFIT 5

03 | BENEFIT YEARS IN REVIEW 8

04 | THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK 9

05 | GENERAL BENEFIT ASSESSMENT 12

# 9B GROUP, INC.

---

A VIRGINIA BENEFIT CORPORATION

At 9b Group, we have completed our sixth and seventh years as a benefit corporation and remain firmly committed to our founding principle of working to ensure that all of the 9 billion people inhabiting the Earth in 2050 will have the same agricultural bounty, clean air, abundant and clean water, plentiful wildlife and healthy environment we enjoy today.

As a benefit corporation we focus on creating a positive impact on agriculture, the environment and society through the consulting and lobbying work we do in Washington, D.C. At the 9b Group we have chosen to work only with clients who want to do a public good. We maintain a small practice and limit our practice to those who share our goals to create a better and more sustainable world.

Through our cooperative business model of working in partnership with our clients, we assist them in realizing, expanding, and surpassing their conservation and sustainability goals. This approach allows the 9b Group to positively influence how people, businesses, and government interact with our environment for the benefit of people today and tomorrow.

## BENEFIT CORPORATION GENERAL AND SPECIFIC BENEFIT

As a benefit corporation formed under Virginia law, the 9b Group pursues both a general and a specific benefit. Our general benefit commits us to **operating 9b Group in a manner that has a material positive impact on society and the environment taken as a whole.** We determined our success in the pursuit of our general benefit by assessing our business and operations against Green America's Green Business Standards and are a fully accredited Green Business.

In addition to a general benefit, we have further committed that the 9b Group shall pursue a specific benefit of **preserving or improving the environment and advancing sustainable agriculture.**

In the two-year period covered by this biennial report, 2020 and 2021, we pursued both our general and specific benefit by and through our work to achieve policy changes in Washington, most notably through working with the Administration and Congress. We worked to secure and increase funding for critical conservation programs, while seeking vital administrative program reforms to simplify processes and expand local voices. We also worked to ensure there was enhanced cooperation between individuals, entities, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); particularly with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). In addition, 9b continued assisting clients apply for grants and special projects. All lobbying and consulting work was designed to advance sustainable agriculture and foster a more inclusive, participatory environment.

## GENERALLY OUR WORK HELPED:

- IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE ON-FARM CONSERVATION PRACTICES.
- PROTECT FARMLAND FROM DEVELOPMENT
- ENHANCE PRODUCTION ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS
- IMPROVE SOURCE WATER PROTECTION TO ENSURE SAFE DRINKING WATER
- ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS FOR UNDERSERVED PRODUCERS
- IMPROVE FEDERAL POLICY FOR INDIVIDUALS, COOPERATING ENTITIES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

# 2020-2021 BENEFIT YEARS IN REVIEW

---

We are proud of the positive impact we were able to obtain during our sixth and seventh years of operation. Throughout 2020 and 2021 we worked with our clients to pursue funding to advance farmland preservation, water quality, source water protection, precision ag conservation technology, and equitable access to programs for all producers.



## OUR WORK

With over 50 years of field experience in developing and implementing agricultural conservation programs, 9b knows what it takes to make programs work. In close consultation with our clients, we helped them develop sound, implementable policy recommendations that would advance voluntary, incentive based private land conservation using Federal Programs. Overall, the recommendations sought

policy changes to increase funding for key conservation programs, increase implementation of source water protection measures, improve existing conservation programs, and foster the inclusion of underserved producers in conservation programs.

Much of our activity focused on working with Administration officials and Congressional staff to implement the conservation

provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill, improve existing program delivery on critical resource needs, and assist clients in developing and successfully obtaining grants and partnership agreements. To obtain these results, our team committed significant amounts of time researching and writing proposals, working with a wide diversity of partners, coordinating with Federal officials, and engaging Capitol Hill decisionmakers.

# THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK

Although we were just one of many groups and individuals who worked on developing the 2018 Farm Bill alongside the dedicated House and Senate Agriculture Committee Members and Staff, the results of that work began to be seen in 2019.

The successful effort to mandate that 10% of all the funding in the Agricultural Easement Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program be spent on Source Water Protection bore amazingly positive results. In 2019 the amount of funding obligated in these four programs toward source water protect totaled \$365.1 million. In 2020, the amount rose to \$459.6 million.

Similarly, the successful work with other entities to increase the funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program from \$250 million to \$450 million per year, increase the Regional Conservation Partnership Program from \$100 million to \$300 million per year, and permanently authorize \$50 million per year for the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program resulted in significant increases in critically important conservation projects.

# THE RESULTS OF OUR WORK CONTINUED

Below are some key examples of 9b's work with client to achieve sustainable agriculture, enhanced water quality, improved wildlife habitat, strengthened equitable access to federal conservation program, and increased understanding of the natural resource and food production issues facing the Nation today:

**\$824  
MILLION**

## TO PROTECT SOURCE WATER

Funding obligated in 2019 and 2020 to protect source water

**\$7.4  
MILLION**

## FOR A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP GRANT IN ARKANSAS TO RESTORE PREVIOUSLY DRAINED WETLANDS TO NATURAL CONDITIONS WITH THE GOAL OF ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH CARBON SEQUESTRATION.

Permanent easements will be used to restore marginal cropland to its previous forested condition. Arkansas has a substantial backlog of producers interested in wetland easements and this project will focus on limited resource farmers who have often been left out of conservation programs.

**\$2.1  
MILLION**

## IN THE JAMES RIVER HEADWATERS IN MISSOURI TO LEVERAGE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE PROTECTION OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR MORE THAN 150,000 MISSOURIANS, IMPROVE THE LOCAL FARMING ECONOMY, HELP THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND COUNTY TO MEET FEDERAL WATER QUALITY REQUIREMENTS, AND IMPROVE AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS.

Project partners plan to triple conservation implementation in the watershed and build an innovative legal and functional framework for the investment of municipal funding on upstream private lands to reduce water quality impacts downstream.

**\$6.5  
MILLION**

## IN WYOMING TO HELP ADVANCE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE MIGRATORY PATHS FOR THE ESTIMATED 75,000 BIG GAME ANIMALS IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE REGION BY PROTECTING INTACT AND CONNECTED MIGRATION CORRIDORS AND CRUCIAL WINTER RANGES.

Using state-of-the-art GPS collar data, scientists can help target project funding to the most critical properties for big game migration. Project partners will help implement four landowner activities—entity-held easements, an innovative payment-for-ecosystem services land lease, fence modification, and invasive species control.

**\$6.8  
MILLION**

## IN NEW HAMPSHIRE TO PROTECT HIGH PRIORITY SOURCE WATER AREAS, RESTORE HABITAT FOR THREATENED FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIES, AND ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE.

The twelve project partners plan to take advantage of RCPP flexibilities including forest land easements to execute large, multi-faceted projects in at least 25 targeted small watersheds.

**\$3.5  
MILLION**

## IN SONOMA COUNTY CALIFORNIA FOR A MULTI-OBJECTIVE PROJECT CENTERED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE RIPARIAN CORRIDOR CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND SOURCE WATER PROTECTION FORESTLAND EASEMENTS.

The easements will preserve agricultural lands, help reduce regulatory burdens, restore riparian and forest ecosystems, improve habitat for at-risk and T & E species, protect source water (both surface and ground), and improve community resilience to extreme events including catastrophic wildfire and flooding.

**\$8  
MILLION**

## FOR THE LAKE SEBAGO WATERSHED IN MAINE. THIS LAKE PROVIDES DRINKING WATER TO ONE SIXTH OF MAINE'S POPULATION, YET ONLY 11 PERCENT OF THIS WATERSHED IS CURRENTLY PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT.

The project will work with landowners and local municipalities to protect 10,000 acres of forest, improve aquatic organism passageway, restore wetlands, improve forest management, control aquatic invasive plant species, and educate landowners. Success for this project will include maintaining water quality levels, protection of critical forests, and spatial analysis of biodiversity.

**\$1.3  
MILLION**

## TO PREVENT NUTRIENTS AND SEDIMENT FROM ENTERING LAKE SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, PROTECTING THE SOURCE WATERS UPON WHICH 165,000 PEOPLE DEPEND.

The project will focus on targeted outreach and practice implementation at locations in the watershed generating the greatest per acre, nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment loads and will be guided by the 2017 Lake Springfield Watershed Management Plan, with a goal of delisting the Lake from the 303(d) impaired waters list.

**\$375  
MILLION**

## FOR A NRCS INITIATIVE

Drafted a special NRCS Initiative in the Prairie Pothole Region for wildlife, wetland protection, and climate mitigation.

Over 2020 and 2021, the 9b Group continued to provide pro bono assistance to a wide variety of groups and individuals. Examples include:

- Helped a small firm seeking to improve irrigation efficiency in cropland scenarios on sandy soils in areas faced with extreme drought
- Served as a volunteer Board Member for the Pollinator Partnership, a small non-profit dedicated to preserving and enhancing all pollinators
- Provided counsel to small firm seeking to improve the technical infrastructure of the crop insurance program
- Provide counsel to small biological firm on how to increase in-stream monitoring in NRCS projects
- Assisted a land trust in developing a proposal to place a permanent easement on a working farm that otherwise would have been turned into a subdivision

The 9b Group assessed its operations and work during this biennium against Green America's Green Business Standards. The 9b Group specifically selected Green America's Green Business Standards as the third-party standard by which to assess its operations because Green America specifically includes an industry certification for businesses like the 9b Group. Green America's Green Business

# GENERAL BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

01

Operates a "values-based" social enterprise according to principles of social justice and environmental sustainability (values statement must be featured on website)

02

Is environmentally responsible in the way the business runs its operations and facilities (green office/facility standards provided), and in how the business sources raw materials, manufactures products, and markets

03

Operates in extraordinary ways that benefit workers, customers, communities, and the environment

04

Operates with transparency in every facet of its business

05

Is on a path to even greater sustainability and actively uses their business as a tool for positive social change



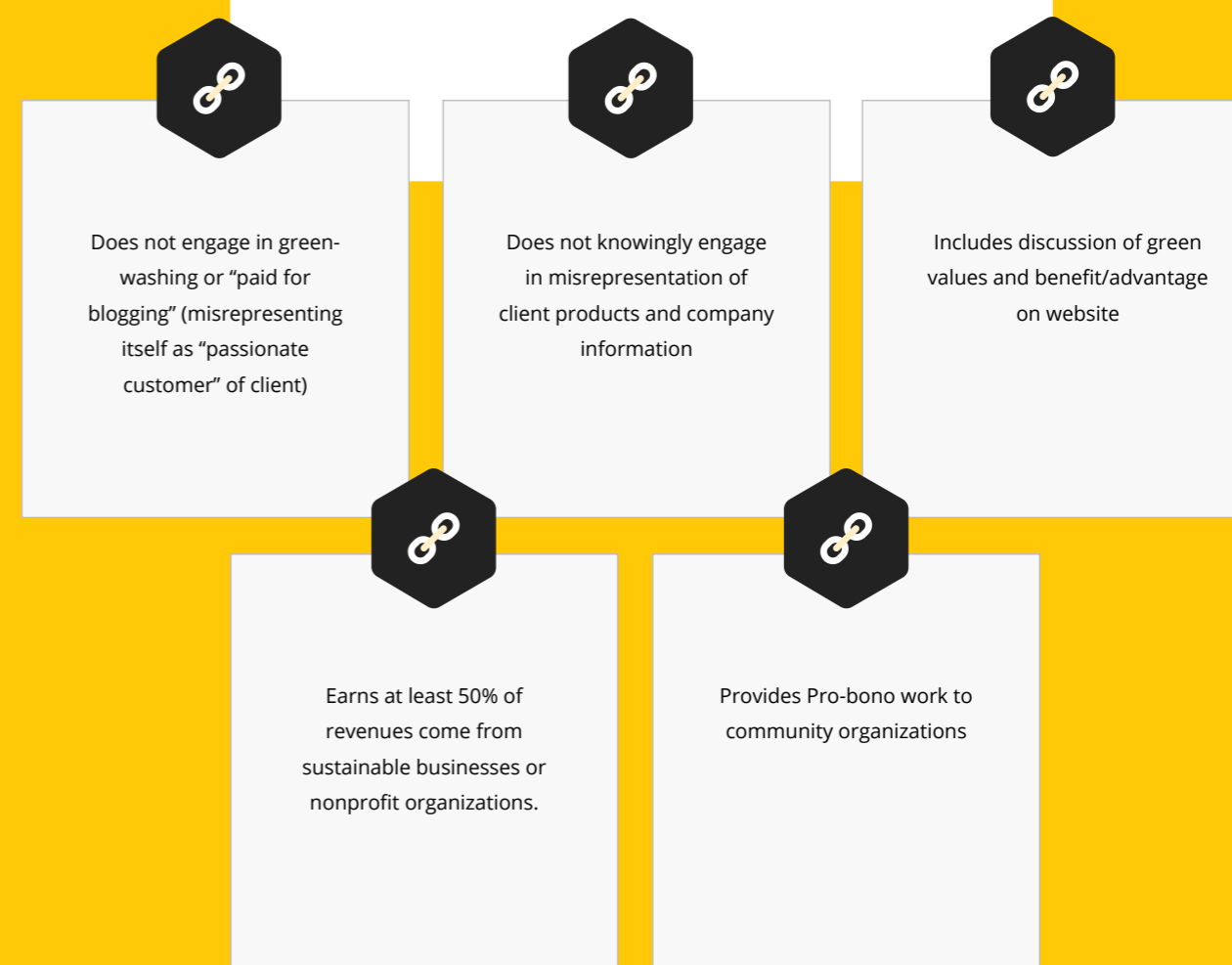
Green America specifically provides Green Business Certification standards for businesses in the Consulting, Marketing and PR Industry that require a business to:

## RESTORE OR PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

When doing work for a client, work is around sustainability or "eco-consulting."

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE.

When doing work for a client, the business:



When 9b Group assessed its work and operations during the biennium against Green America's Green Business Standards generally and for its industry specifically, 9b Group has been operating in a manner that has a material positive impact on society and the environment taken as a whole.

Green America granted the 9b Group a Green Business Certification in 2016 and the firm continues to maintain this honor. This certification recognizes businesses that excel in social and environmental responsibility, and have met or exceeded Green America's Green Business Standards. In order to receive this certification, 9b Group met or exceeded Green America's standards for all green businesses, and also met or exceeded Green America's required standards for its industry.



nine**b** group