Board of Conservation and Recreation
Thursday, May 28, 2015
Shenandoah River State Park

D R A F T M I N U T E S

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair
Steven L. Apicella
James W. Beamer
Linwood M. Cobb, III
Michael P. Reynold
Daniel F. Rinzel
Isaac J. Sarver
Alexander I Vanegas

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Andrew C. Jennison
Harvey B. Morgan
William E. Small

DCR Staff Present

Clyde E. Cristman
Joe Elton
Rochelle Altholtz
George Chieffo
Bill Conkle
Lynn Crump
Mike Fletcher
Sharon Partee
Danette Poole
Craig Seaver
Tom Smith
Tony Widmer

Others Present

Marsha Maybe, Naked Mountain Natural Preserve

Call to Order and Introductions

Mr. Wingo called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Mr. Widmer welcomed members and guests to the park.

Mr. Elton noted that through a public/private partnership Shenandoah River State Park has a canopy tour zipline. He noted that Front Royal is also the canoe capital of Virginia.

Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2014

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moved that the minutes from the December 14, 2014 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation be approved as submitted by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Apicella

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Director's Report

Mr. Cristman gave the Director's report.

Mr. Cristman reported that the General Assembly Session started with concerns for potential budget reductions, but that, after addressing needs, DCR received no budget cuts.

Funds were provided to replace aging furniture in cabins among other things.

DCR is moving forward with the development and limited opening of Seven Bends State Park. The first step is the demolition of existing buildings. The hope is to get the park open on a day use basis.

The General Assembly appropriated $1.4 million for the development of yurts in the State Park System.

A significant change from this session was that State Park Master Plans no longer have to be updated on a five year basis, but can be updated on a ten year basis unless there are significant changes to the plan.

Mr. Cristman said that he had been at the agency just over a year and that the reorganization process was almost complete.

Mr. Cristman asked Mr. Seaver to play a recording of the interview Secretary Ward did with NPR.

Planning and Recreation Resources Update

Ms. Poole gave the update for Planning and Recreation Resources.

Ms. Poole noted the following outcomes from the 2015 General Assembly Session:

- HB2226 – State Park master plans; change update review frequency from 5 to 10 years
- HB1507 – Dan River; 38.6 mile segment designated as State Scenic River
- HB1542 – State Trails Advisory Committee Established

Governor's 1000 Treasures Initiative

- Launched on Earth Day
- 1 Million Acres in Land Conservation

A Treasure is any of the following:

- A permanent land protection project (acquisition or conservation easement) that protects *natural, cultural, or historic assets*
- A *recreational asset* such as a new park, trail, water access site, garden, arboretum, playground
- A designation action such as a new state or national historic register, scenic river or byway, recreational use agreement, new or restored habitat for wildlife watching/viewing – all of which must be *publicly accessible*

DCR will track progress

2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan

- The Technical Advisory Committee for the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan met on April 29, 2015 at Bear Creek Lake State Park. The TAC considered:
    - Presentations by staff, CSR, TAC members
    - Feedback on web-based VOP and Interactive Map
    - Breakout groups: land cons; trails; scenic resources; awards, public outreach and funding
    - Recommendations for next survey/plan

Design and Construction

- Projects Completed
    - Bathhouse Renovations (4 Buildings)
        - Hungry Mother, Douthat, Twin Lakes, Fairly Stone
        - Approximately $1.2 Million – MR Funds
    - Sewer System Upgrades
        - Kiptopeke Campground
        - Lake Anna Picnic Area

- Ongoing Projects
    - Powhatan State Park
        - Complete Phase I Development
            - 30 site campground
            - 2 miles road to new canoe launch
    - New Access Road to High Bridge
        - 1.5 Mile road to provide ADA Access

- New Work for 2015
    - Widewater State Park
        - Phase IA Design
    - Cabin Construction
        - Lake Anna, Twin Lakes, Claytor Lake, Kiptopeke, Natural Tunnel
    - Soil and Water Conservation District Dams
        - Construction of Lake Laura/Birdhaven

LWCF 2015 Grant Round

- 2015 funding $781,443
- 8 applications requested over $3.6 Million
- 2 projects selected:
    - NOVA Regional Park Authority – acquisition of Kenslee Hill in Loudoun County = $390,721
    - DCR – Bald Knob acquisition in the Town of Rocky Mount = $390,72

Land and Water Conservation Fund

- 50th Anniversary in 2015
- Expires this year unless reauthorized by Congress
- Source of funding is revenues from offshore oil drilling leases and other fees – not tax dollars
- Only program in Virginia that provides dollar for dollar matching grants to state and local governments specifically for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities
- Places that are funded by the program must be open to the public and protected in perpetuity
- Since program's inception in 1965, Virginia has received $283 Million in LWCF Funding

MOTION: Mr. Apicella moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation send a letter to the Virginia Congressional Delegation giving support for the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

SECOND: Ms. Jackson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

DCR Staff will draft the appropriate letter.

Statewide Trails

- Beaches to Bluegrass Trail master plan released in January
- Potomac Segment Plan – final draft under review by the advisory committee
- East Coast Greenway statewide committee meeting in March
- First Advisory Committee meeting planned for August

Mr. Wingo said that he would like Mr. Beamer to serve as the BCR representative to the Trails Advisory Committee.

State Park Master Plans

Mr. Conkle presented the Master Plan summaries.

Hungry Mother State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Master Plan update for Hungry Mother State Park. This is a five year update.

The Hungry Mother State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is the official unabridged master plan document adopted on March 6, 2001, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. A Master Plan Amendment was approved on June 10, 2009, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on phased development). This 2015 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for Hungry Mother State Park when it is fully developed.

Hungry Mother State Park is a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) developed park that was first brought into the state park system in 1936. The 333.32-acre park is located in Smyth County three miles north of Marion on Route 16. The park's main feature is the 108-acre Hungry Mother Lake. The park offers boating, fishing, and swimming on the lake. Land based recreational opportunities include a lodge, cabins, camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, nature study and hunting.

This 2015 update places value on connecting Hungry Mother to other resources in the community. Hungry Mother is adjacent to the Mount Rogers District of the U.S. Forest Service, home to the Appalachian Trail in the area. Routes 749 and 680 are designated Virginia Byways, and part of the U.S. Bike Route 76. Route 16 through the park is part of the Back of the Dragon Motorcycle Trail. The park lake is a featured stop along the Fish Virginia First Trail. Other fishing is available on the Holston River and a Rural Retreat Lake. The park is listed as a site on the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Birding and Wildlife Trail. The Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail and the Round the Mountain Artisan Network feature stops near the park, and the Davis Valley Winery and Vineyard and Rural Retreat Winery and Dye's Vineyards are also nearby. The Hungry Mother State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

MOTION: Mr. Beamer moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the update to the Master Plan for Hungry Mother State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Cobb

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Kiptopeke State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Master Plan summary for Kiptopeke State Park. He noted that the lead planner for this park is Janit Llewellyn.

The Kiptopeke State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on March 6, 2001, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. There is also a master plan amendment adopted on April 28, 2009, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This 2015 master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future based on phased development, and it is the most recent five-year as prescribed in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for Kiptopeke State Park when it is fully developed.

Kiptopeke State Park consists of some 562 acres and is located in Northampton County, which occupies the southern half of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The park, located between the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. Route 13 approximately 2 miles north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and 7 miles south of the town of Cape Charles, was acquired in 1999. Kiptopeke State Park is easily accessible via State Route 704 approximately one-half mile from U.S. Route 13. The park can also be accessed by boat from the Chesapeake Bay. The area surrounding the park can be characterized primarily as rural farmland.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation Planners and State Park staff conducted this master plan update. This plan outlines the desired future condition of the park over a 20-year planning horizon. As required by the *Code of Virginia*, it must be revisited every ten years to ensure that the development objectives outlined in the plan continue to meet the recreational, environmental, and historic protection needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. As a part of the 2015 master plan process, the 2001 park master plan and the 2009 amendment were reviewed. It was determined that significant changes occurred within the master plan and a full revision was warranted. The executive summary and accompanying map have been updated. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect current proposed projects. The park staffing and operations costs data have been also updated to reflect current conditions.

Mr. Cobb asked if there was an explanation for the drop in visitors.

Mr. Elton said that part of the campground had been closed for renovation and also that the FEMA trailers were coming off line.

MOTION: Mr. Reynold moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the 2015 update to the Master Plan for Kiptopeke State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Sarver

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Middle Peninsula State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the update to the Master Plan for Middle Peninsula State Park. He said that the plan is to get the park ready for a soft opening. He noted that cost estimates have changed, but the remainder of the plan is the same.

Mr. Cristman noted that the park currently has about 400 acres. The target size is 600 acres.

The master plan for Middle Peninsula State Park was adopted on October 10, 2010 by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director, David A. Johnson.

Middle Peninsula State Park is located in Gloucester County off Route 632. The 431-acre property was acquired in the spring of 2006. It has 2,260 linear feet of York River shoreline where the river is approximately two miles wide. The park also includes approximately 3,776 linear feet of frontage along Aberdeen Creek. Only a portion of the park of the creek is suitable for paddling.

The plan for Middle Peninsula State Park was adopted in 2010. Cost figures for proposed construction have been reviewed and updated. The current cost estimate for the total master plan is $28,283,229, with Phase I of the plan estimated at $13,256,428 and Phase II estimated at $15,026,801. As of this date, Middle Peninsula State Park remains unopened to the public at no development has taken place. This renewal readopts the existing 2010 Middle Peninsula State Park Master Plan with the updated cost estimates.

MOTION: Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the update to the Master Plan for Middle Peninsula State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Apicella

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Breaks Interstate Park

Ms. Crump presented the draft Master Plan for Breaks Interstate Park. She noted that this was the first publicly vetted master plan for the park and that no action was required by the Board.

Ms. Crump said that Breaks Interstate Park was established by Congress as a joint operation between Virginia and Kentucky. The Virginia portion is located in Dickenson County. General Assembly action in the 2015 Session provided the ability for Virginia to appoint law enforcement officers. Training will be shared with Kentucky and law enforcement capabilities allowed on the Kentucky side of the park.

Among the recommendations in the Master Plan is the development of outdoor recreational opportunities on the Kentucky side of the park and an outdoor training center.

Natural Heritage Update

Ms. Marsha Maybe presented an overview of Naked Mountain Natural Preserve. She discussed how she and her husband acquired the property and became interested in an easement to make the area a Natural Preserve. She showed several slides of native plant species unique to the area.

State Parks Update

Mr. Seaver gave an update regarding State Parks.

Mr. Seaver said that Memorial Day weekend showed a significant increase in attendance from 2014. The four-day weekend saw 329,013 visitors in the parks. Overall revenue increased 10% in 2015, after increasing 39% in 2014. AAA reported a 4% increase in holiday traffic.

Mr. Seaver said that as the economy improves, people will continue to look for Virginia State Parks for vacations. He said the concern is where to put them.

Mr. Seaver said that property is available for expansion and development that will allow DCR to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for public recreation areas. These properties include: Biscuit Run, Clinch River, Loudoun, Mayo River, Middle Peninsula, Natural Bridge, Seven Bends, and Widewater.

Mr. Seaver distributed a document entitled "Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Capital Request" that was distributed to members of the General Assembly. He said that the hope is that the General Assembly will consider a bond referendum for parks and natural areas in the 2016 Session.

MOTION: Mr. Sarver moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation adopt a resolution in support of a General Obligation Bond in 2016 for the acquisition and development of State Parks and Natural Areas.

SECOND: Ms. Jackson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

DCR staff will draft the resolution, and should a measure be brought forth in the 2016 General Assembly, will distribute accordingly.

Yurts in State Park Campgrounds – DRAFT resolution for consideration

Mr. Cristman noted that the General Assembly had adopted a provision to allow the development of yurts in State Parks. Currently there is one yurt in the system located at Kiptopeke State Park.

MOTION: Mr. Beamer moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation adopt a resolution that for, for the purposes of state park master planning, camping cabins and yurts, or similar structures, can be interchanged in Virginia State Parks. There will be no need for an amendment to any park master plan to place yurts in areas previously approved for camping cabins. As state park master plans are updated, any reference to "camping cabins" will be modified to state, "camping cabins or yurts," This resolution will accompany each park master plan until it is updated with the new language.

SECOND: Mr. Reynold

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

DCR Administration Update

Ms. Altholz and Ms. Partee gave an administrative update from BCR. They reviewed the following financial report:

General Fund: FY 2015 appropriation per Chapter 2 approved June 23, 2014 - $67,547,331.

Adjusted to $69,138,217 per Chapter 665, approved March 26, 2015. After "pass-thru" to other funds, $44,048,366 remains for expenditure in the current year. Through April 30, 2015,

$37,000,649 (88%) has been spent. Expenditures are not equally distributed through-out the year.

Significantly all will be spent except possibly SWCD funding, a Chesapeake Bay Education Project, and the amount of funding provided for replacement of Parks' cabin furnishings. Routinely unspent items of this nature have been approved for carry forward into the next fiscal year. FY 2015 $740,866 General Fund administration increase resulted in supporting the entire agency.

Line of Credit: Through improved cash management and billing procedures it has not been necessary to use this. Probably will not have to use at year end; but it is available if needed.

Parks Revenue through April is about 8% ahead of last year for the same period.

Parks Project Fund – No items to bring before the Board at this time.

- $10,000 received from Cove Ridge Foundation to be used to help purchase a van.
- $155.00 revenue with no specific designation (3 separate checks)
- $1591.25 Interest earned – allocated to SWVA Museum.

Water Quality Improvement Fund and Virginia Natural Resource Commitment Funds have distributed almost $23,000,000 through April 30.

- $10,841,088 Beginning cash balance on July 1, 2014
- $20,931,888 Deposited into the above fund per Appropriation Act
- $7,071,141 Revenue from Recordation fees and misc.
- $22,986,690 Distributed thru April 30, 2015
- $15,857,427 Cash Balance on hand April 30, 2015

Water Quality Improvement Fund Reserve had a cash balance of $8,185,417 on April 30, 2015.

The Natural Area Preservation Trust Fund had a cash balance of $202,191 as of April 30, 2015.

<u>Other Business</u>

Ms. Crump gave the Scenic Rivers update. She reviewed the criteria for designating Scenic Rivers and gave the particulars on new propose segments.

Dan River – Halifax County

- 38.6 miles
- Field work June 2014

- Meets minimum criteria
- Support of County, South Boston, and Pittsylvania County
- Primary Assets- remoteness, no development, flora and fauna, and recreational assets
- Was passed by the General Assembly in 2015

Clinch River – Tazewell County

- 30.3 miles
- Field work April 2014
- Meets minimum criteria
- No support from the towns of Richlands and Cedar Bluff, nor the County
- Primary Assets – natural heritage resources, expansive views, curving alignment, and variable landscape from remote to developed

Proposed Rapidan River – Orange, Madison, and Culpeper Counties

- +/- 38 miles
- Field work June 3-6, 2015
- Requests from Orange, Culpeper, and Madison Counties

Proposed York River – Gloucester and York Counties

- +/- 15 miles
- Field work July 13, 2015, rain date 7/14
- Requests from Gloucester and York Counties
- Support and guidance from the Waterman's Museum

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting date is to be determined.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Bruce Wingo
Chair

Clyde Cristman
DCR Director