

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
May 1, 2007
Staunton River Battlefield State Park**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Sheryl D. Swinson, Chair
Richard Formato
E. Carter Nettles
Jennifer Wagner

Joy A. Cooley
Gwen Mason
Mark E. Smith

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Alan D. Albert
David G. Brickley
Gerry Connolly

Linda Crandell
Stephen Murray, Vice Chair

DCR Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon, Director
Russell W. Baxter, Deputy Director
David C. Dowling, Policy, Planning and Budget Director
John R. Davy, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Joe Elton, Director, Division of State Parks
Tom Smith, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Ryan Brown, Policy and Planning Assistant Director
Synthia Waymack, Environmental Program Analyst
Michael R. Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Rick Myers, Stewardship Manager
Carrie Hileman, Policy and Planning Intern

Call to Order

Chairman Swinson called the meeting to order. There was a quorum present.

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION: Ms. Mason moved that the minutes of the November 30, 2006 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Carter

DISCUSSION: Mr. Carter noted that Ms. Mason was not included in the list of members not at the November meeting.

Mr. Carter also noted that Mr. Maroon should sign the minutes as "Executive Secretary."

Staff noted the corrections and Ms. Mason accepted them as part of the motion.

VOTE: Motion carried. Minutes were approved as amended.

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He distributed a number of recent DCR publications, including the most recent issue of *Grassroots* as well as two new brochures regarding land conservation.

Mr. Maroon said that the Commonwealth was in the midst of three very exciting weeks. He noted that several Board members were able to participate in the April 26 reenactment of the landing of the Virginia Company on the shores at Cape Henry. The reenactment took place at First Landing State Park. DCR was pleased to host the first of the signature events for the Jamestown 2007 Commemoration.

Mr. Maroon noted that Queen Elizabeth II would be visiting Capitol Square on Thursday, May 3. Several DCR staff will be working as volunteers for the event.

The following weekend includes the President's visit and other events at Jamestown for the official 400th Anniversary Commemoration weekend. There are also events going on throughout the year in Virginia, including several in State Parks.

Mr. Maroon gave an update on the John Smith Water Trail. The final signage for the James River section was being installed. DCR is working on the development of the York River section of the trail.

Mr. Davy noted that the hope was to have the York River materials available in June.

Related to the water trails and upcoming reenactment of the Chesapeake Bay exploratory voyages of John Smith set to begin on May 12th at Jamestown Landing, Mr. Maroon said that Governor Kaine participated in the ceremonial launching of the John Smith "shallop" at Nauticus in Norfolk on March 30.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR is engaged two targeted ad campaigns with regard to water quality.

The first campaign is a farm conservation awareness pilot program launched in the Valley Region. The intent of the campaign is to encourage farmers to work with their local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to make use of state and federal cost share funds available for implementing agriculture practices. The campaign hopes to make the connection that conservation is beneficial from an economic standpoint.

The second campaign is a program that ran previously in Northern Virginia. The "Chesapeake Club" has been recently launched in Richmond and Hampton Roads. The

campaign uses humor to make the connection between individual lawn care and the health of local rivers and streams and the organisms that rely on them.

Mr. Maroon said that State Park Master Plans would be discussed later on the agenda. He noted that DCR is forming two new Master Plan advisory committees and noted that Board members may wish to consider participating.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR is still waiting to hear regarding Board appointments or reappointments.

Mr. Maroon provided a final update on 2007 legislative and budget actions. A copy of the document is available from DCR. He noted the following:

As part of the legislative discussion, Mr. Maroon referenced HB 2343 that as introduced, would have renamed Smith Mountain Lake State park in honor of the late Delegate Vic Thomas.

In discussion during the session, recognition was given by legislators to the concerns of changing a well-established State Park name and not with naming something for Delegate Thomas. With that consideration, the patron asked that the bill be stricken from the calendar.

DCR continues to work with the sponsors to develop a fitting tribute to Delegate Thomas.

Mr. Maroon said that later in the morning DCR would be joining Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant, Jr. and representatives from Dominion for dedication of the state park kiosk. He noted that the Board had previewed the kiosk at the November meeting.

State Parks Project Fund

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of Virginia State Parks Project Fund Project #07-01 authorizing Occoneechee State Park to collect and expend funds in support of the Occoneechee Native American Heritage Festival and School Day.

SECOND: Ms. Mason

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Master Plan Update

Mr. Davy gave an update on the development of Master Plans for Widewater and Seven Bends State Parks. The intent is to have these to present the Board either in the fall or early 2008.

Mr. Davy said that any members wishing to serve on the Advisory Committees should note that to Mr. Maroon or himself.

Ms. Swinson asked about the acreage for each of the parks.

Mr. Davy said that Widewater is almost 1,100 acres and that Seven Bends is around 800 acres.

York River Water Trail

Mr. Davy presented the map design for the York River Water Trail section of the Captain John Smith Water Trail.

The trail will include sections of the York, the Mattoponi and the Pamunky Rivers.

Mr. Davy noted that in contrast with the James River trail, the York trail is primarily limited to access from the water.

At this time the Board recessed for the dedication of the State Park Kiosk and for lunch.

Recreational Trails Grants

Mr. Davy gave an update regarding recreational trails. He noted that the program provides grants to non-profit organizations and localities. The program must be acceptable to the Federal Highway Administration.

Approximately \$1.8 million is available on an 80/20 match program. The funds must be awarded with 30% for single purpose trails, 30% for motorized trails and 40% for multi-purpose trails.

Motorized funds that are not used would be required to be returned to the federal government. Currently staff is able to recommend about \$167,000 of the available \$300,000 for motorized trails. Motorized trails include those constructed for golf carts, off road vehicles and motorcycles. In some cases this can be a trail for motorized boat traffic.

Upon discussion, consensus of the Board was that federal policy should be revised to allow for the use of funds allocated for motorized trails to be used on non-motorized trails rather than returning the funds to the federal government.

Mr. Formato noted that the encouragement of the use of fossil fuels on recreational trails appears to be in opposition to the mission of the Board and the Department.

The maximum grant award is \$100,000. Applications are reviewed and scored by the Recreation Trails Advisory Committee.

Mr. Davy introduced Ms. Waymack, Grants Administrator, to review the recommendations.

Ms. Waymack presented the following 30 projects recommended for funding:

City of Danville
Dan River Boardwalk
Recommended grant: \$71,600

Albemarle County Parks and Recreation
Rivanna Greenway Free Bridge Connector
Recommended grant: \$100,000

City of Salem in cooperation with Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission
Roanoke River Greenway and Blueway: Trailside and Trailhead Facilities
Recommended grant: \$46,000

Amherst/Nelson Counties
Virginia Blue Ridge Railway Trail
Recommended grant: \$100,000

Shenandoah Mountain Bike Club
North River Trail Enhancement Project
Recommended grant: \$98,001

Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
Recommended grant: \$60,520

Town of Luray
Luray Hawksbill Greenway
Recommended grant: \$40,500

U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management Lower Potomac Field Station
Meadowood/Mason Neck Trail Development
Recommended grant: \$40,000

Patrick County Board of Supervisors
Mayo River Rail Trail Phase I
Recommended grant: \$52,135

City of Colonial Heights
City of Colonial Heights – Appomattox River Greenway Trail
Recommended grant: \$100,000

USDA Forest Service
The Virginia Creeper National Recreation Trail
Recommended grant: \$40,608

Richmond Recreation and Parks Foundation
Belle Isle Circumferential Trail
Recommended grant: \$40,000

The Clinch Connection
Chief Bengé Trail Renovation
Recommended grant: \$40,000

Roanoke County Parks Recreation and Tourism
Walrond Park Walking/Hiking/Biking Trail Project
Recommended grant: \$57,000

NVRPA
Seneca Connector Trail Improvements
Recommended grant: \$78,400

Beaverdam Park/Gloucester County Parks, Rec. & Tourism
Trail-Surfacing
Recommended grant: \$28,847

Town of Blacksburg
Ellect Valley Loop Trail System-Section Four Industrial Park Southern
Connection
Recommended grant: \$197,474

Nelson County
Restoration of the Blue Ridge Tunnel & Regional Greenway: A Green
Infrastructure
Recommended grant: \$118,000

City of Harrisonburg
Hillandale Park Mountain Bike
Recommended grant: \$30,222

Tangier History Museum and Interpretive Cultural Center
Tangier Interpretive History Trail / Tangier Water Trail / Tangier Nature Trail
Recommended grant: \$100,000

US Forest Service Eastern Divide Ranger District
Potts Mountain Jeep Trail Improvements
Recommended grant: \$28,487

USDA Forest Service / GW & TJ Nat'l Forests
Peters Mill & Taskers Gap OHV Trail Enhancement
Recommended grant: \$70,400

US Forest Service Glenwood & Pedlar Ranger Districts
South Pedlar ATV Trail System Maintenance & Restoration
Recommended grant: \$30,574

Northern Virginia Trail Riders
Takers Gap OHV Parking Improvement Project
Recommended grant: \$57,000

Rockingham County American Motorcyclist Association
Rocky Run Off-Road Trails
Recommended grant: \$7,680

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
STAR Trail
Recommended grant: \$49,332

Natural Heritage
Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve Trail
Recommended grant: \$62,000

State Parks
Equipment Purchase
Recommended grant: \$100,000

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation accept DCR recommendations based on the work of the Recreation Trails Advisory Committee to approve the 30 trail projects and encourage funding other eligible projects, should additional funds be made available this year.

SECOND: Mr. Nettles

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation authorize DCR to utilize the balance of the prescribed 30% motorized Recreational Trail Project funds on any eligible motorized projects that arise during the course of the year, understanding the sense of the Board on this topic.

SECOND: Ms. Mason

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Maroon suggested a future Board discussion with regard to the use of the motorized portion of trail fund allocations.

Mr. Davy noted that one of the largest support groups for this Congressional funding has been the off road vehicle coalition.

Natural Area Management Issues

Mr. Maroon noted that staff wished to better familiarize the Board with Natural Area management issues and the Natural Heritage program. He said any public survey regarding natural resources support in the Commonwealth will typically list natural heritage support at or near the top. However, there is sometimes a disconnect between what the public cares about and what the General Assembly funds.

Mr. Tom Smith noted that at the last Board meeting, the Board adopted guidelines for the naming of Natural Area Preserves similar to the guidelines for the naming of State Parks. He said that two projects may be finished prior to the next Board meeting.

Those projects are:

One involves untouched forest along the Nottoway River and the other an exemplary seepage swamp. Mr. Smith presented naming recommendations for both properties.

Mr. Maroon noted that there was no longer a quorum, however, actions regarding the naming are advisory.

MOTION: Mr. Nettles moved that the Board support the staff's naming recommendations.

SECOND: Ms. Mason

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously among members present.

Mr. Tom Smith and Mr. Myers gave an overview of the Natural Heritage program, regions and staffing. The presentation entitled "Virginia's Natural Area Preserve System: A Growing Natural Treasure and Management Challenge," is available from DCR.

Ms. Swinson asked if the General Assembly Appropriations Committee visited Natural Areas in the same manner as visiting State Parks. She said that exposure to these resources is key to the appreciation and understanding of their importance.

Following a brief discussion of the issues and partnering consideration, Mr. Maroon suggested that the Board might develop a subcommittee for further discussion of this issue.

Ms. Swinson appointed Ms. Mason to chair the subcommittee. Staff will work with Ms. Mason and the chair to identify additional members for the subcommittee.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be in August or September. Staff will work with the chair to coordinate a date and location.

Adjourn

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl D. Swinson
Chair

Joseph H. Maroon
Executive Secretary