

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Board Room, 4000 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230

May 7, 2009, 1:00pm

Present: Dr. William T. Greer, Jr. - Committee Chairman, Sherry S. Crumley, Mary Louisa Pollard; **Absent:** Randy Kozuch; **Management Staff:** Becky Gwynn, Larry Hart, Bob Ellis, Cale Godfrey, David Simmons, Julia Dixon, Ed Steinkoenig, Lee Walker, David Whitehurst, John Allen.

Dr. Greer welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 5, 2009 committee meeting have been posted to the Web site and copies were distributed to the Committee members for review. **Dr. Greer called for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Crumley made a motion for the minutes to be approved as submitted. Motion Seconded by Ms. Pollard. Ayes: Greer, Crumley and Pollard.**

Comments by Director Robert W. “Bob” Duncan: Mr. Duncan was not able to attend this meeting due to a schedule conflict.

Possible Board Legislative Initiatives: The Chairman commented on this item for the 2010 General Assembly Session indicating that Ms. Crumley has presented the issue of mandatory penalties for some wildlife violations. That issue has been moved along to Law Enforcement to look into and find out what other states are doing. They will then bring their findings back to the Board and a recommendation of action.

Ms. Crumley indicated that the Commonwealth’s Attorney in Botetourt County where she lives is the current President of the Commonwealth Attorney’s Association and is also a hunter. She has talked with him and had a good discussion where he said that the laws are there, it is just a matter of education. He also said that he could work with the Department on some initiatives to help educate the judges and the attorneys.

Dr. Greer asked if anyone knew of any other initiatives that would be coming forth from other Board members. Ms. Pollard stated that there were some from the staff that would be coming forward. Lee Walker noted that Ms. Crumley’s initiative had been turned over to Colonel Watts and Major Steve Pike.

Media Service Report: The Chairman called upon Mr. Lee Walker to present his presentation on the Quarterly Media Service Report. Mr. Walker presented his report noting that there were 110 media inquiries/interviews fielded by the Media Relations Coordinator during the third quarter of FY 2009, which compares to 122 inquiries during the same period last year. He mentioned that 2008 had the highest number of hunting fatalities in more than 15 years, but on the positive side it was also the highest number of

bear and deer harvested. Mr. Walker also noted there are major changes to take place in wildlife regulations. The Outdoor Report, which is a bi-weekly electronic newsletter, continues to grow and now has 23,000 subscribers and is a great proactive way to get information out to the public. The Video Production Unit has been very busy creating streaming videos to publish on the web. An example of this is the four minute pictorial of the Agency's history which is also used to open meetings, groups and discussions. A 45-minute video about Habitat at Home was recently completed which focuses on improving home landscaping for wildlife and will be available to the general public at a cost of \$12. Work has also begun on Hunter Safety PSAs. The website continues to grow and receives over 15 million pages viewed a year. New notices and events are published weekly to the web. The magazine continues to grow and the March Photo Contest issue remains the most popular. Regulations publications never stop and continue to be distributed to over 600 licensing agents across the state. The Wildlife Calendar sales increased this year probably due to the change in the calendar covering January to December. Two strong sales opportunities exist for the calendar - one in August when the calendar comes out and again in December during the Christmas season.

Lapsed Angler Program: Mr. Walker reported that this is the second year of a three year nationwide program. The postcards are now being mailed out to try and encourage the 75,000 anglers who missed buying their licenses last year. The Agency is participating in this program along with 38 other states.

Apprentice Hunting License Program: Mr. Walker reported on the sales numbers for this new effort and also indicated that the Department recently was awarded a grant for about \$80,000 grant from the National Shooting Sports Foundation to participate in a program for hunting that is similar to the Lapsed Angler Program.

Boater Education Program: Mr. Walker reported on the boating safety education requirement, noting that we will soon be doing some advertisements in some selected newspapers and other hunting/fishing publications around the state to bring attention to the upcoming compliance date and phase-in schedule for this requirement.

Ms. Crumley brought to staff's attention that her husband attempted to check in a turkey online using the two websites in the regulation booklet. She noted one link hooked him into the Department's website while the other went to an unavailable screen. Mr. Walker responded that he would check into the matter and get it resolved.

The question was raised on whether Virginia Wildlife magazine subscriptions have been affected by the downturn in the economy or is it holding pretty well? Mr. Walker responded by saying that the magazine is down by about 600 subscribers and the economy has taken a small toll in about the last eight months. One initiative that is being looked at for the future is an electronic version of the magazine and a proposal has been put forth to the IT department and to VITA to explore this option. This would be a multi-year process to create a fully electronic version.

Ms. Pollard asked if there is a profile on the magazine subscribers. Mr. Walker responded by reporting that there will be a major survey completed in 2010 through the magazine fulfillment services, Infonet Systems. Infonet also represents 28 other states and their magazines as a COOP which provides a consolidated cost savings to all members. The detailed survey results will be brought back to the Board once it is completed.

Ms. Pollard mentioned that the magazine seems like it would be a good gift item for the Apprentice Hunters and younger hunters. Mr. Walker commented that other options are being explored to offer the magazine and improve the outreach.

Ms. Crumley commented that she heard more positive comments about last month's magazine than she has heard in so long and "it really just grabbed people."

Ms. Pollard wanted to know what happens to the old issues of the magazine. Mr. Walker responded that few issues are left; 200 copies of each issue are held to make hardbound copies at the end of the year, 200 issues are held back for archival purposes and any other issues that are left are used at state fairs and outdoor shows. None go to waste.

Ms. Crumley mentioned that she had gotten a few extra copies from Sally Mills and they had quickly disappeared to people at Farmer's Markets and that kind of thing. "It is great reading and a way to get the message out."

Dr. Greer asked if the people who purchase lifetime licenses receive copies of the magazine. Mr. Walker's response was that they do not but funding opportunities are being explored and it has been suggested that the magazine be used as an incentive for some programs and license sales.

Ms. Pollard submitted an email that was sent to her about the groups that will be working on the BayScapes Garden at the Science Museum. She said that it is a great example of how networking with different organizations really gets the word out about what the Agency is doing.

Dr. Greer thanked Mr. Walker for his report.

Update on Agency Management Study: The Chairman called upon Ms. Gwynn to give an update on the Management Study.

Organizational Changes – Ms. Gwynn reported that the application period for the Chief Operating Officer's position has closed. Approximately 160 applications were received and Bob Duncan has done some preliminary screening on those. Interviews should be held for this position later this month. As reported previously, the establishment of a Bureau of Wildlife Resources was recommended and this was implemented about three weeks ago by combining Fisheries, Wildlife and Wildlife Diversity units to be lead by Mr. David Whitehurst as Bureau Director. Since that time he has met with the Senior Leadership of these groups and will meet on June 10, 2009 with the broader operational

teams to bring this group together. Bob Duncan has conducted a meeting in Region 5 to discuss the management study with the staff in that area. He also has a meeting scheduled with Region 4 at the end of this month. Meetings with the other regions will be scheduled within the next several weeks, giving them an opportunity to ask questions as well. Ms. Gwynn has posted the Management Study results on the internal intranet site so employees can have access to this information.

Ms. Gwynn mentioned that agency staffs have met with several individuals regarding Direct Marketing. The next step will be to get together and decide if one company is better to work with in a contracted capacity for fund raising and sponsorships.

Funding/Revenue – Ms. Gwynn noted that Bob Duncan has asked Gary Martel to head up a team of employees to identify opportunities to generate increased revenues. This team met several weeks ago and came up with about 60 options with respect to funding and revenue possibilities. This list has subsequently been revised down to about two dozen feasible options that have merit regarding their ability to generate revenue. Another meeting will be held next week for a final list of opportunities to work through this year. The options are being looked at from the perspective of being Legislative, Regulatory or Administrative in scope.

Leadership Development Program – Ms. Gwynn reported that the 40 Fellows met last week to work on a leadership development plan, the results of which will be translated into a learning plan. The learning plan will then be implemented starting next month. These members will hold conferences with Bob Duncan on a monthly basis. They have been divided into 8 peer groups and have been asked to sit in on Board meetings.

Ms. Gwynn noted that the Agency has been working with a Change Management Specialist to help us with the changes that are being implemented.

Dr. Greer asked if Ms. Gwynn thinks the Change Management Specialist works, and she responded by saying that “yes, I think it does; since we are in the change ourselves we can’t always see the best path of helping the rest of the employees work their way through the change.”

Dr. Greer thanked Ms. Gwynn for her report.

The next meeting of the Committee will be June 2, 2009 at 8:00am. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly F. Crockett

Staff Note - It has since been determined that a meeting on June 2, 2009 is not necessary and will not be held.