

**Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Board Room, 4000 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230**

February 16, 2010, 10:00am

Present: Mr. Ward Burton, Committee Chairman, Ms. Sherry Crumley and Mr. Scott Reed;
Director: Mr. Robert “Bob” W. Duncan; **Chief Operating Officer:** Mr. Matt Koch; **Senior Leadership Team:** Mr. Ray Davis, Mr. Larry Hart, Dr. Joice Conyers, Mr. Charlie Sledd and Colonel Dabney “Dee” Watts and Mr. David Whitehurst

The Chairman welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 10:00am. A quorum was present for this meeting.

The Chairman called upon Mr. Bob Duncan to introduce the new Human Resource Director, Dr. Joice Conyers. Mr. Duncan gave the following introduction:

Dr. Joice Conyers has twenty-three years of state service. Prior to coming to DGIF, Joice served as the human resource director at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. She has served on numerous statewide initiatives that included the appointment to serve on the Governor’s Operational Review Team designed to develop and analyze a statewide Return-to-Work policy and guidelines; co-authored a strategic plan and implementation model for the P-16 Council; co-authored a report to the Governor and General Assembly regarding the status of Virginia’s secondary and post-secondary schools; and provided leadership and expertise in enterprise-wide reengineering and re-solutioning of business processes commonly used across the Executive Branch of government (Virginia Enterprise Application Program). Joice is a 1997 graduate of Leadership Metro Richmond, a 30 year-old leadership development and community service program that seeks to harness the shared passion of emerging and establishing leader to serve the community. She also serves on the board of the Commonwealth Manages Association. She is a past Council member of the Virginia Alternative Dispute Resolution Council. During Joice’s career, she has worked in all major functional areas of human resources. She has served on statewide task forces responsible for the development and revision of statewide policies and procedures.

Joice has a master’s degree in human resource management from American University. She has a PH.D in public policy; specializing in educational policy.

Mr. Duncan stated it was a joy to have her as part of the DGIF Staff.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman welcomed Dr. Conyers to the Agency.

The Chairman noted for the record that 2 additional agenda items have been added for today’s meeting: (1) Presentation of the Wildlife Violator Compact-Final Action and (2) Presentation on Chronic Wasting Disease.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 21, 2009 meeting have been posted on the Website and copies were distributed to the Committee members for review. **The Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Crumley made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2009 meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Reed. Ayes: Burton, Crumley and Reed.**

Public Comments: The Chairman called for public comment. Hearing none, the chairman moved to the next agenda item.

Wildlife Violator Compact Regulation-Final Action: The Chairman called upon Colonel Dabney Watts to present an update on the Wildlife Violator Compact Regulation-Final Action. Colonel Watts gave a brief overview of the Compact. Public Comments have been received and there were only 2 persons who opposed this regulation. The Law Enforcement Division recommends the Committee adopt the Compact Regulation as presented by staff to the full Board for approval during the March Board Meeting.

A discussion was held between the Committee and Staff. **Following the discussion, Mr. Reed made the following motion: Mr. Chairman, I hereby move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee recommend to the full Board the proposed Compact Regulation final action for adoption during the March Meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Burton. Ayes: Burton, Crumley and Reed.**

The Chairman thanked Colonel Watts for his update.

Update on Fishing, Boating, and Wildlife Diversity Regulation Cycle Issues and Concepts: The Chairman called upon Mr. David Whitehurst to present an update on Fishing, Boating and Wildlife Diversity Regulation Cycle Issues and Concepts. Mr. Whitehurst called upon Mr. Gary Martel to provide a brief update on the current process. Mr. Martel gave the following presentation:

During the period of September 1 through November 30, 2009 was the scoping period for staff and public view/input on fishing, boating, and wildlife diversity regulation issues.**

At the March Board Meeting, the staff will present their regulatory issues/concepts identified during the scoping period to the Board for its consideration and modification as desired.**

Mr. Martel covered the remaining schedule:

60 Day Public Comment Period on Regulatory Issues and Concepts**

June 8, 2010 Board Meeting – Staff presents proposal stage recommendations and the Board proposes regulation amendments; **

60 Day Public Comment period on Board Proposed Regulations – public meetings may be scheduled at appropriate locations depending on subject matter and interest. **

October 5, 2010 Board Meeting – staff presents its final recommendations and the Board deliberates and adopts final regulation amendments.**

January 1, 2011-effective date of Board adopted regulation amendments unless otherwise specified by the Board.

A discussion was held by the Committee and Staff. The Chairman thanked Mr. Martel for his report.

Mr. Duncan introduced guests in the audience today: Mr. Wilmer Stoneman, Virginia Farm Bureau, USDA Wildlife Services Director Scott Barris and Deputy Jennifer Cromwell.

2010 Legislative Update: The Chairman called upon Mr. Sledd for the 2010 Legislative Update. Mr. Sledd gave the following report: Twenty-five bills have been posted to the DGIF Website list relating to the Agency and the Board. The DGIF agency bills are: HB373, HB487, HB801, HB1218; SB289 and SB575. So far, legislative action has been taken on 9 of the 25 bills. Mr. Sledd also noted that there are a number of bills that relate to licensing fees.

A brief discussion was held by the Committee and Staff. The Chairman thanked Mr. Sledd for his report.

Virginia Boating Education Compliance, PSA (Video). The Chairman called upon Mr. Sledd and Mr. Walker to present this video. This video can be viewed upon request.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their collaborative efforts.

Update on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD): The Chairman called upon Mr. Bob Ellis and Mr. Nelson Lafon to present this update.

Mr. Ellis introduced the topic and recognized the CWD Response Team members:

Bureau of Wildlife Resources:

Co-Chairs Cale Godfrey and Nelson Lafon

Kendall Ryan, Dave Steffen, Matt Knox, Jay Jeffreys, Fred Frenzel, Dave Kocka, Al, Bourgeois, Hank Tomilinson and Tyler Urgo

Law Enforcement:

Ray Soloman, CPO, Sgt. Carl Martin, Capt. Kevin Clark, Sgt. Steve Bullman and Lt. Ronnie Warrant

Outreach Division

Julia Dixon

Other Agencies

USDA Vet. Services

VDACS

VDH

Mr. Lafon gave the following presentation:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a progressive neurological disease found in North American deer. The disease ultimately results in the death of the deer, following rapid decline in condition. Susceptible species are elk, moose mule deer, white-tailed deer, and black tailed deer. This disease belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. There is no evidence that CWD has been transmitted to humans or livestock and it is a serious threat to Virginia's deer population.

VDGIF has been preparing for this potential for a number of years and is well-positioned to adequately address this first positive case in Virginia. The agency has monitored for CWD since 2002 when the disease was first found east of the Mississippi River in Wisconsin. With the discovery of CWD in West Virginia less than 10 miles from the Virginia line in 2005, CWD surveillance was focused in an area of western Frederick and Shenandoah counties and elements of the CWD Response Plan were implemented. Additional elements of the Response Plan - establishment of response surveillance area and mandatory sampling - were implemented in 2008 following detection of CWD in West Virginia 2.5 miles from the Virginia border in the Fall of 2007. An additional positive case was found in West Virginia 4.5 miles from the Virginia Border in the Fall of 2008.

Mr. Lafon presented slides showing statewide CWD samples collected during the 2009-2010 hunting season, as well as all West Virginia and Virginia CWD positives found during 2005-2010. Virginia CWD Surveillance during 2009-2010 included continuing active surveillance in Frederick and Shenandoah counties. New initiatives included an additional sampling location and increased coordination with landowners, clubs, cooperating agencies, etc. The sampling efforts have resulted in 206 samples collected with 1 confirmed positive. All of the other sample results have been received and found to be negative for CWD.

Virginia has one CWD confirmed positive sample. The preliminary result was received Jan 8, 2010 and confirmed January 19, 2010. It was determined that the location was less than 1 mile from the West Virginia border, southwest of Gore, Virginia. Staff has worked with the landowner to obtain the exact location.

Following detection of CWD in Virginia, Wildlife Bureau staff implemented the following actions outlined in the CWD Response Plan:

1. Stressed the guiding principle to keep our response in proportion to risks.
2. Notified key individuals (SNR, Board, Chair, State Vet, USDA Vet, WV) of the preliminary positive on January 11th
3. Notified key individuals named above regarding the positive confirmation on January 19-20th
4. Notified all VDGIF staff on January 20th
5. Notified key stakeholders on January 20-21
6. Advised the media via a press release on January 20
7. Assigned staff media contacts on January 20
8. Assembled a CWD Response Team and held an initial meeting on January 28th
9. Assigned 6 teams to develop proposals for disease containment measures on January 28th.
10. Began planning for a public informational meeting in the area in April.

The staff continues to review the CWD Response Plan to determine the appropriate disease control measures and prevalence and geographic extent of the outbreak for free-ranging deer. Under authority of 4 VAC 15-20-220 and per the Response Plan, potential CWD response actions include:

1. Delineation of CWD management and surveillance areas;
2. Requiring mandatory checking and/or disease testing of deer;
3. Further prohibiting feeding of deer;
4. Restricting the movement and disposal of deer or deer parts;
5. Restricting rehabilitation and release of deer; and
6. Reduction of deer populations

Other ongoing tasks relate to media and communications, personnel issue and CWD grants/funds, and coordination with other agencies (WVDNR, VDACS, USDA-VS, VDH).

The Chairman encouraged staff to have this as a priority and to provide updates to the Committee. A discussion was held by the Committee and Staff.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Ellis and Mr. Lafon for their report.

Update on Elk Restoration and Management Operational Plan Process: The Chairman called on Mr. Ellis to provide the committee an update on the Elk Restoration and Management Operational Plan Process. Mr. Ellis gave the following presentation:

The Elk Plan Committee Members are:

Johnny Wills, (District Wildlife Biologist) Co-Chair
Allen Boynton (Wildlife Regional Manager) Co-Chair
Dave Steffen (Forest Game Program Manager)
Matt Knox (Deer Project Leader)
Al Bourgeois (District Wildlife Biologist)
Jeff Trollinger (Watchable Wildlife Manager)
Jamie Davis (CPO Sgt.)
Ricky Salyers (CPO)
Tom Hampton (District Fisheries Biologist)

Committee Support

Cale Godfrey (Wildlife Assistant Director)
Coren Jagnow (Human Dimensions Specialist)
Lee Walker (Communications Manager)
Julia Dixon (Media Relations Specialist)
Dave Morton (GIS Manager)
Kendall Ryan (GIS Specialist)

Mr. Ellis noted that many of the same people also serve as members of the CWD Response Team.

The Committee Activities have included:

October 25-26 Meeting with KYDWF Staff
December 10: Meeting with Va. Farm Bureau
January 20: Meeting with Va. Mining Association
January 25-26: Field trip and meeting of the Committee
January-February: Sections of Plan being prepared

The accomplishments of the Committee are:

- Meeting conducted with KYDWF
- Meeting with two stakeholder groups
- Discussion of Federal Aid Funding with USFWS
 - Adopting a plan format that will qualify as a NEPA Document
 - Plan will present different management options
 - Plan will discuss environmental effects
 - Plan will receive public comment
- Sections of plan drafted for review by committee

Mr. Ellis covered the next actions outline:

February – Complete rough draft of plan

March-April – Meet with key stakeholder groups to make sure concerns have been identified in draft plan (Va. Farm Bureau; Va. Mining Association; US Forest Service; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation)

May- Committee conducts final review of draft and forward to Richmond leadership for review

July – Draft Plan presented to Board at July Board meeting; Draft Plan, if approved, distributed for public comment; public input meetings held in SW Virginia (July and August)

October – Final plan recommended to Board at the October Board meeting.

A discussion was held by the Committee and staff. The Committee also called upon Mr. Wilmer Stoneman of the Va. Farm Bureau for comments regarding the December 10th Meeting. Mr. Stoneman stated he believed the meeting was somewhat successful but encourage staff and the Director to schedule another meeting to update everyone. Mr. Stoneman also stated that members of the Farm Bureau would still like to be included in the drafting of the plan.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Ellis for his presentation.

Mr. Reed asked about the status of the Fox Hunters and Trappers agreement. Mr. Ellis indicated that there were no outstanding issues at this time.

Directors Comments/Other Business: The Chairman called upon Mr. Duncan for his remarks. Mr. Duncan thanked Mr. Charlie Sledd and others for a job well done during the General Assembly. Mr. Duncan will give a presentation during the Sportsman's Caucus Breakfast on March 4th.

Mr. Duncan noted that recently a newly formed Foxhound Training Preserve Association. There are currently 39 fox pen operators and 1 currently under construction. Recently, law enforcement and wildlife have met with the organization. Different issues were discussed. One of the more pressing issues was the use of coyotes in the pen. Bears are also becoming an operational issue for pen operators. Constituents have expressed concern regarding these ongoing issues. The Director and staff presented a motion for a moratorium on foxhound training preserves. The

Director requested the Committee to present the motion to the full Board during the March Meeting.

The Chairman conducted a discussion on the issue. Mr. Reed expressed his reservation on the moratorium. Ms. Crumley asked if this had been discussed with the new association. Mr. Ellis stated this discussion had occurred and they support the moratorium. Further discussion was held on the issue. The Committee requested a document be prepared so all operators can conduct business under the same guidelines.

The Chairman called upon Mr. Stoneman for comment on the issue. Mr. Stoneman indicated that members of the Farm Bureau be included in the discussion with the fox pen holders.

Mr. Reed stated he would support this effort if there was ample time for public comment. The motion was amended to include all interested parties in the discussions and...

Mr. Duncan reminded everyone of the NSAP tournament on February 27, 2010.

The Chairman thanked the Director and staff for their presentations given today. Hearing no additional comments the meeting was adjourned at 12:45pm. The next meeting date will be announced at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth B. Drewery, Board Secretary
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries