

**Board of Conservation and Recreation  
Wednesday, April 26, 2006  
The Jefferson Library at Monticello  
Charlottesville, Virginia**

**Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present**

Alan D. Albert, Chair  
David G. Brickley  
Gerald Connolly  
Richard Formato  
E. Carter Nettles

Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair  
J. Benjy Burnett  
Linda Crandell  
Stephen Murray  
Jennifer Wagner

**Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present**

Joy A. Cooley

Gwen W. Mason

**DCR Staff Present**

Joseph H. Maroon, Director  
John R. Davy  
Larry Smith

Russell W. Baxter  
Michael R. Fletcher  
R. Gary Waugh

**Call to Order**

Chairman Albert called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and declared a quorum present.

Mr. Albert introduced Jack Robertson, the librarian of the Jefferson Library.

Mr. Robertson welcomed members and gave an overview of the Jefferson Library. The Library was dedicated in 2002 as part of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's work to expand scholarship and research.

Mr. Maroon expressed appreciation to Mr. Robertson and also to Katherine Imhoff who serves as Chair of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

**Introduction of New Member**

Mr. Albert welcomed Jennifer Wagner of Meadowview as the newest member of the Board.

**Minutes from December 16, 2005**

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the minutes of the December 16, 2006 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nettles noted that the minutes had indicated a review of the Bylaws was necessary.

Mr. Maroon indicated that would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

### **Director's Report and Legislative & Budget Update**

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He noted that Ms. Mason was unable to attend because she was running for City Council in Roanoke and the election was approaching. Additionally, Joy Cooley had planned to attend but was called away for a funeral.

Mr. Maroon noted that a tour of Monticello was offered for members following the meeting.

Mr. Maroon noted that former Delegate L. Preston Bryant, Jr. had been appointed as Secretary of Natural Resources. Working in the Secretary's office are: Nikki Rovner, formerly with The Nature Conservancy, Jeff Corbin, formerly with the Bay Foundation and Missy Neff who shares a strong conservation background. Mr. Maroon said there was an excellent team in place and that he looked forward to working with them over the next four years.

Mr. Maroon noted that Governor Kaine had reappointed him to the position of Department Director. Additionally David Paylor, former Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources was appointed Director of the Department of Environmental Quality and Kathleen Kilpatrick was reappointed as Director of the Department of Historic Resources.

Mr. Maroon noted that a summary of legislative actions from the past session was provided in member packets.

Legislation included SB52 that allows the Department to amend the lease of Oconeechee State Park with the Army Corps of Engineers for the purpose of providing additional facilities.

SJR 109 Commemorates 2006 as the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Virginia State Parks.

SB415 Extends the period for prescribed burning under certain conditions.

This is used as a management tool on some of DCR's natural areas. The legislation allows for an additional six weeks.

Mr. Maroon provided a handout with a summary of the budget bills as of the end of the regular session. He noted that until the work of the General Assembly is completed the bills are not final. A copy of this summary is available from DCR.

Mr. Maroon noted that several staff and Board members were present at the Annual Environment Virginia Conference at VMI. Governor Kaine addressed the more than 800 attendees. A copy of the Governor's remarks was provided in member packets. A copy of the Governor's remarks is available from DCR.

Mr. Maroon said the Governor announced plans to hold a Virginia Outdoors Summit by the end of the year. Additionally he said that one of the key goals that were set out by the Governor is the preservation of an additional 400,000 acres of land by the end of his term. That is a very aggressive goal and Virginia is involved in a partnership with Maryland and Pennsylvania in protection of the Bay. In that agreement there is a land conservation goal to protect 20% of the land in the Bay watershed overall. Virginia has adopted that as a goal for the state. Pennsylvania and Maryland have met this goal. Virginia still needs to protect another 350,000 acres.

Mr. Murray asked if this was all state land. Mr. Maroon said it was a combination of state, local and private lands. He said the state has had a land preservation tax credit that has propelled a lot of conservation efforts.

Mr. Maroon said that on the next to his last day in office, Governor Warner announced and signed the Commonwealth's commitment to acquire 1100 acres in Stafford County called Widewater. This land located forty miles south of Washington DC and comes with 2 miles of river frontage on the Potomac River and Aquia Creek. DCR was able to purchase the land with the help of the Trust for Public Lands. Although the property appraised for considerably more, DCR was able to obtain the property for \$6.1 million. This will become a state park in the future when funds are available to develop and to staff it.

DCR is also working with local and state leaders on the potential acquisition of Grand Caverns to become a new state park.

Mr. Maroon said that Grand Caverns was already operating as a park under regional authority. The park authority originally wanted DCR to assume the ownership of Natural Chimneys as well, however the state is not interested in Natural Chimneys as the resource is more of a regional attraction.

Mr. Maroon said that at the last meeting the Board had endorsed the concept of naming the renovated dining facility at Westmoreland State Park in honor of Tayloe and Helen Murphy. The facility will be converted into an environmental conference center. The

Department has moved ahead with that plan and that a dedication ceremony will be some time in the fall.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR would like to use \$400,000 of the available funds from the State Park Project Fund for the renovation of Murphy Hall. These funds were donated to the state from private sources. Additional funding includes \$350,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and \$75,000 from the Division of State Parks.

The Chairman recognized Ms. Crandell who offered the following motion:

The Board of Conservation and Recreation shall endorse the use of \$400,000 from the Unreserved Fund Balance of the State Parks Project Fund for the renovation of Murphy Hall at Westmoreland State Park. Formerly the park's restaurant, the renovation will entail a new heating and air conditioning system, upgraded and accessible bathrooms, and three upgraded meeting rooms. The renovation will allow Murphy Hall to accommodate meetings, special events and environmental education.

Mr. Connolly seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Governor would be at Douthat State Park over the Memorial Day weekend and will participate in an event honoring the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Virginia State Parks.

On June 15 there will be events at the six original state parks: First Landing, Douthat, Hungry Mother, Staunton River, Westmoreland and Fairy Stone.

Mr. Brickley asked the status of High Bridge Trail.

Mr. Maroon said that over 130 different deeds are being examined with regard to High Bridge Trail. Once that work is completed work on the park can go forward. DCR is working with Norfolk-Southern regarding the land transfer. The Master Plan planning committee begins work on May 8.

### **State Park Master Plan Amendments**

Mr. Davy addressed Master Plan amendments for Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River and Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation State Parks.

Chippokes has received an additional 300 acres. The plan would involve moving the maintenance site and adding a horse camp. There has been interest from the Tidewater area with regard to the addition of an equestrian camping area.

Also in the plan is the relocation of the farm/forestry center.

There is also research being conducted on the old Chipox Trail with the possibility that the trail may be able to connect the park with Bacon's Castle.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the amendments to the Master Plan for Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Murray

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Davy said that the General Obligation Bond funded a new visitor center for Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River State Park. In developing plans for the visitor center staff is recommending an alternate location than what was previously approved.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the amendment to the Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: Mr. Connolly offered a friendly amendment to the motion that would direct DCR staff to continue to pursue options with Point Farm including the possibility of purchasing development rights.

Ms. Swinson agreed to the amendment.

VOTE: Motion carried as amended.

### **Beaumont/Powhatan State Park Update**

Mr. Davy gave an update regarding Beaumont/Powhatan State Park. He said that the process had been moving forward following the last Board meeting. However, there has been considerable concerns raised with regard to the use of the primary access road into the park. Route 522 is the main road that goes by the park. Old River Trail accesses the park from Route 522. About two dozen homes are along that road. The road ends with a poultry farm along the river.

The local state Senator and Delegate have conveyed constituent concerns with the plan for the access road. At this point the only other option for access to the park would be through land owned by the correctional center, which poses its own problems.

Mr. Davy reviewed the map and access into the parkland. The existing road as it is built cannot exceed daily traffic of 500 vehicles. To upgrade the road would require the County to rescind its current resolution.

Staff has met with park neighbors and state transportation and corrections officials to try to identify and address the concerns.

Mr. Maroon noted that during the original discussions over the deed transfer of the land the Department of Juvenile Justice expressed that they would oppose park access through their land due to security issues.

### **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Virginia State Parks**

Mr. Waugh gave a presentation regarding the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Virginia State Parks. He distributed copies of the State Parks Anniversary memo to members.

On June 15, 1936, Virginia became the first state to open an entire system of state parks on the same day. That Monday morning, Douthat, Fairy Stone, Hungry Mother, Seashore (now First Landing), Staunton River and Westmoreland opened to the public for the first time. This followed a special ceremony that Saturday, June 13 at Hungry Mother State Park with Governor George C. Perry presiding.

DCR is celebrating this anniversary all year long by using the anniversary theme in publications, advertisements and through special events in all Virginia State Parks.

Special attention will be paid to the actual anniversary date, Thursday, June 15, and the following weekend. When the state parks opened in 1936, guests were charged 10 cents per person admittance. This June 15-18 (Thursday-Sunday) parks will revert to the 10-cent admission fee. Mr. Waugh reviewed a list of planned events and invited Board members to participate as schedules allow.

### **State Park Project Fund**

MOTION: Mr. Formato moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the following two projects from the State Park Project Fund:

*Project 06-01 Grayson Highlands State Park*

Black bear full body mount to be displayed in park visitor center.

\$1,200.00 from Park unallocated funds.

Project 06-02 Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River State Park

Purchase of a "Woods" backhoe implement for a tractor.

\$5775.00 from Park unallocated funds.

SECOND: Mr. Nettles

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

**State Park GOB Project Update**

Mr. Davy gave the following GOB Project Update:

- Tier 1 projects completed or underway
  - 10 projects now complete
  - 11 more by Summer 2006
  - Two major acquisitions complete (Hundley – middle peninsula park site and Ware – Lake Anna)
- Program increased by \$9.2 M of general funds
- Leveraged over \$12 M in Federal Funds
- Total funds expended or obligated over \$59 M

**Projects Completed**

- Wilderness Road Visitor's Center
- First Landing Bathhouse
- Lake Anna Cabins
- Grayson Highlands Campground
- Mulberry Hill Renovation
- Leesylvania Picnic Shelter
- Leesylvania Pier
- First Landing Upgraded Campsites
- Pocahontas Campground
- James River Campground
- Bear Creek Meeting Facility
- Bear Creek Meeting Facility
- Claytor Lake Linen Storage Building

**Projects Under Construction**

- Claytor Lake Marina Support Facility
- Claytor Lake Cabins
- James River State Park Cabins
- Bear Creek Lake State Park Cabins
- Kiptopeke State Park Cabins
- Occoneechee State Park Cabins
- Chippokes Historic Area

### **GOB Update**

- Next phase underway including:
  - Construction of roads, cabins, campground & visitor's center – Shenandoah River/Andy Guest
  - Construction of cabins – Douthat
  - Renovate historic Hillsman House – Sailors Creek Battlefield
  - Construct equestrian center, parking & road repairs – Pocahontas
  - Dredge lakes – Hungry Mother & Fairy Stone
  - Improve visitors center – First Landing
  - Cabins & Campground – Natural Tunnel
  - Improve Boat Launch & Pier Parking, York River
- All projects should be completed by 2010.

### **Natural Heritage GOB Project Update**

Mr. Maroon noted that he had just received word that the DCR Natural Heritage Program recently won an international award for the program's impact.

Mr. Larry Smith gave the Natural Heritage GOB Project Update.

1. 2002 Funding for Natural Area Preserve Protection
  - \$13,200,00 in General Obligation Bond Funds
  - \$6,800,000 in VA Public Building Authority Bond Funds
  - \$4,345,000 raised in Federal Grant Funds for Natural Area Protection
2. Summary of Accomplishments To Date
  - Eight New Natural Area Preserves
  - Additions to Seven Preserves
  - 22 Tracts Acquired
  - 5755 acres additional protected
  - \$5,500,000 expended
  - Projects Identified for Remaining Funds
3. New Natural Area Preserves
  - Grayson Glades – Grayson County: Mafic Wetlands, Rare Plants, Bog Turtle

- Clover Hollow – Giles County: Biologically Significant Cave
- Mt. Joy Pond – Augusta County: Sinkhole Ponds with Virginia Sneezeweed
- Mutton Hunk Fen – Accomack County: Sea-level fen
- Cherry Orchard Bog – Sussex & Prince George Counties: Headwater Seepage Bog
- Mark & Jack's Islands – Accomack County: Chesapeake Bay Beach and Marsh System
- Red Rock Mountain – Smyth County: Rich Cove Forest
- Unthanks Cave – Lee County: Biologically Significant Cave

4. What's Left To Be Done

- Protect Crow's Nest in Stafford County, 1800 to 3200 acres
- He also identified several new Natural Area Preserves and additions to be acquired.

5. Challenges?

- Rapid Increases in Land Prices
- Greater Demand for Rural Land
- Extended Time to Complete Projects

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation commend Director Joe Maroon and Division Director Tom Smith and the Division of Natural Heritage for their fine work, commend them for the receipt of this national award and express appreciation for a job well done.

SECOND: Mr. Murray.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

**Factors Affecting Park Construction Costs**

Mr. Davy gave a report regarding factors affecting park construction costs.

**Cabin Construction Costs**

### Project Size

- Small – higher unit cost
- 99% are under \$ 5 million vs community colleges with 50% under \$5 million
- 60% are under \$ 1 million

### State Reviews

- Costly and time consuming
- Review is virtually the same for a \$10 million college dorm as for park cabin

### Remote Locations

- Parks in isolated areas
- Distance to site in park

### Substantial Infrastructure Costs

- Roads
- Water, Sewer
- Electric

### Commercial Grade Construction

- Heavy use
- Low maintenance materials

### High Cost of Materials

- Surging demand on world market
- Wholesale rebuilding in wake of hurricanes

## **Captain John Smith Water Trail**

Mr. Davy gave an update on the Captain John Smith Water Trail. The agency developed the first element of the Captain John Smith Water Trail James River component working with the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Council on Indians and others. The trail will be both a water and a land trail.

Mr. Davy showed design boards for the four promotional brochures for the trail. He noted that funding was a concern for the York River portion of the trail.

MOTION: Mr. Nettles moved that on behalf of the Board of Conservation and Recreation staff draft a letter of endorsement for the Chair's signature that supports the concept of funding for this trail.

SECOND: Ms. Swinson

DISCUSSION:       None

VOTE:               Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be late July or early August. Staff will poll Board members for the best available date. The location will be determined at a later date.

**Adjourn**

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alan D. Albert, Chair

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Joseph H. Maroon, Director