

**Virginia Scenic River Advisory Board
January 6, 2010
VCU-MCV Molecular Medicine Research Center**

Virginia Scenic River Advisory Board Members Present

Richard G. Gibbons, Chair
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair
Amanda T. Macaulay
Porcher L. Taylor, Jr.

Joseph H. Maroon, Director
Ruth T. Dickerson
Mary Lily Nuckolls
K. Wayne Walton

Virginia Scenic River Advisory Board Members Not Present

Henry R. Broaddus
Ralph L. Moore
Cardell C. Patillo, Sr.
Ellen Shepard

Robert G. Harrison
Edward A. Mullen
Christopher B. Rivers
Christy Williams

DCR Staff Present

Russell W. Baxter
Michael R. Fletcher

Lynn Crump
Jennifer Wampler

Call to Order

Chairman Gibbons called the meeting to order. There was not a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

There were no changes to the minutes and they were accepted as presented.

Mr. Baxter noted that on the agenda the presentation on the Healthy Waters Program will be rescheduled for the next meeting.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Gibbons said that it had been a great summer in terms of the Advisory Board and the program. He reviewed some of the events since the last meeting.

The Scenic Virginia awards were presented in October. The Department received numerous awards for activities involving rivers. The first one was for the Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve located on the Potomac River. The Potomac is not a Scenic River

but it is a Heritage River and does reflect the actions of the Board and Department as they relate to protection of critical resources on the rivers.

The Scenic Water Corridor Preservation Award in the urban category went to the James River Park System's conservation easement. The Falls of the James Advisory Committee and local groups have been working for years to get a conservation easement on the 400 acres that comprise the James River Park. This was the first designated river.

In the rural category the award was given to the New River Land Trust for the easements.

Mrs. Nuckolls said that was located just upstream from Fries, Virginia.

The Creative Enhancement Award was given to the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan. Chairman Gibbons said that this was the outdoor recreation and conservation plan for Virginia. He said that the award reflects the commitment of the staff.

Chairman Gibbons said that Board members had also been active.

He noted that Ms. Jackson had participated with the Albemarle River Basin Commission regarding the 40th Anniversary. Ms. Jackson has also chaired the 40th Anniversary Subcommittee. He noted that Ms. Jackson would give a report on that progress later in the meeting.

Mr. Gibbons said that Dennis Liberson presented information to the Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors when they were considering the Jordan River. The Board unanimously passed a resolution supporting the designation.

Mr. Gibbons said that Wayne Walton presented information to the Culpeper Board of Supervisors when they were considering the Hughes River. They also passed a resolution supporting the designation. Mr. Walton also presented information to the City of Franklin regarding the designation along the Blackwater River.

Mrs. Nuckolls met with local officials to discuss the possibility of designations along the New River.

Mr. Broaddus worked with groups considering the designation of the Mattaponi River. This river has had previous issues concerning water supply and the reservoir. The citizens are interested in restarting the efforts.

Mr. Harrison provided a picture of the Guest and Clinch Rivers for the display in the General Assembly Building.

Mr. Gibbons noted that he had accepted a position on the Scenic Virginia Board and hoped to provide insight regarding working with the Department.

Mr. Gibbons thanked Board members and staff for their work to promote Virginia's scenic rivers.

Mr. Gibbons said that the 40th Anniversary display had been installed in the General Assembly Building and that following the meeting Board members would have a chance to view the display.

Mr. Gibbons welcomed Ruth Dickerson as a new member to the Board. He noted that Ellen Shepard had also been appointed to serve on the Board but was unable to attend this meeting.

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report.

Mr. Maroon said that on behalf of the Department he wanted to welcome Ms. Dickerson and Ms. Shepard to the Board.

Mr. Maroon said that the Board would like to recognize Ralph Hambrick and Dennis Liberson for their service to the Board. Certificates were prepared for signature by the Chairman and the Director.

Mr. Maroon thanked the members for their activity concerning scenic rivers.

Mr. Maroon noted that in member packets was a copy of the report to the General Assembly regarding the effectiveness of the Virginia Scenic River Board. A copy of that report is available from DCR. The report was mandated when the Board was created.

Mr. Maroon said that the Department and Board would also like to recognize Helen Casey for her long term involvement as chair of the Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee. He said that the hope would be to recognize her at an appropriate event in the future.

Mr. Maroon noted that Governor-Elect McDonnell had announced that Doug Domenech would be the new Secretary of Natural Resources. Mr. Domenech previously served on the Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Board.

Mr. Maroon asked Mr. Baxter to give an update concerning the VDOT signage.

Mr. Baxter said that under the stormwater law, VDOT is obligated to do public education regarding water quality. One of the things they have agreed to do is to provide watershed signs. They have also agreed at major crossings to post the name of the river and what major watershed it is in. At DCR's request they will also add the designation of Scenic River where appropriate.

Mr. Maroon provided a list of legislation introduced concerning Scenic Rivers. A copy of that list is available from DCR. He said that this would be a banner year if all of these rivers were designated in the 40th Anniversary Year.

Mr. Maroon said that he was pleased to announce that the Governor's 400,000 acre Land Conservation goal had been met. He said that acquisition of property in Charlottesville for a new state park would complete the goal.

Mr. Maroon said that with regard to the stormwater management regulations the Soil and Water Conservation Board had adopted final regulations on December 9, 2009. He said that unless they are further delayed the regulations would take effect on July 1, 2010.

Mr. Maroon said that the budget remained a concern. The Department had roughly 20% in cuts for the current fiscal year. He said that additional substantial cuts were not expected in the upcoming budget proposal from the Governor, but that could change when the General Assembly convened.

River Studies Designations

Ms. Crump presented an overview of the river studies designations.

Rivers Awaiting General Assembly Designation

- Jordan & Hughes*- Rappahannock Co.
 - Delegate Gilbert submitted bill
 - Senator Obenshain – letter of support
 - *No Support from Madison County or SRAB
- Blackwater - Isle of Wight & Southampton Co., Cities of Suffolk & Franklin
 - Pre-filled 12-16-09
 - Senator Lucas SB 17, Delegate Barlow
- Russell Fork* - Dickenson Co.
 - *Needs Support from SRAB

Rivers Awaiting Local Action

- Appomattox Extension*- Chesterfield and Prince George Counties and the Cities of Hopewell, Petersburg and Colonial Heights
 - Qualifying letters to the localities
 - Need supporting documentation from localities
 - Needs Support from SRAB
 - No report needed for GA

A copy of Ms. Crump's presentation is available from DCR.

Mr. Maroon said that the Board had the responsibility to recommend the designation of scenic rivers. He said that without a quorum that the Board could not take official action but could give an indication of support.

A member asked why Madison County had not supported the designation of the Hughes River.

Ms. Crump said that the County had not taken a formal position either for or against. She noted that Culpepper County had passed a resolution of support.

Mr. Maroon said that the Board could take the position of support for the designation give there was no local opposition.

Mr. Gibbons said that the Board could express support for the designation because the river meets the qualifications.

Mrs. Nuckolls said that the Board should move forward with the designation. Members agreed that it was the sense of the Board to recommend approval and express support for the designation of the Hughes River as a State Scenic River and for the extensions of the Russell Fork and Appomattox Rivers.

40th Anniversary Celebration

Mr. Gibbons said that Ms. Jackson had done a marvelous job of taking on the coordination of the 40th Anniversary Celebration and developing a plan and a program.

Ms. Jackson thanked Mr. Gibbons and staff members who worked with the committee. She said that this was a unique opportunity to gain recognition for the program. She noted the following:

- In the 2009 General Assembly session Delegate Hargrove sponsored a resolution regarding the Scenic River Program. This was presented at the last Board meeting.
- Kim Hodge has developed a 40th Anniversary logo. That is now on the DCR website.
- There is a Scenic River 40th Anniversary display in the General Assembly Building.
- The committee is looking for sponsorship for a poster and brochures to promote the Scenic River program.
- Ms. Crump has provided a spreadsheet of local groups that have already shown interest in or have promoted the 40th anniversary.

Ms. Jackson noted that members were provided with a list of rivers by region.

Ms. Crump said that the list would need to be revised to reflect the new Board member appointments.

Ms. Jackson said that the hope was that members would contact the organizations in their respective watersheds. She said that hopefully the exhibit would be available to travel following the end of the General Assembly Session.

Ms. Jackson said that localities could be asked to adopt a similar resolution to the one approved by the General Assembly. A draft appropriate for local governments was provided to members.

Mr. Baxter noted that the PowerPoint presentation regarding the Scenic Rivers program was available on the DCR website, as well as a copy of the brochure that could be downloaded and printed.

Ms. Jackson said that the final piece would be for the Board to select a date for a recognition ceremony.

Mr. Gibbons said that it would be helpful to have the Board meet in conjunction with the event.

Mr. Baxter said that it might be best to wait for scheduling after the Inauguration. He said that DCR staff had already discussed the program with the transition team.

Mr. Maroon suggested coordinating the date with the Earth Day celebration held at Brown's Island. He suggested Friday, April 23 for a meeting and recognition event.

James River Heritage Trail

Ms. Wampler gave a presentation regarding the James River Heritage Trail, a braided trail network along the James River corridor. A copy of Ms. Wampler's full presentation is available from DCR.

The Vision

- The James River Heritage Trail has been identified as a proposed trail in the Virginia Outdoors Plan for over 30 years.
- Various segments exist
- Need a coordinated approach to planning and developing the entire 340-mile corridor

Anticipated Outcome

A conceptual plan using public input that:

- Highlights the optimum user experience
- Includes maps of proposed routes
- Locates visitor services
- Identifies destinations

Potential Users

- Bikers
- Hikers
- Paddlers/floaters/polers
- Birders
- Fishermen/women
- Equestrians
- History buffs/Historians
- Tourists
- School children/youth
- Local citizens
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Naturalists

Why Develop a Trail Now?

- Land loss (much easier now than later)
- Provides access to natural areas
- Demand for trails is up and rising
- Economic development
- Funding for trails available
- Pollution (congestion mitigation, environmental awareness and protection)
- Education (environmental, outdoor skills, history)
- Communities are doing it (models, dots to connect)
- Connection to larger trails raises profile
- Greenways movement
- Quality of life

What is DCR's Role?

- Legislation passed in 1972 authorized DCR to establish and administer a state-wide system of non-motorized, scenic, recreational and connecting side trails. § 10.1-204
- Implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, developed to help all levels of the private and public sector meet the needs of outdoor recreation, land conservation and open space planning

Next Steps

- Complete draft maps (winter)
- Send out draft conceptual plan (spring)
- Target potential sites for water access
- Seek grant funding for interpretive planning and signage
- Develop Best Practices Guide for development along the James

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

New Business

There was no new business.

Chairman Gibbons noted that the Healthy Waters presentation would tentatively be at the next meeting. The tentative date for the next meeting is April 23.

Chairman Gibbons noted that he would also like to schedule a fall meeting as well. He suggested looking at October 21 in connection with the Scenic Virginia meeting and presentation.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard G. Gibbons
Chairman

Russell W. Baxter
Acting Director