

DRAFT MINUTES

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Thursday, January 8, 2004
Offices of Troutman-Sanders
Richmond, Virginia**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Alan D. Albert, Chair
David G. Brickley
Joy A. Cooley
Ted Drake
Stephen Murray

Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair
J. Benji Burnett
Linda Crandall
Gwen Mason
Susan Swecker

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Gerald Connolly

Richard Formato

Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon
Timothy J. Bishton
Lynn Crump
Michael R. Fletcher
Derral Jones

Leon E. App
William Conkle
John R. Davy
Nancy Heltman
Robert Munson

Call to Order

Chairman Albert called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and declared a quorum present.

Mr. Albert asked members and staff to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes of October 23, 2003

MOTION: Mr. Drake moved that the minutes of the October 23, 2003 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Mr. Murray

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He reviewed the agenda and the materials that would be covered at the meeting.

Mr. Maroon gave an update on the recovery efforts from Hurricane Isabel. Twenty-three out of thirty-four state parks had some damage associated with the Hurricane Isabel. The debris removal estimate is approximately \$7.5 million. The additional impact on facilities brings the total for the recovery to approximately \$10 million.

Costs for the debris removal are covered by the Federal government under FEMA. FEMA will cover 75% of the work approved. At this point the Governor's budget does include a central appropriation to cover damage for state agencies.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Governor submitted his budget proposal in December. At this time DCR is not currently slated for additional cuts during the biennium. This is predicated on the passage of the governor's tax reform package.

From 2001 to 2004 DCR has already seen more than a 50% reduction in general funds.

The WQIA fund dedicates about 10 percent of any budget surplus to water quality improvement. This year approximately \$1.9 million will come to DCR to help with agricultural cost share nonpoint source programs.

The dam safety program also received funding and one additional position. Funding is also included to help repair some of the most hazardous dams owned by soil and water conservation districts.

The department has been authorized to receive the Falling Springs property near Covington, Virginia. If acquired, the area will be managed as an extension of Douthat State Park.

There is also language for public/private construction at Occoneechee as well as funding for Mason Neck and Shenandoah River State Parks. Those two parks did not get full funding under the general obligation bond.

Mr. Maroon reviewed legislative issues for the upcoming General Assembly session. The Virginia Natural and Historic Resources Fund bill would create a fund bill that would be set up and dedicated for additional funding sources. The Governor is proposing that the fee of \$10 be placed on the recording of deeds not be discontinued as planned, but remain and portions be dedicated to natural resources.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Board of Conservation and Recreation has the responsibility for stormwater management regulations. A current proposal will streamline this authority and would transfer it to the Soil and Water Conservation Board. The Soil and Water Conservation Board already has responsibility for erosion and sediment control regulations.

This would include a consolidation within DCR of programs that are also currently managed by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department.

The last bill DCR is following deals with the purchase of handguns by a conservation officer. This will allow retirees or families of conservation officers who die while employed by DCR to purchase their handguns and a significantly reduced rate.

This is similar to programs with other law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Maroon also noted that DCR is anticipating a budget amendment that would allow the department to accept an abandoned rail line in Prince Edward and Cumberland Counties for the possible development of a park.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the legislative proposals to 1) Consolidate the stormwater management responsibilities within DCR and transfer the responsibilities for stormwater management regulations to the Soil and Water Conservation Board and 2) to allow retiring conservation officers or their families to purchase that officers handgun upon departure from service.

SECOND: Ms. Mason.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

State Parks Master Plans

Mr. Davy gave an overview of the State Park Master Plan process. He noted that the Board would be reviewing three new plans and one revised plan. Each plan takes approximately one year to put together. The plan is a vision of what the park would look like over the next 20 years when totally completed.

DCR looks at a maximum development of 15-20% of the park area leaving at least 80-85% of park land as open space.

DCR is the only state agency with a master plan process designated in the *Code of Virginia*.

Grayson Highlands State Park

Mr. Jones presented the Executive Summary for Grayson Highlands State Park. A copy of that executive summary is available from the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Originally named Mount Rogers State Park, Grayson Highlands State Park was established in 1965, and was the first of eight parks acquired through Virginia's State Park Expansion Program. The name of the park was changed in 1975 due to confusion that lead park visitors to believe the

park was located on the summit of Mount Rogers itself. The new name Grayson Highlands was derived from the name of one of the first two senators from the state, William Grayson, and the mountainous “highlands” location in the county. The Commonwealth of Virginia began purchasing the 48 farm tracts that make up the park in 1964, using federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) and matching state appropriations for the land acquisition. In compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965, the state is required to maintain this park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

The total cost of development in 2004 dollars is expected to be about \$7,241,467.

Mr. Albert asked for public comment. Hearing none he asked for the Board’s recommendation regarding the Grayson Highland State Park Master Plan.

MOTION: Ms. Crandall moved that the Board endorse the Grayson Highland State Park Master Plan as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Burnett.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Leesylvania State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Executive Summary of the Master Plan for Leesylvania State Park. He noted that there is probably no other park in the system under more pressure from development and public use. He noted that Mr. Brickley was instrumental in the establishment of Leesylvania during his tenure in the General Assembly.

The park is located in the southeastern corner of Prince William County, approximately 25 miles south of Washington, DC. The park covers 500+ acres on a peninsula by the Potomac River on the east, Neabsco Creek on the north, and Powells Creek on the south. An area referred to as the Neabsco Community also borders the park on the north. The western boundary of the park consists of land that is currently residential or planned for new homes. The parks is cut almost exactly in half by property owned by the CSX railroad, which operates an active railway through the area. Prince William County is one of the fastest growing counties in the Commonwealth.

On March 30, 1978, the Commonwealth of Virginia, through a donation by Daniel K. Ludwig, acquired the Leesylvania tract from the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company. Although there were several state, regional and local parks in the area, the rapidly increasing population of Northern Virginia, the historical significance of the site, and its access to the Potomac River made Leesylvania State Park an important addition to the State Park System.

Total cost of development in 2004 dollars is expected to be \$2,547,277.

Mr. Albert asked for public comment. Hearing none he asked for the Board’s recommendation regarding the Leesylvania State Park Master Plan.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board endorse the Leesylvania State Park Master Plan as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandall.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Fairy Stone State Park

Mr. Munson presented the Executive Summary of the Master Plan for Fairy Stone State Park.

Fairy Stone State Park is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Patrick and Henry Counties. The park lies within a half hour's drive of Martinsville, home of the Martinsville Speedway, and is within a reasonable driving distance of major cities in Virginia and North Carolina including Roanoke, Greensboro, Charlotte, Raleigh, Richmond, and the metro Washington, DC area. Access to the park is via Route 57 West off Route 220 East or Routes 8 South and 57 East.

The total estimated cost, including three General Obligation Bond projects is \$25,728,084.

Ms. Swinson asked if there was an opportunity to charge an additional fee for hunting in the park. Staff noted that some parks do have specific hunts and require a fee, but Fairy Stone only requires the appropriate hunting license.

Mr. Albert asked for public comment. Hearing none he asked for the Board's recommendation regarding the Fairy Stone State Park Master Plan.

MOTION: Mr. Drake moved that the Board endorse the Fairy Stone State Park Master Plan as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Swinson.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

New River Trail State Park

Mr. Munson presented the Executive Summary for the revised New River Trail State Park Master Plan. New River Trail is one of the most challenging to manage and one of the most dynamic parks in the system. The park is 57 miles long and 80 feet wide.

The Commonwealth of Virginia acquired the New River Trail State Park in 1986 as a donation from the Norfolk-Southern Corporation. The majority of the 57-mile long park consists of an

80-foot wide corridor with a 12-foot wide cinder surfaced trail passing through it. The trail follows the course of the abandoned North Carolina Branch of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, which was constructed from Pulaski to Galax, Virginia in the late 1800s. A spur line, added to serve the textile mill in Fries in the early 1900s, was also donated for the park. The trail passes through several historic towns and villages.

The total cost to bring New River Trail State Park to its desired future condition is \$39,438,441.

Mr. Albert asked for public comment. Hearing none he asked for the Board's recommendation regarding the New River Trail State Park Master Plan.

MOTION: Ms. Burnett moved that the Board endorse the New River Trail Highland State Park Master Plan as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Murray.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

State Park Project Fund

Mr. Bishton gave an overview of the current State Park Project Fund financial statement. A copy of the statement is available from the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Mr. Fletcher reviewed current project status. He noted that staff intended to take the following actions:

98-28 Leesylvania - Jr. Ranger Day Camp
Close and return \$455.09 to park unallocated funds.

00-52 Leesylvania – Computer purchase
Close and return \$265.06 to park unallocated funds.

03-05 Hungry Mother – Music in the Park
Close and return \$750.00 to park unallocated funds.

Mr. Fletcher reviewed the following project requests and staff recommendations:

04-01 New River Trail – Trailside picnic facility
Approve \$800.00 from park unallocated funds.

04-02 Kiptopeke – landscaping
Approve \$150 from park unallocated funds

04-03 New River Trail – Byllesby House
Approve \$2,650.00 from park unallocated funds.

- 04-04 Grayson Highlands – Permanent stage shelter
Approve park authority to raise and expend funds.
- 04-05 Leesylvania – digital and police radio.
Approve \$1,495.00 from park unallocated funds.
Park will identify additional funding.
- 04-06 Hungry Mother – Discovery Center
Approve \$950 from park unallocated funds and
\$1050.00 from Park Project Funds.
- 04-07 Sailor’s Creek – security lighting
Approve \$350.00 from Park Project Funds

MOTION: Ms. Crandall moved that the Board of Conservation endorse the recommended staff actions regarding State Parks Project Fund Projects.

SECOND: Ms. Swinson.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Freedom of Information Act Update

Mr. App gave a brief update regarding the conducting of Board business and the use of electronic mail. He noted that electronic mail should be treated as regular correspondence. Additional materials distributed are available from the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Other Business

Mr. Albert noted that there was interest in discussion or establishing a board opportunity to focus on private fund raising opportunities. He requested that interested Board members contact him prior to the next meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Set Next Meeting Dates

Future meeting dates are as follows:

Thursday, April 29th

Tuesday, June 15th
Thursday, October 21st

Meeting times will be scheduled from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Resolution Honoring W. Bruce Wingo

Mr. Maroon presented a draft resolution to honor W. Bruce Wingo. A copy of the resolution is attached as Attachment #1. Mr. Wingo served as Chair of the Board of Conservation and Recreation from 1991 through 2003.

MOTION: Mr. Burnett moved that the Board adopt the resolution in honor of Mr. Wingo.

SECOND: Ms. Swinson.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan D. Albert
Chairman

Joseph H. Maroon
Recording Secretary

**Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Certificate of Appreciation
presented to
W. Bruce Wingo
of the
Norfolk Southern Corporation
January 8, 2003**

Whereas, Mr. W. Bruce Wingo has served the Department and Board of Conservation and Historic Resources and the successor agency, the Department and Board of Conservation and Recreation through various collegial bodies in a number of roles since 1988; and,

Whereas, Mr. Wingo served from 1988 through 1991 on the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Board acting upon numerous Recreational Trail Grants, Land and Water Conservation Act Grants, Recreational Access Road Grants, and Virginia Outdoor Fund Grants; and,

Whereas, Bruce has served on the Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation which administers the Farm and Forestry Museum of the Chippokes Plantation State Park from 1999 through 2003; and,

Whereas, Bruce Wingo served for twelve straight years from 1991 through to 2003 as Chair of the Board of Conservation and Recreation providing a timely and untiring commitment to Virginia's natural and recreational resources; and,

Whereas, W. Bruce Wingo provided leadership in developing the legislative need for the 1992 General Obligation Bonds for \$95,365,000, the 2002 General Obligation Bonds for \$119,040,000, and the 2002 Virginia Public Building Authority Bonds for \$21,615,000 which have brought a major restoration of existing facilities and unparalleled expansion to the Department's lands and facilities; and,

Whereas, Mr. Wingo was instrumental in several real estate gifts from the Norfolk and Southern Corporation to the Commonwealth including property at Staunton River Battlefield Park and Natural Tunnel State Park, and the entire 57 mile trail known as the New River Trail State Park which now attracts over 1,000,000 visitors per year; now,

Therefore, the Department and Board of Conservation and Recreation take this opportunity to thank W. Bruce Wingo for his many years of friendship, leadership, counsel, support, and encouragement. We cherish the physical results of your leadership now manifest in our State Parks and Natural Area Preserves, as well as your wise counsel, wish you many continued years of service to the Commonwealth in other capacities, hope you will continue to keep the Department of Conservation and Recreation in your mind's eye, and look forward to continued opportunities of serving with you in the future.

Joseph H. Maroon
Director of the Department

Alan D. Albert
Chairman of the Board

