

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Friday, December 16, 2005
The Science Museum of Virginia
Richmond, Virginia**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Alan D. Albert, Chair	Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair
David G. Brickley	J. Benjy Burnett
Gerald Connolly	Joy A. Cooley
Linda Crandell	Gwen W. Mason
E. Carter Nettles	Susan Swecker

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Richard Formato	Stephen Murray
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DCR Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon, Director	Russell W. Baxter
John R. Davy	David C. Dowling
Joe Elton	Michael R. Fletcher
James Meisner	Robert Munson

Others Present

David Barrow
Dr. Nick Elam
John Morrell, Administrative Aide to Chairman Connolly

Call to Order

Chairman Albert called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. and declared a quorum present.

Minutes of June 2, 2005 and September 20, 2005

MOTION: Ms. Crandell moved that the minutes of the June 2, 2005 and September 20, 2005 meetings be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Swinson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He noted that this was a very busy time for state government with the transition to the new Governor. Mr. Maroon noted that Governor-elect Kaine had appointed Delegate Preston Bryant of Lynchburg as the next Secretary of Natural Resources.

Mr. Maroon noted that it would be very difficult to replace Secretary Tayloe Murphy and that the Department was looking for a way to prepare a lasting tribute for Secretary Murphy.

Mr. Maroon announced that Governor Warner appointed Russ Baxter as Deputy Director at the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Mr. Baxter previously served in the office of the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Mr. Maroon reviewed a list of DCR accomplishments and challenges. He noted that this information had recently been provided to the Governor in preparation for the release of his proposed budget.

- From the General Obligation Bond of 2002, DCR is adding nearly 90 cabins at 9 state parks and over 260 campsites, as well as upgrading another 230 campsites. The Department is adding land for as many as 6 new state parks. Operating and staffing for the parks has been the prime focus. During the last legislative session, DCR received 57 new staff positions and the single largest appropriation in park history.
- Virginia still remains near the bottom of states in per capita funding for state parks.
- Annually the Auditor of Public Accounts does a statewide survey. DCR ranks number 2 behind the University of Virginia and ahead of Virginia Tech in terms of the amount of maintenance funding and projects that are needed.
- Higher building costs have necessitated the reduction of the number of cabins that may be constructed.
- No funds have been appropriated to develop or staff any of the new parks. DCR is acquiring the land and banking the property, but the parks will not open until there is development and operational funding.
- Mr. Maroon referenced a letter from members of the House Appropriations Committee that was sent to Governor Warner in anticipation of his budget. A copy of this letter is available from DCR. The letter encourages the Governor to include operational funds for parks in his budget and outlines a six-year process for the opening of new parks.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR is very engaged as one of the state's lead agencies in trying to improve Virginia's water quality. There have been a number of improvements in stormwater management. DCR is also working with DEQ and others on impaired waters.

DCR initiated and the Governor approved an agency management scorecard. Agencies will have to meet state nutrient management requirements as well as other environmental standards.

Mr. Maroon noted that in terms of streamlining state government, the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department had moved into the Department of Conservation and Recreation in July of 2004. Additionally, the Administration and General Assembly eliminated 19 Boards within DCR. He noted that the Board of Conservation and Recreation had assumed the responsibility for the work of the Public Beach Board and the Virginia State Parks Foundation.

The stormwater management program had been spread between three agencies and four Boards and has been consolidated into DCR and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Virginia has entered a trail renaissance. Mr. Maroon and Secretary Murphy visited National Geographic in Washington, DC over the summer to receive the 2005 Kodak American Greenways Award on behalf of Governor Warner. Governor Warner was the first Governor to ever receive this award presented by Eastman Kodak.

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation recently completed the largest land conservation grant round in the history of the Commonwealth.

The Invasive Species Council recently adopted Virginia's first statewide plan for dealing with Invasive Species.

A significant challenge is that 60% of Virginia's natural areas remain unprotected. With the expansion of the Natural Heritage Program and its preserve system, DCR also has increased management responsibility.

Regarding public safety, DCR's dam safety program and regulatory responsibilities have expanded with law changes passed in 2001. DCR has a very small field staff to handle this expanded responsibility.

While dams may be in good repair, increased development downstream may substantially increase the safety hazard and classification of the dams. This is not because of anything the dam owner has done, but because a local government has permitted development below the dam. Last year legislation was passed to give localities the authority to map dam break inundation zones.

Mr. Connolly thanked Mr. Maroon for the report. He noted that a new trail opening in Fairfax County is a 37-mile trail from Occoquan to Great Falls. The trail links those portions of the Potomac River and travels through every magisterial district in the County. Over time, this will open up hundreds of miles of trails. He invited members to attend an opening kickoff celebration on May 6.

Mr. Maroon said that in terms of legislation, DCR was advancing only one bill in the 2006 session. This is for the extension of the Virginia Invasive Species Council. Currently the provision for the Invasive Species Council is set to sunset on June 30, 2006. He noted that there would likely be other bills introduced that will have an impact on the Department.

Mr. Maroon reminded members of Board policy with regard to the naming of state parks. However, he noted that certain park facilities have been named in honor of individuals. He said that the Department had considered the renaming of the Westmoreland State Park Conference Center in honor of Secretary and Mrs. Murphy.

Board consensus was that staff move ahead with this designation.

Mr. Maroon reviewed a document prepared for the House Appropriations Committee entitled "Information Related to Construction Cost of State Park Cabins." A copy of this document is available from DCR.

State Parks Project Fund

Mr. Fletcher referenced the State Parks Project Fund Balance Sheet. A copy of this report is available from DCR.

Mr. Fletcher presented Project #05-07 a request from Holliday Lake State Park for the removal of weathered fencing bordering the concessions patio in the front and rear of the building. Through a partnership with Appomattox High School, the fencing will be replaced with landscaping designed and put in by a horticulture class from the High School.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend the approval of Park Project #05-07 in the amount of \$798.42 for landscaping at Holliday Lake State Park.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Powhatan State Park

Mr. Munson presented the proposed Master Plan for Powhatan State Park. A copy of the draft plan is available from DCR.

Powhatan State Parks is located on the banks of the James River in northern Powhatan County. The park consists of 1564 acres and has 2.5 miles of frontage on the river.

Powhatan State Park was transferred from the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to the Department of Conservation and Recreation through the 2003 Acts of Assembly, Chapter 1042, Item 381.M, dated May 1, 2003. Prior to the transfer, the land was administered by the Department of Juvenile Justice and was part of the Beaumont Correctional Center. The land was farmed by the Department of Corrections.

Before the transfer was made, DJJ and DCR developed a Memorandum of Understanding that established a safety zone along the park border with the DJJ property. It was also agreed that the park access road would not come through the Beaumont Correctional Center lands. The park is accessed via Route 617 off of Route 522.

The purpose of Powhatan State Park is “to provide premiere water and land based outdoor recreational and educational opportunities while protecting and interpreting the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of the storied James River and the eastern Piedmont region of Virginia.” Goals were established for providing a wide range of day-use recreational activities, educational and interpretive programs and facilities, camping and cabins, and a well-equipped and trained staff to manage and maintain the park.

Chairman Albert recognized Dr. Nick Elam from the Powhatan Field Trial Club for comments.

Dr. Elam said that the Powhatan Field Trial Club is interested in Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers and Chesapeake Bay retrievers. The Club trains these dogs for hunting purposes. He said that there is only one public facility on the east coast for the training of dogs.

Dr. Elam said that the Club believes Powhatan State Park would be an ideal location for training grounds. The Club has held these events for a number of years on the state farm. He said the terrain is ideal for their events.

Dr. Elam said that the Club was not asking the state to develop the training ground, but to provide the land. The crop land would be converted to grass which the Corrections Department would continue to mow. The Club and affiliates would take care of any necessary construction.

Mr. Connolly asked Dr. Elam how large the site would need to be. Dr. Elam said it would require 150 acres.

Ms. Swinson asked if that was what was needed or just the land available there.

Dr. Elam said that the Club would consider holding four events at a time. Each event takes 50-60 acres and requires one pond.

Ms. Swinson asked how often the Club would like to use the land.

Dr. Elam said that there are 15 clubs in Virginia. Each club usually holds two events per year.

Chairman Albert recognized David Barrow with the Virginia State Field Trial Organization.

Mr. Barrow said that historically retrievers were used in the conservation of game. He said that using trained retrievers significantly reduces the amount of lost game. He said that there is no training facility in Virginia but that there is a facility in Delaware.

He noted that one of the committee's concerns was the use of live shot. He said that the trials are stationed in specific locations. Participants have to be approved and capable of shooting a bird to land in a specific area. The American Kennel Club polices the event.

Chairman Albert asked Mr. Munson to review how the proposal of the Master Plan committee differed from these requests.

Mr. Munson said that what the committee proposed was the development of up to four ponds that could be used for fishing, sailboating, training and park amenities. He noted that a hydrologic analysis has not yet been completed. The committee proposed allowing the use of the area on a special permit basis, but not the establishment of a permanent training ground.

Mr. Maroon clarified that the difference in the request was the use of live birds and ammunition.

Mr. Munson said that the committee was not comfortable with the use of live birds. He noted also that the Department of Juvenile Justice expressed concern over the use of live rounds.

Mr. Albert thanked Dr. Elam and Mr. Barrow for their comments. He noted that the Master Plan process provided a blueprint of what was likely or possible for a park. He suggested that staff continue to work with the retriever organizations to accommodate their requests through special permits.

Mr. Albert also said that he would be happy to have further discussions with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Department of Forestry regarding an alternative site for a permanent facility.

Mr. Albert noted that the Board provides a recommendation to the Director, but that the approval of the Master Plan rests with the Director.

Ms. Crandell clarified that the approval of the Master Plan would not preclude the development of the training area at a future point.

Mr. Maroon noted that the Department is required to review park master plans every five years.

Mr. Brickley clarified that the Board would be prepared to adopt the Master Plan but would leave it to the discretion of the Director to determine what was appropriate for special use permits in the park.

MOTION: Mr. Brickley moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend the approval of the Powhatan State Park Master Plan as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Connolly

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Election of Officers

MOTION: Mr. Burnett nominated Mr. Albert to serve as Board Chairman for the next year.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: None. There were no further nominations.

VOTE: Motion carried with Mr. Albert abstaining.

MOTION: Mr. Connolly nominated Ms. Swinson to serve as Board Vice Chairman for the next year.

SECOND: Ms. Burnett

DISCUSSION: None. There were no further nominations.

VOTE: Motion carried with Ms. Swinson abstaining.

Bylaws

Mr. Dowling said that it is staff's intention to bring Bylaws revisions to the attention of the Board at the next meeting.

New State Park Video

Mr. Meisner presented the new State Parks promotional video. This will be used in park visitor centers.

Captain John Smith Water Trail

Mr. Davy gave an overview of the Captain John Smith Water Trail.

Mr. Davy said that the Governor had recently announced the Captain John Smith Water Trail. This trail follows John Smith's journeys along the James River. Mr. Maroon provided a poster for members and noted that maps would be available in the spring. The maps provide information for both water and land access to historic sites along the trails.

State Park 70th Anniversary and 2007 Events

Mr. Elton gave an overview of the plans for the State Park 70th Anniversary and 2007 Events.

Virginia State Parks 2006 and 2007 Marketing

2006

- Have a special section in the 2006 State Parks guide on the anniversary; have a timeline run through the entire document.
- New State Parks video with 70th anniversary introduction
- Special 2006 Travel Guide
- Use anniversary theme in all 2006 advertising including TV/Radio ads
- Use anniversary theme in all new facility openings
- State park Open House, waive parking fees or revert to June 15, 1936 admission fee of 10 cents per person 10 or over
- Have Governor "barnstorm" to all six original state parks on June 15 or recreate the June 13, 1936 ceremony at Hungry Mother State Park
- Scan historic black and white photos; develop high resolution page so newspapers, magazines, etc. can download and use. Update and feature the state parks history page on the DCR website.
- Special merchandise including Virginia State Parks Monopoly Game, t-shirts, hats, etc.
- Develop a Governor's Proclamation and a HJR honoring state parks on their 70th anniversary
- Have a State Parks Day with a display in the General Assembly Building that would include a continuous loop of our new video and historic photos along with photos of new construction.

- National and State Historic Landmark status for Staunton River, Hungry Mother and Fairy Stone are underway. Douthat, Westmoreland and Seashore/First Landing are done

2007 – Visit Virginia State Parks – Explore the American Experience

- Parks are working on new and revamped programs to feature Virginia's place in American History, often in conjunction with their communities

Parks and Trails Passport

- Participants purchase their passport
 - \$10.00 plus tax - Passport when purchased with parking/boat launch pass
 - \$15.00 plus tax Passport when purchased without parking/boat launch pass
- The State Parks System is divided into seven venues
- Parks can be in multiple venues
- Visit each park in a venue and receive that venue's hatpin
- Visit the system's 33 parks and receive the special "Been There!" T-shirt
- Hike one trail in each park and receive a Virginia State Parks hiking stick medallion

The CCC Parks

- Bear Creek Lake State Park
- Douthat State Park*
- Fairy Stone State Park*
- First Landing State Park*
- Holliday Lake State Park
- Hungry Mother State Park*
- Pocahontas State Park
- Staunton River State Park*
- Twin Lakes State Park
- Westmoreland State Park*

* Virginia's first six state parks

The Gateway Parks

- Belle Isle State Park
- Caledon Natural Area
- Chippokes Plantation State Park
- First Landing State Park
- Kiptopeke State Park
- Leesylvania State Park
- Mason Neck State Park
- Westmoreland State Park

- York River State Park

The Civil War Parks

- Leesylvania State Park
- Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park
- Sky Meadows State Park
- Staunton River Battlefield State Park

The Lake Parks

- Bear Creek Lake State Park #
- Claytor Lake State Park *
- Douthat State Park #
- Fairy Stone State Park #
- Holliday Lake State Park #
- Hungry Mother State Park #
- Lake Anna State Park *
- Occoneechee State Park *
- Smith Mountain Lake State Park *
- Staunton River State Park *
- Twin Lakes State Park #

* Large lakes/unlimited motor systems

Small lakes/electric motors only

The Mountain Vista Parks

- Breaks Interstate Park
- Douthat State Park
- Fairy Stone State Park
- Grayson Highlands State Park
- Hungry Mother State Park
- Natural Tunnel State Park
- Shenandoah River State Park
- Sky Meadows State Park
- Wilderness Road State Park

The River Parks

- Belle Isle State Park
- Breaks Interstate Park
- Caledon Natural Area
- Chippokes Plantation State Park
- James River State Park
- Leesylvania State Park
- Mason Neck State Park
- New River Trail State Park

- Shenandoah River State Park
- Staunton River Battlefield State Park
- Staunton River State Park
- Westmoreland State Park
- York River State Park

The Rooted In History Parks

- Chippokes Plantation State Park
- False Cape State Park
- First Landing State Park
- Kiptopeke State Park
- Natural Tunnel State Park
- Occoneechee State Park
- Pocahontas State Park
- Southwest VA Museum Historical State Park
- Wilderness Road State Park

General Obligation Bond Update

Mr. Davy gave an update on the general obligation bond.

**DCR Board Meeting Presentation
General Obligation Bond Status
December 16, 2005**

- Progress much farther ahead of 1992 Bond
- Tier 1 projects completed or underway
 - 10 projects now complete
 - 11 more by Summer 2006
 - Some acquisitions complete or in progress; several are moving more slowly than expected
- Total funds expended or obligated almost \$49 M
- GOB augmented by over \$9 M of General funds
- Leveraged over \$12 M in Federal Funds

New State Park Facilities To Be Completed By 06 Operating Season

- 69 new cabins in 7 parks
- 210 new campsites in 5 parks and 132 campsites upgraded in 2 parks
- New visitors centers built at Wilderness Road and Belle Isle
- New meeting facilities at Bear Creek and Claytor Lake
- New boat docks and picnic shelter at Leesylvania
- 9 new bathhouses

Projects Completed

- First Landing Bathhouse
- Wilderness Road Visitor's Center
- Lake Anna State Park Cabins
- Grayson Highlands State Park Horse Campground
- Mulberry Hill Renovation (circa 1750)
- Leesylvania Picnic State Park Shelter
- Leesylvania State Park Pier
- First Landing State Park Upgraded Campsites

Projects Under Construction

- Claytor Lake Marina Support Facility
- Claytor Lake State Park Cabins
- Claytor Lake State Park Linen Storage Building
- Bear Creek State Park Six Bedroom Cabin
- Bear Creek State Park Meeting Facility
- Pocahontas State Park Campground
- Chippokes State Park Historic Area (multiple projects)

GOB Update

- Next phase began July 2005 including:
 - Construction of roads, cabins, campground & visitor center – Shenandoah River/Andy Guest
 - Construction of cabins – Douthat
 - Renovate visitor center – Staunton River
 - Renovate historic Hillsman House – Sailors Creek Battlefield
 - Construct equestrian center, parking & road repairs – Pocahontas
 - Dredge lakes – Hungry Mother & Douthat
 - Improve visitors center & Chesapeake Bay Center – First Landing
 - Cabins & Campground – Natural Tunnel
 - Improve Boat Launch & Pier Parking - York River
 - Trail Improvements – system wide
- All projects should be completed by 2010

Virginia Outdoors Plan Update

Mr. Davy gave an update regarding the 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Purpose: The *Virginia Outdoors Plan* is the Commonwealth's official conservation, outdoor recreation and open space plan. The plan is intended to serve as a guide to all levels of government and the private sector in meeting the state's conservation, outdoor recreation and open space needs. Virginia has produced a *Virginia Outdoors Plan* approximately every five years since 1966.

This is the tenth *Virginia Outdoors Plan* produced in accordance with §10.1-200 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The plan also serves as a guidance document for land protection through actions of the *Virginia Land Conservation Foundation*. Identification of important conservation lands in each planning district (region) is one of the tools used by foundation trustees in ranking and selecting projects for funding. The *Virginia Outdoors Plan* is specifically cited in §10.1-1021.

Mr. Davy said that the Department had recently completed a series of 44 public meetings around the state in each of the Planning Districts. A technical advisory committee will be appointed shortly after the first of the year.

Clinch River Feasibility Study

Mr. Maroon said that through the budget process DCR received a request to look at the Pinnacle area in far Southwest Virginia regarding possible options for recreational use. A report entitled “The Recreational Development Potential of the Clinch River Valley in Russell County,” has been completed.

Mr. Munson gave an overview of the report.

The 2005 General Assembly requested that the Department of Conservation and Recreation conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing day use recreational access sites along the Clinch River in the vicinity of the Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve in Russell County. The study area considered ran from the Route 80 bridge at Blackford to the DGIF boat landing at Carterton, a distance of 32 river miles. While the charge of the report was to identify day-use recreation enhancements near the Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve, the significance of the region led the study team to expand the study to the consideration of a more comprehensive range of recreational development options encompassing the entire study area.

DCR’s Division of Planning and Recreation Resources, State Parks and Natural Heritage in consultation with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and The Nature Conservancy have reached the following conclusions:

1. The Clinch River Valley in Russell County has a unique combination of scenic, natural, and recreational resources that would allow the area to function successfully as a destination eco-tourism destination. A range of options exist for the locality, region, state and private sectors to take greater advantage of these resources.
2. For this potential to be realized, facilities for overnight accommodations will be needed and a marketing plan must be developed and implemented.
3. A master plan that specifically identifies each node or development site that will be needed to provide access, education and interpretation, rest stops, overnight

- facilities, and administrative and support facilities in order to identify and promote the region's natural assets will need to be developed.
4. Funding would need to be earmarked for the acquisition and development of the areas and facilities identified in the master plan and for staffing and operating the option selected.
 5. Canoe liveries, outfitter and guide services, bicycle rentals and other support services will be necessary to fully facilitate recreational use of the Valley.
 6. The Clinch River Valley rates among the Commonwealth's most important natural areas. Certain aspects of the Clinch River Valley flora and fauna are recognized as state and globally rare and some of those species are federally listed or endangered and threatened. These sensitive resources are, in part, protected by DCR at its Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve in the northern end of the study areas and at its Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve in the southern end. The Nature Conservancy also has land holdings in the study area. Future development of recreational opportunities in the Valley should not be accomplished in a manner that would have detrimental affects on those natural heritage resources.

DCR has not made a recommendation for a preferred alternative. The findings of this study are that the Clinch River Valley in Russell County is an attractive area that would support an eco-tourism industry. Good marketing and the development of visitor support services would be needed for the region to capitalize on this opportunity. However, the sensitive nature of the environment in the Valley suggests that a government presence may be needed to properly accommodate visitor use in a manner that will protect the sensitive species and habitats from visitor impacts. A full service state park near Nash Ford would provide the most comprehensive framework for fully realizing the eco-tourism potential of the Valley, but lesser levels of development (outlined in this report) could greatly enhance the region's recreational opportunities.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation will be April 4 or April 5, 2006. Staff will poll Board members regarding these dates.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

Adjourn

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan D. Albert, Chair

Joseph H. Maroon, Director