

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
November 30, 2006
Bear Creek Lake State Park
Cumberland, Virginia**

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Alan D. Albert, Chair	Sheryl D. Swinson, Vice Chair
David G. Brickley	Joy A. Cooley
Linda Crandell	Richard Formato
Stephen Murray	Mark E. Smith
Jennifer Wagner	

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Gerald Connolly	Gwen Mason
E. Carter Nettles	

DCR Staff Present

Joseph H. Maroon, Director
Russell W. Baxter, Deputy Director
John R. Davy, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Thomas L. Smith, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Joe Elton, Director, Division of State Parks
Michael R. Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
William Brenzovich, Human Resources Director

Others Present

Fred Lochner, Imperial Multimedia, Inc.

Call to Order

Chairman Albert called the meeting order and declared a quorum present.

MOTION: Mr. Murray moved that the minutes of the July 26, 2006 meeting be approved as submitted.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Director's Report

Mr. Maroon gave the Director's report. He welcomed members to Bear Creek Lake State Park.

Mr. Maroon said that Scenic Virginia had honored DCR with "Most Creative Scenic Improvement" award for the development of the Captain John Smith Water Trail on the James. DCR continues to work on the York River Trail. He said that the designation of the National John Smith Water Trail is moving forward in Congress.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR was working closely with the Governor in terms of the Governor's Land Conservation Goal. A tracking mechanism is available on the DCR website at the following address: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/olc/index.htm>.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR was hosting a land conservation workshop for state agencies on December 13 and on the following day would be meeting with the Department of Defense and Ducks Unlimited to discuss issues of land conservation with regard to the military.

Mr. Brickley noted that in the establishment of the Potomac National Heritage Trail there had been an issue with going through the Quantico base following 9/11. He noted that the Director of Facilities for Fort Belvoir intended to resurrect the trail going through that base.

Mr. Maroon gave the following presentation:

State Parks & Natural Areas Overview

Presentation Summary

- Virginia's State Parks are an essential part of the Commonwealth's tourism, outdoor recreation, and conservation efforts. It is a popular system, experiencing tremendous growth, received national recognition, contributes over \$160 M to local and state economies.
- The 2002 GOB is spurring a new round of growth and expansion. DCR is opening more new facilities this year than in any single year since the establishment of the State Park System in 1936.
- Bond projects will help develop numerous parks, provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities statewide, enhance tourism, conserve valuable resources, and contribute to state and local economies.
- Land for potential 6 new State Parks is being acquired with bond proceeds or by separate legislative actions.

- Rebenchmarking of existing State Park staffing and operations remains a top priority. Recent actions by the 2005 and 2006 General Assembly and Governor have greatly aided the operational challenges faced by the State Park System.
- Total additional funds still needed for existing parks are approximately \$5.9 M per year for operational needs, 49 additional FTEs as well as additional one-time funding for vehicle replacement, program support, maintenance and repairs.
- FY 2008 budget request for \$3.9 M and 38 FTEs.
- Such levels would close the gap identified in SD 4, provide operational support for new GOB cabins, campgrounds, etc. and help bring Virginia more in line with other states. (Additional support will also be needed for increased program offerings and to open new state parks.)
- Virginia's Natural Area Preserve System has protected over 40,000 acres of sensitive natural areas during the past 20 years, provided research and educational opportunities, as well as unique recreational opportunities to the public.
- DCR's Natural Heritage Program was recently recognized as the best program in the western hemisphere.
- To date, the 2002 State Parks and Natural Areas GOB has provided for the acquisition of 12 new preserves and targeted additions to 9 existing preserves.
- The acquisitions have more than doubled the amount of sensitive natural area lands conserved during the past four years (2002-2006).
- Managing the investments in a growing NAP System remains a challenge. Carrying out stewardship activities and providing public access are increasingly difficult with existing resources.

A complete copy of Mr. Maroon's presentation is available from DCR.

State Park Project Fund

MOTION: Mr. Smith moved approval of the following State Park Project Fund requests:

Project #06-04 Twin Lakes State Park
Safety lighting in cabins

\$1,383.00 from Park unallocated funds

Project #06-05 Holiday Lake State Park
Beachfest Celebration for 70th Anniversary of State Parks
(retroactive)

\$1,115.00 from park dedicated funds
\$250.00 from Virginia State Parks Project Fund unallocated

Project #06-06 Southwest Virginia Museum State Park
Exhibit space upgrade

\$100,000 from park dedicated funds provided by 2 installment
payments of \$50,000 from the Slemm Foundation

SECOND: Ms. Swinson
DISCUSSION: None
VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Virginia Outdoors Plan Update

Mr. Davy gave the following presentation.

Virginia Outdoors Plan

What has been completed so far on the plan:

- Conducted 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey*.
- Established advisory committee.
- Research and writing for overall statewide recommendations related to conservation and outdoor recreation.

Working directly with PDCs to:

- Include regional connections & initiative in plan recommendations.
- Update regional text and establish recommendations in accordance with regional objectives.
- Scheduling fall public meetings for local and regional input to recommendations.

Key Issues from Public Meetings

- Green infrastructure
- Wildlife corridors
- Carrying capacity
- Trails/greenways and linkages
- Water trails and scenic waterways

- Livable/walkable communities/safe routes to schools
- Accessibility to recreation opportunities
- Ethnic/cultural changes

Key Issues from Public Meetings

- Good planning and assessment
- Stable funding
- Private property rights
- Increasing real estate values
- Economic values of parks and open space
- Water quality
- Eco-tourism
- Nature deficit disorder
- Security and safety of public areas

2006 Ranking of Outdoor Recreational Activities

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>% Population Participating</u>
1	Walking for Pleasure	69%
2	Driving for Pleasure	54%
3	Visiting Historic Sites	50%
4	Swimming	40%
5	Visiting Nat. Areas, Parks	40%
6	Sunbathing on Beach	32%
7	Fishing	25%
8	Picnicking	25%
9	Using a playground	25%
10	Boating	23%
11	Jogging	22%
12	Bicycling	19%
13	Visiting Gardens/Arboretums	18%
14	Camping	16%
15	Hiking/Backpacking	14%
16	Basketball	12%
17	Golf	12%
18	Fitness Trail	10%
19	Soccer	8%
20	Snow Skiing/Boarding	7%
21	Tennis	7%
22	Hunting	7%

2006 Survey Results

How important is it to have access to outdoor recreation opportunities?

9%	not important
42%	important
49%	very important

What are the most needed outdoor recreation opportunities in Virginia?

Public Access to state waters	49%
Trails for hiking, walking, bicycling	47%
Access to Natural areas	40%

What are the top three reasons for having a system of state parks?

Conserving and protecting our natural resources	59%
Providing places for people to explore and enjoy their natural and cultural heritage	59%
Providing places for people to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation activities which contribute to a health lifestyle	54%

Did you visit a Virginia State Park in the past year?

Yes	40%
No	54%
Don't Know	6%

What are major reasons for having a system of state parks?

Conserving Natural Resources	58%
Providing places for people to enjoy nature & cultural heritage	58%
Providing places for people to enjoy outdoor recreation contributing to a healthy lifestyle	54%

What prevented you from visiting a Virginia State Park?

Lack of Information	31%
Too far from home	19%
Other	18%
Lack of Desired Activities	12%
Too crowded	12%
Too expensive	10%
Safety Security Concerns	7%

How important is it to protect Virginia's natural and open space resources?

Very important	66%
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Important	27%
Don't Know	6%
Not important	1%

Are open space and natural resources adequately protected?

Don't know	48%
No	30%
Yes	22%

When spending public monies to protect Virginia's open space resources from development, which strategy do you feel is best?

Outright purchase from willing sellers of the property & then manage as natural area or park for public use.	71%
Purchase of easements that reduce development rights, leaving the land in private ownership with some public use allowed.	23%
Purchase of easements that reduce development rights, leaving the land in private ownership with no public use allowed.	6%

VOP Themes

Outdoor Recreation
Land Conservation
Green Infrastructure

Key Plan Components

- Vision for Virginia
- Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings
- Land Conservation
- Green Infrastructure

Key Plan Components

- Economic Benefits of Recreation Tourism and Open Space
- Funding for Outdoor Recreation Open Space and Conservation

Outdoor Recreation Program Initiatives

- Greenways and Trails

- Blueways and Water Access
- Historic and Landscape Resources
- Scenic Resources
- Scenic Highways/Virginia Byways
- Scenic Rivers
- Virginia Watersheds
- Environmental and Land Stewardship Education

Resource Agencies

- Federal (National Parks, National Forests & National Wildlife Refuges)
- State (DGIF, VMRC, DOF, DNH, Transportation Programs)
- Local & Regional Parks and Recreation
- Private Sector

What's next?

Summer 2006– Draft sections of plan completed

Fall 2006 – Public meetings

Winter 2007 – Plan to NPS

Spring/Summer 2007 – Plan distribution

High Bridge State Park Master Plan

Mr. Davy presented the Executive Summary for the High Bridge State Park Master Plan.

Establishment of High Bridge Trail State Park was made possible by the abandonment and subsequent donation of a segment of the South Side Rail Road by Norfolk Southern Corporation. Norfolk Southern filed for abandonment September 30, 2004. The 2005 General Assembly session authorized the Department of Conservation and Recreation to accept donation of the railroad corridor for a state park. The park is named for the remarkable high railroad bridge over the Appomattox River, the location of a battle fought during Lee's retreat from Petersburg.

A copy of the Executive Summary is available from DCR.

Mr. Maroon said that DCR needed a Board recommendation for approval of the master plan, that recommendation will go to the General Assembly members who will have 30 days to respond.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the High Bridge Trail State Park Master Plan as submitted by DCR Staff.

SECOND: Mr. Smith

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Powhatan State Park Master Plan

Mr. Davy said that the Powhatan State Park Master Plan has gone through the initial review, but has not been sent to the General Assembly. Nearby landowners have expressed concern over the increased traffic on the access road to the park (Rt. 617).

When discussing other alternative routes, Mr. Davy said neither the Department of Juvenile Justice nor the regional jail were comfortable with park traffic coming in close proximity to their facilities.

Mr. Davy said that bridging the river was a possibility, but was not feasible. Of the alternatives evaluated, the only feasible alternative is to use Rt. 617.

Mr. Davy said that the master plan recommended that the park not be developed beyond the day use phase until the road improvements are made. Additionally there are no funds for those developments at this time.

Mr. Davy said that the Park also has not been named at this point.

Ms. Swinson asked about the climate within the County regarding the park.

Mr. Elton said that DCR has received a petition in support of the park signed by over 600 residents, as well as resolutions of support from the County School Board, the retail merchants, and the Republican and Democratic committees.

Mr. Formato asked if there were operational considerations regarding the prison and the safety of the park.

Mr. Maroon said there would be operational considerations once the park is being developed. This has been addressed in the Master Plan and will include such things as a 100-foot security zone.

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

SECOND: Mr. Murray

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Davy said that staff is recommending the park name be “Powhatan State Park on the Historic James: E. Floyd Yates Conservation Area.”

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend that the new Powhatan State Park be named the “Powhatan State Park on the Historic James: E. Floyd Yates Conservation Area.”

SECOND: Mr. Smith

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

State Park Electronic Information Kiosk Presentation

Mr. Elton introduced Mr. Fred Lochner from Imperial Multimedia, Inc.

Mr. Lochner gave an overview of the new state park information kiosks being installed in each of the state parks. These will be in place by April 2007.

Guidelines for Naming of New Virginia Natural Area Preserves

Mr. Tom Smith presented a document entitled “Guidelines for the Naming of New Virginia Natural Area Preserves.” A copy of that document is available from DCR. He noted that the Board had adopted a similar set of guidelines for the naming of State Parks.

The suggested names for new Natural Area Preserves will be brought to the Board for the purpose of a Board recommendation to the Director. The Director will make the final decision.

Mr. Smith reviewed four natural area projects coming on line in the next few months, suggested names are: Chestnut Creek Wetland, Naked Mountain, Ogdens Cave and Crawford Knob.

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the Guidelines for the naming of New Virginia Natural Area Preserves as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

MOTION: Ms. Swinson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend the adoption of the four proposed natural area names as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Crandell

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

By-laws

Mr. Maroon reviewed the draft revisions to the By-laws. He said that the general purpose of the edits was to bring the By-laws into conformity with the statutes under which the Board operates.

A question was raised about going from four to three required meetings.

Mr. Maroon explained that would simply mean the Board must meet a minimum of three times per year as required by the *Code of Virginia*, but that it would not preclude additional meetings.

The proposed changes to the By-laws will be voted on at the next meeting.

Election of Officers

Mr. Brickley suggested that it might be beneficial to rotate the chairmanship of the Board. Mr. Murray and Mr. Albert concurred.

Mr. Maroon said that it would be beneficial to staff to have the chair serve at least two terms.

Mr. Albert said this could be addressed with additional revisions to the By-laws.

Ms. Wagner suggested that the Chair be elected annually but that it be understood the Chair will serve two terms.

Mr. Albert said it might be helpful to elect the Vice Chair with consideration that that individual would move to the chairmanship.

These issues will be addressed in additional revisions to the By-laws for consideration at the next meeting.

Mr. Murray nominated Ms. Swinson to serve as Board Chair. Ms. Crandell seconded. There were no other nominations and the motion carried.

Mr. Formato nominated Mr. Murray to serve as Vice Chair. Mr. Brickley seconded. There were no other nominations and the motion carried.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheryl D. Swinson
Chair

Joseph H. Maroon
Executive Secretary