

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees
Wednesday, May 18, 2016
Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation took place at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2016 in the East Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Molly Ward, Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair
Robert Lazaro, Jr., Vice Chair
Deputy Secretary Sam Towell, for The Honorable Todd Haymore

R. Brian Ball
Glenda C. Booth
Joan Fenton
The Honorable Emmett Hanger, Jr.
Valerie D. Hubbard
Ollie W. Kitchen, Jr.

Anna Lawson
Paul V. Milde
Mary Helen Morgan
The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Jr.
The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Byron M. Adkins, Jr.
Steven L. Apicella
Susan E. Donner

Jay C. Ford
The Honorable Jill Holtzman Vogel

STATE AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, DCR, Executive Secretary
Rochelle Altholz, DCR
Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR
Jason Bulluck, DCR
Rob Evans, DCR
Michael Fletcher, DCR
Martha Little, VOF
Gary Martel, DGIF
Jason McGarvey, VOF
Lisa McGee, DCR

John Mitchell, DCR
Julie Morris, DPB
Danette Poole, DCR
Sarah Richardson, DCR
Mike Santucci, DOF
Andy Sorrell, VDACS
Tom Smith, DCR
Elizabeth Tune, DHR
Deb Van Duzee, DGIF

OTHERS PRESENT

Sabrina Jones, The Mariners' Museum and Park
Nikki Rovner, TNC

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With fourteen (14) members present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Ward called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

2016 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – Clyde Cristman, Director, DCR

- The General Assembly approved \$10 million for land conservation which is significantly higher than in the past. Of that:
 - \$8 million goes to the VLCF
 - \$1 million goes to the Department of Historic Resources for battlefield preservation
 - \$1 million goes to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for farmland preservation
- House Bill 220 amends and reenacts §§ 2.2-106, 2.2-107, 2.2-3705.1, and 2.2-3705.7 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and public access to resumes and other information related to gubernatorial appointees. Effective July 1, 2016, resumes and applications shall not be considered Governor's working papers and are therefore subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. The bill does not apply to current board members and is not retroactive. This change will apply to applications submitted for appointment on or after 7/1/16.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 27, 2015

Mr. Lazaro moved that the minutes of the October 27, 2015 meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Mr. Ball seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

VLCF PROJECTS UPDATE – Sarah Richardson, DCR

Members were provided with a map showing all VLCF projects across the state. The map reflects all projects awarded grants, including projects that were withdrawn after the grant award. Since October 2015, the following projects have been completed:

- **Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund** – Bald Knob Natural Area Preserve (FY15 grant round, closed March 2016)

The Bald Knob property has been a top priority for natural area acquisition in Virginia for decades. This spectacular natural landmark in the Town of Rocky Mount is distinctive for its rock outcrop vegetation and habitat for several rare species and significant natural communities. During the spring and summer, many people climb the hill to enjoy the view and the solitude. Among the rarities found here is the Piedmont Fameflower, *Phemeranthus piedmonanus*, which is know only from Bald Knob, two other sites in Franklin County, and two sites in northern North Carolina.

Match: \$1,676,525. VLCF Grant amount: \$320,585

NOTE: Director Cristman and Secretary Ward participated in the Bald Knob Natural Area Preserve dedication ceremony held on May 6, 2016.

- **Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority** – Springdale Regional Park Acquisition (FY16 grant round; closed March 2016)

Grant funds were requested to acquire 149.51 acres of land with approximately 2,080 linear feet of frontage on the Potomac River. The property, which also fronts on Route 15 in northern Loudoun County, includes over 7,000 linear feet of streams and 15.8 acres of wetlands. The project is within the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and the Journey through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. The property will become a regional park open to the public, with passive recreational uses such as hiking, wildlife observation, fishing, and picnicking.

Match: \$3,700,000, LWCF and NOVA Parks funds. VLCF Grant amount: \$300,000.

- **Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribal Heritage Foundation, Inc.** – Fee Simple Acquisition by Cheroenhaka Indian Tribal Heritage Foundation and Easement Addition to Cypress Bridge Swamp Natural Area Preserve – Cheroenhaka Tract (FY16 grant round; closed March 2016)

The project protects approximately 170 acres adjacent to DCR's Cypress Bridge Swamp Natural Area Preserve and land already owned by the Cheroenhaka Tribe. The property is held under easement of natural area dedication by DCR's Natural Heritage Program. Approximately 10 acres of the property is native bottomland forest and most of the remainder is upland planted with loblolly pine. The applicant will harvest the pine forest, replant with native Virginia longleaf pine, and restore the upland into an uneven-aged, open-canopy longleaf pine savannah through selective thinning and prescribed fire. Protection of the property will serve as an important buffer to the natural area preserve. Match: \$280,515. VLCF Grant amount: \$271,145.

- **Fauquier County Agricultural Development Department** – Highwater Farm (FY16 grant round; closed May 2016)

The grant enabled the purchase of development rights and placement of a conservation easement on a 181.65-acre beef cattle farm that includes 60 acres of pine woodlands. Protection of the property, which is part of the 19,000-acre Southern Fauquier Agricultural and Forestal District, helps accomplish one of the major goals of the county's PDR program, which is to establish a critical mass of protected farmland and open space. The project will include vegetated riparian buffers along 4,000 feet of frontage on two streams in the Rappahannock watershed.

Match: \$110,500. VLCF Grant amount: \$72,500.

The following projects were withdrawn and the funding will be returned to the respective categories for the next grant round:

- **Civil War Trust** – Gaines Tract (FY16 grant round)
VLCF Grant Request: \$87,500. Recommended amount: \$87,500 from Historic Resources Category.
- **Northern Virginia Conservation Trust** – Belmont Bay Farm Phase I (December 2012 grant round)

VLCF Grant Request: \$540,000. Recommended amount: \$250,000 from Parks and Open Space Category.

VLCF FINANCIAL UPDATE – Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Ms. Bulbulkaya presented the Board with the following financial update of the fund balance to include income and disbursements.

INCOME	
FY14 Stewardship Funds	\$ 1,088,822
FY15 Stewardship Funds	\$ 855,400
FY14 Appropriation – Chapter 3	\$1,000,000
FY 15 Appropriation – Chapter 806	\$1,000,000
FY16 Appropriation – Chapter 685	\$4,000,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$7,944,222
DISBURSEMENTS	
FY15 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$1,088,822
FY16 Stewardship Fund Disbursements	\$ 855,400
FY14 Grant Payments	\$ 834,978
FY15 Grant Payments	\$ 556,937
FY16 Grant Payments	\$ 981,730
FY14 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$ 250,000
FY15 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$ 250,000
FY16 Open Space Preservation (VOF) Payments	\$1,000,000
FY15 Appropriation Reversion – Part 3, 1.01 ZZ.1 CH665	\$ 300,000
TOTAL DISBURSEMENT	\$6,117,867
OBLIGATED FUND BALANCE – April 30, 2016	\$3,348,820

GRANT EXPENDITURE PLAN DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL – Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Ms. Bulbulkaya presented the funding summary plan for the 2016 Grant Round based on the 2016 Budget Bill (HB30) and in accordance with § 10.1-1020 (C)(2) of the Code of Virginia.

FUNDING CATEGORIES	FY17 Budget Bill HB 30 Enrolled	Carryover Funding from Past Grants	TOTAL
I. VOF Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (25%)	\$2,000,000	N/A	\$2,000,000
II. Grant Program (75%)			
(i) Natural Area Protection	\$1,500,000	0	\$1,500,000
(ii) Open Space and Parks	\$1,500,000	\$250,000	\$1,750,000
(iii) Farmland and Forest Preservation	\$1,500,000	0	\$1,500,000
(iv) Historic Area Preservation	\$1,500,000	\$87,500	\$1,587,500
TOTAL	\$8,000,000	\$337,500	\$8,337,500

Item 365 D of the 2016-2018 Biennium Budget Bill (HB 30 Enrolled)

D.1 Included in the amount for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$8,000,000 the first year and \$800,000 the second year from the general fund to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, § 10.1-1020, Code of Virginia. Of these funds, after Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund statutory distribution obligations have been satisfied, no less than 50 percent of the remaining appropriations are to be used for grants for fee simple acquisitions with public access or acquisitions of easements with public access. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of § 2.2-1509.4, Code of Virginia [Grant Funds]

2. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is \$2,000,000 the first year and \$2,000,000 the second year from nongeneral funds to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be distributed by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation pursuant to the provisions of §58.1-513, Code of Virginia. [Stewardship Funds]

§ 10.1-1020. Virginia Land Conservation Fund: purposes of Foundation.

C. In any year in which the Fund contains less than \$10 million in new deposits on September 1, and after an allocation for administrative expenses has been made as provided in subsection G, the remaining unrestricted funds in the Fund shall be allocated as follows:

2. Seventy-five percent shall be divided equally among the following four grant uses: (i) natural area protection; (ii) open spaces and parks, including but not limited to, land for public hunting, fishing, or wildlife watching; (iii) farmlands and forest preservation; and (iv) historic area preservation. Of the amount allocated as provided in this subdivision, at least one third shall be used to secure easements to be held or co-held by a public body.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Milde moved and Ms. Lawson seconded that the VLCF Board of Trustees approve the funding plan for the 2016 grant round as submitted by staff. The motion carried and the plan was approved.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF FY17 GRANT ROUND SCHEDULE – Sarah Richardson, DCR

Ms. Richardson presented the proposed FY17 Grant Round Schedule.

Proposed 2016 VLCF Schedule	
Wednesday May 18, 2016	VLCF Board Meeting to approve grant round.
By June 1, 2016	Announce official opening of grant round (emails, postcards).
Tuesday, June 28, 2016 1:00 p.m.	Workshop for grant applicants at the Department of Forestry (DOF) Training Room, 900 Natural Resources Drive, Charlottesville
Thursday, July 28, 2016	Deadline for application submittal.
August 2016	Interagency taskforce meeting to score projects – usually takes two meetings.
Early September 2016	SNR and Director's review of top-scoring projects.
Third week in September	VLCF Board meeting. Approval of grant awards.
By October 28, 2016	Grant agreements signed. Projects have two years to close.

Ms. Richardson informed the Board that staff is sending information to prospective grant applicants regarding the proposed schedule and requested that Board members contact her regarding other potential applicants. Ms. Richardson further advised that staff will poll the members for their availability for a September meeting date.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved that the Proposed VLCF schedule be approved as submitted by staff. Mr. Ball seconded. The motion carried and the schedule was approved.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS MANUAL – Sarah Richardson, DCR

Ms. Richardson reviewed the proposed changes to the Grants Manual.

Mr. Bulluck discussed the Virginia Conservation Vision Development Vulnerability Map, now part of the scoring in the Open Space and Agricultural Land categories. The map was revised based on the 2011 land covers assessment and shows development hot spots based on impervious surface and travel time to metropolitan areas. The map incorporates undevelopable land along with existing permanently conserved lands to reach a rank of vulnerability.

Mr. Sorrell noted that in the scoring for the Agricultural category the map will be used as part of the ranking process in the farmland category. The previous version of the Vulnerability Model used three maps (the urban model, the urban fringe model and the rural model). The new map allows for a reduction in the scoring points for development threat to agricultural lands and increase in the scoring points for parcel size.

Ms. Richardson completed an overview of the other changes to the manual, noting that most were technical in nature.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Booth asked if an evaluation of future grants rounds could consider preservation in more developed areas with emphasis given to the population served, and also if the scoring could take into account the restoration of properties.

Ms. Richardson noted that in the Open Space category there is a factor for the consideration of densely populated or developing areas and also noted that the Virginia Outdoors Foundation is looking at the issue of connectivity. Mr. Smith added that current scoring criteria consider proximity to other resources.

Mr. Pollard initiated a discussion about the issue of scoring with regard to public access and public utilization. He commented that most of the preservation of land is for areas with no public access. Mr. Ball recalled that the Board had discussed this issue in the past and the statute was written to use resources for the protection of threatened lands or endangered species and not necessarily tilted to more utilization or more urban areas. Mr. Woodley suggested that staff develop a proposal that would reflect giving an appropriate degree of weight to the amount of volume of public use within designated

categories. After further discussion, the Board recommended an amendment to the scoring for the 2016 Grant Round for the Open Space Category to more adequately distribute points based on public access time periods.

Secretary Ward proposed a committee to review this issue for the next grant round. Mr. Pollard, Mr. Ball, Ms. Fenton, and Ms. Booth were appointed to the committee and will work with the interagency task force.

BOARD ACTION.

Ms. Fenton moved that the scoring in the Open Space category be amended as follows:

For a maximum of 10 points.

2 points will be awarded to areas that are open from 1-60 days per year.

2 points will be added for each additional 60 days an area is open, not to exceed a maximum of 10 points for the year.

Mr. Pollard seconded. The motion carried.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Lazaro moved that the VLCF Board of Trustees approve the proposed grant manual as amended.

Ms. Morgan seconded and the motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Secretary Ward reported that, as of the date of the meeting, DCR has identified 759 Virginia Treasures. She expressed confidence that the Commonwealth would meet the goal of 1,000 Treasures.

Ms. Lawson asked that Board members be notified of any dedication events happening in their area so that they may be able to attend. Ms. Richardson agreed to keep the Board informed of events.

AGENCY UPDATES

Department of Conservation and Recreation, Clyde Cristman

Director Cristman announced that Mr. Tom Smith accepted the position as Deputy Director for Operations replacing Mr. Elton who recently retired in March and Mr. Jason Bulluck accepted the position as Director of the Division of Natural Heritage. Mr. Cristman also introduced, Mr. Rob Evans who accepted the position of the Natural Areas Preserve Manager replacing Larry Smith who retired earlier in the year.

Director Cristman reported that DCR is working toward the opening of Natural Bridge State Park in September and that the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant round is scheduled to close May 26.

He also encouraged Board members to notify DCR of any potential treasures including new trails, water access trails, native plant gardens and more.

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries - Deb Van Duzee

Ms. Van Duzee reported that since the last meeting DGIF has closed on 2,653 acres in New Kent County in April and on 241 acres in Roanoke County attached to the Havens Wildlife Management Area. Additional closings in process include; 1,600 acres in Roanoke County, 2,000 acres in Sussex County, 86 acres in New Kent County, 36 in Bath County.

Department of Historic Resources - Elizabeth Tune

Ms. Tune reported that 2016 is the 50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act & the Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office. She noted that DHR is excited about the VLCF grant round and the additional \$1 million in Battlefield Preservation Funds.

Department of Forestry - Mike Santucci

Mr. Santucci reported that in 2015 DOF had the second highest number of easements in a given calendar year, the most transactions ever, and DOF is seeking to exceed those numbers in 2016. He announced that a forestry specialist has been hired for the western region giving DOF statewide coverage for the program. He further reported that DOF's largest event in 2015 was the Ellis Mines Easement on the Rappahannock River in Culpeper which included 1,200 acres and a mile and a half frontage on the Rappahannock River providing conservation on both sides of the river for 15 miles upstream from Fredericksburg.

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Andy Sorrell

Mr. Sorrell reported that VDACS is working with the PDR program to distribute \$2 million to 6 localities with matching funds and that 18 localities have received funding since the beginning of the program to include 72 easements on 10,000 acres. He further advised that VDACS is working on a PDR benchmark study.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation – Jason McGarvey

Mr. McGarvey reported that 2016 is the 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and he reflected that since 1966 VOF has preserved about 2 acres ever hour. He advised that the VOF website along with events across the state will celebrate the anniversary. Mr. McGarvey commented that the largest issues for VOF are budget and stewardship concerns.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Senator Hanger thanked those involved in the efforts of land conservation. He noted that forming a workgroup may provide the opportunity to look more broadly at the vision and strategic goals of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. He added that the legislation that created the VLCF envisioned fundraising and encouraged the Board to be proactive in that regard.

Mr. Lazaro asked if there had been a private sector contribution since the Foundation began. Director Cristman responded that the grants require matching funds and that these come from a variety of sources.

Ms. Morgan commented that she had been on the Board for several years and was impressed by the caliber of Board members. She believes that the expertise of the Board could be used more fully.

Secretary Ward agreed that following the committee's initial meeting to address grant scoring, the committee could meet further to discuss strategic planning and other related Board items.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

Director Cristman reported that 2016 is the 80th Anniversary of Virginia State Parks and the 30th Anniversary of the Virginia Natural Heritage Program. Director Cristman informed the Board members that a celebration will be held in honor of Virginia State Parks on June 15, 2016 at Westmoreland State Park to include the planting of an oak tree and the burial of a time capsule and invited the members to attend if available.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Molly Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair

Clyde E. Cristman
DCR Director, Executive Secretary