

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Friday, January 25, 2019
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 25, 2019 at the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation in Richmond, Virginia.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Dexter C. Hurt
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair	Kat Maybury
Vincent M. Burgess	Esther Nizer
Angela Henderson	Clayton Spruill
Nancy Hull Davidson	Vivek Shinde Patil

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Danielle Heisler	Harvey B. Morgan
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DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director, by phone
Thomas Smith, Deputy Director of Operations
Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director of Administration and Finance
Isaac J. Sarver, Deputy Director for Boards and Constituent Services
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Dave Collett, Western Field Operations Director
Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Kimberly Freiburger, Policy Analyst
Melissa Jackson, Budget Manager
Lisa McGee, Director of Policy
Conor O'Donnell, Virginia Management Fellow
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Craig Seaver, Director, Division of State Parks
Timothy Shrader, Eastern Field Operations Director

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With ten (10) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. and asked for a calling of the roll.

Chairman Wingo welcomed new members Angela Henderson and Clayton Spruill.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 19, 2018

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Burgess moved for the approval of the minutes of the October 19, 2018 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Ms. Jackson seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Clyde E. Cristman, Director, by phone*

Due to illness, Director Cristman participated in the meeting via conference phone.

Director Cristman noted:

- The main purpose of this meeting was to update the Board regarding General Assembly activities and to provide an overview of the Governor's proposed budget.
- Because of conservative revenue estimates, the Internet sales tax, and the unintended consequences of the federal tax structure, the Commonwealth ended the last fiscal year with a surplus.
- Governor Northam has pledged to increase funding for natural resources.

Director Cristman reviewed the legislative report and addressed bills that would affect the work of the Board. He advised that, as the session was continuing, the final disposition of the bills could change.

Items in the Governor's proposed budget include in FY19:

- An additional \$20 million for the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF)
- \$5.5 million for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

In FY20:

- 10% of the surplus goes to the WQIF, providing a record \$73.7 million
- An additional \$15 million for water quality non-point source pollution to help address the Chesapeake Bay 2025 cleanup goals
- \$534,000 and two full-time positions for a limited opening of Clinch River State Park, DCR hopes to open this park in 2019

GOVERNOR'S LAND CONSERVATION GOAL – *Thomas Smith, Deputy Director for Operations*

Mr. Smith addressed Governor Northam's land conservation goal of developing the first statewide comprehensive land conservation strategy. This science-based driven land conservation strategy would allow the measuring of progress.

The current effort is through ConserveVirginia, a collaborative effort of land trusts, nonprofits and local agencies.

- Conversations and research resulted in use and/or production of 19 data model maps.

- 19 were consolidated into six sub-composite maps.
 - Agriculture and Forestry
 - Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity
 - Floodplains and Flooding Resilience
 - Cultural and Historic Preservation
 - Scenic Preservation
 - Protected Landscapes Resilience

DCR is working with Nature Serve to make these maps available.

STATE PARKS UPDATE – *Craig Seaver, Director, Virginia State Parks*

Mr. Seaver gave the Virginia State Parks update.

- Revenue for Calendar Year 2018 - \$28,818,475
- Attendance for Calendar Year 2018 – 9,249,307

Mr. Seaver noted that weather, including Hurricane Michael, had a significant impact on park attendance in 2018.

Mr. Seaver also noted:

- Widewater State Park was officially opened on November 8, 2018
- Governor Northam participated in Park RX America, a program to encourage doctors to prescribe outdoor time for mental and physical health.

Mr. Seaver reviewed park activities for the year, including:

- The Virginia State Parks Ranger Academy, Office Manager Training
- Cardinal Criminal Justice Academy, 71st Entry Level Law Enforcement Academy
- Over 13,000 people participated in 2019 First Day Hikes

The Birds and the Bees: State Park Pollinators by the Numbers

- Prior to 2017
 - 1,160 acres managed as habitat
 - 1,640 acres mowed
- 2017
 - 18 parks participated in mowing reduction programs
- 2018
 - An additional 12 parks were added
 - 1,938 acres managed as habitat
 - 862 acres mowed
- This has resulted in
 - An additional 778 acres managed as habitat
 - A savings of \$140,000

- 42% of open area in parks managed for habitat and pollinators
- Cost to maintain the habitat \$45,000

Garden Club of Virginia Centennial Grants

- State parks has received grants in two-years of this three-year cycle and hopes to receive a grant during the third year.
- \$101,091 is being awarded this year.

Mr. Seaver gave progress updates on the following parks in development.

- Clinch River State Park
- Sweet Run State Park
- Seven Bends State Park
- A yet to be named park on the Timberneck Farm Property

NATURAL HERITAGE UPDATE – Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage

Mr. Bulluck gave the Natural Heritage update.

Native Bees and Rusty-patched bumble bee

- Over 450 species have been identified to date
- The Rusty-patched bumble bee has been found in Virginia
 - 19 new observations in 2018
 - Largest known population east of the Mississippi

Predicted Suitable Habitat Modeling Projects

- Predicted suitable habitat models complete for 138 state and federal species models.
- Factoring the outputs into publicity accessible and subscription-based maps.
- For conservation planning and environmental review.

Mr. Bulluck noted the 2018 Natural Area Preserve additions:

- The Cedars – 66.7 acres (DCR purchase)
- Mount Joy Pond – 85 acres (VNPS)
- Magothy Bay – 53.71 acres (DCR purchase)
- Crows Nest – 70 acres (Northern Virginia Conservation Trust)
- South Quay – 116.7 acres (The Nature Conservancy)

New Protection Grants (each includes stewardship component):

- \$300,00 (CXM) – VLCF match \$359,067 – addition to Magothy Bay
- \$915,500 (VOF) – addition to Chestnut Ridge (808 acres)
- \$500,000 (VOF) – additions to Poor Mountain (279 acres)

Goals for 2019:

- Complete the Natural Heritage Plan
- Richer educational outreach with new PCMO Director
- Engaging closest data sharing partners for fundraising support

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES UPDATE – *Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources*

Ms. Poole gave the update for Planning and Recreation Resources.

Virginia Outdoors Plan

- The Virginia Outdoors Plan is updated every five years.
- A summary of the plan was provided to members. The full plan is available online.
- Robbie Rohr was the lead planner for the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

State Trails Advisory Committee

- Mr. Burgess represents the BCR on the State Trails Advisory Committee.
- A strategic planning session was held in November.
 - The group addressed long-term goals and objectives
 - The group has formed the Virginia Trails Alliance, a non-profit organization for trails advocacy

Biscuit Run County Park

Biscuit Run County Park is being developed per a lease agreement and MOU between DCR and Albemarle County.

Overview of conditions

- Impervious cover not to exceed 5%
- 80% of acreage must remain in forestal cover
- No golf courses or permanent spectator seating
- Invasive species inventory and plan for removal
- Protection of Natural Heritage resources
- 100' riparian buffer along any streams

2019 State Park Master Plans

DCR intends to complete the following park master plans in 2019.

- Chippokes
- False Cape
- First Landing

- Leesylvania
- New River Trail
- Seven Bends
- Smith Mountain Lake

Scenic Resources – Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator

Ms. Crump reviewed the following Scenic Resources Activities:

- Work with Scenic Virginia and Virginia Tech
 - Virginia Landscape Assessment
 - Literature Review
 - Designation Process
- VDOT and Virginia Byways
- River Management Society Conference
 - Hosted at VCU, May 12-15, 2020
 - Theme: Connecting Mountain Creeks to Metro Canals
 - 4-day Water Trails
 - Possible Visual Assessment Training
- 50th Anniversary of Virginia Scenic Rivers
 - The Steering Committee will meet again on March 6, 2019
 - Ms. Crump noted that a copy of the Strategic Plan was provided in member packets for review.
 - The committee is working to gather support, including a resolution from the General Assembly. A draft resolution was provide in member packets.
- Chickahominy Evaluation
- Potential Evaluations
 - Ms. Crump reviewed a map of potential reviews of rivers sections being considered for Scenic River designation.

Ms. Jackson thanked Ms. Crump for her work toward the 50th Anniversary. She noted that there is a very active subcommittee with members from the local Scenic River committees. This group has been reaching out to other river organizations.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation support the draft General Assembly resolution and encourage the passage. Ms. Davidson seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – *Melissa Jackson, Budget Manager*

Ms. Jackson gave a financial update.

- The FY2019 Legislative Appropriation was \$73,510,004
- With transfers and adjustments the total General Fund appropriation available for operations was \$47,708,593

Ms. Jackson reviewed the State Parks Projects Fund.

- The cash balance of the fund was \$560,020.33 as of December 31, 2018.
- There were no new projects to bring before the Board.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Wingo noted that Board members had been provided a copy of the Board Bylaws that need to be updated. He asked members to review the document and noted that at the next meeting a subcommittee could be appointed to consider necessary revisions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation will be Friday, April 26 at Natural Tunnel State Park in Duffield. This will allow members to attend the official opening of the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Interpretive Center.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.