

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Friday, April 26, 2019
Natural Tunnel State Park
Duffield, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 8:03 a.m. on Friday, April 26, 2019 at in the Cove Ridge Center at Natural Tunnel State Park in Duffield, Virginia.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Angela Henderson
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair	Dexter C. Hurt
Vincent M. Burgess	Esther Nizer
Nancy Hull Davidson	Clayton Spruill
Danielle Heisler	

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Kat Maybury	Vivek Shinde Patil
Harvey Morgan	

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
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
Robert Chapman, Park Manager, Natural Tunnel State Park
Dave Collett, Western Field Operations Director
Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator
Rob Evans, Natural Areas Protection Manager
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
John Hartley, SW Regional Operations Steward
Lisa McGee, Director of Policy
Wil Orndorff, Karst Protection Coordinator
Sharon Partee, Director of Finance
Craig Seaver, Director, Division of State Parks
Timothy Shrader, Eastern Field Operations Director
Allie Singleton, SW Regional Stewardship Technician
John Townsend, State Botanist

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With eight (8) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. and asked for a calling of the roll.

WELCOME – *Robert Chapman, Park Manager, Natural Tunnel State Park*

Mr. Chapman welcomed members to Natural Tunnel State Park. He noted that in 1935 when tunnel was a privately operated tourist attraction there were around 4,000 annually. Today as a state park, visitation ranges from 200,000-250,000 annually.

Natural Tunnel State Park consists of 955 acres. In 2018, the park conducted 710 programs reaching almost 26,000 people.

Director Cristman expressed appreciation for the work of park staff in arranging meals and accommodations for the weekend.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 25, 2019

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved for the approval of the minutes of the January 25, 2019 meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation. Mr. Burgess seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Director Cristman again welcomed members to Natural Tunnel State Park. He noted that the park was not far from the developments for Clinch River State Park, and that Wilderness Road State Park was about an hour's drive.

DCR had seven agency bills in the recent General Assembly session. The agency was successful in moving forward the legislation creating the Virginia State Parks license plate. Those who ordered should expect plates around the end of the year. The General Assembly also recognized the 50th Anniversary of the Scenic Rivers program in 2020.

NAMING OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY STATE PARK – *Clyde Cristman*

Director Cristman reported that the newest Virginia state park was on the side of the old Timberneck farm in Gloucester County. DCR will receive this park as part of Dominion's mitigation for the Surry-Skiffe's creek transmission line crossing the James River. 645 acres have been purchased and are currently owned by the conservation fund, a private, non-profit land trust.

The park is located about ten miles down the York River from Werewicomico. Because of the special nature of this project, the park is exempt from the first phase of the state park master planning process. The park will include a carry in canoe and kayak launch, a campground with yurts, and an interpretive visitor center focusing on Virginia Indian history. DCR has been meeting with the tribes to discuss how best to move forward with the interpretation of that history.

The Catlett House located on the property is on both the National and Virginia historic registers. This property will go to the Fairfield Foundation in Gloucester County and will be redeveloped into a Bed and Breakfast that will be managed with the state park system. The Department of Historic Resources will hold an easement.

Director Cristman noted that a groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 8. The hope is to have the park opened later in 2019. While the last two state parks built from scratch each took about thirteen years to open, the special nature of this park allows the private sector to work on it and the park will be open much sooner.

DCR also owns about 400 acres on the Middle Peninsula at the Rosewell site. While that area has an approved master plan, the intent is to combine the two. Those will come back to the Board to review for Phase 2 and 3 development.

Director Cristman said that it is also the responsibility of the Board to approve final naming of parks. The recommended name for this park is "Machicomoco." In the Algonquin language, that translates to "A special meeting place."

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Burgess moved that the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation approve and endorse the name "Machicomoco State Park" for the new park located in Gloucester County. Mr. Hurt seconded and the motion carried.

Chairman Wingo noted that the power line across the James was currently tied up in court. He asked how that would affect this project.

Director Cristman noted that the construction of the power line is complete. However, the federal circuit court of appeals vacated the permit two days after the line was turned on. The plaintiffs are asking for the line to be removed. He noted that part of the agreement was that DCR have the funds for the new park prior to the beginning of construction. There should be no impact regarding the park.

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

Mr. Seaver gave the update for Virginia State Parks.

The Virginia Association for Parks elected Tim Kennell as the new president. They had a strong presence in the recent General Assembly Session.

Youth from round the world are again participating in Youth Conservation Corps. 171 participants are registered for the summer.

Construction of the four yurts at First Landing State Park is completed. These were the last of 46 yurts that were constructed in 13 parks over the last 2 ½ years. The construction was completed with agency staff. This effort did take longer than if the project had been contracted. However, our average cost per yurt was \$27,526, compared to an estimated \$46,050. This cost savings allowed for the construction of 20 more yurts over contracting.

Round Up for Parks raised \$39,339.80 as of February 2019.

The Garden Club of Virginia is awarding \$101,091 in Centennial Grants this year.

Law Enforcement Training

- January 2 – May 29 72 Basic Law Enforcement School (7 recruits, 4 male, 3 female)
- March in-service training was conducted for 95 officers; provided continuing education. Sessions included non-commissioned park managers to assist them in managing the LE/PS program. Sessions included Crisis Intervention training that will be followed up with Statewide opportunities for all staff to become certified in *Mental Health First Aid* (Community Services Boards will provide the training).
- April – May Field training for 7 new officers that graduated in October of 2018.

Mr. Seaver gave progress updates regarding the following new parks:

- Clinch River State Park
- Sweet Run State Park
- Seven Bends State Park
- Machicomoco State Park

Mr. Seaver noted that State Parks find it necessary to raise visitor rates in 2019.

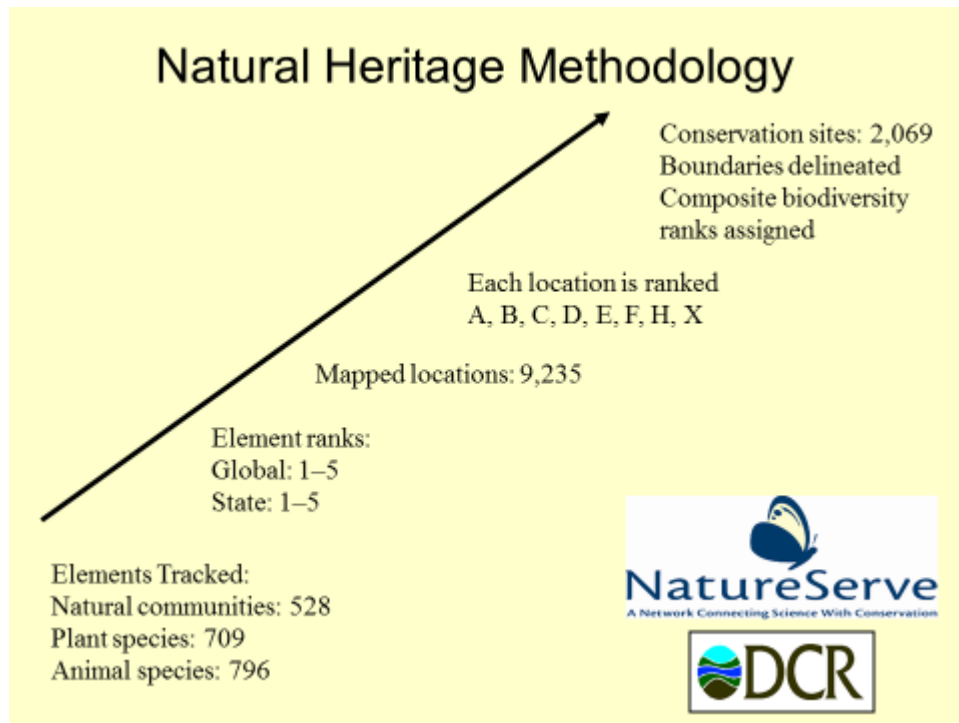
THE CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CEDARS – *Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage, and Rob Evans, Natural Areas Protection Manager*

Mr. Bulluck noted that this region of the Commonwealth is one of North America's most biodiverse places. Because the Board was in the area, he advised that staff had decided to focus on the significance of the Cedars. He introduced Mr. Evans to make that presentation.

Director Cristman noted that, in 1990, the Commonwealth had no Natural Area Preserves. Today there are sixty-three (63), with just over 57,000 acres. The primary mission of the Natural Area Preserves is to protect the habitat. DCR works to balance public access with the primary mission.

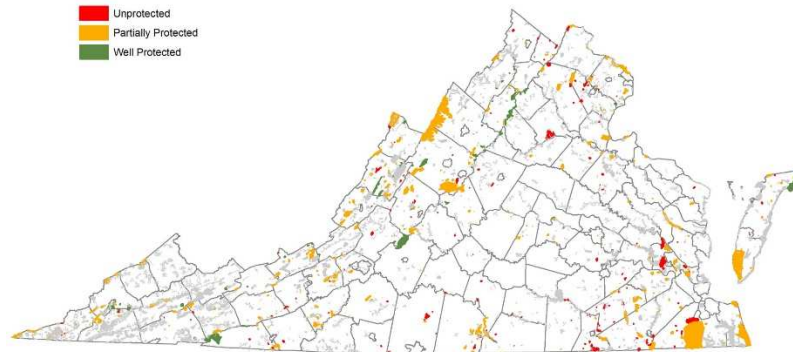
Mr. Evans shared information regarding the Natural Heritage program and conserving Virginia's biodiversity.

- Biological expertise (discovered 30 species new to science and 300 species new to Virginia)
- Data management tools and standards
- Innovative stewardship

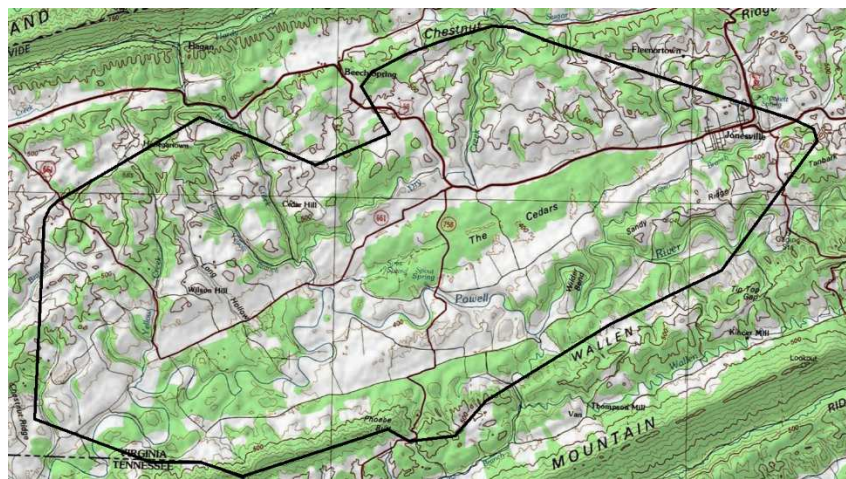


The Virginia Natural Area Preserves Act (1989)

- The Department shall...preserve the natural diversity of biological resources of the Commonwealth.
 - Estimated 35,000 species of plants, animals, invertebrates, natural communities
- Maintain a Natural Heritage Program to:
 - Select and nominate areas containing natural heritage resources for registration, acquisition, and dedication of natural areas and natural area preserves.
- The Natural Area Preserve System
 - Strongly informed by science
 - Established in the “right” locations
 - Formal and permanent protection
 - Actively managed
 - Many sites owned by DCR, other sites formally designated and cooperatively managed
 - Overall goal is to be efficient and comprehensive
- Essential Conservation sites
 - Key areas of the landscape where protection and stewardship action is most critically needed to ensure the long-term viability of one or more natural heritage resources that are the best examples known to remain in Virginia.



Mr. Evans gave an overview of the Cedars area:



Upper Tennessee watershed

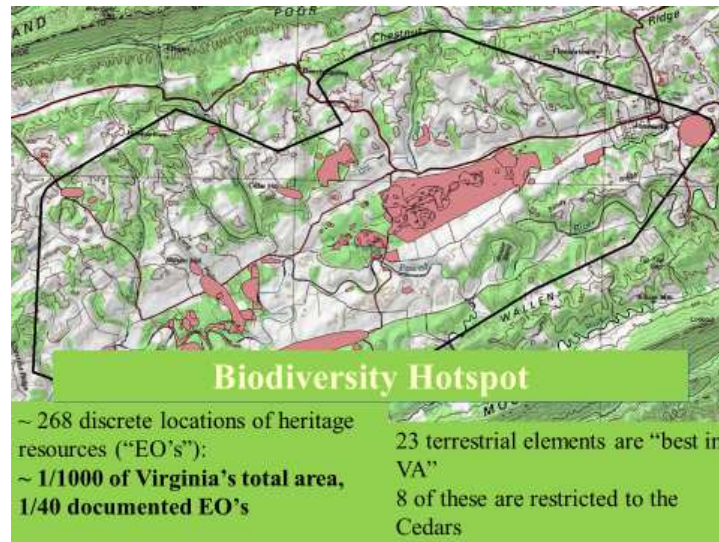
- Harbors one of the most diverse assemblages of fishes and mussels in North America (USFWS 2014b)
- Diverse freshwater mussel fauna is “unmatched anywhere in the world” (Master et al. 1998).
- “nation’s leading hot spot of aquatic diversity” (Master et al. 1998)
- Highest number of globally imperiled and vulnerable freshwater species in the United States (Master et al. 1998 Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperative 2017)
- Virginia portions of the Upper Tennessee support 31 species of federal or state-listed mussels (VGDIF 2010).

Lower Powell River

- Critical Habitat Unit for 6 aquatic species (Federal Register 2004),
- “Priority Aquatic Habitat Conservation Zone” (The Nature Conservancy)
- Freshwater Mussel Augmentation area (VGDIF 2010)

Caves

- At least 21 significant caves and 12 globally rare species



PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES UPDATE – Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator

Ms. Crump noted that DCR is taking another look at the Master Plan for Seven Bends State Park. Part of that is waiting for VDOT to complete the study regarding access via the low water bridges.

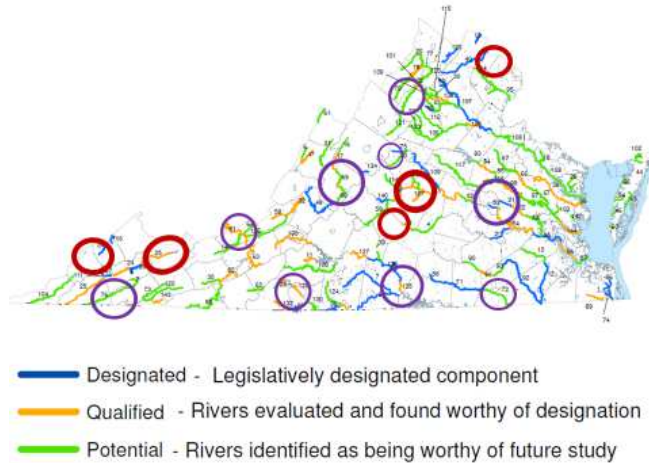
Ms. Crump provided an update regarding Scenic Resources.

DCR is working with Virginia Tech and Scenic Virginia with regard to protecting scenic viewsheds.

**Work with
 Scenic
 Virginia & VT
 Update**

Scenic Rivers

Ms. Crump reviewed the status of scenic rivers and the potential for new designations.



50th Anniversary Celebration

- Steering Committee - May 7
- Marketing Plan Implementation
- Accomplishments
- Letter requesting support

Ms. Crump gave an update regarding the 50th anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers program. She provided a draft letter of support and requested that the Board approve the letter to be sent to interested parties regarding the anniversary. A draft of the letter is included as Attachment A.

Ms. Jackson thanked Ms. Crump for her work in this regard. She noted that the resolution passed the General Assembly recognizing the 50th anniversary.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board approve the draft letter as presented by staff and that the letter be sent along with a copy of the General Assembly resolution. Mr. Burgess seconded and the motion carried.

Staff will prepare the final version of the letter for Chairman Wingo's signature.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – Sharon Partee, Director of Finance

Ms. Partee gave the financial update.

General Fund Appropriation and Expenditures
Fiscal Year 2019

FY 2019 Legislative Appropriation **73,510.004**

Appropriation Transfers and Adjustments

Water Quality Improvement Fund Transfers	(25,115,830)	
SWCD Dam Repair	(500,000)	
Dam Safety/Flood Prevention & Protection	(884,294)	
Re-appropriated Funds for Swift Creek Bike Trail	117,000	
Central Appropriation Adjustment	581,713	
		<u>(25,801,411)</u>

FY 2019 Total GF Appropriation Available for Operations **47,708.593**

Division	FY19 Division Targets	YTD Actual (as of March 2019)	Target vs. Actual %
Soil and Water Conservation	9,060,046	6,559,328	72.4%
Dam Safety	1,265,302	1,025,038	81.0%
Natural Heritage	3,195,656	2,463,525	77.1%
Land Conservation	1,937,610	1,439,787	74.3%
State Parks	19,150,960	18,885,787	98.6%
PRR (Inc. Design & Construction & Breaks)	1,936,566	1,521,635	78.6%
Director's Office – Admin – Finance	<u>11,162,453</u>	<u>7,980,484</u>	<u>71.5%</u>
Grand Total	<u>47,708,593</u>	<u>39,875,584</u>	<u>83.6%</u>

BOARD BYLAWS

Chairman Wingo noted that the Board Bylaws had not been updated in several years. He asked that Board members review the copy provided in member packets. He further asked that staff return to the next meeting with recommended revisions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Wingo advised the Board that he would work with staff to poll for the next meeting date.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Attachment A

Dear River Enthusiast,

Virginia's rivers are renowned worldwide for their historic, scenic, natural and recreational qualities.

Some of the most outstanding are recognized through the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. The General Assembly established this program in 1970 with the passage of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act.

In 2020, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program will mark its 50th anniversary, and I invite you to join the celebration.

The Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation seeks your support in one or more of the following ways:

- Add your name to the list of supporters at www.dcr.virginia.gov/sr50.
- Host an informational meeting about the program's 50th anniversary.
- Include the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program in a local river event or conference.
- Work with your local media to promote existing designations (DCR can provide a toolkit).
- Support local grassroots efforts for new river designations.

If you have a specific need or interest, please contact Lynn Crump, manager of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, at 804-786-5054 or lynn.crump@dcr.virginia.gov.

The board looks forward to collaborating with you as we plan for the exciting year ahead.

Thank you for supporting Virginia's Scenic Rivers!

Sincerely,

W. Bruce Wingo

Chair, Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation