

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees
Thursday, March 14, 2019
West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, Virginia**

MINUTES

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees took place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2019 in the West Reading Room of the Patrick Henry Building, Richmond, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Matthew J. Strickler, Secretary of Natural Resources, Chair

The Honorable Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Byron M. Adkins, Jr.

Anna Lawson

Steven Apicella

The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Jr.

Glenda C. Booth

The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Jr.

Jay C. Ford

The Honorable Paul V. Milde

The Honorable Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.

Bruce Vlck

Valerie D. Hubbard

MEMBERS ABSENT

Susan E. Donner

Julian T. Ottley

Robert Lazaro, Vice Chair

Russell Vern Presley, II

The Honorable Matthew Lohr

The Honorable Jill Vogel

STATE AGENCY STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, DCR

Brad Copenhaver, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources

Rochelle Altholz, DCR

Larry Mikkelson, DCR

Suzan Bulbulkaya, DCR

Wendy Musumeci, DHR

Rob Evans, DCR

Conor O'Donnell, DCR

Kimberly Freiburger, DCR

Jen Perkins, VDACS

Brian Fuller, DCR

Sarah Richardson, DCR

Terry Lasher, DOF

Elizabeth Tune, DHR

Dave Morten, VOF

Deb VanDuzee, DGIF

Lisa McGee, DCR

Joe Weber, DCR

Isaac Sarver, DCR

Mike Santucci, DOF

OTHERS PRESENT

Justin Doyle, James River Association

Anna Killius, James River Association

Chris Gensic, City of Charlottesville

Natasha Skelton, Valley Conservation Council

Tom Gilmore, American Battlefield Trust

John Hutchinson, SVBF

Ellen Shepard, VAULT

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With thirteen (13) members of the Board of Trustees present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Strickler called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for member introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 25, 2018 BOARD MEETING

Mr. Woodley moved that the minutes from the September 25, 2018 meeting of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) Board of Trustees be approved as submitted. Mr. Apicella seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY – *Clyde E. Cristman, Director, DCR*

Director Cristman gave the legislative summary. Two pieces of passed legislation directly impact the VLCF.

- HB1816 Extends the amount of time a taxpayer is allowed to claim the tax credit from the second calendar year from the year the donation is made. Previously, landowners had one year to request the tax credit after the easement was recorded.
- HB2009 Directs the VLCF to conduct a grant ground each year to rank projects for the next fiscal year.

CONSERVE VIRGINIA PRESENTATION – *Joshua Saks, Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources*

Mr. Saks presented and overview of Governor Northam's *ConserveVirginia* initiative.

In April 2018, Governor Northam made the following statement at the Virginia United Land Trusts (VAULT) Conference:

"I believe that we need a land conservation strategy that is focused and targeted toward making measurable progress on our national resource goals...Through this data driven process, we will prioritize the most important targeted lands and direct limited resources toward those conservation projects that provide the greatest benefit in the most cost-effective manner."

ConserveVirginia represents a new data-drive approach that builds upon work already underway in Virginia and other states. The central feature of *ConserveVirginia* is a living "smart map" that identifies 6.3 million acres of priority lands for conservation. While not all 6.3 million acres may be preserved, the map will help target areas of need. The hope is for the VLCF to adopt criteria focused on the properties noted in the *ConserveVirginia* maps.

Working with the land conservation community, a number of state agencies, and the Secretary of Natural Resources, six categories were developed, each representing a different overarching conservation value. Those categories are:

- Agriculture and Forestry
- Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity
- Floodplains and Flooding Resilience
- Cultural and Historic Preservation
- Scenic Preservation
- Protected Landscapes Resilience

A Recreation Model has been developed to identify priority recreation gaps across Virginia and will be used to help sort funding and protection priorities for grant programs, public land acquisitions and easements as permitted. Deputy Secretary Saks noted that further refinement to the map will help determine how best to treat areas that meet multiple criteria.

VLCF MAPPER – *Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, DCR*

Ms. Bulbulkaya shared the interactive map created by the DCR Public Communication and Marketing Office. This map shows every VLCF grant project since 2000. The map is available at this link:

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/land-conservation/vlcf-grant-list>

Secretary Strickler asked how this would be provided to key stakeholders and decision makers and suggested the map also have an overlay of Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects to show the impact of federal funds. He also recommended adding photos for each project.

Mr. Pollard suggested that it would be helpful to show Congressional districts.

2018 VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN – *Danette Poole, Division Director for Planning and Recreation Resources, DCR*

Ms. Poole gave an update regarding the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP). A summary was provided in the meeting packets.

This is the 11th Virginia Outdoors Plan since 1966. The VOP is required by both the National Park Service and the *Code of Virginia*, and is updated every five years. The plan provides guidance for grant fund allocation to state and local projects. Since 2013, the plan has been provided in a digital format which features an interactive map. Development of the plan is a two-year process, beginning with the Virginia Outdoors Survey. DCR staff presented solicited input from the Planning District Commissions (PDCs) across the Commonwealth.

The focus of the 2018 VOP was the benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Land Conservation. The key components of the VOP include:

- Outdoor Rec Trends
- Funding
- Economics & Tourism

- Recreation & Health
- Parks & Recreation
- Trails
- Water Access
- Scenic Resources
- Natural Heritage Resources
- Land Conservation
- Regional Analysis of each of the 21 Planning Regions

Ms. Poole explained that the Virginia Outdoors Survey is the first step in completing the VOP.

- 2017 Survey completed under contract with the UVA Center for Survey Research
- Public polled in a series of questions about their outdoor recreation preferences
- Simultaneously, the inventory of recreational facilities across the state was updated
- Takes a year to complete & analyze

The Survey Method included:

- 14,000 Virginians contacted by mail
- 3,252 responded
- 23% response rate
- Margin of error 2.3%

The most popular activities in the survey were:

| Activity | % of households | |
|--|-----------------|------|
| | 2011 | 2017 |
| Visiting natural areas, preserves, refuges | 50 | 71 |
| Driving for pleasure | - | 67 |
| Walking for pleasure | 82 | 67 |
| Visiting parks (local, state, national) | 51 | 56 |
| Swimming/ outdoor pool | 43 | 48 |
| Sunbathing/ relaxing on a beach | 41 | 47 |
| Viewing the water | - | 38 |
| Swimming—beach/ lake/ river | 38 | 37 |
| Visiting historic areas | 64 | 35 |

| | | |
|--------------------|----|-----------|
| Freshwater fishing | 24 | 34 |
|--------------------|----|-----------|

Citizens view of most needed outdoor recreation facilities

| Most Needed Facilities | % of households |
|--|-----------------|
| Natural Areas | 54 |
| Parks | 49 |
| Trails | 43 |
| Water access | 43 |
| Historic areas | 39 |
| Scenic drives (driving for pleasure) | 29 |
| Playing fields, sports and golf facilities | 22 |

It was noted that 96% of households ranked protection of Virginia’s natural areas & open space resources as “important” or “very important.”

Public Opinions about Recreation

96% *Important to protect Virginia’s natural and open space resources*

93% *Important to have access to outdoor recreation opportunities*

74% *Support state funding for outdoor recreation; 44% of those support an increase in funding*

In the fall of 2019, DCR staff will resume regional meetings to begin work on the next Virginia Outdoors Plan.

VLCF BUSINESS ITEMS

2017 LPTC Annual Report and 2018 VLCF Biennial Report – Suzan Bulbulkaya

Ms. Bulbulkaya reported that the 2017 LPTC Annual Report has been posted and the \$75 million cap for the tax credit was reached. More than 49,000 acres were preserved. The VLCF Biennial Report will be available in the next few months and posted online. Staff will share that link with the board members.

FY20 Grant Round and Revision of Grant Manual – Suzan Bulbulkaya

Ms. Bulbulkaya shared the proposed FY20 VLCF Schedule.

| Proposed FY20 VLCF Schedule | |
|------------------------------|---|
| First week of May 2019 | VLCF Board meeting to approve grant manual and initiate the grant round request for proposals (RFP). |
| By second week of May 2019 | Announce official opening of grant round (send emails, postcards). |
| Late May 2019 | Grant Workshop: staff presentations and orientation for grant applicants. |
| Thursday, August 9, 2019 | Deadline for application submittal. |
| Mid-August 2019 | Interagency taskforce meetings to score projects – usually takes two meetings. |
| Early September 2019 | SNR and Director’s review of top-scoring projects. |
| Third week in September 2019 | VLCF Board meeting. Approval of grant awards. |
| By November 1, 2019 | Grant agreements signed. Projects have two years to close. |

Request to Amend the Scope of a FY17 grant: City of Charlottesville/Charley Close Land Acquisition – Larry Mikkelson, DCR

Mr. Mikkelson reviewed a request from the City of Charlottesville. Mr. Chris Gensic, Charlottesville City Parks and Greenways Planner was present and provided information to the Board.

An FY17 VLCF grant involving the Charley Close Land Acquisition is no longer viable. However, the City has found a similar nearby tract of land for the same project that could be substituted with an amended scope of work.

Mr. Pollard noted that amending the scope of work for the project would not include a rescoring of the project and was hesitant to set a precedence. He encouraged the City to apply during the next grant round.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Pollard moved that the VLCF deny the request from the City of Charlottesville to transfer the grant from the Charley Close Land Acquisition to the new parcel. Ms. Booth seconded and the motion carried.

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation Update on their FY15 Grant Extension

Director Cristman advised the Board that at the September 2018 meeting the Board heard from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SBVF) requesting an extension to the FY15 Grant. He noted that the project was now entering the fourth year. The grant manual provides for two years in the initial grant round with the option for the VLCF to extend the project for an additional year.

Mr. Hutchinson from the SVBF expressed appreciation for the prior extension. The 121-acre project involves 13 separate tax parcels. He advised that the SVBF was within months of completing the project.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Pollard moved that the VLCF deny an additional extension to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation, and that the SVBF be encouraged to reapply with the next grant round. Mr. Woodley seconded and the motion carried.

Deeds of Trust: Lyon Farm/SVBF; Turner Tract/ABT, Battlefield Bluffs/ABT

Director Cristman noted that three VLCF grant projects presented a situation where there are three Deeds of Trust. Currently, the Director has the ownership of those deeds of trust. One was from the Surry-Skiffes Creek mitigation grant round with American Battlefield Trust, the other two are regular VLCF grants: one is with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the other is also with American Battlefield Trust.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rochelle Altholz, Deputy of Administration for DCR inquired about what audiences the VLCF Board of Trustees would like to reach through marketing of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, VLCF Mapper, and Conserve Virginia. Secretary Strickler recommended a focus on local governments.

Mr. Hutchinson noted that the SVBF hopes to close on the Lyons property, which has a Deed of Trust, in the next few weeks.

NEXT MEETING

Director Cristman noted that a grant round could not begin prior to final approval of the budget which is expected in April. He recommended an early May meeting date and advised that staff would poll members for a convenient date.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.