

Board of Conservation and Recreation
October 28, 2010 – 10:00 a.m.
Bear Creek Hall, Bear Creek Lake State Park
Cumberland, Virginia

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

Mark E. Smith, Chairman
Stephen Murray
Jennifer C. Wagner
Robert L. Wilkerson

W. Bruce Wingo, Vice Chair
Sheryl D. Swinson
David Watts
Andrea Young

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Alan D. Albert
Gwen Mason

Richard Formato
George R. Melnyk, Sr.

DCR Staff Present

David A. Johnson, Director
Jeb Wilkinson, Chief Deputy Director
David C. Dowling, Director of Policy Planning and Budget
Joe Elton, Director, Division of State Parks
Thomas Smith, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Synthia Waymack, Grants Manager
Michael R. Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison

Call to Order and Introductions

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order. A quorum was declared present.

Mr. Smith said that two new members had been appointed by Governor McDonnell. He welcomed Andrea Young from McLean. He noted that George Melnyk of Virginia Beach was not able to be present due to a family emergency.

Election of Officers

Mr. Smith said that the Board by-laws call for the election of officers at the first meeting after the beginning of the fiscal year.

Mr. Murray nominated Mr. Smith to serve another year as Chairman. Mr. Watts seconded and Ms. Swinson moved that the nominations be closed.

Mr. Murray called for the vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Swinson nominated Mr. Wingo to serve as Vice Chair. Ms. Wagner seconded. Mr. Murray moved that the nominations be closed and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Smith said that there had been a number of discussions regarding the By-laws. He said that the understanding had been that a Chair would serve no more than two consecutive terms. However, he noted that requirement had not been included in the By-laws adopted in January of 2008.

Mr. Smith said that he would like to work with staff to amend the By-laws as needed if the Board would like to establish that provision for the election of the chair.

Approval of Minutes from June 15, 2010

It was noted that Ms. Cooley's name had been omitted from the attendance list for the June 15, 2010 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Wingo moved that the minutes of the June 15, 2010 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation be approved as amended.

SECOND: Mr. Watts

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Directors Report

Mr. Johnson gave the Director's report. He offered congratulations to Mr. Smith who had also been reappointed to the Board.

Mr. Johnson said that the Governor had asked that agencies submit plans for 2, 4 and 6 percent reductions in general operating funds. He said that because of previous rounds of cuts even a small amount of additional cuts would be difficult. He said that DCR hoped to manage any reductions without further layoffs.

Mr. Johnson said that DCR has engaged a management consulting firm to see how the Agency may operate more efficiently.

Discussion of Governor's 400,000 Acre Goal

Mr. Dowling addressed the Governor's 400,000 acre land conservation goal. He offered the following report.

Overview on Land Conservation in Virginia and Progress Towards the Governor's Goal

Inquiry

A member has inquired whether the Board of Conservation and Recreation should “encourage the Director and Secretary of Natural Resources to amend/modify/adjust/revise/reconsider the Governor's campaign idea of adding 400,000 acres to state protection”. It was suggested that “[a] more appropriate standard would be to add lands and interests in lands to the Commonwealth's recreational estate in accordance with the State Wide Comprehensive Plan developed under the Land and Water Conservation Fund as well as to consider factors other than raw total acreages in deciding what areas to acquire or administer. The latter approach would assure that the more expensive urban/suburban lands of smaller acreage are fully and equally considered by the Commonwealth along with the large land areas of rural Virginia.”

Overview

Land conservation in Virginia is generally a very balanced process that includes many approaches, entities, and funding mechanisms. Both rural and urban lands are being protected.

- 1) **Land preservation tax credit:** Virginia’s Land Preservation Tax Credit Program was created in 1999 to incentivize land conservation by providing an income tax credit of up to 50 percent of the value of conservation easements placed on land in the Commonwealth. The law was later amended to lower the allowable credit to 40 percent of the value of a donation and to authorize the transfer of credits, so they can be sold to other taxpayers. The program allows taxpayers to use up to \$50,000 of the credit per year for 13 years. Unused credits may be sold, allowing individuals with little or no Virginia income tax burden to take advantage of this benefit. To be eligible for tax credits, the easement must qualify as a charitable deduction under federal tax regulations and meet additional requirements under the Virginia Land Conservation Incentives Act. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) must verify the conservation value for those donations resulting in a tax credit request of \$1 million or more. To determine conservation value, DCR utilizes criteria adopted by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board. This program has been extremely successful, and through mid-2010 had enabled the protection of approximately 514,000 acres through credit requests of \$1.12 billion (2010 Cap was \$106,845,000). The majority of the credits and acreages have been in Fauquier, Albemarle, Loudoun, and Rockbridge.
- 2) **State Incentives:**
 - The **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF)**, administered by DCR, provides grants to state agencies and matching grants to local governments and land trusts across the state to acquire land in fee simple or to place land under open space and conservation easements. Since its inception in 2000, there have been six grant rounds, with over \$87.4 million in requests and awards of almost \$28 million. Over 30,000 acres have been protected. About another \$10 million has been transferred to VOF.
 - The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ **Office of Farmland Preservation**, which was first funded in 2007, provides matching grants to localities that have qualifying Purchase of Development Rights programs. As of December 1, 2009, \$4.75 million had been allocated to 15 local PDR programs.
 - Virginia’s Department of Historic Resources also provides grant funding for civil war battlefield protection. DHR’s **Civil War Preservation Fund** is utilized to make competitive grants to private nonprofit organizations for the fee simple

purchase of, or purchase of protective interests in, any Virginia Civil War historic site listed in the “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields,” issued in 1993 or as amended or reissued pursuant to the Civil War Battlefield Protection Act of 2002 as amended or supplemented by new information by the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program. Since 2006, about \$5.8 million has passed through the Fund and has resulted in preservation of over 2000 acres representing 31 tracts and 20 battlefields.

- 3) **Virginia Outdoors Foundation and Private Land Trusts:** The Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), a public body created in 1966, has helped facilitate the donation of conservation easements on thousands of acres of land, and works in partnership with land trusts and other nonprofit conservation groups to protect land while keeping it in private ownership. VOF, which holds approximately 75 percent of all conservation easements in the Commonwealth, receives funding from VLCF and from the General Assembly to pay the costs associated with these transactions and sometimes to purchase easements. Between 1968 and 1999, VOF averaged about 4,700 acres of easements yearly, but after Virginia’s land preservation tax credits were enacted, VOF’s yearly average has increased to 44,920 acres, almost a ten-fold increase.
- 4) **Land Trusts:** In the past decade, land trusts in Virginia have grown in both numbers and capacity and have become partners in the work of preserving Virginia’s land-based resources. Virginia’s United Land Trusts, a statewide coalition, was created to foster this growth in private land trust capacity.
- 5) **Bond Funds:** The Commonwealth has invested in land acquisition through both General Obligation Bonds and Virginia Public Building Authority Bonds. These appropriations have lead to the purchase of new state parks, state forests, natural areas, and wildlife management areas.

HISTORICAL TRENDS FOR LAND CONSERVATION IN VIRGINIA

Table 1: Current Annual Protection Trends

Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)	Statewide (acreage)	VOF Protected
2001	43,930.86	27,934.49
2002	50,250.98	24,248.38
2003	46,875.60	37,184.06
2004	39,282.46	23,442.04
2005	69,138.58	40,454.48
2006	70,506.41	41,627.56
2007	97,585.89	71,449.15
2008	93,802.09	62,362.85
2009	89,521.79	67,220.18
2010	106,147.05	53,286.03
Total	707,041.05	449,209.22
Average annual acreage Protected	70,704.17	44,920.92
	49,895.70 (first 5 FY)	30,652.69 (first 5 FY)
	91,512.65 (last 5 FY)	59,189.15 (last 5 FY)

Table 2. Permanently Protected Land within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

	Bay Watershed Land Area ¹ (Acres)	Bay Watershed Protected Land ² (Acres)	Bay Watershed Protected Land from 2000-2009 ³ (Acres)	Percent of Bay Watershed Land Protected
Maryland	5,849,553	1,440,184	402,556	24.6%
Pennsylvania	14,313,538	3,175,992	331,329	22.2%
Virginia	13,821,194	2,639,440	508,196	19.1%
Total	33,984,285	7,555,616	1,242,081	22.2%

¹[Source] U.S. Geological Survey, September 2010

²[Source] EPA Chesapeake Bay Program and States through July 30, 2009

³Calculated using year 2000 baselines for Maryland and Virginia; and year 2010 for Pennsylvania as provided to EPA Chesapeake Bay Program from the States.

Table 3: Progress Towards Governor Kaine's and McDonnell's Goals (as of August 31, 2010)

Fiscal Year Quarter	Quarter Total	Cumulative Total
FY06 total		70,506.41
FY07-1 (July, August, September)	13,450.20	83,956.61
FY07-2 (October, November, December)	73,084.59	157,041.20
FY07-3 (January, February, March)	6,897.58	163,938.78
FY07-4 (April, May, June)	4,153.52	168,092.30
FY08-1	12,304.95	180,397.25
FY08-2	60,639.54	241,036.79
FY08-3	8,704.17	249,740.96
FY08-4	12,153.43	261,894.39
FY09-1	10,585.05	272,479.44
FY09-2	60,208.39	332,687.83
FY09-3	8,847.11	341,534.94
FY09-4	9,881.24	351,416.18
FY10-1	23,348.02	374,764.20
FY10-2	54,187.46	428,951.66
FY10-3 Kaine finish [Jan (partial)]	298.97	429,250.63
FY10-3 McDonnell [Jan (partial), Feb, March]	17,547.31	17,547.31
FY10-4 [April, May, June]	10,616.64	28,163.95
FY11-1 [Jul/Aug]	4,308.38	32,472.33

Table 4: State Funding for Land Conservation

Program	Appropriation
VLCF FY00 Appropriations	\$1,750,000
VLCF FY01 Appropriations	\$9,600,000
VLCF FY05 Appropriations	\$12,500,000
VLCF FY06 Appropriations	\$2,500,000
VLCF FY07 Appropriations	\$3,000,000
VLCF FY08 Appropriations	\$3,000,000
VLCF FY09 Appropriations	\$2,000,000
VLCF FY10 Appropriations	\$2,000,000
VLCF FY11 Appropriations	\$500,000
VLCF FY12 Appropriations	\$500,000
VLCF FY11 Stewardship from LPTC	\$2,000,000
VLCF FY12 Stewardship from LPTC	\$2,000,000
VLCF Vehicle Registration Funds FY04-09	\$3,833,714
VLCF Interest Earned	\$2,236,003
2002 General Obligation Bond (land conservation)	\$30,000,000
2002 General Obligation Bond (inholdings)	\$6,500,000
2002 VPBA Bond (land conservation)	\$20,000,000
2009 VPBA Bond (land conservation)	\$30,000,000
2009 DHR GF	\$5,190,000
2010 DHR GF	\$190,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY07	\$3,550,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY08	\$700,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY09	\$500,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY10	\$400,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY11	\$100,000
Office of Farmland Preservation FY12	\$100,000
	\$144,649,717.00

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
2008 Grant Program Manual

Adoption Date: November 29, 2007
Administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Authority

Chapter 900 and 906 of the 1999 Virginia Acts of Assembly established the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, Fund, and Board of Trustees. These acts and recent amendments are codified at Va. Code §10.1-1017 through §10.1-1026. The statute stipulates that the Foundation “shall establish; administer; manage, including the creation of reserves; and make expenditures and allocations from a special, nonreverting fund in the state treasury to be known as the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Fund.”

General Purpose of Grant Program

The statute allows moneys in the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be used for matching grants to localities, public bodies, and nonprofit organizations for purchasing fee simple title to, and other interests in, real property for land conservation purposes. The grant categories provided by the statute are: natural area protection; open spaces and parks; farmlands and forest preservation; and historic area preservation. For the natural area protection category, the legislation requires a recommendation from the Department of Conservation and Recreation based on specific criteria listed in Va. Code §10.1-1022(B). A limited amount of funds may also be available for the development of properties purchased in fee simple by the Fund for public use; however, it is currently the VLCF Board’s intent to expend funds primarily for land conservation projects. Development funding is limited to public access facilities that are essential to the public benefit to be derived from the property.

Generally speaking, grants for acquisition projects will be awarded only for current proposals, including those purchased within two years prior to the grant application date. Grants for purchases that were previously completed will be awarded only in exceptional situations involving considerable public benefit and a compelling demonstration of unusual financial need and circumstances.

Grant Program Overview

A major function for the Foundation, as set forth in the statute, is to establish and administer the Fund for the purpose of providing grants to state agencies, including the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and **matching grants** to holders, who are defined in §10.1-1009, and to public bodies, defined in §10.1-1700, for purchasing “fee simple title to or other rights, interests or privileges in property for the protection or preservation of ecological, cultural or historical resources, lands for recreational purposes, state forest lands, and lands for threatened or endangered species, fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, agricultural and forestal lands and open space.”

The Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation is charged with administering, reviewing, and making recommendations on grant applications to the Secretary of Natural Resources

and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. Grant applications are reviewed and scored by an inter-agency task force. Grant awards are based on applications for 50 percent or less of total project costs pursuant to specific criteria defined in each application category, and 100 percent or less of total project costs for state agencies. Guiding factors in distribution of VLCF funds are set out in Virginia Code §§ 10.1-1020 and 1021.1, which specify that at least one third of the funds shall be used to secure open-space easements to be held or co-held by a public body, and that VLCF shall seek to achieve a fair distribution of land protected throughout the Commonwealth.

Application Categories

1. Open Spaces and Parks
2. Natural Area Protection
3. Historic Area Preservation
4. Farmlands and Forest Preservation

Appendix 1

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____ Open Space & Parks Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
1) Public Access to State Waters: Acquires land or an easement on land which provides increased public access to state waters offering recreational potential. Maximum score 13		Public access to state waters that provides boating, fishing, and beach/bank swimming opportunities = 13 Public access that provides two of those recreational opportunities = 10 Public access that provides one of those recreational opportunities = 5
2) Adjacency to Parks and Conserved Lands: Acquires lands or easements adjacent to existing parks, protected conservation areas, or other recreational resources that expand and protect public conservation or recreational interests. Maximum score 10		Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area that will allow full public use on the new property = 10 Acquisition or easement adjacent to park or conservation area, with limited public use = 7 Acquisition or easement contiguous to park or conservation area, with no public use = 5
3) Scenic Resources Protection: Protects scenic viewsheds or land important to the protection of any federally designated Wild and Scenic River or American Heritage River in or adjacent to Virginia, Virginia's Scenic Rivers, designated Scenic Roads, and Virginia Byways, and/or recreational trails, including greenways or blueways. Maximum score 10		Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, one of the listed resources = 10 Conserves land adjacent to, or in direct viewshed of, a potential resource identified in VOP = 7
4) Alignment with State, Regional, or Local Plans: Supports local and/or regional comprehensive plans for parks, open space, and recreational facilities, and/or contributes to the protection of a state, regionally, or locally identified conservation corridor. Name and Page # of plan cited. Maximum score 9		If project site/corridor is specifically mentioned in regional/local plan, or identified by Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment = 9 If area of project has general reference in regional/local plan = 5
5) Virginia Outdoors Plan Need: Addresses a need identified in the <i>Virginia Outdoors Plan</i> . Applicant must specify VOP Page #. Maximum score 9		Specific numbered need from regional section of VOP = 9 General Need = 5
6) Public Utilization: Availability of land for public use, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, or wildlife watching. Maximum score 10		Open for public utilization = 10 Public use for more than one day per year = 5 Public use one day per year = 3 No public use = 0
7) Densely Populated and Developing Areas: Conserves land in a densely populated or rapidly developing area. Densely populated is defined as a locality with population of 90,000 or more, or a locality designated by the Commonwealth as an incorporated City, regardless of size. Rapidly developing is defined as property identified in the VCLNA Outside the Urban Fringe Vulnerability Model with a threat value of 5. Maximum score 9		Densely populated locality = 8 Threat value of 5 in VCLNA model = 5
8) Degree of Threat: Site is threatened by development. A threatened site is defined as property documented to be on the market currently or recently, in an estate that is currently being settled, or adjacent to similar property which is on the market or sold in the past year. Maximum score 10		Currently on the market or in an estate = 10 Recently on the market = 8 Adjacent to similar property on the market or sold within the previous year = 5

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Appendix 3

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Historic Area Preservation Category

Criterion	Score	Notes
<p>1) Strong proposals are likely to protect or preserve a resource that is: (A) Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) or certified as eligible for listing by the Director of the Department of Historic Resources; or (B) A resource that contributes to the integrity, enhances the setting, or provides a buffer for a property that is listed on the VLR*, or (C) a Civil War Battlefield listed as a Class A or B, Priority I or II battlefield by the <i>Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report</i> of 1993, and as amended. <i>*Note: For applications under (B) above, the historical significance of the listed property will be evaluated. For resources which are not listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register but have been certified as eligible for listing, historical significance will be determined as if such properties were so listed.</i> <i>**Applicants must submit a copy of the National Register/VLR nomination form or Civil War Sites Advisory Commission rating, if applicable.</i> Maximum score 40</p>		<p>35 points: National Historic Landmark 25 points: Property individually listed in the VLR OR eligible for individual listing in the VLR OR contributing to a National Historic Landmark District 15 points: Contributing property in a VLR historic district 5 points: Other historic and cultural resources Civil War Battlefields with CWSAC rating & not in VLR: 35 points: Properties designated as Priority I, Class A or B 25 Points: Properties designated as Priority II, Class A, B, C, or D 15 Points: Properties designated as Priority III, Class A, B, C, or D 5 Points: Properties designated as Priority IV, Class A, B, C, or D Additional 0 – 5 points: Rarity, quality, and integrity of resource.</p>
<p>2) An identifiable threat to the resource or compelling need for immediate preservation exists. Maximum score 10</p>		<p>Property is currently on the market for sale OR in imminent danger of demolition = 10 Property is listed with a Threat Value of 7 or 8 on the VLCNA composite model OR property is significantly deteriorated and in need of immediate preservation = 7 Other identifiable threat to resource or compelling need for preservation = 4</p>
<p>3) Applicant intends to manage property according to a documented resource management plan and has demonstrated organizational and financial capacity to ensure appropriate treatment and ongoing maintenance of the resource <i>*Project plans must meet the relevant preservation standards and be approved by the Department of Historic Resources.</i> <i>**Historic Structures Report or Resource Management Plan should be submitted with application, with sections applicable to grant proposal highlighted.</i> Maximum score 15</p>		<p>Property managed using a Historic Structures Report and applicant has documented financial and organizational capacity to maintain resource = 15 Property managed using general Resource Management Plan and applicant has documented financial capacity to maintain resource = 10 Property owner will obtain Resource Management Plan and has limited financial capacity to maintain resource = 5.</p>
<p>4) Preservation of the resource may complement or enhance other cultural or historic resources or land already protected through a conservation easement OR represents a unique cultural resource opportunity within the geographical area. Maximum score 5</p>		<p>Adjacent to significant historic/cultural resources, and/or land already protected through conservation easement or existing conservation land = 5 In viewshed of significant historic/cultural resources, and/or land already protected through conservation easement OR existing conservation land = 3 Not adjacent to significant historic/cultural resources or in viewshed of land already protected through conservation easement or existing conservation land, but represents unique cultural resource within the geographical area = 1</p>
<p>5) Protection or preservation of the resource may further other public interests, such as education, research, heritage tourism promotion or orderly community development. Maximum score 5</p>		
<p>6) There is demonstrated public support for the protection or preservation of the resource. Maximum score 5</p>		

Total Maximum Score 80 points _____

Appendix 6

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) Identified Need

Degree to which a parcel satisfies resource conservation needs as identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* or in a local comprehensive plan.

Maximum 3 points

- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP and in a local comprehensive plan = 3 points
- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 2 points
- Not identified in VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Water Quality Benefit

Extent to which the parcel will protect water quality through the use of permanent riparian buffers that are at least 35 ft. wide.

Maximum 4 points

- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on all streams/ivers throughout the property = 4 points
- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on a portion of the streams/ivers in the property = 2 points
- No permanent buffers = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Value Added

Degree to which the project has significant value in other categories.

Maximum 11 points

- Farmland = 2 points
- Forestal land = 2 points
- Historic resources = 2 points
- Natural heritage resources = 2 points
- Recreation/parks = 2 points
- Wildlife = 3 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

Public Access

Degree to which the property has public or visual access.

Maximum 6 points

- Full Public Access = 6 points
- Limited Public Access = 3 points
- Visual Access = 2 points
- No Access = 0 points

Scoring Sheet Criteria For: _____

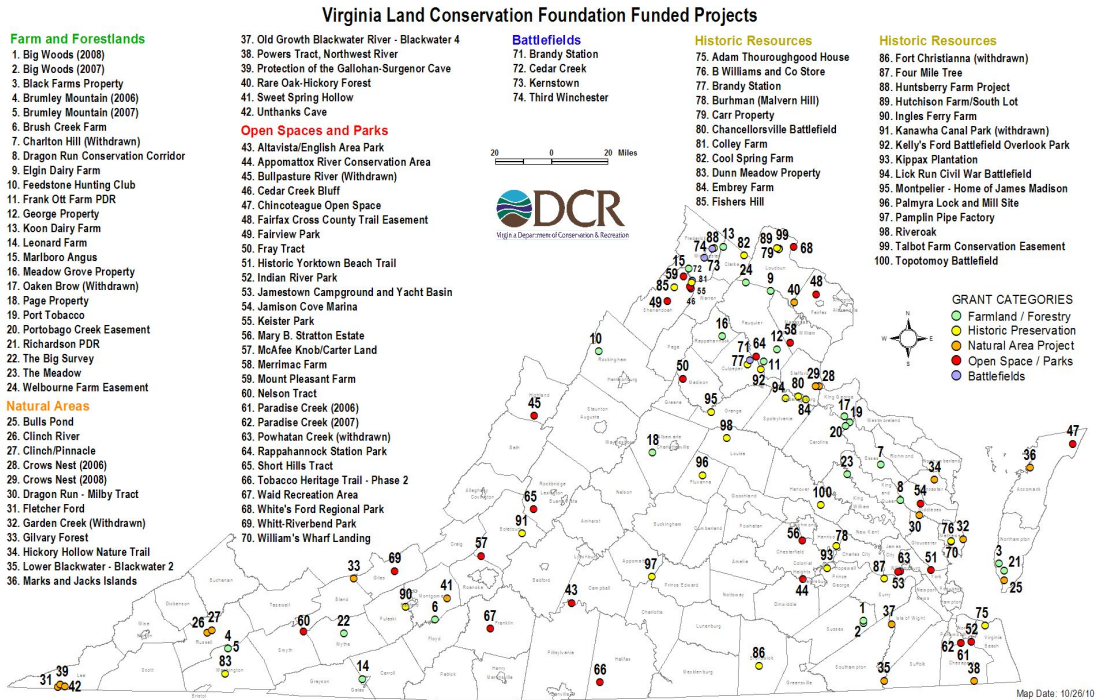
Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost

More than 80% of total allowable request = 3

More than 60% of total allowable request = 2

50 % of total allowable request = 0

Total Maximum Score for Additional Scoring Criteria: 27 points



Mr. Watts thanked Mr. Dowling for the report. He expressed concern regarding the need for the lands to be both urban and rural. He said that he hoped that the preservation wouldn't be too closely tied to a number.

Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Watts. He said that DCR staff was very concerned regarding the issue of quality of the land preserved. He noted that there was a limited amount of money for purchases and that easements were often the most efficient route.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Update and Overview

Ms. Waymack gave an update regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Projects are awarded on a 50/50 match basis. Projects selected for the most recent grant round were:

*Winding Brook Nature Park
 Hanover County*

- About 15 minutes north of Richmond, near Bass Pro Shop/ not too far from Hanover Municipal Airport
- Conserve about 3 acres in perpetuity
- Facilities to be constructed include, trails, pond for fishing, benches and picnic tables.
- \$100,000 award

*Azalea Park
Charlottesville*

- 23 acres in southern part of city near I64 and Old Lynchburg Road. Originally purchased from Bellmeade
- Assistance will be given for trail connectors to the adjacent neighborhoods, construction of restrooms, construction of a pavilion and improved access to Moore's Creek.
- \$50,000 award

Chesterfield County

- Acquisition of two 5 acre properties to provide river access along the piedmont section of the Appomattox River. One location is at River Road, Route 602,(30-40 minutes east of Amelia Wildlife Management area) the other is Route 360/Hull Street (Moseley Area, 10-12 miles west of Midlothian, Va)

*Gilberts Corner
Loudoun, County Leesburg/ Aldie Va*

- Route 50 and Watson Rd, just east of intersection of 15 and 50
- \$100,000 award to be used for construction of parking area, identification signage, hiking and equestrian trails –about 2 miles and interpretive signage.
- Battle of Aldie John S. Mosby versus William H. Forbes both sides had 150 mounted soldiers
- 155 acres

*Lily Ruckstuhl Acquisition
Falls Church*

- On Idylwood Road (695) in Falls Church area between Route 7 and 495 Capital Beltway
- 6 acres will be acquired for development into a passive recreation park
- Between Idylwood Road and Interstate 66
- Parking, trails, picnic tables, etc are proposed for the park.
- \$100,000

Mr. Elton presented a recommended draft resolution regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund. He noted that the National Governors Association had endorsed full and equitable funding.

Mr. Watts moved that the Board adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation (BCR) met at Bear Creek Lake State Park, on October 28, 2010, and;

WHEREAS, the members of the BCR reviewed and reinforced their strong support for legislation that would enhance the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by providing full (\$900 million annually), permanent funding and provide equal funding (same percentage as that received for federal programs) for the Stateside program; and;

WHEREAS, there has been demonstrated bipartisan support for the LWCF Stateside program through resolutions adopted by the National Governor's Association representing all fifty states and by Virginia Governor McDonnell through correspondence to the Virginia congressional delegation, and;

WHEREAS, the BCR acknowledges the action taken by the United States House of Representatives on July 30, 2010 with the passage of H.R. 3534, The Clear Act, and:

WHEREAS, Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV-3) chief sponsor of The Clear Act is commended for his words spoken on the floor of the House of Representatives; "The Stateside LWCF program provides vital support for states and local communities for access to outdoor recreation...I am pleased that the CLEAR Act will provide stable, permanent funding for the Stateside program...I look forward to working with you, our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the Administration and others who support this critical program to insure it receives adequate and equitable funding going forward."

WHEREAS, the BCR lends its support to any congressional action to provide for equal funding for the Stateside program, and;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the BCR hereby calls on Virginia's United States Senators Mark Warner and James Webb and the full United States Senate to act on legislation this year, that includes language for full and permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund with equal funding for the Stateside program.

SECOND: Mr. Wilkerson
DISCUSSION: None
VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Natural Heritage Program 2010 Field Action Highlights

Mr. Thomas Smith gave a report regarding the Natural Heritage Program.

The Natural Heritage Mission is *to conserve Virginia's biodiversity through inventory, protection, and stewardship.*

Hot Spots of Rarity

Hot spots of rarity in America are based on how irreplaceable their complement of rare species is (*Precious Heritage 2000*). Southern Appalachia, including southwestern Virginia, is one of six biodiversity hot spots in the United States, based upon imperiled species, important habitats, and diversity-of-life data from state Natural Heritage programs.

The Natural Heritage Network 2010

All 50 U.S. states + TVA and Navajo Nation,
Canada, and 11 Latin American countries

DCR participates in an international network of natural heritage programs. The network helps Virginians make informed decisions and helps carry our efforts and information to conservation decision-makers throughout the Western Hemisphere.

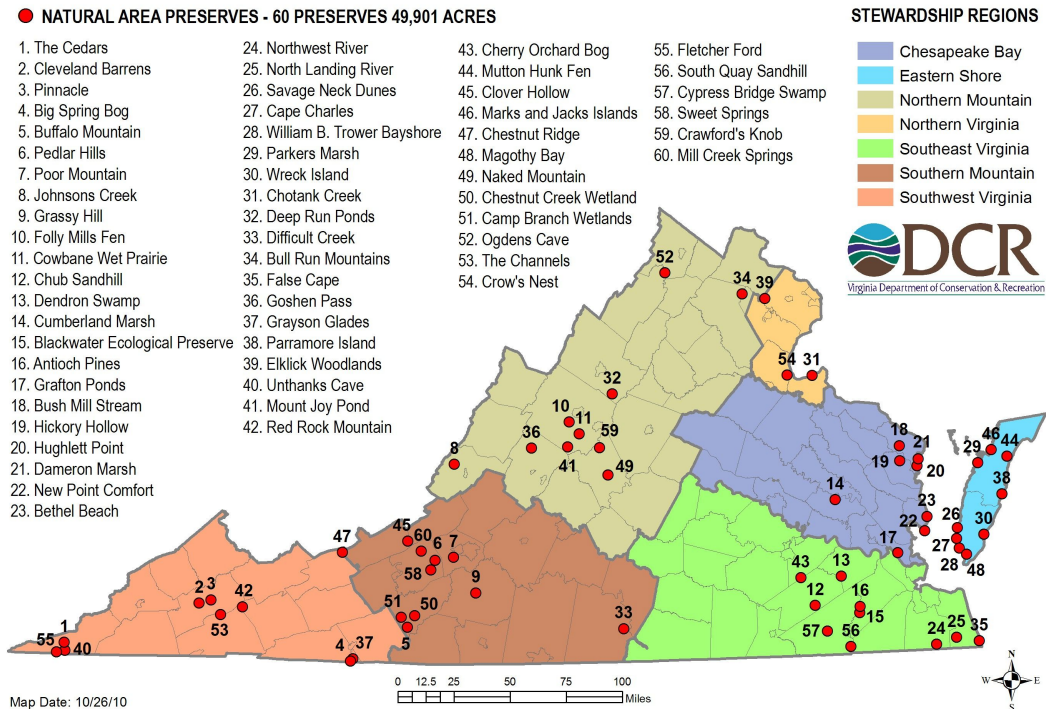
Natural Heritage Inventory

- Interdisciplinary team of botanists, zoologists, vegetation ecologists, and cooperators throughout Virginia
- 240 field days in 2010 collecting data on about 220 natural community and rare species locations
- Discovered 30 species new to science and 300 species new to Virginia since 1986

Virginia Conservation Lands Database

Tracking the 400,000 acre land conservation goal:
32,156 Acres Protected as of September 30.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage
 Natural Heritage Stewardship Regions & Natural Area Preserves



A full copy of Mr. Smith's presentation is available from DCR.

State Parks Update

Mr. Elton gave a State Parks update. He noted that Bear Creek Lake State Park was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the Great Depression. The Park is surrounded by the largest state forest in Virginia.

Mr. Elton gave the following presentation. A full copy of this presentation is available from DCR.

3 New Initiatives

- Youth Ambassador Program
- AmeriCorps Grant – Seasonal Interpreters
- 75th Anniversary of Virginia State Parks

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- National call to service for youth ages 16-26 to collaborate on a statewide media and marketing program
- Promoting outdoor recreation in our state parks

- Document outdoor experiences and capture all of life's adventures from the extreme to the everyday with this youth partnership
- Challenging outdoor enthusiasts and advocates to bring the stories of the parks to the public
- Phase I – Youth Ambassador for all 50 states
- Phase II – Youth Ambassador for every state park

ROLE OF THE AMBASSADOR

- Get out and enjoy the parks in their state
- Be present as a voice and advocate for State Parks Nationwide
- Work with the park to develop a 9-12 month content plan of parks/events/experiences that we want to capture and highlight online
- File a minimum of 1 (one) video story and several written stories/blogs per month
- Provide admin support to the America's State Parks Facebook page
- Represent ASP at 2011 Outdoor Nation summits and at other special events

PROJECT MILESTONES

- Training and youth ambassador working group to begin in November 2010
- Official public launch and celebration with sponsors in March/April 2011
- Work with Outdoor Nation on 2011 State and Regional Youth Summits from May 2011 through September 2011
- NASPD meeting September 2011

CURRENT PARTNERS

- State Parks
 - Leadership – All 50 states participating
 - States are recruiting and choosing their own ambassadors
- Imperial Multimedia
 - Content and Technical Expertise
- Outdoor Nation/Outdoor Foundation
 - Youth and Outdoor Advocacy
 - Financial Support
- Olympus
 - Equipment Sponsor

Virginia State Parks Program

- Youth Ambassadors are not paid, they are volunteers
- Must be 16-26 years of age
- All 35 State Parks will have a Youth Ambassador
- Multiple Youth Ambassadors assigned to a park
- One will be designated as the lead park representative
- One of the park's Ambassadors will be designated as the District Ambassador
- Appoint a State Park Youth Ambassador to represent Virginia in multi-state functions

- Identifiable clothing will be provided
- Ambassadors will interface with Park's Friends and volunteers

Virginia State Parks AmeriCorps Volunteer Interpretative Initiative

At a Glance

- Successful grant application providing **\$165,792** per year for up to 3 years from the Corporation for National and Community Service with an additional 2 years if successful for a five-year total of \$828,960
- Provides opportunity to increase interpretive programming - 34 individuals, 675 hours per year, April-September 2011

VSP Staff Duties

- Training - Site Supervisors are responsible for making sure AmeriCorps members complete:
 - Four day interpretive workshop 23-26 May 2011
 - Member orientation
 - FOCUS training
 - Water Safety Training
 - Best Practices and Beyond

Benefits for VSP

- Enhancing the visitor experience by offering more interpretive and educational programs
- Enhanced focus on stewardship and conservation
- Growing our volunteer program
- Collaboration between AmeriCorps Youth and Park Friends

Member Benefits

- All AmeriCorps volunteers are called Members.
- Education award
 - Upon successful completion member receives \$2,038 education award
- Living allowance
 - Members will receive a \$3,000 living allowance distributed bi-monthly on state pay days.
 - No correlation between hours work in month and monthly living allowance
 - Living allowance is taxable

Organizational Nuts and Bolts

Member eligibility:

- Must be US citizen, US National or a lawful permanent resident
- Must be at least 17 years old

- Opportunity to engage seniors, veterans, disabled and unemployed community members
- BRAND new AmeriCorps rule- seniors over 55 can transfer education award to child or grandchild!

What AmeriCorps is NOT

- VERY IMPORTANT- AmeriCorps is not an employee displacement option!
 - This is NOT an opportunity to reduce staffing; it IS an opportunity to augment park staff with a volunteer to INCREASE interpretation
- AmeriCorps members are NOT employees
 - They are volunteers providing a service
- AmeriCorps members are NOT paid-
 - they receive a living allowance that is NOT tied to the hours of service they provide on a weekly basis



Why Celebrate?

- To increase citizens' pride and support for their Virginia State Park System
- To remind us, the staff and volunteers of State Parks, of our heritage and the importance of what we do
- Opportunity to increase visitation
- Shameless self-promotion of our parks and what we have to offer

PROMOTIONS

- Anniversary theme in publications, commercials, etc.
- 75 Days of Summer...daily prizes
- Promotional items for events, shows, etc
- Visitor Photo Contest
- "Happy Birthday from VSP Staff" video

- Blue Ridge Public Television Documentary
- Social Media push
- Blog Contest
- Traveling Exhibits
- Lottery Scratch Off Game

75 Days Of Summer

- Daily web/social media based contests
- Day of the week themes like: Guess which Park; Native Virginia Plants (show a picture, they guess what it is); Show a picture with maximum zoom (they guess what it is); Fish species in Virginia State Parks; Park Trivia; Jumble of park names; Wildlife trivia
- Begins June 15th
- Ends right before Labor Day
- Every park visitor can enter the grand prize drawing
- Each park will pick one winner on Labor Day
- Out of all of the park winners, a grand prize winner will be selected

Photography Contest

- Photos will be submitted Labor Day through October 31
- Youth contest and categories: People and nature; Flora; Fauna; Seasons (with a Kids 15 and under contest in each of these categories)
- Winners featured in #1 brochure + prizes
- All photos submitted digitally through VirginiaOutdoors site

Staff Pride – Park “Happy Birthday” videos competition

- All parks will submit a “Happy Birthday” video which we will feature on VirginiaOutdoors.com
- Winning video gives Park bragging rights and a Pizza Party

PBS Video on State Parks

- Overview of Documentary
- Chance of a Lifetime
- The First Six Parks
- Integration and Growth
- 75 Years Later – all 35 parks
- Awe and Wonder- beauty segment
- Park Preservation- the future of our parks
- Wrap-up and Credits

Social Media and Blog Contest

- On-Going

All interpretive events

- Will speak to VSP history
 - Developing standard language to be conveyed with programs
- Will feature things people can do at home to be green

Exhibits

- 8 new mobile exhibits
- Multi-functional, adaptable
- Combination of graphics and electronic displays

Lottery

- Lottery has committed to developing a special scratch off game for the 75 Anniversary
- May include “second chance” feature...internet supported

Partnerships, Sponsorships, Fundraising

- We are seeking donations for the 75 Days of Summer promo...good stuff already coming in.
- Donations are technically being made to VAFP and then donated to us.
- Parks will seek local support for on-site celebrations

Thank Community and Visitors for 75 years of support – Birthday Celebration

- June 18, 2011 at all Parks
- Birthday Cake
- Special programs and events
- Local dignitaries, Delegates and State Senators invited

State Parks History Adventures Geocaching Game

- Same game, new cards, new caches
- State Park History Theme

Other Business

There was no further business.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Friday, June 17 was set as a meeting date in conjunction with the 75th State Parks Anniversary Celebration at Hungry Mother State Park. Additional dates will be proposed by the staff and would likely include a March meeting.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark E. Smith
Chairman

David A. Johnson
Executive Secretary