

Board of Conservation and Recreation
August 21, 2014
Douthat State Park, Millboro, Virginia

MINUTES

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Present

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Steve L. Apicella
James W. Beamer	Linwood M. Cobb, III
Patricia A. Jackson	Andrew C. Jennison
Daniel F. Rinzel	Isaac J. Sarver
William E. Small	Alexander I. Vanegas

Board of Conservation and Recreation Members Not Present

Harvey B. Morgan	Michael P. Reynold
------------------	--------------------

DCR Staff Present

Clyde E. Cristman, Director	David Collett
Bill Conkle	Charles Conner
Lynn Crump	Michael Fletcher
Danette Poole	Craig Seaver
Tom Smith	

Call to Order

Mr. Wingo called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Mr. Seaver welcomed attendees to Douthat State Park.

Mr. Wingo welcomed Ms. Jackson, Mr. Jennison, and Mr. Sarver as new members of the Board.

Approval of Minutes of May 12, 2014

MOTION: Mr. Beamer moved that the minutes of the May 12, 2014 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation be approved as submitted by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Cobb

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Mr. Cristman welcomed attendees to Douthat State Park. He commented that many meetings had been held in this lodge since 1936.

Mr. Cristman said that DCR had hired a new Director of Administration and Finance; Rochelle, Altholtz. He noted that Joe Elton had been named Deputy Director of Operations and that Craig Seaver had been named State Parks Director.

Mr. Cristman said that good progress had been made on addressing the Department's audit points.

Planning and Recreation Resources Update

Virginia Outdoors Plan

Ms. Poole gave an overview of the Virginia Outdoors Plan. She noted that members had been provided a digital copy of the plan in the packet mailed to them prior to the meeting.

2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan

Virginia's 10th Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Outdoor Recreation Objective

Provide guidance to all levels of government and the private sector in meeting the state's conservation, outdoor recreation and open space needs.

Produced in accordance with §10.1-200 of the Code of Virginia.

Land Conservation Objective

Provide guidance for land protection through actions of the *Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF)*

Identify potential conservation lands in each planning district (region)

Produced in accordance with §10.1-1021 of the Code of Virginia.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Requirement of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program.

Provides guidance for grant fund allocations to state and local projects.

Ms. Poole reviewed the results from the 2011 Virginia Outdoor Demand Survey conducted by the Center for Research at the University of Virginia on behalf of DCR. Survey results are available from DCR.

Ms. Poole reviewed the summary:

- Survey indicates shift in recreation trends
- Wide range in participation for outdoor recreation activities
- Importance of state park facilities
- Strong support for public purchase, management and access to natural areas and open space.

New features for the Virginia Outdoors Plan include:

- Web-based with active links
- Interactive mapping component
- Annual engagement by staff with:
 - Planning Districts
 - Technical Advisory Committee
 - Localities to provide technical support and foster plan implementation

State Park Master Planning

Mr. Conkle began the presentation of the Master Plans for review.

James River State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the Master Plan Executive Summary for James River State Park. A full copy of the Executive Summary is available at the following link:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/mp4jrexecsum.pdf

Mr. Conkle noted:

The James River State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on October 29, 1998, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. The plan was then reviewed on December 16, 2004 by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on the phased development). This 2014 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for James River State Park when it is fully developed.

The James River State Park was purchased as part of the Park and Recreational Facilities Bond Act of 1992. The park is located in Buckingham County, ten miles north of Route 60 at Bent Creek and across the James River from Norwood. The park is 80 miles west of Richmond and 32 miles north-east of Lynchburg. The park is accessed via Route 605 from Route 60 at Bent Creek. The park currently consists of 1525 acres. Three in-holdings totaling 17 acres have been identified for future acquisition.

Mr. Beamer asked about the increase in visitation from between 2006 and 2007.

Mr. Conkle noted that was when the cabins were added to the park.

Mr. Rinzel noted that the full master plan covers about twenty years.

Mr. Conkle noted that much of the development of the actual master plan depended upon funding and staffing availability. He said that each phase of development represented about ten years.

Mr. Conkle noted that sometimes the plans for the park would change. He said that the master plans were flexible by nature. He said that a lot of input for the park comes from the local community.

Mr. Apicella asked if the information regarding the economic impact on a locality was documented.

Mr. Cristman said that it was and suggested that staff could do a presentation regarding that information.

Mr. Apicella asked how decisions were made regarding prioritization when funding was limited.

Mr. Conkle said that staff looks at the projects proposed across the system. He said that in some cases the General Assembly would target funds to specific projects.

Mr. Cristman said that it was important to remember that the master plans were to represent the full park build out. He said that he did not believe that any park had been fully built out. He noted that the General Assembly reviews the plans every five years. He noted that guidance for development of a park is that there is a minimal amount of land disturbance. The guidance specifies that not more than 15% of the park will be developed.

MOTION: Mr. Beamer moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approve of the Master Plan update for James River State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Jackson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried with Mr. Small voting no.

Sailor's Creek State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Master Plan update for Sailor's Creek State Park. A full copy of the executive summary and plan can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/mp4scexecsum.pdf

Mr. Conkle noted:

The Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on December 4, 2002 by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director Joseph H. Maroon. The plan was then amended on June 10, 2009, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on the phased development). This 2014 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for Sailor's Creek State Park when it is fully developed.

Sailor's Creek State Park is located in the Piedmont Region of central Virginia. Sections of the park are in three counties: Prince Edward, Amelia, and Nottoway. The park can be reached from Routes 360, 460, and 307 by following the directional signs to Route 617, which cuts through the largest portion of the park and leads to the Hillsman House.

Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park is the site of the last major battle of the War Between the States in the state of Virginia. The purpose of the Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park master plan is to provide revisions and updates to previous plans and to establish a new plan to support the educational and recreational mission of the park, a National Historic Landmark site.

MOTION: Mr. Apicella moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approve of the Master Plan update for Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Cobb.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Seven Bends State Park

Ms. Crump presented the Master Plan update for Seven Bends State Park. A full copy of the executive summary and plan can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/mp4seexecsum.pdf

Ms. Crump noted:

The master plan for Seven Bends State Park was adopted on November 26, 2008, by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director, Joseph H. Maroon.

Seven Bends State Parks is located in east-central Shenandoah County near the Town of Woodstock. The park consists of 1,066 acres situated in the geographically unique Seven Bends area of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The majority of the park was assembled from donated land. The Town of Woodstock donated almost 85 acres of what had been the town reservoir site. Dr. James R. Myers donated the last parcel, approximately 674 acres, which is adjacent to the reservoir site. The third parcel, more than 306 acres known as Camp Lupton, was purchased by the state from the Massanutten Military Academy.

Ms. Crump said that no changes were recommended to the master plan at this time. She noted that because there were no recommended changes that the plan would not go to the General Assembly.

There was a discussion regarding opening land banked parks for limited usage.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approve of the Master Plan update for Seven Bends State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Ms. Jackson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried with Mr. Small voting no.

Douthat State Park

Ms. Crump presented the Master Plan update for Douthat State Park. A full copy of the executive summary and plan can be viewed at the following link:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/documents/mp4doexecsum.pdf

Ms. Crump noted the following:

The Douthat State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted December 29, 1998 by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. The plan was then renewed on December 16, 2005 by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. An updated plan was adopted by DCR director Joseph H. Maroon on November 14, 2008. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on the phased development). This 2014 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for Douthat State Park when it is fully developed.

Douthat State Parks is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is situated in the Alleghany Highlands. Opening in June 1936, it was the first recreational facility acquired by the Commonwealth. Three Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camps developed the site. Since opening, the park has more than doubled in size and now equals 4,545.69 acres. Central to the park and serving as a hub of recreational and scenic resources is the 50-acre Douthat Lake.

Mr. Rinzel asked who was responsible for maintaining the road through the park.

Ms. Crump said that was a state road that went through the park and that it was also a state scenic byway.

MOTION: Mr. Apicella moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approve of the Master Plan update for Douthat State Park as presented by staff.

SECOND: Mr. Vanegas

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried with Mr. Small voting no.

Mr. Cristman said that with regard to the master planning process, staff would like for the Board to endorse the concept of changing the review process from five to ten years. He said that this would still allow the opportunity to review the plans if there was a desire or if there as a significant change recommended. He said that the suggested legislation would change the Code requirement from five to ten years for the review.

Mr. Rinzel asked what would trigger an update outside that schedule.

Ms. Poole said that an update would be considered if there was additional acquired property or the recommendation of a new facility. She said a gift of land or other acquisition could also trigger the need for an update. She said that any recommendation of half a million dollars or more required an update to the master plan.

- MOTION: Mr. Beamer moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the concept of changing the master plan review process from every five years to every ten years and that the change be reflected in the Code of Virginia.
- SECOND: Ms. Jackson
- DISCUSSION: None
- VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

At this time the Board recessed for a break.

Scenic Rivers Program

Ms. Crump presented the Scenic Rivers update.

Purpose:

- Identify and protect significant river resources
- “superior natural and scenic beauty, fish and wildlife, and historic, recreational, geologic, cultural, and other assets”

Evaluations Requested By:

- A locality letter
- The General Assembly
- Board of Conservation and Recreation

Designation Process:

1. Evaluate River
 - a. Request
 - b. Map & literature surveys
 - c. Field evaluation
 - d. 13 criteria
2. Report preparation
3. “Boiler plate” legislation provided
4. Local legislator take to GA
5. GA Passage and Governor’s signature

Ms. Crump noted that the only restriction placed on a river segment by Scenic River designation is that there be no dam construction unless specifically authorized by the General Assembly. There are no additional restrictions. All riparian land and water uses along the river section that are permitted by law are not restricted by the designation.

Ms. Crump asked the Board to endorse the designation of the Dan River in Halifax County and South Boston as a Scenic River. She reviewed the criteria and noted that this segment of the river qualified for designation.

MOTION: Mr. Sarver moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation express support for the designation of the Dan River in Halifax County and South Boston as a State Scenic River.

SECOND: Ms. Jackson

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Apicella asked if there were ways the Board could help with the promotion of Scenic River designation.

Ms. Crump said that recently a segment of the Middle James River was pulled from consideration because of local opposition. She said that a recent article in *Virginia Business Magazine* had not addressed the program in a favorable light. She said that she was in consultation with the DCR Public Communications Office regarding the best way to respond to this article.

Ms. Crump said that there would be opportunities for Board members to express support and to assist in working with localities when localities expressed concerns.

State Parks Update

Mr. Seaver gave the state parks update.

Mr. Seaver noted that the Division of State Parks currently has 35 vacancies.

Mr. Seaver said that customer comments regarding the parks are now part of an online system. He noted that 98.1% of park visitors said they would recommend Virginia State Parks to family and friends.

Mr. Seaver said that attendance for the year was up by about 4%.

Mr. Seaver said that DCR had recently conducted 18 programs in the Youth Conservation Corps with about 240 participants in the program.

Mr. Seaver said that progress was being made with the conversion of Natural Bridge to a State Park. He noted that construction on the Richmond Ride Center would begin in September.

Natural Heritage Update

Mr. Smith presented the Natural Heritage update.

Natural Heritage Program Re-Benchmark 2014

In 2002

- 48 full time positions
- 1,368 natural heritage conservation sites
- 34 Natural Area Preserves

In 2014

- 40 full time positions
- 2,007 natural heritage conservation sites
- 61 Natural Area Preserves (added 35,538 acres)

- Virginia's population increased by over 1 million
- 2002 budget adjusted for inflation \$2.7M – thus the NHP 2014 budget is \$237K behind 2002 budget
- 2011 Virginia Outdoors Survey – 4th most popular outdoor activity – Visiting Natural Areas
- 8,455 natural community, biologically diverse streams and rare species populations to monitor
- 4,100 caves and increasing citizen demands related to disease, stormwater, sinkhole, pollution conflicts
- 2,200 information requests/yr and increasing
- State Natural Area Preserve System – potential Public Access Additions:
 - SW Region: 9 NAPs, 2 Public Access Facilities; With additional resources could add Cedars and Cleveland Barrens
 - Mountain Region: 11 NAPs, 3 Public Access Facilities; With additional resources could add Difficult Creek, and Pedlar Hills
 - Shenandoah Valley Region: 9 NAPs, 1 Public Access Facility; With additional resources could add Deep Run Ponds
 - Northern Region: 4 NAPs, 2 Public Access Facilities
 - Chesapeake Bay Region: 8 NAPs, 7 Public Access Facilities
 - Southeast Region: 11 NAPs, 2 Public Access Facilities; With additional resources could add Antioch Pines and Blackwater Ecological Preserve
 - Eastern Shore Region: 9 NAPs, 4 Public Access Facilities
- Re-Benchmark Need – Staffing: 26 New FTE \$2,417,090 (salary and operating costs)

Key questions for discussion

- What advice do you have for us to better enlist the support of the administration and legislature to address our natural heritage needs?

- What advice do you have for us to enhance our Natural Area Volunteer Stewardship Committees?
- What advice do you have for us on how to better communicate our natural heritage management purpose needs to the public?

Other Business

Mr. Wingo requested that staff draft resolutions to honor outgoing Board members.

Election of Officers

Mr. Apicella moved that Mr. Wingo be re-elected as Board Chair. Mr. Vanegas seconded. There were no other nominations and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Vanegas moved that Mr. Beamer be elected as Board Vice Chair. Mr. Cobb seconded. There were no other nominations and the motion as approved unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next Meeting

Staff will look for a convenient meeting date in early December.

Adjourn

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Bruce Wingo
Chair

Clyde E. Cristman
DCR Director