

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Thursday, May 10, 2018
Shenandoah River State Park
Bentonville, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, 2018 at Shenandoah River State Park in Bentonville, Virginia.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair

Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair

Vincent M. Burgess

Nancy Hull Davidson

Danielle Heisler

Dexter C. Hurt

Andrew C. Jennison

Kat Maybury

Vivek Shinde Patil, PhD

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Harvey B. Morgan

Esther M. Nizer

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director

Thomas Smith, Deputy Director of Operations

Isaac J. Sarver, Deputy Director for Board and Constituent Services

Ken Benson, District 4 Manager, Virginia State Parks

Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage

Bill Conkle, Park Planner

Lynn Crump, Environmental Program Planner

Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison

Kimberly Freiburger, Policy Analyst

Melissa Jackson, Budget Manager

Lisa McGee, Director of Policy

Sharon Partee, Director of Finance

Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources

Timothy Shrader, Eastern Field Operations Director, Virginia State Parks

Tony Widmer, Park Manager, Shenandoah River State Park

Nathan Younger, District 3 Manager, Virginia State Parks

Matthew Gooch, Office of the Attorney General

OTHERS PRESENT

Phil Daley

Richard Gibbons

John Heerwald

Bruce Johnson

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With nine (9) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Tony Widmer, Park Manger, welcomed Board members and staff and gave an overview of Shenandoah River State Park.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 21, 2017

Ms. Jackson moved for the approval of the minutes of the December 21, 2017 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Mr. Jennison seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Director Cristman welcomed members to the meeting and advised that the full name of the park was Raymond R. "Andy" Guest Shenandoah River State Park. Andy Guest was a former member of the House Appropriations committee.

Director Cristman noted that Isaac Sarver had resigned from the Board and was appointed by Governor Northam to be the Chief Deputy for Boards and Constituent Services for DCR. Mr. Sarver will be working to develop strategic planning for the Boards, and will be meeting with new members of the General Assembly.

Director Cristman gave an overview of legislation from the 2018 General Assembly Session. A copy of that report is included as Attachment #A. He noted that the state budget had not been approved and that the Senate would be returning to Richmond the following week to address their version of the budget.

STATE PARKS UPDATE – *Timothy Shrader, Eastern Field Operations Director, Virginia State Parks*

Mr. Shrader noted that State Parks Director, Craig Seaver was attending a meeting as a member of the Board for the National Association State Parks Leadership School.

Naming of a state park in Loudoun County

DCR has acquired land for a new state park in Loudoun County. At this point, the area will be managed through an agreement with a local non-profit organization.

Suggested names for the new park were Blue Ridge State Park or Sweet Run State Park.

Sweet Run is a creek running through the property. Concern was expressed that the name Blue Ridge would be confusing with other areas, including the Blue Ridge parkway.

The consensus of the Board was to recommend the park be named Sweet Run State Park.

Choosing the PARKway

Choosing the PARKway is an approach to life, work, play, and relationships from a Park Ranger's perspective. An approach that is intentional and focuses on dedication, creativity, passion, perseverance, visitor experience, listening, communicating, laughing, and embracing Ranger First principles.

2017 Economic Impact Report

Virginia Tech, Pamplin College of Business

Vincent P. Magnini, PhD

- Visitors to Virginia State Parks (VSP) spent an estimated \$226.1 million in Virginia. 46% was from out of state
- The economic impact is approximately \$229.4 million
- For each \$1.00 in general revenue provided to VSP, \$13.08 was generated
- Economic activity by visitors to VSP generated \$21.3 in state and local taxes
- For every \$1.00 of tax money spent on State Parks, \$1.17 in taxes was return to the state and localities

2017 Your Comments Count Survey

- 98% of respondents would recommend the park that the visited to a friend.
- The most frequently utilized information source used by visitors when deciding to visit is "memories of past visits."
- The average percentage of "good" or "excellent" responses across the eight visitor satisfaction facets was 91%.
- Visitors who had face-to-face interactions with park staff were more highly satisfied than visitors who did not report face-to-face interactions.
- More than 4,800 respondents asked to enroll in Virginia State Parks' eNews list.

Mr. Shrader gave an overview of current construction progress within the parks.

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

Mr. Bulluck gave an overview of Governor Northam's Land Conservation Strategy.

A top 10% Analysis

- Review current mapped priorities
- Select Top Priority of Resources Total
- Graph proportion of Highest Priority lands by category
- Select out the Protected Lands within the Top priorities in each category
- Calculate 10% of the remaining Unprotected Top Priority lands in each category

Highest priority lands are:

- Natural Areas
- Ecological Cores
- Wetlands
- Forests
- Agricultural lands
- Historic Resources

Mr. Bulluck reported that, so far in 2018, the Division of Natural Heritage has conducted prescribed burns on 1,364 acres across five Natural Area Preserves.

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

Virginia Treasures

A total of 1,337 Virginia Treasures were identified and recognized under Governor McAuliffe's Virginia Treasures program.

2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan: Celebrating the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

A major component of the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan is the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Survey.

- Conducted by UVA Center for Survey Research
- 14,000 Virginians contacted by mail
- 3,252 responded
- 23% response rate
- Margin of error 2.3%

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

Scenic Rivers and Scenic Byways

- 89% Scenery is important in making travel plans
- 2020 will be the 50th anniversary of the Scenic Rivers Program.

Survey Summary

- Natural areas, parks, trails, and access to waterways remain among the top recreational needs in Virginia
- Increased participation in freshwater fishing and paddle sports
- Increased visitation to natural areas and preserves
- Support for public funding for outdoor recreation

- Importance of scenic resources in travel planning

Ms. Poole gave an overview of current design and construction projects.

Recreational Grants

Recreational Trails Program – FHWA

- 35 active grants totaling over \$5 million
- RTP grant cycle approximately \$1 million available for new projects to be announced in May

Land and Water Conservation Fund – NPS

- 11 active grants totaling over \$4 million
- 2017 LWCF apportionment to Virginia is approximately \$2 million

State Trails Advisory Committee

The State Trails Advisory Committee met at the Joint Land Conservation and Greenways Conference in Roanoke in April.

Master Planning – 2018

DCR staff is current working on Master Plans for the following parks:

- Biscuit Run – planning support to Albemarle County
- Seven Bends
- Occoneechee
- False Cape
- Natural Bridge
- Leesylvania
- First Landing

Occoneechee State Park Master Plan – Bill Conkle, Park Planner

Mr. Conkle reviewed the Executive Summary for the proposed 2018 update to the Master Plan for Occoneechee State Park.

Occoneechee State Park (2,695 acres) is situated on the north shore of Virginia's largest lake, Buggs Island Lake. The lake, which is also referred to as the John H. Kerr Reservoir covers approximately 48,000 acres. Occoneechee State Park was brought into the Virginia State Parks System by execution in 1968 of a lease with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The park is situated on the south side of U.S. Route 58, approximately 1.5. miles east of Clarksville, in Mecklenburg County, in Southside Virginia.

The process for updating the Master Plan involves a staff review of the current plan and park resources, and input from the local committee. The update is then brought before the Board to recommend approval and to provide comments. Once the Board approves the project the master plan is then sent to members of the General Assembly who have thirty days to comment. After that thirty-day period, the plan is sent to the Director final approval.

Executive Summaries of State Park Master plans may be viewed at this link:

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the Master Plan update for Occoneechee State Park. Mr. Burgess seconded and the motion was approved.

Scenic Resources – Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner

DCR has been working with Scenic Virginia for a number of years. DCR is working with Scenic Virginia and Virginia Tech to develop a protocol to establish criteria for a Virginia Scenic Viewshed register, similar to the ones for Virginia Scenic Rivers and Virginia Scenic Byways. A new website has been developed for social interaction with regard to Virginia's scenic resources. The hope is to include a training program for communities regarding scenic assets.

50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program

2020 will be the 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. The hope is to have five new rivers segments approved and dedicated prior to 2020.

DCR is partnering with VCU, The Rice Center, and the River Management Society (RMS) to host the RMS Symposium in Richmond in 2020.

Ms. Crump introduced four gentlemen representing the local scenic river committees:

Phil Daley, Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee
Richard Gibbons, Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
John Heerwald, Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
Bruce Johnson, Catoclin Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee

The gentlemen spoke in support of the Scenic Rivers Program and the establishment of a new entity to advise regarding these issues.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – *Sharon Partee, Finance Director*

Ms. Partee noted that there were no changes to the budget information since the last Board meeting. She provided an overview of revenue and expenditures through March 31, 2018. She noted that, to date, State Parks revenue has increased from the prior fiscal year. This may be attributed to bringing new cabins and yurts online.

Ms. Partee advised that there were no new projects to bring forward under the State Parks Project Fund.

FOIA/COIA TRAINING – Matthew Gooch, Office of the Attorney General

Mr. Gooch provided Board members and staff an overview of the Freedom of Information Act and the Conflict of Interest Act.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Jackson asked, with regard to the scenic river presentations, what the next steps were for the Board with regard to this request. She noted that the Board had previously discussed the establishment of a Scenic Resources Subcommittee to address these issues. She expressed a concern that 2020 and the 50th Anniversary of the Scenic Rivers program was approaching.

Chairman Wingo advised that he would work with Director Cristman for the appointment of a subcommittee. He asked that interested members contact him if they would like to serve on the subcommittee.

It was suggested that the subcommittee meet prior to the next Board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Wingo suggested that the next meeting of the Board be in the September timeframe at Natural Tunnel State Park and that an educational visit to The Cedars Natural Area Preserve be arranged. Staff will coordinate dates and poll members regarding availability.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Attachment #A

Bill	Description	Acts of Assembly Eff. 7/1/2018
HB669 Kilgore	Natural Tunnel State Park - Authorizes DCR to accept, without consideration, certain real property in Scott County measuring approximately 1.85 acres in total.	Chapter 438
HB671 Kilgore	Tourism Development Authority - Reorganizes the Tourism Development Authority adds a representative from Virginia State Parks as an ex-officio nonvoting member. Identical to SB383	Chapter 321
HB821 Knight	* Little Island Park - Authorizes DCR to convey all of its right, title, and interest in a parcel in Virginia Beach within Little Island Park known as the Little Island Coast Guard Station in exchange for property adjacent to Little Island Park that provides public access to Back Bay.	Chapter 442
HB866 Orrock	Scenic river designations - Consolidates provisions of the Scenic Rivers Act relating to prohibitions on the construction of dams and limits on the effects of the Act.	Chapter 273
HB 1460 Fariss -	Land preservation tax credits; transfer to a designated beneficiary - Provides that a person who has unused land preservation tax credits may provide that such credits be transferred to a designated beneficiary upon his death, so long as such person with unused credits is the person who originally earned them. The bill provides that if a person dies without a will, his unused credit shall be transferred according to the rules of intestacy. The bill provides that such transfers are not subject to any fees and retain the same carryover period as if held by their original owner.	Chapter 560
HJ 148 Bulova	Celebrating the life of David Clark Dowling	<i>Agreed by House and Senate</i>
SB353 McClellan	White Oaks Technology Park: Authorizes DCR to convey certain real property adjacent to the White Oak Technology Park in Henrico County to the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County in return for the grant of an open space easement and the dedication of a natural area preserve on a portion of the White Oak Technology Park property.	Chapter 739
SB585 DeSteph	Chesapeake Bay Restoration - Clarifies the purposes for which grants from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (the Fund) are to be used and clarifies that guidelines for the use of such grants shall be developed by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Advisory Committee (the Committee) in accordance with such purposes.	Chapter 628
SB587 Stuart	* Caledon State Park - Authorizes DCR to quitclaim and release all of its right, title, and interest in an unimproved parcel of land near the southwest corner of Caledon State Park without consideration.	Chapter 740

SB 908 McClellan	Electric vehicle charging stations - Authorizes DCR to locate and operate a retail fee-based electric vehicle charging station on property such entity owns or leases. The bill exempts the Department of Conservation and Recreation from being considered a public utility solely because of the sale of electric vehicle charging service or the ownership or operation of an electric vehicle charging station and further exempts such service from constituting the retail sale of electricity.. Identical to HB 922	Chapter 295
SB950 Hanger	Pipeline construction – Water Protection Permit; additional certification impacts – Department of Environmental Quality	Chapter 636
SJ 90 - Stuart	Clean Water Farm Award – Resolution Commending the 10 River Basin Grand Winners of the Clean Water Farm Award.	<i>Agreed by House and Senate</i>

FAILED BILLS	
Bill	Description
SB 139 - Petersen	Chesapeake Bay Watershed; imposes a tax on plastic bags - <i>Senate: Failed to report in Finance (4-Y 11-N)</i>
SB499 Carrico	Agriculture easements; validity; termination - <i>Senate: Continued to 2019 in ACNR (12-Y 2-N)</i>
SB582 - Hanger	Open-space lands; conversion/diversion - <i>House: Subcommittee recommends continuing to 2019</i>
SB691 - Deeds	VALORS - <i>Senate: Continued to 2019 in ACNR (12-Y 2-N)</i>
SB 985 - Wagner -	Hurricane and Flooding Risk Reduction and Bond Rating Protection Act of 2018; report. <i>(Left in Committee)</i>
HB579 - Bloxom	Transient occupancy tax - <i>Pass By Indefinitely Senate Finance (11 Y 3 N)</i>
HB736 - McGuire	Seaplanes in state parks – <i>Patron withdrew bill – Struck from Docket</i>
HB 1448 Guzman	Special Assessment for land preservation; agricultural use - <i>House: Left in Finance</i>
HJ 96 - Hurst -	VALORS; JLARC study. - <i>House: Left in Rules</i>