

**Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation
Scenic Resources Subcommittee
Wednesday, February 27, 2019
Richmond, Virginia**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Patricia A. Jackson, Subcommittee Chair
Vincent M. Burgess
Danielle Heisler
Dexter C. Hurt

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Thomas Smith, Deputy Director of Operations
Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director of Administration and Finance
Isaac J. Sarver, Deputy Director for Boards and Constituent Services
Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Kimberly Freiburger, Policy Analyst
Lisa McGee, Director of Policy
Conor O'Donnell, Virginia Management Fellow
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources (by phone)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jackson called the meeting to order and noted that it was very helpful to have a specific focus on Scenic Resources.

REVIEW OF LAST MEETING AND UPDATE ON RESOURCES WORK

Ms. Crump reviewed discussions from the last meeting of the subcommittee. She noted that the subcommittee discussed scenic rivers, scenic byways and scenic resources in general. She also advised that DCR has worked closely with Scenic Virginia. One of the goals is to determine if there are issues from local communities that can be brought to the subcommittee for comment or guidance.

The subcommittee also discussed ways to help guide the efforts related to the 50th Anniversary of the Scenic Rivers Program. The steering committee is comprised of members from the three Scenic River Advisory Committees, a representative from Scenic Virginia, a representative from the James River Association, and former DCR Deputy Director, Leon App. The hope is to add a representative from the Piedmont Environmental Council.

Ms. Crump discussed the Chesapeake RFP that is looking for a scenic river assessment mitigation protocol. The Chesapeake Conservancy is taking the lead on this project with assistance from Scenic Virginia. The maximum grant available is \$75,000. DCR does not anticipate receiving funds from this grant but hopes to be able to help replicate the process across the state.

Ms. Jackson asked if the subcommittee could be provided with a scope of the work from the Conservancy. She noted that at the last meeting the subcommittee discussed the need for a scenic resources assessment. What comes from this process will help drive future efforts and what might be recommended to the Board.

Regarding scenic assessments, Ms. Crump advised that, Scenic Virginia has contracted with Virginia Tech to develop a literature review and to propose a protocol for scenic nominations and the evaluations of viewsheds. They hope to present this process at Environment Virginia. The next step would be a pilot project as part of developing community awareness.

Ms. Jackson noted that Scenic Virginia was born out of an effort by the Garden Club of Virginia to oppose the construction and placement of billboards. From that initial effort, they now work to protect scenic viewsheds. One of their projects is the photo contest that is published in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Ms. Jackson suggested that it might be helpful to invite Scenic Virginia Director Leighton Powell to a subcommittee meeting to discuss how the Board and Scenic Virginia could work together.

Mr. Smith gave an update regarding Conserve Virginia, the Governor's land conservation goal. Conserve Virginia has a scenic element that is essentially a corridor approach. This calls for a 200 ft. corridor on each side of the scenic features.

Mr. Smith also noted that the Department of Forestry is finalizing work on a revised forest layer for Conserve Virginia. DCR is also working with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to revise the agriculture model.

Ms. Crump noted that former DCR grants manager, Synthia Waymack is now working with the Scenic Byways program at the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Commonwealth Transportation Board has requested a protocol for the reevaluation of scenic byways. This is addressed in the Code of Virginia, allowing a reevaluation to determine if the road still qualifies as a scenic byway. However, the protocol is not quantifiable.

For the first time in four years, there have been requests for byway studies. Those requests came from Albemarle County and a joint request from Tazewell and Giles Counties. Studies are initiated after a letter is sent to DCR or VDOT. DCR does background work on historic resources and planning and works with the localities to determine what the assets are. VDOT does a safety study and planning, and then both departments work through the evaluation process together.

If a road is found to qualify, the information is communicated to the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The locality must pass a resolution of support.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIRGINIA SCENIC RIVERS PROGRAM

Ms. Crump discussed the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program. The following documents were distributed and are attached at the end of this document:

- 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Virginia Scenic River Program – 2020 Project Strategic Plan
- Website language
- House Joint Resolution No. 1132 Commending the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program

The Steering Committee is working to reach out to partner organizations. The hope is to develop a calendar and a map to promote the 50th Anniversary.

Mr. O'Donnell provided a list of potential partner organizations. Ms. Crump asked the subcommittee for assistance in contacting these organizations to request a resolution or letter of support from each. DCR will track which letters are sent and responses.

Mr. Smith suggested that localities with scenic rivers be added to the list.

Ms. Crump noted that this information would be documented on the website.

Ms. Jackson noted that the Virginia Tourism Commission is developing a "Virginia is for River Lovers" sticker.

Ms. Crump noted that there would be a joint presentation at Environment Virginia and that she would mention the scenic rivers program. She also noted that she hoped to present at the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society conference in the fall, as well as the New River conference.

The River Management Society Conference will be held May 12-15, 2020 at Virginia Commonwealth University. The theme is "Connecting Mountain Streams to Urban Trails."

Mr. Sarver reviewed House Joint Resolution No 1132. Chief patrons were Delegate Danny Marshall, and Senator Frank Ruff. This passed unanimously on a voice vote the second to last day of the General Assembly Session.

Ms. Jackson noted that as a part of the 40th Anniversary, a celebration was held on the banks of the James River in Richmond. The framed resolution was presented along with certificates for local river champions.

Ms. Jackson thanked members and staff for attending.

The next meeting date was set as Friday, June 15 at 1:00 p.m. in the DCR Boardroom.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Virginia Scenic River Program - 2020 PROJECT STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION:

The 50th Anniversary Celebration will increase understanding and continued support for the Virginia Scenic River Program and Virginia's outstanding scenic rivers and their environs beyond the celebration.

MISSION:

Scenic River Advisory Committees working with the Board of Conservation & Recreation (BCR) will provide leadership to create and support a 50th Anniversary Celebration for the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program through strengthening partnerships, recognizing new river segments, educating our citizens and engaging the public and ensuring long term support for the program.

CORE VALUES:

- 1) Identification of Support
- 2) Brand the celebration
- 3) Educate the citizens of the benefits of the program
- 4) Recognize accomplishments of the celebration and the history of the program

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF CORE VALUES:

Core Value #1: Identification of Support, current and long standing

Core Value #2: Brand and promote the 50th celebration

Core Value #3: Educate the citizens of the benefits of the program

Core Value #4: Recognize accomplishments of the Virginia Scenic River program

Core Value #1: Identification of Support

Goal 1.0: Establish mutually beneficial relationships with Commonwealth stakeholders as partners to implement the vision and mission of the celebration.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Identify elected officials, public agencies, and advocacy organization partners that have similar missions, especially those focused on rivers and clean water.

Action Items:

- Collect names and contacts of key individuals at each organization. **On going**
- Establish a core 50th Anniversary steering group. **Done**
- Determine a legislator who is willing to work with the effort. **Have Del. Edmunds, via Carl Espy; Del. Danny Marshall need more**

- 1.2 Collaborate with steering committee and other interested groups

Action Item:

- Convene and/or communicate the intention of this process to garner support of the initial Advisory Committee by **next Meeting March 2019.**

- 1.3 Establish regular communication with all involved

Action Items:

- Present the proposed effort to the Board of Conservation and Recreation (BCR). **Done and unanimously supported, October 19, 2018.**

- Establish a Scenic Resource Subcommittee of the BCR. [Done and initial meeting, October 10, 2018.](#)
 - Initiate regular project communications schedule and meeting dates.
 - Create a web presence. [anticipated Spring 2019](#)
- 1.4 Define roles and responsibilities for leading and coordinating the celebration.

Goal 2.0: Inasmuch as the Virginia Scenic River Program is important in the Virginia Outdoors Plan and in the Code of Virginia, develop specific recommendations for expanding the number of designated rivers.

Objectives:

2.1 Determine the number of rivers to focus on for designation in 2020

Action Item:

- Identify specific rivers to target by the [end of 2018. 8 communities have reached out interested in the program; 2 have sent letters requesting a study.](#)
- 2.2 Establish a process for reaching out to communities to get support for designation.

Goal 3.0: Lead the advocacy effort for the Scenic River program to educate and influence elected officials, program planners, the public, and other non-profits on its benefits.

Objectives:

3.1 Get statewide recognition

- Work with legislator to get a Resolution of Support for the 50th from the General Assembly, similar to 2010 one - <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?091+ful+HJ819ER> [Scenic Va began effort for 2019 General Assembly.](#)
- Work with legislator to get Proclamation from the Governor on the 50th.

3.2 Engage partners to provide feedback on an education program that can be shared easily by interested parties.

Action Item:

- Convene a meeting of supporting organizations to establish an outline for the education program and get volunteers to develop. [Spring 2019](#)
- Use other education programs as a template for the educational program.
- Package the educational program and provide easy access to it – web based.

3.3 Strengthen other supporting programs, e.g., Virginia Byways and Scenic Rivers.

Action Item:

- Include the BCR sub-committee in the planning and implementing of this celebration. [On-going](#)
- Identify and nurture legislative champions at all levels. [Note: This must be completed before we request the Virginia Code change re-establishing the Scenic Rivers Advisory Board.]
- Establish a Scenic Advisory Board through the General Assembly to address Scenic Rivers and Scenic viewsheds, including Virginia Byways. [To be completed in 2020.](#)

Core Value #2: Brand and promote the 50th celebration

Goal 1.0: Develop a branding strategy for the 50th celebration.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Create a logo for the year-long celebration. **Completed, now boat stickers and new brochure with logo are available**
- 1.2 Create a branding campaign.

Goal 2.0: Implement promotion of the 50th Anniversary Celebration.Objectives:

- 2.1 Establish a message and program for promoting the 50th Anniversary Celebration online and through social media effort.

Action Item:

- Use the 50th Anniversary Committee to determine the message prior to **March 2019**.
- Establish a message for promoting the celebration. **By Summer 2019**.
- Establish a plan for delivering the message that includes the timeline, contacts for reaching prospective audiences, and the delivery method. **By Summer 2019**.
- Launch 50th Anniversary web presence **By Summer 2019**.
- Identify national, state, regional, and local organizations – both public and private – to assist in championing this program. **Initiated and on-going**
- Consider development of a calendar for sales that showcases our Scenic Rivers. **We already have someone who is willing to provide photos, if we acknowledge him.**

- 2.2 Itemize and target organizations and media with the most impact for promoting the 50th Anniversary Celebration. **On-going; initial contact with Virginia Magazine and Chesapeake Bay Journal.**

Goal 3.0: Identify organizations that could provide funding or sponsorships and apply for grants to support the implementation and sustainability of the Viewshed Register.Action Items:

- Use key partners to identify potential funding sources. **By Summer 2019**.
- Apply for funding, and use partners to assist with applications. **Initiate Summer 2019**
- Reach out to sponsors to see what services rendered they can provide.

Core Value #3: Educate citizens of the benefits of the program**Goal 1.0:** Develop a communications plan for educating the public on the VA Scenic Rivers Program. **By Summer 2019**.Objectives:

- 1.1 Establish a communication program for education about Scenic River values.

Action Items:

- Establish targeted communication message. **By Summer 2019**.
- Identify target audiences. **By Summer 2019**.

- 1.2 Create a 'State of Virginia Rivers' report to educate citizens on the program. **Start early 2019**

Goal 2.0: Offer education opportunities for communities on the value of Scenic River designation for communities and conservation.

Objectives:

2.1 Create and maintain an online 'packaged' presentation about Scenic Rivers. [By Summer 2019](#)

2.2 Maintain a list of "ambassadors" who will advocate for the program, share the education presentation, and respond to questions and information on the Scenic Rivers Program. [Summer 2018](#)

2.3 Identify possible funding sources for implementation of educational programs. [Summer 2018](#)

2.4 Produce a Scenic River conference, including water trails in 2020, in conjunction with other gatherings.

Action Items:

- Communicate with representatives regarding holding the 2020 River Management Society conference in Virginia. [Confirmed the 2020 national RMA conference to be held May 11-15, 2019 at VCU, Richmond](#)
- Consider incorporating an art festival with the effort, like the [2018 Festival of the River- completed. Other events and targeted groups have seen the table top exhibit and/or presentation of the anniversary effort. Over 2000 reached so far.](#)
- Identify target audiences.

2.5 Recommend code changes to allow for signage on bridges identifying designated rivers. [Summer 2019, to include meetings with VDOT, DEQ and several river representatives.](#)

Core Value #4: Recognize accomplishments of the Virginia Scenic River program

Goal 1.0: Identify accomplishments and venues for recognition.

Goal 2.0: Identify and designate five (5) new river segments. Focusing on the watersheds that do not have a designated river segment. [Potential Rivers – extensions on the James near Richmond and Scottsville, Pound in Dickenson Co., SF Holston, Scott Co., Clinch, Appomattox, Maury, New – Grayson & Giles.](#)

Goal 3.0: Document accomplishments over the next two years. Include: Number of outreach and resource protection events and number of participants, number of supporters, number of volunteer hours, etc. [Begin Summer 2018](#)

www.dcr.virginia.gov/sr50

Also needs to link from www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/srmain

Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary

The year 1970 brought many firsts for conservation. Congress passed the Clean Air Act. The Environmental Protection Agency was formed. And the world celebrated the first Earth Day.

That same year, Virginia had its own first for conservation: the General Assembly passed the Virginia Scenic Rivers Act. This established a program for recognizing the commonwealth's most outstanding rivers, with the intent to protect them for future generations.

All Virginians are invited to join the 50th anniversary celebration. Festivities are being planned across the commonwealth. Follow the links below to join the fun!

- **Map of 33 rivers – similar to VLCF map, simple**
- **Event Calendar**
- **Pledge Your Support** (link to new page telling people how they can support and submit their name, contact, organization and logo (if applicable))
- **River Management Society Conference**
- **(more bullets as we continue to plan)**



2019 SESSION

INTRODUCED

19107186D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1132

Offered February 18, 2019

Commending the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program.

Patrons—Marshall, Adams, L.R., Austin, Carr, Edmunds, Fariss and Kory; Senators: Chafin, Deeds and Ruff

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program was established in 1970 and will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program designates and helps protect rivers and streams that possess outstanding scenic, recreational, historic, and natural characteristics that are of statewide significance; and

WHEREAS, scenic river designations result from initiatives launched by partnerships between local organizations, local governments, state agencies, and the General Assembly of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, since the advent of the program, 33 river segments totaling more than 850 river miles have been designated as state scenic rivers; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation administers the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, is assisted and advised by the Board of Conservation and Recreation, and receives guidance from locally appointed advisory committees; and

WHEREAS, rivers possessing outstanding scenic qualities continue to be evaluated and added to the Virginia Scenic Rivers system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program in advance of its 50th anniversary so that the Board of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, advisory committees, interested citizens, and local governments may plan for appropriate celebrations in 2020; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for the efforts of those state and local entities and individuals who have moved the program forward for the benefit of all Virginians now and in the future.

INTRODUCED

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