

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Monday, December 21, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Electronic Meeting**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation took place at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, December 21, 2020 via GoToMeeting.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair
Danielle Heisler
Angela Henderson, Ph.D.
Harvey B. Morgan
Vivek Shinde Patil, PhD
Clayton Spruill

Nancy Hull Davidson
Dexter C. Hurt
Kat Maybury
Esther M. Nizer
Camilla Simon
Camille Touton

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E Cristman, Director
Tom Smith, Deputy Director for Operations
Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director for Administration and Finance
Lisa McGee, Policy and Planning Director
Kimberly Freiberger, Policy Analyst
Kelly McClary, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Bill Conkle, Park Planner
Lynn Crump, Scenic Resource Coordinator
Jennifer Wampler, Trails Coordinator

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With twelve (12) members of the Board of Conservation and Recreation present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND CERTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC MEETING

Ms. Jackson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and gave the following remarks:

Good morning, I would like to call this virtual meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation to order.

Generally, public bodies are prohibited from meeting electronically under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, emergency language approved by the Governor

and General Assembly in April allows us to move forward with certain restrictions that I will outline below.

Before I review those provisions, please let me take a moment to review how this meeting will work. We want to allow for participation by Board members, staff, and members of the public who wish to comment. However, it is essential that we are able to manage the conversation effectively.

While the meeting will be open for Board comment, due to the challenges associated with an electronic meeting, we want to allow members of the public to be heard. If you would like to make a comment, please do so in the chat box. DCR staff will be monitoring the chat box and let us know when someone has submitted a comment. We will address your comments as time allows.

Please be patient with us as we work through this. We understand and appreciate the challenges.

Again, I have to read a lengthy introduction for our virtual meeting. This is long, but is required to be read aloud under Chapter 1283 for all electronic meetings:

Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, also known as the “Caboose Bill,” includes language addressing the ability of public bodies to conduct electronic meetings without the need for a quorum being present in a single physical location (“Electronic Meeting”).

This language was submitted as an amendment by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly at their April 22, 2020 reconvened Session. The Governor subsequently signed the Caboose Bill and the Bill was effective as of April 24, 2020.

The Caboose Bill allows public bodies to hold Electronic Meetings when the Governor has declared a state of emergency pursuant to § 44-146.17 if:

“(i) the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location;

(ii) the purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body...and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities...” § 4-0.01(g).

The Caboose Bill also has language regarding recordings and transcriptions of Electronic Meetings. Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded. This recording will be available to the public through the DCR website. The comments in the chat room will also be preserved as a public record. Official minutes of this meeting will be drafted and posted in accordance with regular procedures.

The Caboose Bill does not allow the Board to hold an Electronic Meeting to discuss or transact business for *any purpose*. Rather, they may do so as long as the agenda items that the public body plans to take up are: (a) statutorily required or (b) necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties and responsibilities.

It is the Board's responsibility to determine whether "the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location."

At the conclusion of my remarks, I will ask for a motion for the board to make this determination. If that motion fails, this electronic meeting will end at that point. The Caboose Bill requires compliance with the provisions of § [2.2-3708.2](#). Therefore, in accordance with § 2.2-3708.2.D.2, public bodies must include a telephone number that may be used to notify the public body of any interruption in the telephonic or video broadcast of the meeting.

In the event that a disruption occurs, participants should contact Mr. Fletcher by phone or text at 804-317-8934.

Additionally, if there is an interruption in the broadcast, the meeting must be suspended until public access is restored.

Those provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act not addressed by the Caboose Bill remain in effect.

Before we continue with the business portion of the meeting, I will ask Mr. Fletcher to call the roll for Board members and anticipated staff. Other participants will be recorded through the chat window. If you are participating by phone and your name is not called, please call or text Mr. Fletcher at 804-317-8934.

In addition, if at any time you lose connection and are unable to reconnect, please contact Mr. Fletcher at the same number.

I will now turn to Mr. Fletcher for the calling of the roll:

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Patil*, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Simon, Touton

ABSENT: None

*Dr. Patil arrived at 10:30 a.m.

Ms. Jackson continued:

I will now present a recommended motion, and wait for a board member to request the motion:

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Hurt moved and Ms. Nizer seconded the following motion:

The Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation certifies that the nature of the declared COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Board to assemble in a single location and further that the agenda items to be taken up at this meeting are necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities of the Board.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYE: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Simon, Touton

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Patil

Ms. Jackson continued:

I want to explain further how we will handle participation by board members, staff, and the public. Everyone, except the individual presenting materials for an agenda item, will be muted. Once the presentation is completed, the board members, and only board members, will be unmuted for discussion. Staff will assist me with ensuring board members are recognized when they have questions or comments. As needed, staff will be unmuted to address questions or concerns. Members of the public will be able to ask questions and provide input by utilizing the chat box function only. As time allows, we will respond to those questions and comments in the chat function.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 25, 2020

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Maybury moved and Ms. Touton seconded that the minutes of the January 6, 2020 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation be approved as submitted.

AYE: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Touton

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Simon, Patil

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Hurt reported that the nominating committee had met following the January, 2020 meeting. He placed into nomination the names of Patricia Jackson to be Board Chair and Nancy Hull Davidson to be Board Vice Chair.

Ms. Maybury seconded and the vote was as follows:

AYE: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Simon, Touton

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Patil

STATE PARK MASTER PLANS

Leesylvania State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Executive Summary for the Leesylvania State Park Master plan.

Leesylvania State Park Phase I

- Reconfigure contact station/park entrance (use technology to control traffic/collect revenue)
- Create/extend turning lane on Neabsco Road into park (no estimate provided)
- Trailhead parking lot (30 spaces) and comfort station near Powell's Creek Boardwalk
- Upgrade trail access parking along main access road and a group camp (24 spaces total)
- Upgrade comfort stations (2) in picnic area, add shower stations
- Renovate comfort station at concession building
- Add storage/office building and 10 parking spaces in maintenance area
- Construct elevated observation platform at Freestone Point
- Replace large playgrounds (2 to 5 year old and 5 to 12 year old component structures)
- Dredge marina
- Upgrade pier and dock and Powell's Creek paddle launch
- Relocate canoe rental facility, add storage and electric/water
- Reconfigure picnic area with expanded picnic pads, 5 covered shelters; gravel road/parking
- Improve landscaping to restore the natural appearance of the park

- Expand trail system within the park and connect to exterior trail systems

Total Cost of Phase I: \$7,791,764

Leesylvania State Park Phase II

- Staff Residence
- Construct comfort station with a single shower station at group camp
- Expand park office
- Create a discovery play area near visitor center
- Improve landscaping to restore the natural appearance of the park
- Expand trail system within the park and connect to exterior trail systems

Total Cost of Phase II: \$2,242,654

Leesylvania State Park Phase III

- Construct small amphitheater behind visitor center (100 seats)
- Add fish weigh-in station with small office, electricity, holding tank and chute
- Develop disc golf course with 10 parking spaces
- Expand existing fishing pier
- Improve landscaping to restore the natural appearance of the park
- Expand trail system within the park and connect to exterior trail systems

Total Cost of Phase III: \$1,823,905

The total cost to bring Leesylvania State Park to its desired future condition is \$11,858,323

Chippokes Plantation State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the Executive Summary for Chippokes Plantation State Park.

Chippokes Plantation State Park Phase I

- Renovate Conference Shelter for year round use, kitchen and comfort station
- Renovate campsites in Loop A, camp host site, replace bathhouse, electric
- Upgrade roads in loop A and B campgrounds
- Construct 3 pay pole she in Maintenance area and add linen building
- Renovate museum (climate control)
- Artifact storage building (climate controlled)
- Renovate Pool and Bathhouse
- Stabilize/renovate Brick Kitchen at Mansion
- Renovate Interpreter's Cottage for a rental cabin

- Construct boardwalk over marsh that connects to Chipoax Trace Trail
- Stabilize shoreline erosion behind visitor center to western boundary
- Resurface roads and parking areas
- Assess, stabilize and restore historic structures
- Expand trails and external trail connections

The total estimated cost for Phase I development: \$20,899,871

Chippokes Plantation State Park Phase II

- Stabilize the River House for interpretation
- Renovate historic gardens and walkways at Mansion
- Resurface park roads and parking areas
- Install fuel station at maintenance area
- Construct small interpretive shelter, 10 parking and 2 trailer spaces, and vault toilet
- Place utility wires underground in historic area
- Assess, stabilize and restore historic structures
- Expand park trails and external trail connections

The total estimated cost for Phase II development \$3,437,680

Chippokes Plantation State Park Phase III

- Develop equestrian camping area
- Interpretive wharf exhibit
- Resurface roads and parking areas
- Construct fishing pier (site to be determined)
- Assess, stabilize and restore historic structures
- Expand park trails and external trail connections

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$4,095,395

The total cost to bring Chippokes Plantation State Park to its desired future condition is \$28,432,945

New River Trail State Park

Ms. Wampler presented the Executive Summary for the New River Trail State Park Master Plan update.

New River Trail State Park Phase I

Hub Development

Foster Falls - Renovate Boy's Dormitory, add a picnic shelter and restroom to the day use area, demo the Lovell house at Foster Falls to add contact station.

Horseshoe Bend - Demo pool, bathroom, barn and picnic shelter, add water/septic system and develop interior road network and parking, develop campground, yurts and bathhouse, construct one picnic shelter, develop a northern maintenance hub, build contact station with office space, develop trail system

New River Trail State Park Phase II

Filling Service Gaps

Foster Falls - Build a bathhouse near Millrace Campground and extend utilities to serve this area

Horseshoe Bend - Develop cabins

Ivanhoe - Develop a vault toilet at Chiswell Hole/Ivanhoe River Trestle/Ogle Track

Hiwassee Access - Add vault toilet

Shot Tower - Add bike racks and repave roads and parking area, connect to water and sewer

Lone Ash - Add or connect to water

New River Trail State Park Phase III

Gateway Kiosks

Foster Falls - Renovate Melton House (YCC bunkhouse) and develop storage space to support Foster Falls

Draper - Demo existing house and develop a park office; add water and sewer to serve this area, develop gateway kiosk

Austinville - Develop vault toilet and a gateway kiosk

Chestnut Yard - Develop vault toilet

Fries - Connect to water and sewer; construct picnic shelter, gateway kiosk and restroom.

Dora Junction - Develop a gateway kiosk

The total cost to bring New Rive Trail to its desired future condition is \$27,495,749

BOARD ACTION

Dr. Patil moved that the Master Plan updates for Leesylvania, Chippokes Plantation, and New River Trail State Parks be recommended for approval as presented by staff. Ms. Nizer seconded and the vote was as follows:

AYE: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Patil, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Simon, Touton

NAY: None

SCENIC RIVER EVALUATIONS

Ms. Crump presented and overview of four rivers deemed eligible to move forward with Scenic River designation in the 2021 General Assembly Session.

South River in Waynesboro

- 6.4 miles
- Parallel greenway and conserved lands
- Multiple historic sites
- Urban trout fishery
- High water quality
- Variety of scenic features: instream, islands, rapids, bluffs, etc.

Middle James River in Appomattox, Nelson, Buckingham, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Cumberland Counties

- 45 new miles
- Rural and remote
- Historic and natural resources
- Good water quality
- Recreational access

North Fork Shenandoah in Shenandoah County

- 8.8 miles
- Rural w/unique geology
- High diversity of views and landscapes
- Good fishing and Natural Resources
- A Healthy Waters site

Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Essex

- 79 new miles
- Historic and Natural Heritage Resources
- Rural, remote with a variety of landscapes
- Access and conserved lands

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Hull Davidson moved that the four Scenic Rivers presented by staff be endorsed for designation by the General Assembly during the 2021 session. Dr. Patil seconded and motion carried.

AYE: Jackson, Heisler, Henderson, Morgan, Patil, Spruill, Hull Davidson, Hurt, Maybury, Nizer, Simon, Touton

NAY: None

NAMING OF A NEW NATURAL AREA PRESERVE

Mr. Bulluck presented the recommendation for the naming of Piney Grove Flatwoods Natural Area Preserve.

Piney Grove Flatwoods Natural Area Preserve

- 350-acre purchase (VLCF funds) + donation of 115-acre easement
- Natural Area Deed of Dedication on total 465 acres

Landscape Level Conservation Significance

- contributing to ~10,000-acre permanently protected tract
- C1, C2 and C3 forested Ecological Cores
- largest block of fire-managed pine savanna in Virginia

Governor Northam's ConserveVirginia

- Four of seven conservation priority categories included
- Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity (>90%)
- Protected Land Resilience (>75%)

- Floodplains and Flooding Resilience (>40%)
- Water Quality Improvement Opportunity Areas

Natural Heritage Resources

- Manry Wakefield Conservation Site (biodiversity significance rank – B2)
 - Red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) (G3/S1, state and federally endangered)
 - pine savanna specialist
 - one of only two populations of red-cockaded woodpecker in Virginia
 - 25 year old colony (family groups) on the subject property
- Loblolly Pine/Little Bluestem Woodland/ Savanna natural community

Mr. Bulluck noted that this would be Virginia's 66th Natural Area Preserve and would be the 12th Natural Area Preserve in the Southeast Region of Virginia. Total acreage in the NAP system will increase to 58,693 acres.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Director Cristman introduced Melissa Baker who joined DCR as the Director of State Parks in early 2020.

NEXT MEETING

Director Cristman advised that staff would like to schedule the next meeting of the Board in the spring or early summer at Natural Tunnel State Park in Southwest Virginia. At that time, DCR will be installing and dedicating a memorial to W. Bruce Wingo a longtime member and chair of the Board. Mr. Wingo was instrumental in the development of several state parks, most notably New River Trail State Park and Highbridge State Park.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.