

FINAL

**Minutes**  
Virginia Outdoors Foundation  
Board of Trustees Special Forestry Committee  
August 19, 2019

**Attendees**

**Board of Trustees:**

Eleanor Brown, Chair  
Elizabeth Obenshain

**Staff:**

Brett Glymph, Executive Director  
Leslie Grayson, Deputy Director  
Martha Little, Deputy Director  
Emily White, Conservation Program  
Administrator  
Anita Angelone, Communications  
Assistant

**Guests:**

Natasha Shelton, The Conservation Fund  
Andrew Downs, Appalachian Trail  
Conservancy  
Lucas Tyree, NDPonics

Eleanor Brown opened the meeting at 10:35 a.m. and welcomed the group, asking attendees to introduce themselves.

Introductions were made, and the Chair noted the herculean effort of gathering and reviewing the second round of projects as well as her gratitude to the technical committee for their work.

The Chair opened the floor to Public Comments.

Natasha Shelton spoke of her appreciation of the Committee for their consideration of the Stanley Land and Lumber project, especially of the fact that the project would afford protections on a state forest “core within a core”.

Andrew Downs thanked VOF for its support on the Hogan Hollow project in the first grant round. He stated that he understood that existence of habitable structures on the Doc’s Way proposal were preventing the committee from awarding full funding but stressed that the ATC has the experience to remove them. He hopes that the committee will consider full funding for the project; it’s a rare opportunity to protect and improve the McAfee Knob viewshed.

Lucas Tyree also thanked the committee for funding the Mystic Forest project in the first grant round and added that as a small nonprofit NDPonics does not have the same resources as other conservation organizations. He stressed that his nonprofit was started to give traditional people a voice. He states that he’s trying to protect over 15,000 acres across three counties as a rural historical district.

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Emily White gave a program update. The Board of Trustees decided to make \$3 million available this round, and the requests far exceed that amount. The limit of \$3 million was chosen as a way to give more time for outreach to smaller groups that might not have a proposal ready right away.

She stated that the nine applications are a diverse mix of land and of applicants, and that a new review level has been added since the last round: a staff check for accuracy.

She stressed that today's meeting was about making sure that the human aspect of the projects is clear to the special forestry committee, as the technical committee's review can be pretty cut and dried with regards to technical standards and data driven.

She stated that 20% of the funds this time were set aside (reserved) for community projects that may not be a "slam dunk" as far as technical aspects go.

She presented the 2019 Technical Committee Report and discussed the average ranking and proposed funding of each project.

The Chair asked about how important is "the now" for some projects as opposed to waiting for another round or other opportunities for funding, and it was observed that DCR-Natural Heritage's top priority, Chestnut Ridge and ATC's Doc's Way, are experiencing high development pressures and are time sensitive.

The Chair asked the Committee to consider the interest accrued on loans organizations take out to buy properties when awarding funding, such as what was included in The Conservation Fund's application.

The group reviewed the Projects Update material, with letters in support of both the Doc's Way and Mystic Forest Projects.

Lucas Tyree asked about VOF's definition of Environmental Justice as it relates to the Forest CORE Fund and it is still a work in process. It was decided that VOF will continue to develop and refine its work processes to address equity and access issues within Forest CORE.

The Committee decided to move forward to the full board with the recommendations of the technical committee.

The meeting adjourned at 1:37.