

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Monday, October 7, 2019
Pocahontas State Park
Chesterfield, Virginia**

MINUTES

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 10:06 a.m. on Monday, October 7, 2019 at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield, Virginia.

BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Kat Maybury
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair	Harvey B. Morgan
Nancy Hull Davidson	Esther M. Nizer
Danielle Heisler	Vivek Shinde Patil, PhD
Dexter C. Hurt	Clayton Spruill
Angela Henderson. PhD	Camille Touton

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Tom Smith, Deputy Director of Operations
Isaac J. Sarver, Deputy Director for Boards and Constituent Services
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Nathan Clark, Manager, Pocahontas State Park
Dave Collett, Acting State Parks Manager
Bill Conkle, Park Planner
Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator
Rob Evans, Natural Areas Protection Manager
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Kelly McClary, Acting Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Sharon Partee, Director of Finance
Danette Poole, Director Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Jennifer Wampler, Trails Coordinator
Ann Zahn, District I Manager, Virginia State Parks

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. and asked for the calling of the roll.

Chairman Wingo welcomed new Board member, Camille Touton from Arlington.

WELCOME – *Nathan Clark, Park Manager, Pocahontas State Park*

Mr. Clark welcomed members to Pocahontas State Park. With just over 7,900 acres, Pocahontas is the largest park in the State Park system. The park also houses the Civilian Conservation Corps museum.

Construction is underway for five cabins and one six-bedroom lodge. These will be the first full housekeeping cabins at Pocahontas.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 26, 2019 MEETING

Ms. Jackson moved for the approval of the minutes from the April 26, 2019 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Mr. Hurt seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Director Cristman reported that he had accompanied Governor Northam on a five-day tour of six Virginia State Parks. The tour began with the announcement of a project dedicated to the Chickahominy tribe made possible by the Surrey-Skiffes settlement. This is the first time in 400 years that the tribe has owned waterfront property on the river once referred to as the Powhatan. Members of the Chickahominy tribe from across the United States were present.

The Governor participated in the Second Annual State Employee Fishing Tournament at Occoneechee State Park. Retiring State Parks Director Craig Seaver was recognized at that event.

At Twin Lakes, retired Park Manager Willie Bowman was recognized for his work to help desegregate State Parks.

Craig Seaver officially retired as of October 1, 2019 after almost 35 years in state service. Dave Collett is serving as acting State Parks Director.

Director Cristman noted that the Department is optimistic about the Virginia Valors program for State Park Police Officers going forward in the next General Assembly session.

Danette Poole has also announced retirement after 41 years with the Department. Kelly McClary, Director of Design and Construction will serve as Acting Director for the Division of Parks and Recreation Resources.

RECOGNITION OF RETIRING STAFF MEMBERS

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Hurt moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation adopt the resolution in honor of retiring State Parks Director Craig Seaver. Ms. Jackson seconded and the following resolution was adopted.

WHEREAS, during America's Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service in partnership with the Commonwealth built the Virginia State Park System, which was launched on June 15, 1936; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 Mr. Seaver became the 7th Director of the Virginia State Parks System, serving from August 2014 to October 2019; and

WHEREAS, under Mr. Seaver's leadership the Virginia State Park system has grown from 36 state parks to include 40 operating parks and three new sites in planning and development; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver supported the efforts of advocacy groups for Virginia State Parks such as the Virginia Association for Parks and over 30 "Friends Groups"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver ensured the Virginia State Parks was the first statewide park system in the country to support the Parks Rx America program; designed to encourage doctors to prescribe to patients time outdoors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver spearheaded the Round-up for Parks program which allows visitors to round up to the nearest dollar when they make camping or cabin reservations or purchases in the gift shop.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver's leadership led Virginia State Parks to reach 10 million visitors for the first time in state history; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver working with the Garden Club of Virginia resulted in \$500,000 in grants to Virginia State Parks

WHEREAS, Mr. Seaver served as the President of the Association of Southeast State Park Directors from 2016-2019; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 Mr. Seaver was honored with the Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of State Parks Directors "in recognition of many years of dedicated service and inspired leadership to the conservation, interpretation and enhancement of our nation's natural and cultural state park treasures"; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation applaud Mr. Seaver for his commitment to the recreational and natural resources of the Commonwealth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on this date, October 7, 2019, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation establishes a public record of their deep appreciation for Mr. Seaver's 34 years of service.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation adopt the resolution in honor of retiring Planning and Recreation Resources Director Danette Poole. Mr. Hurt seconded and the following resolution was adopted.

WHEREAS, during America's Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service in partnership with the Commonwealth built the Virginia State Park System, which was launched on June 15, 1936; and

WHEREAS Ms. Poole's service to DCR has spanned over forty years and began in 1976 with Virginia State Parks as a seasonal worker at First Landing (then Seashore) State Park in Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole rose up in the ranks of Virginia State Parks as a chief ranger, interpreter, assistant manager and manager serving at First Landing, Pocahontas, Caledon, Westmoreland, York River, False Cape, and Chippokes Plantation State Parks ; and

WHEREAS, in 1989 Ms. Poole became the first female park manager in the Virginia State Parks System paving the way for other women seeking careers in parks; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole served as the park manager of Chippokes Plantation State Park in Surry County for 21 years from 1989 to 2010; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole served as the Virginia Coordinator for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail for two years from 2008 to 2010; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole served as the first female director of the Department's Division of Planning and Recreation Resources from 2010 to the present and in that capacity led the effort to produce both the 2013 and 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plans, the first outdoor plans in 50 years to be completely paperless, with an interactive map of recreational resources across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole was responsible for the administration of the Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the design and construction of facilities for Virginia State Parks; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole also led the effort to provide master plans and 10-year updates for all of Virginia's State Parks; led the state trails program, and led the scenic resources program, working in partnership with Scenic Virginia and other partners to promote Virginia's Scenic Rivers and scenic views; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole oversaw the implementation of the Virginia Treasures Program and other special projects initiated by the Governor's Office; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole served on many advisory boards and committees, including the Natural Resources Leadership Advisory Board, where she helped guide curriculum development at Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Poole graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Executive Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University's Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 Ms. Poole was honored with the Distinguished Service Award by the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals in recognition of many years of dedicated service and inspired leadership in making a significant contribution to the outdoor recreation profession;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation applaud Ms. Poole for her lifetime commitment to the recreational and natural resources of the Commonwealth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on this date, October 7, 2019, the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation establishes a public record of their deep appreciation for Ms. Poole's forty years of service.

JAMES RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL – *Jennifer Wampler, Trails Coordinator, DCR*

Ms. Wampler gave a presentation regarding the James River Heritage Trail.

The James River Trail is a braided network incorporating water, land trails, and driving routes. The current focus is the Middle James segment, but the intent is to incorporate the entire James River watershed.

Watershed Strategic Plan Content

- Based on stakeholder interviews and feedback from VOP regional meetings
- Reaching out to diverse audiences
- Derived from SWOT analyses
- Need volunteer(s) for technical advisory group

Making the Trail Visible and Visitor Ready: A Plan for the Middle James Segment:

- Identify focus areas with high visitation and existing attractions
- Hold small focus group meetings with land managers and key stakeholders for each focus area
- Develop a set of strategies for connecting, promoting, interpreting, protecting, and enhancing the trail

Timeline

- Input meetings this fall (VOP, listening sessions, and focus groups)
- Continue stakeholder interviews fall/winter
- Compile and analyze input over the winter
- Technical advisory committee meetings winter and spring
- Drafts developed spring 2020
- Present process/drafts at River Management Society Conference in May

SCENIC RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE – *Patti Jackson, Subcommittee Chair*

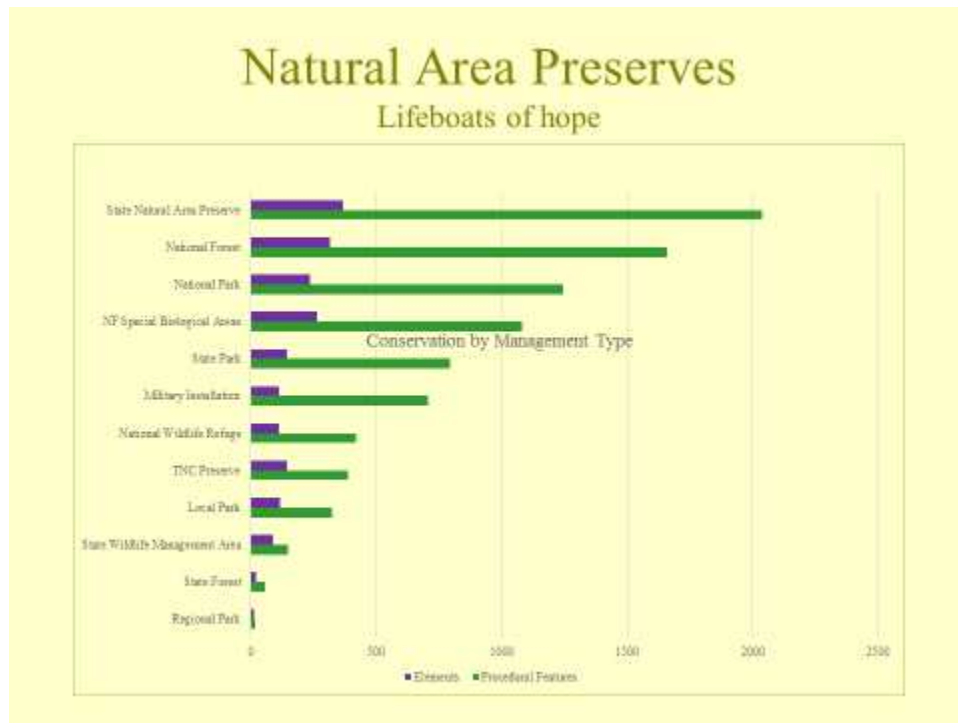
Ms. Jackson reported that the Scenic Resources Subcommittee met on Thursday, September 19, 2019. There was not a quorum; however, the following items were discussed.

- 50th Anniversary of the Scenic Rivers Program – tentative plan to have an official kickoff celebration in Richmond on April 22.
- The website allows interested groups to see a resolution of support that they may adopt.
- The committee would like to ask the Governor to designate June 2020 as Scenic Rivers Month.
- Ms. Crump will give a Scenic Rivers Update at the River Management Society Conference in May 2020.
- The subcommittee concurred with staff recommendation to allow designation of river segments that are less than five miles long where appropriate. The Board concurred that this should be a staff recommendation. Ms. Crump noted that no designations move forward without the approval of the General Assembly.
- The subcommittee would like to add at least three new non-board members to the subcommittee. These members would offer advice and expertise, but would not vote on matters to come before the Board.

Director Cristman noted that Governor Northam has been invited to participate in the River Management Society Conference in May.

DIVISION OF NATURAL HERITAGE – *Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage and Rob Evans, Natural Area Protection Manager*

Mr. Bulluck advised that the Natural Heritage report would focus on recent land protection successes and other efforts. He introduced Mr. Evans who gave the following report.



The Virginia Natural Areas Preserves Act was passed in 1989 and gave the following powers to the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

➤ **10.1-210. Additional powers of the Department.**

In addition to other powers conferred by law and subject to the provisions of this article, the Department shall have the power, which may be delegated by the Director:

1. To establish criteria for the selection, registration and dedication of natural areas and natural area preserves.
2. To purchase, lease or otherwise acquire in the name of the Commonwealth, using moneys from the Natural Area Preservation Fund, lands suitable for natural area preserves.
3. To acquire by gift, devise, purchase, or otherwise, absolutely or in trust, and to hold and, unless otherwise restricted by the terms of a gift or devise, to encumber, convey or otherwise dispose of, any real property, any estate or interests therein, or products on or derived from such real property, as may be necessary and proper in carrying into effect the provisions of this article.

The legislation also provided for the dedication of natural area preserves and established the Virginia natural area preserve system.

There is currently no dedicated funding for natural area preservation. Lands are obtained through the grant process. This chart shows the current funding status.

Natural Area Preserve Funding Status (2017- present)	
VLCF	\$ 2,157,900
VDGIF	\$ 100,000
NOAA/VACZM	\$ 500,000
DuPont Settlement	\$ 2,401,000
USFWS	\$ 1,822,139
Skiffes Settlement	\$ 3,600,000
VOF MVP Settlement *	\$ 1,452,000
Total:	\$12,033,039

The Natural Area Preserve system protects the largest share of the most significant biodiversity in Virginia.

Staff Recommendation for naming a new Natural Area Preserve

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Nizer moved that the Board of Conservation endorse the staff recommendation of Lyndhurst Ponds Natural Area Preserve as the name for the 64th Virginia Natural Area Preserve. Dr. Patil seconded and the motion carried.

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

Ms. Poole thanked the Board for the recognition of her service to the Commonwealth. She noted that for several years she was the Park Manager at Chippokes Plantation State Park. The preceding day she had attended a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the land grant establishing the property.

Ms. Poole gave the following update.

2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan

“Celebrating the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation”

A dynamic, working document

- Staff judged the nominations for the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards for the Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation, which were awarded at the Environment Virginia conference in April.
- Held a meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee in May for the newly published 2018 VOP.
- Planners will resume annual regional meetings with the Planning Districts this fall to exchange information and accomplishments in outdoor recreation, and to lay the groundwork for the next VOP.

2019 Grant Rounds

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Held an acquisition only grant round
- 9 applications received; top 7 recommended for funding through the LWCF committee
 - Applicants currently working through due diligence (NEPA, USSFLA/Yellow-Book appraisals)
- If approved by the National Park Service, 2019 projects will total \$4.42 million

Next Anticipated Grant Round: Spring 2020

Virginia's Apportionment: \$3,800,000

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- RTP funding disbursement: 30% motorized, 30% non-motorized, 40% to diversified/multiuse trails
- 30 applications received in 2019
 - 3 non-motorized, 2 diversified, 4 motorized projects recommended for funding by RTP committee, in amount of \$3.39 million
 - DCR grants staff currently processing agreements to request approval through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Next Anticipated Grant Round: Winter 2020 for Motorized

Anticipated Apportionment: \$1.5 million for winter 2021 grant round

ABPP Grants

- American Battlefield Protection Program – funded by LWCF – requires government sponsor
- 2019 – 7 grants for over \$4 million passed through the agency to date, protecting approx. 350 acres of land
- Current 23 active grants in amount of over \$6.4 million will protect an additional 1,403 acres
- DCR invoices partner organizations in the amount of \$1,000 per grant to serve as the governmental sponsor

Statewide Trails and STAC

- Strategic planning in November – Formation of the Virginia Trails Alliance
- Hosted Joint Land Conservation and Greenways Conference in April
- August meeting/presentations
- Report to the General Assembly – September, 2019
- James River Heritage Trail

MOU for Cooperative Action – Public Access

- Establishes coordination between DCR, DGIF, and VDOT
- Purpose: ID opportunities for access at bridge crossings and road endings
- Clarifies roles
- Established 1981; updated 2015

Design and Construction

Completed Projects

- Pocahontas and Westmoreland Pool Bathhouses: \$1.8M
- First Landing Chesapeake Bay Center Renovations: \$560K
- High Bridge Culvert Emergency: \$1.1M

Construction Projects Underway

- Lake Anna Concession Bathhouse Renovations
- Pocahontas New Cabins
- Foster Falls Hotel Renovations
- Hungry Mother Amphitheater Bridge
- False Cape Bulkhead
- Seven Bends Development

2019 State Park Master Plans

- Chippokes
- False Cape
- First Landing
- Leesylvania
- New River Trail
- Seven Bends
- Smith Mountain Lake

State Park Master Plan Updates – Bill Conkle, Park Planner

Kiptopeake State Park

Mr. Conkle presented the master plan update for Kiptopeake State Park. He noted that prior to the construction of the Chesapeake Bay Tunnel, travelers would arrive at the end of the Eastern Shore and take the ferry across the Bay to Virginia Beach.

Mr. Conkle reminded the Board that State Park Master Plans are required by Code to be updated every ten years. Previously, this had been every five years. A master plan must be in place before any new construction begins.

Kiptopeke State Park consists of some 562 acres and is located in Northampton County, which occupies the southern half of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The park, located between the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. Route 13 approximately 2 miles north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and 7 miles south of the town of Cape Charles, was acquired in 1999. Kiptopeke State Park is easily accessible via State Route 704 approximately one-half mile from U.S. Route 13. The park can also be accessed by boat from the Chesapeake Bay. The area surrounding the park can be characterized primarily as rural farmland.

This amendment to the 2015 Kiptopeke plan recognizes the acquisition of 1.52 acres of land and a structure to be used as a park visitor center. Additional changes since the 2015 update are a completed cabin complex and construction of 3 additional yurts in the park campground. Due to minimal changes in the park master plan, no public meeting was held for this amendment. A full 10-year master plan update is scheduled in 2025.

The full executive summary for Kiptopeke State Park can be seen at this link:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/mp4kpexecsum.pdf>

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the Master Plan update for Kiptopeke State Park including the approval of the acquisition of 1.52 acres of land. Ms. Heisler seconded and the motion carried.

Leesylvania State Park

The park is located in the southeastern corner of Prince William County, approximately 25 miles south of Washington, D.C. The park covers 542.5 acres on a peninsula bordered by the Potomac River on the east, Neabsco Creek on the north, and Powells Creek on the south. An area referred to as the Neabsco Community also borders the park on the north. The western boundary of the park consists of land that is currently residential or planned for new homes. The park is cut almost exactly in half by property owned by the CSX railroad, which operates an active railway through the area. Leesylvania has evolved as one of the most popular destinations for water access in Northern Virginia in one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

The full executive summary for Leesylvania State Park can be seen at this link:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/mp4leexecsum.pdf>

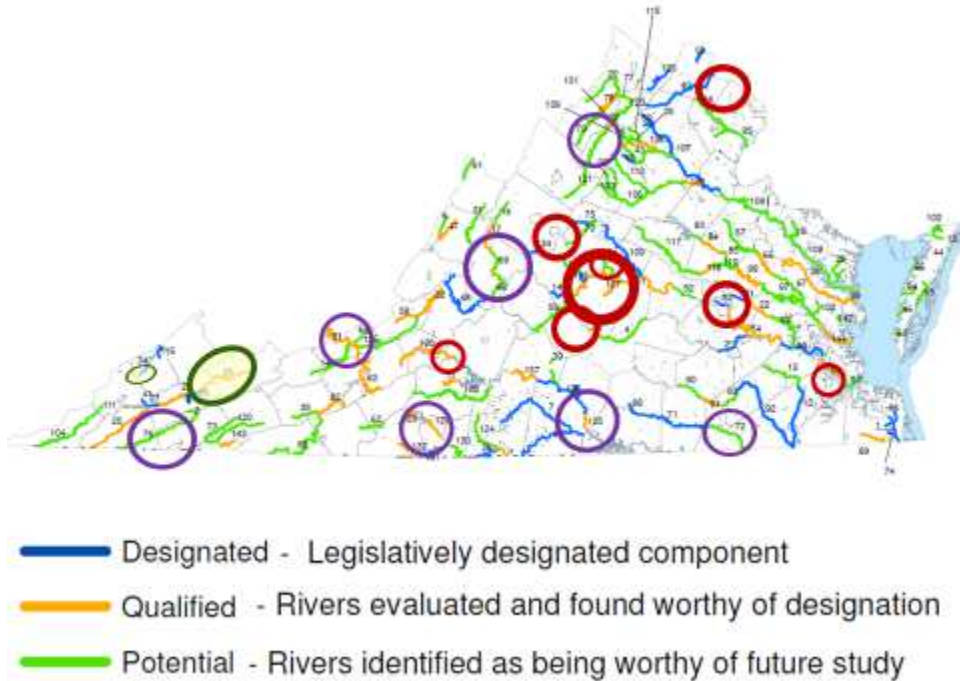
BOARD ACTION

Dr. Patil moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the update to the Master Plan for Leesylvania State Park. Mr. Morgan seconded and the motion carried.

Scenic Resources – Lynn Crump, Scenic Resources Coordinator

Ms. Crump gave an update regarding the Scenic Resources.

This map shows current, qualified, and potential scenic rivers.



Ms. Crump noted that staff was recommending the following for designation.

- Clinch – Tazewell, Cedar Bluff, Richlands
- Pound – Wise and Dickenson
- Roanoke – Roanoke, Franklin, Bedford
- Middle James – Scottsville, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Nelson, Buckingham
- Grays Creek – Surry
- Maury – Rockbridge

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Morgan moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation recommend approval of the rivers presented for Scenic River designation. Ms. Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

Ms. Crump noted that DCR is working with Scenic Virginia and Virginia Tech to update the protocols for designation of Scenic Byways.

STATE PARKS UPDATE – David Collett, Acting State Parks Director

Mr. Collette gave the update for Virginia State Parks.

Revenues and Attendance FY20

- \$800K from fee increases in FY19
- Budgeting growth @1%

- Total revenues up 14.7% YTD
- Merchandise up 5.3%
- Attendance methodology changed in FY20; 5,037,129 through September 1st

Reserve American and Round Up Programs have generated an additional \$94,240.80 since December 2016.

The Garden Club of Virginia Centennial Project Grant Program has provided \$364,518 in funding since 2016. The Garden Club of Virginia received a national award for their work with Virginia State Parks.

Mr. Collett noted that in 1929, the Garden Club of Virginia was instrumental in the efforts to create Virginia State Parks.

Mr. Collett provided updates for the following parks.

Seven Bends State Park

- One FTE on site & wage staff
- Soft opening in October 2019
- Spring 2020 Grand Opening
- VDOT conducting traffic survey
- Master Plan Revisit – Access Challenges

Machicomoco State Park

- Formerly called “Timberneck”
- Contact station, roads, and three mile paved bike path already exist
- Funding was provided by Dominion Energy for land acquisition and visitor interpretation as part of the proposed Surry-Skiffes Creek Transmission Line Project

Clinch River State Park

- Acquisition complete for two large parcels in Russell and Wise Counties; totaling 523.83 acres
- Next phase will be acquisition in Scott County; Master Plan anticipated to begin in Fall 2020
- Park Manager position has been filled; Chief Ranger in Spring 2020

Sweet Run State Park

- Located in Loudoun County, 4 miles from Harpers Ferry, 604 acres
- Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship operates the park for public use through and MOU
- Loudoun County has acquired 280 acres
 - Due diligence is underway and expect closing by January 31, 2020

Mayo River State Park

- Addition of 216.67 acres purchased with funds from Duke Energy Coal Ash Mitigation; now 615.86 acres
- 30.0 acre tract purchase underway near entrance
- Master Plan process to begin in 2021

CAPTIAL BIKE TRAIL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – *Clyde Cristman*

Director Cristman reported that in the 2019 Appropriation Act DCR and VDOT were asked to look at the potential for the transfer of the Capital Bike Trail from VDOT to DCR management. The Capital Bike Trail is a 57-mile paved bike trail from downtown Richmond to Williamsburg and Jamestown. The trail is currently operated by the non-profit Virginia Capital Trail Foundation. The trail crosses multiple jurisdictions and runs near three VDOT maintenance shops.

DCR was the lead agency for the study. It was determined that since the trail was built with a variety of transportation funds there was no mechanism or ability to charge user fees or tolls for maintenance.

The report will recommend that the Capital Trail Foundation and VDOT should continue to operate the trail, and that the Foundation and VDOT work to create a master plan. The report will also recommend that the General Assembly consider legislation that will allow localities to have reciprocal law enforcement arrangements.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – *Sharon Partee, Finance Director*

Ms. Partee presented a financial update.

The FY2020 Legislative Appropriation was \$134,811,754

Appropriation Transfers and Adjustments were:

Water Quality Improvement Fund Transfers	(76,341,230)	
SWCD Dam Repair	(900,000)	
Dam Safety/Flood Prevention and Protection	(5,832,147)	
Land Conservation Transfers	(4,500,000)	
Central Appropriations Adjustments	1,663,140	
		(85,910,237)
FY2020 Total GF Appropriation Available for Operations		<u>\$48,901,517</u>

BOARD BYLAWS – *Chairman Wingo*

Chairman Wingo noted that the current approved Bylaws and recommended staff changes were provided in member packets for review. He deferred action on the Bylaws until the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hurt expressed appreciation for the Youth Conservation Camp program and noted that his son was excited to return again next year.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be in Richmond prior to the beginning of the General Assembly session.

In April, the Board will meet at Kiptopeake State Park.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.