

**Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees Subcommittee
November 3, 2016
Richmond, Virginia**

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

The Honorable Albert C. Pollard, Subcommittee Chair
R. Brian Ball
Jay Ford
Glenda C. Booth

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Joan Fenton

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Analyst
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Sarah Richardson, Land Conservation & Real Property Manager
Thomas Smith, Deputy Director for Operations
Synthia Waymack, Grants Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT

Missy Neff Gould, The Nature Conservancy
Martha Little, Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Mike Santucci, Virginia Department of Forestry
Brett Glymph, Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Andy Sorrell, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

PLACE AND TIME

The meeting of the VLCF Subcommittee convened at 11:03 a.m. on Thursday, November 3, 2016 at the DCR Offices located at 600 E. Main Street, Richmond, Virginia.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With four (4) members of the subcommittee present, a quorum was established.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mr. Pollard reminded members that the work of the subcommittee was to review the Code of Virginia and compare it to the VLCF Grant Program Manual. He asked members to give their thoughts regarding the current scoring criteria.

Mr. Ford noted that the scoring criteria didn't necessarily seem to reflect the Code, including things like environmental benefits and public access.

Mr. Ball responded that he had been involved with the original development of the grant manual. He agreed that while the manual had not been reviewed in some time but felt that it tracked well with the Code.

Mr. Pollard pointed out that while the scores accurately represent the Code, the items in Appendix 6, Additional Scoring Criteria, are almost the foundational scoring criteria.

There was discussion of the value of points assigned in each category and whether the points awarded in Appendix 6 should be additional points or should be the foundational basis for scoring.

Ms. Booth pointed out that the statute calls for the comprehensive plan and needs assessment. She asked for more background concerning the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Ms. Poole responded that the Virginia Outdoors Plan is the recreation and conservation plan for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Smith said that overriding factors in the Code and the State Budget specify that a certain percentage of funding must go for public access (50%), and that a third must go to easements. Those considerations are factored into staff recommendations.

Ms. Richardson clarified that points are given for public access in Appendix 6 for all projects, whether there is an easement or a fee simple acquisition. To date, meeting these requirements has not been an issue.

The subcommittee discussed the scoring criteria and asked that the Board be briefed on the scoring process for a full understanding of how a project was evaluated.

Mr. Ball commented that he heard Board members asking for assistance in helping to determine what the conservation needs are in the Commonwealth, how that is going to be addressed and how the cost will be determined.

Mr. Smith stated that in the early 2000s DCR did a Conservation Lands Needs Assessment that looked at categories and needs, where the primary lands are and what could be protected. The Board had been briefed in previous years. The National Heritage Division still uses this assessment.

Mr. Bulluck reported that DCR set up seven models that address different interests. Included in this is the threat of development. Natural Heritage uses these tools daily for conservation planning.

Mr. Santucci noted that the benefit of Conservation Vision was that it was a broad tool that crossed multiple agencies. The Department of Forestry uses the tool to determine the conservation value of lands they are interested in conserving.

Mr. Ford commented that from the last Board meeting he felt that the desire was to have a more effective way to advocate for additional conservation. A vision document would be most helpful.

Mr. Pollard noted that what was needed was a more robust needs assessment to identify what and where the priority lands are.

Mr. Bulluck advised the subcommittee that at the next meeting staff could provide an update on the tools and models.

Mr. Pollard requested that the subcommittee and Board would benefit from a more thorough overview of the Conservation Vision.

Mr. Smith commented that he had presented an analysis at a VAULT meeting. He agreed to update that presentation and to share it with the subcommittee. That will be included at the next meeting along with an update concerning the Virginia Outdoors Plan.

Ms. Booth handed out information with a list of resources on habitat restoration. She expressed her concern on how VLCF funding could greatly benefit impaired habitats and how the list of resources could help guide that effort.

The subcommittee discussed the requirement in the Code for a public co-holder of conservation easements to qualify for VLCF grants. Ms. Richardson noted that public bodies are often better protected against eminent domain.

The subcommittee discussed a letter received from the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust regarding the VLCF grant criteria and the need to find a public co-holder regarding land in Loudoun County. Ms. Glymph said that the VOF would follow up with NVCT.

Mr. Bulluck presented an introduction to the Conservation Vision model, which can be accessed from the DCR web page.

The agenda for the next meeting of the subcommittee will include the following:

- Mr. Smith's presentation on Conservation Lands Needs Assessment
- A review of the Virginia Outdoors Plan
- A review of the projects from the last grant round to show how projects were scored (one from each category)

The subcommittee will meet again prior to the next full Board meeting.