

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Friday, January 27, 2017
Richmond, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 10:11 a.m. on Friday, January 27, 2017 in the Board Room of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Richmond, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Dexter C. Hurt
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair	Andrew Jennison
Vincent M. Burgess	Vivek Patil
Nancy Hull Davidson	Michael P. Reynold

MEMBERS ABSENT

Danielle Heisler	Isaac Sarver
Harvey B. Morgan	

STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Tom Smith, Deputy Director of Operations
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Bill Conkle, Park Planner
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Jonathan Jackson, Fiscal Technician
Melissa Jackson, Budget Director
Lisa McGee, Director, Policy and Planning
Sharon Partee, Finance Director
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Craig Seaver, Director, Division of State Parks

QUORUM

With eight (8) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. and asked for member and staff introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2, 2016

Mr. Burgess moved for the approval of the minutes of the November 2, 2016 meeting. Mr. Hurt seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

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

2016 was a strong year for DCR.

- State parks celebrated their 80th anniversary.

- The Natural Heritage program celebrated thirty years.
- State parks had record attendance.
- DCR opened Natural Bridge as the 37th state park. Entrances fees were reduced and the park saw a 43% increase in visitation and a 20% increase in revenue.
- The 63rd natural area preserve was opened in 2016. In 1990 there were no natural area preserves. Now almost 56,000 acres are preserved.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Director Cristman gave an overview of legislation pending in the General Assembly session. A copy of that overview is included as Attachment #1.

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Division Update – Danette Poole, Division Director, Planning and Recreation Resources

Ms. Poole gave an overview of current activities in the Division of Planning and Recreation Resources.

- Lake Laura Dam restoration, Bayse, Virginia – Completed \$7.8 million capital construction project to renovate two Conservation District-owned dams, Lake Laura and Bird Haven.
- Virginia Outdoors Plan – 21 regional meetings have been held
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Recreational Trails Program
 - 9 grants awarded
 - \$3.3 million
 - 475 acres protected
- Statewide Trails Advisory Committee
 - Held three meetings to solicit information for Virginia Outdoors Plan
 - Submitted annual report to the General Assembly in September
- Environmental Excellence Awards Environment Virginia
 - Gold Medal winner – Luray Hawksbill Greenway Trail
- Scenic Rivers
 - Staff completed the evaluation of the Upper James
- Design and Construction, projects include:
 - New Cabins in five State Parks
 - Powhatan Campground and Canoe Access
 - High Bridge Access Road
 - Mulberry Hill Roof and HVAC at Staunton River Battlefield
 - Floor replacement in Murphy Hall at Westmoreland
- Virginia Treasures
 - Natural Bridge State Park became the 925th Virginia Treasure at the park's opening on September 24, 2016.
 - The goal of 1,000 Treasures was reached in November, 2016, and a special reception was held at the Governor's Mansion in December.

Ms. Poole reviewed the Division work plan for 2017.

State Park Master Plans – Bill Conkle, Park Planner

Mr. Conkle reviewed the master planning process.

- Master plans are required before park construction may begin.
- Master plans are updated every ten (10) years.
- Master plans show a 30-year plan for a full buildout of the park.
- DCR generally develops 15% of a park and leaves the rest in a natural state.
- Each master plan is presented at a public meeting where input is received from the community.
- Master plans are a collaboration between park staff, planning staff, natural heritage staff, friends groups, and the public.

Westmoreland State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the proposed update for Westmoreland State Park.

The Westmoreland State Park Master Plan was originally adopted on January 10, 2006, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director Joseph H. Maroon. An update to the plan was approved on December 20, 2011 by DCR Director David A. Johnson.

Westmoreland State Park is located along the cliffs of the Potomac River in Westmoreland County in the historic Northern Neck of Virginia. The park opened on June 15, 1936 as one of the original six Virginia State Parks. Westmoreland was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 as a historic district. Westmoreland offers quality recreational opportunities on 1,320.61 acres along the Potomac River.

Proposed developments for the park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and cover a 30-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2017 cost estimates.

PHASE I

Acquire and install visitor center exhibits

Redesign pool bathrooms/bathhouses to include a concession/rental area

Construct new pool/spray-ground at different site, include picnic area, playground and parking.

Develop and install interpretive signage throughout the park

Renovate former office at Potomac Retreat for seasonal staff housing

Construct large playground near swimming pool/picnic area

Pave roads in campgrounds B and C, and cabins

Expand existing fishing pier and improve accessibility to pier

Renovate all 26 existing cabins to current standards

Redesign campground A, replace bathhouse and upgrade water/electric

Redesign campground B, replace bathhouse (with 2 bathhouses) and upgrade water/electric

Renovate 6 camping cabins in campground A including new electric service

Construct yurts at existing campgrounds

Construct staff residence (1)

Renovate existing staff residences (2)

Enhance existing internal park trails to hike/bike trails and add an accessible loop

Stabilize shoreline erosion at designated beach areas

Stabilize cliff erosion below cabins 19-25, visitor center and other designated areas
Develop trail linkages with local sites and area long distance trails with partners
Utilities – place wires underground and develop backup source of electricity
The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$40,557,212

PHASE II

Construct contact station and welcome center (with document storage area)
Redesign and expand campground C, replace bathhouse, add water/electric, segregate tent and r/v sites.
Add a special events gazebo near Murphy Hall
Remove playground at Murphy Hall and construct new playground at visitor center
Relocate parking and road at Murphy Hall
Convert existing Discovery Center into wet lab/classroom, add small shelter with fireplace
Construct natural play area/trail near Discovery Center
Construct staff residence
Renovate CCC Bunkhouse (current staff housing) as YCC/volunteer bunkhouse
Improve boat ramp area by adding a lane, redesign parking lot and add breakwater.
Repurpose boat house as a comfort station
Construct vault toilet near Fossil Beach
Develop trail linkages with local sites and area long distance trails with partners
Utilities – place wires underground and develop backup source of electricity
The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$8,136,946

PHASE III

Construct additional cabins at existing cabin areas (1-6 bedroom and 3-3 bedroom)
Develop trail linkages with local sites and area long distance trails with partners
Utilities – place wires underground and develop backup source of electricity
The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$5,038,416

The total cost to bring Westmoreland State Park to its desired future condition is \$53,732,574.

The full Executive Summary can be found at the following link:
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

Fairy Stone State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the proposed update for Fairy Stone State Park.

Fairy Stone State Park is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Patrick and Henry Counties in the West Piedmont Planning District (Region 12). The park lies within a half hour's drive of Martinsville, and is within a reasonable driving distance of major cities in Virginia and North Carolina including Roanoke, Greensboro, Charlotte, Raleigh, Richmond and the metro Washington, DC area.

Fairy Stone is one of the six original Virginia state parks to open on June 15, 1936. The park was listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places in April 2007.

Proposed developments for the Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and covers a 30-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2017 estimates.

PHASE I

- Demo old bathhouse at group camp
- Replace the park office and enlarge parking area
- Construct 4 Yurts
- Renovate beach bathhouse, concession facility and beachfront.
- Add spray ground at beach area.
- Construct a visitor center
- Upgrade amphitheater with comfort station
- Renovate (25) cabins
- Renovate campground
- Renovate boat ramp, add parking
- Dredge Fairy Stone Lake
- Renovate and expand internal trails and explore connections to external trails.
- Resurface roads and parking lots throughout the park.

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$29,297,363

PHASE II

- Water tank demolition and adaptive re-use of water treatment facility
- Construct comfort station near picnic shelter #1.
- Relocate equestrian day-use parking.
- Add bathhouse and dump station in equestrian area.
- Add playground area for campground and cabin guests.
- Construct staff residence
- Gazebo near Fayerdale Hall
- Renovate and expand internal trails and explore connections to external trails
- Resurface roads and parking lots throughout the park.

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$6,016,982

PHASE III

- Stabilize CCC era structure near picnic shelter #1 for adaptive re-use
- Renovate lodge
- Develop a new campground loop at the old overflow campground site.
- Renovate group camp to include camping cabins.
- Construct up to ten cabins, (5 2-bedrom, 4 3-bedroom and 1 6- bedroom).
- Renovate and expand internal trails and explore connections to external trails
- Resurface roads and parking lots throughout the park

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$14,975,064

The total cost to bring Fairy Stone State Park to its desired future condition is \$50,289,410.

The full Executive Summary can be found at this link:

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

Belle Isle State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the proposed update for Belle Isle State Park.

Belle Isle State Park is located on the northern shore of the Rappahannock River in Lancaster County, which is in the Northern Neck Planning District (Region 17) of eastern Virginia. It is about 70 miles northeast of Richmond, 80 miles southeast of Fredericksburg and 70 miles from the Hampton Roads area.

Comprising 889.85 acres, with frontage on the Rappahannock River and Deep and Mulberry Creeks, the initial purchase was made in April 1993 with funds appropriated from the 1992 Virginia Park and Recreation Facilities Bond Act. All park amenities funded through the 1992 Bond Act were completed by the fall of 1999, when the park opened to visitors.

Proposed developments for the park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and cover a 30-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2017 cost estimates. Shoreline stabilization and the dredging of Deep Creek will be an ongoing issue, and long term planning and funding will be needed to protect the recreational resources of Belle Isle State Park.

Phase I

Renovate Belle Isle Plantation House, out-buildings and historic landscape

Upgrade fuel station in maintenance area

Shoreline stabilization at visitor center, day-use, Watch House and Bel Air Guest House sites

Dredge Deep Creek to boat ramp

Develop interpretive exhibits for the Visitor Center

Construct a 30-site campground, including 4 yurts/camping cabins with bathhouse

Provide additional parking for picnic area (60 spaces)

Construct screened-in shelter at YCC bunkhouse with water and electric

Construct and develop a trail with a bridge across the Mulberry Creek inlet

Construct staff residences (2)

Demolish garage at Belle Isle Plantation House site

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$18,758,844

Phase II

Construct a fishing pier (200 foot) in the day-use area

Cabins (12) with boat tie-ups

Construct a day-use boat tie-up adjacent to the large boat ramp

Staff residence

Renovate three existing staff residences for overnight rentals

Construct a meeting facility with seating for 150-200, kitchen, conference room, comfort station

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$12,258,921

Phase III

Restore historic barn for interpretive programs
Construct a comfort station and canoe storage at the car-top launch
Upgrade group camp with water, electric, bathhouse, shelter, gravel road and parking (20 spaces)
Construct a water feature/spray ground in the day-use area
The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$4,840,652

The total cost to bring Belle Isle State Park to its desired future condition is \$35,858,616.

The full Executive Summary can be found at this link:
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

Mason Neck State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the proposed update for Mason Neck State Park.

Mason Neck State Park is located in the southwest corner of Fairfax County, approximately 20 miles south of Washington, DC. The park is situated on a peninsula and fronts on three picturesque embayments of the Potomac River. With its close proximity to the nation's capital, Mason Neck State Park often represents Virginia to members of Congress, and the tens of thousands of tourists who visit Washington, DC from across the country and the globe.

Mason Neck State Park opened to the public on April 21, 1985. The park currently consists of 1,824.98 acres.

Proposed developments for the Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and covers a 30-year timeframe. Estimates are based on 2017 cost figures.

Phase I

Enhance picnic area, construct two large shelters with comfort station
Connect to county water system
Protect and interpret Lexington historic site
Develop an environmental education center/ multi-purpose with existing structures
Improve environmental education/multipurpose center access road (using pull-outs)
Canoe-in campsites (4)
Construct structure for concessions and bike/boat rental at boat storage building site
Demo greenhouse
Improve and expand park trail system including on-road bike facilities
Shoreline erosion control measures (living shoreline)
Place utility wires underground
The estimated cost to complete Phase I is: \$34,462,165 \$

Phase II

Picnic area parking lot expansion and resurfacing

Improve and expand park trail system including renovation of Bay View Trail boardwalks
Contact Station
Staff residence
Redesign entrance to park visitor center with courtyard and improvements to building interior.
Add pole shed and additional bay at maintenance area
Shoreline erosion control measures (living shoreline)
Place utility wires underground
The estimated cost to complete Phase II is \$3,129, 835

The total cost to bring Mason Neck State Park to its desired future condition is \$37,592,000.

The full Executive Summary can be found at this link:
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

Grayson Highlands State Park

Mr. Conkle reviewed the proposed update for Grayson Highlands State Park.

Grayson Highlands State Park lies in the mountains of southwest Virginia, adjacent to Mount Rogers, the highest mountain in Virginia at 5,729 feet. The park is located in western Grayson County in the Mount Rogers Planning District, approximately one mile north of the North Carolina state line and 8 miles west of Volney, Virginia, on State Highway 58.

The park was established in 1965 as Mouth Rogers State Park and was remained in 1975 as Grayson Highlands. The name was derived from one of Virginia's first Senators, William Grayson, also namesake of the county established in 1793, and the mountainous "highlands" location.

Proposed developments for Grayson Highlands State Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and covers a 30-year timeframe. Estimates are based on 2017 cost figures.

PHASE I

Upgrade utilities including replacing water lines and enhancing phone service.
Comfort station/shelter at Massie Gap
Construct a staff residence (demo current structure)
Yurts (4) in campground
Upgrade electric for (45) campsites in campground
Replace bathhouse in lower loop of campground.
Redesign and expand park office as welcome center, with 2 offices and meeting space.
Resurface roads and parking lots throughout park.
Expand trails to connect points of interest inside and outside the park.
Landscaping, including additional stone walls and rail fencing.
The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$9,055,323

PHASE II

Expand picnic area with shelter and comfort station
Expand and upgrade Country Store, including shelter and overhang.
Expand maintenance area
Expand trails to connect points of interest inside and outside the park.
Landscaping, including additional stone walls and rail fencing.
The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$4,034,815

PHASE III

Renovate bathhouse in upper loop of campground
Picnic shelter/SST with water/electric at visitor center parking lot
Upgrade horse stalls (10)
Expand trails to connect points of interest inside and outside the park.
Landscaping, including additional stone walls and rail fencing.
The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$2,695,399

The total cost to bring Grayson Highlands State Park to its desired future condition is \$15,785,537.

The full Executive Summary can be found at this link:
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans>

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board recommend approval of the master plan updates as presented by staff. Mr. Burgess seconded and the motion carried.

NATURAL HERITAGE – Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage

Mr. Bulluck gave an update for the Division of Natural Heritage.

The Division of Natural Heritage publishes an Annual eNews that highlights activities of the Division over the year. Board members will be added to the distribution list.

Board members were also encouraged to like the Natural Heritage Facebook page.

DCR has developed a program called RareQuest to help with the gathering and updating data. Mr. Bulluck gave an overview of the RareQuest program.

Natural Heritage Resources as of December 2016

Tracked Elements

- Vertebrates 189
- Invertebrates 606
- Plants 710
- Communities 527

Element occurrence

- Animal Mapped Locations 3,326

- Plant Mapped Locations 3,871
 - Community Mapped Locations 1,612
- Conservation Sites (total) 2,090
Stream Conservation Units – 429
Terrestrial Conservation Sites – 1,408
Cave Sites – 253

Data has to be maintained and funding is not what is used to be. Much of the data collected was gathered when the natural heritage act was enacted over 40 years ago.

RareQuest

- Funding from the Virginia Native Plant Society
- 100 volunteers, about three per team selected based on:
 - Taxonomic prowess
 - Tech proficiency
 - Negotiation
- Species selected (134 EOs)
- Trained by DCR staff
- Line of communication

Mr. Bulluck shared a video about RareQuest. This video won one of two runner's up awards in this year's RVA Environmental Film Festival.

The video is available at this link: <https://vimeo.com/195854299>

STATE PARKS – *Craig Seaver, Director, Division of State Parks*

Mr. Seaver gave the update for the Division of State Parks.

Virginia State Parks had record attendance in 2016.

- 10,022,698 visitors, a 12% increase over 2015
- More than one million overnight visitors, a 3 percent increase over 2015

Contributing factors were:

- Good weather, in spite of two hurricanes
- Increased presence on social media
- The Natural Bridge event and the opening of the 37th State Park
- The 80th Anniversary Celebration

Mr. Seaver provided a copy of the Virginia State Parks Economic Impact Report for 2015. A copy of this report is available from DCR.

As noted in the Executive Summary:

Visitors attracted annually to Virginia State Parks trigger a large amount of economic activity throughout the state. Key findings show:

- In 2016 visitors to Virginia State Parks spent an estimated \$224.7M throughout the state. Approximately 44% [\$98.2M] of this spending was by out-of-state visitors.
- The total economic activity stimulated by Virginia State Parks during 2016 was between \$292.2M and \$301.2M.
- The total economic impact of Virginia State Parks during 2016 was between \$219.8M and \$259.1M. Economic impact is a measure of “fresh money” infused into the state’s economy that likely would not have been generated in the absence of the park system.
- In 2016, for every \$1 of general tax revenue provided to state parks, \$13.61 on average was generated in fresh money that wouldn’t be there if not for the operation of Virginia State Parks.
- Regarding employment, the economic activity stimulated by visitation to Virginia State Parks supported approximately 3,548 jobs in the state in 2016.
- In terms of wages and income, the economic activity spawned by Virginia State Parks was responsible for roughly \$116.5M in wage and salary income in 2016.
- Economic activity created by Virginia State Parks was associated with approximately \$176M in value-added effects which is a measure of the park system’s contribution to the gross domestic product of the Commonwealth.
- Economic activity stimulated by Virginia State Parks generated approximately \$19.6M in tax revenue for the State of Virginia during 2016. As such, \$0.99 in taxes were generated for every dollar of tax money spent in the park system.

Mr. Seaver noted park initiative for the coming year.

- June 10 is Back to the Bay Day at Mason Neck State Park
- The first day hike on New Year’s Day drew 19,000 participants.
- Youth Conservation Corps applications are due on March 1.
- 24 participants in the AmeriCorps program will be doing resource management projects.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – Sharon Partee, Finance Director

Ms. Partee gave the following financial update:

General Fund - FY 2017 appropriation per Chapter 780 approved May 20, 2016 - \$119,653,799. The increase in appropriation this fiscal year results primarily from an FY15 State Surplus deposit of approximately \$61.7M to the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund. Other increases include \$4M to Dam Safety for dam repairs, and \$4M in additional funding for VLCF (Virginia Land Conservation Foundation).

Agency Reductions Included in the Governor's Introduced Budget

General Fund Reductions - DCR realized the following reductions, as a part of the Governor's FY17 Savings Strategy:

(\$200,000)	Workforce Reduction
(\$224,000)	Vacancy Savings

(\$635,000) Revert Swift Creek Bike Trail Funding
(\$1,059,000) Total GF Appropriation Reduction

Reverted Non General Fund Cash Balances

(\$344,711) Revert Excess Todd Lake Dam Funding
(\$200,000) Revert Unobligated Funds in Dam Safety, Flood Prevention & Protection Fund
(\$528,000) Revert Unobligated Prior Year Cash in Natural Resources Commitment Fund
(\$1,072,711) Total NGF Resource Reduction (Reverted NGF Cash Balances)

General Fund Balance - After fulfilling all mandatory transfer requirements and managing the Governor's Savings Plan Reductions, DCR's remaining General Fund balance for agency operations is roughly \$45M.

Parks Revenue – State Park's Six months' revenues are up by approximately 4.78% from FY16 revenues.

Parks Project Fund – There were no new projects to present to the Board.

Water Quality Improvement Fund and Virginia Natural Resource Commitment Funds has distributed \$24M through December 31, 2016.

\$8,139,941 Beginning cash balance on July 1, 2016
\$53,464,590 Deposited into the above funds per the Appropriation Act
\$4,904,558 Revenue from Recordation fee (mostly) and misc.
\$(24,116,243) Distributed thru December 31, 2016
\$42,392,846 Cash Balance on hand December 31, 2016

Water Quality Improvement Fund Reserve has a cash balance of \$8,244,210 as of December 31, 2016.

Natural Area Preservation Fund has a cash balance of \$291,566 as of December 31, 2016.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Wingo will work with the Director and DCR staff for options regarding the next meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at XXXXX p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Bruce Wingo
Chair

Clyde E. Cristman
DCR Director

ATTACHMENT #1

January 27, 2017

2017 General Assembly – Legislative Update

Natural Resources – Key Bills – DCR LEAD AGENCY

Bill	Patron	Description	Current Action
HB 1454	Austin	James River; designation as component of Virginia Scenic Rivers System: Extends the scenic river designation of a portion of the James River located in Botetourt County.	(S) Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources
HB 1681	Bloxom	Transient occupancy tax; state parks: Permits localities to impose transient occupancy taxes on transient room rents and travel campgrounds in state parks.	Passed House Senate Referral Pending
HB 1691	Dudenhefer	Property conveyance; Widewater Beach Subdivision: Authorizes DCR to convey two parcels of land within the Widewater State Park in Stafford County to the Subdivision Association (Bellushi Pond, portion of abandoned roadway)	House Appropriations (Subcommittee for Commerce and Agriculture recommends Reporting)
HB 1833	Kilgore	VALORs: Adds DCR conservation officers as members of the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement system. <i>(SB1097 Companion Bill)</i>	House Appropriations (Subcommittee for Compensation & Retirement)
HB 2308	Wright	Carrying a concealed handgun; retired conservation officers: Adds retired DCR conservation officers to the list of retired persons eligible to carry a concealed handgun without a permit. <i>(SB1465 Companion Bill)</i>	Passed House Senate Committee for Courts of Justice
SB 964	Hanger	Running bamboo; Authorizes locality to adopt ordinances requiring proper upkeep and prohibiting spread of running bamboo	Senate read 3 rd time and passed
SB 1071	Deeds	VALORs: Adds DCR conservation officers as members of the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement system. <i>(HB1833 Companion Bill)</i>	(S) Committee on Finance
SB 1196	Deeds	James River; designation as component of Virginia Scenic Rivers System. Designates a 10.2 mile section of the James River from Rockbridge-Botetourt County line to Rockbridge-Amherst-Bedford County line.	Passed Senate House Referral Pending
SB 1224	Stuart	Landowner liability; recreational access: Provides liability immunity for landowners who have entered into an agreement with a public entity for use of land for public recreation and limits potential liability for the Commonwealth.	(S) Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources reported.
SB1465	Carrico	Carrying a concealed handgun; retired conservation officers: Adds retired DCR conservation officers to the list of retired persons eligible to carry a concealed handgun without a permit. <i>(HB2308 Companion Bill)</i>	Senate read 2nd time and passed Senate

HJ 640	Lopez	Public Lands Day: Designates the last Saturday in September as Public Lands Day.	Passed House Referred to Senate Rules
HJ 704	Bulova	Environmental Education Study: Secretaries of Natural Resources and Education conduct a study on the delivery of environmental education; report.	(H) Committee on Rules (Studies Subcommittee)
SJ 314	Hanger	Commending Michael Lester Lipford: 1 st Director of VA Natural Heritage Program	Senate Agreed House - on Speaker's table

Natural Resources – Bills of Interest

Bill	Patron	Description	Current Action
HB1470	Ware	Land preservation tax credits; limitations: Imposes a \$2M limit on the amount of credits that may be claimed for land conveyance and a \$20K limit on annual tax credits. A \$50K cap on credits for fee simple donation. Maximum of \$50M tax credits total. Increases tax credit transfer fee to 2.5% value of donated interest.	Laid on the Table in Subcommittee
HB 1875	Pogge	Waterfowl blinds: Reduces distance a hunter maintains between floating waterfowl blind and stationary blind, from 500 yards to 250 yards.	Laid on the Table in Subcommittee
HB1988	Bell	Outdoor lighting fixtures; use of light-emitting diodes (LEDs): Requires the use of LED bulbs on outdoor lighting fixtures.	(H) Committee on General Laws
HB2150	Aird	Land preservation tax credit; per taxpayer limitation: Extends the \$20K limit on the amount a taxpayer may claim to 2017.	Laid on the Table in Subcommittee
HB2154 HB2194	Rasoul Rush	Golden bamboo; designates as a noxious weed: Authorizes localities to adopt ordinance to prevent, control and abate the growth, importation or spread of golden bamboo.	(H) Committee on Counties, Cities, and Towns - (Subcommittee 1)
SB 963	Hanger	Land preservation tax credit; per taxpayer limitation: Extends the \$20K limit on the amount a taxpayer may claim to 2017.	(S) Committee on Finance
SB1286	Obenshain	Land preservation tax credits; withholding tax of nonresident owners: Allows a pass through entity to claim a tax credit against the taxes withheld on the VA source income of a nonresident owner of the entity.	(S) Committee on Finance
SB1485	Sturtevant	Expiration of certain tax credits: Adds a sunset date of January 1, 2022 to all existing tax credits that do not have a sunset date.	(S) Committee on Finance
SB1540	Sturtevant	Tax credits, certain; aggregate caps: Reduces the total aggregate caps over a period of ten years with no credits beginning in 2027.	(S) Committee on Finance

Bills relating to Dam Safety and Floodplain Management and Soil and Water Conservation

- [HB 1472](#) State and Local Government COIA; prohibited contracts; exceptions.
- [HB 1562](#) Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund.
- [HB1964](#) Coastal Protection and Flooding Adaptation, Secretary for; creates position.
- [HB 2319](#) National Flood Insurance Program; participation by localities; report
- [HB 2320](#) Hurricane and Flooding Risk Reduction Act of 2017
- [SB 965](#) State and Local Government COIA prohibited contracts; exceptions [SB](#)
- [1079](#) Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund.
- [SB1349](#) Secretary for Coastal Protection and Flooding Adaptation
- [SB1398](#) Coal combustion residuals unit; closure permit; assessments required.
- [HJ 636](#) Study; economic impacts of litter on fishing, farming, and water quality in urban streams; report
- [HJ 672](#) Study; JLARC; coastal flooding adaptation and resiliency report
- [HJ 677](#) Study; study the current and potential impact of zebra and quagga mussels in Virginia waters.
- [SJ 297](#) Study; JLARC; coastal flooding adaptation and resiliency
- [SJ 320](#) Commending the 10 River Basin Grand Winners of the Clean Water Farm Award.

Budget Amendments – House Bill 1500

<p>364 #9h <u>GF FY2018</u> \$2,448,129</p>	<p>Natural Heritage Program Funding Provides an additional \$2.4 million from the general fund and 24 positions in the second year to further support DCR's Natural Heritage Program in support of active preserve management activities for the 61 Natural Area Preserves across the Commonwealth.</p>
<p>365 #1h <u>GF FY2017</u> \$400,000</p>	<p>Partial Restoration of Funding for Swift Creek Bike Trail Partially restores for the construction of accessible mountain bike trails for disabled riders. Additional language clarifies the legislative intent of the funding is for trail construction and does not include additional structures.</p>
<p>365 #2h Language Only</p>	<p>Restore Ch. 780 Language on Parkland Acquisition Removes new language proposed by the Governor in House Bill 1500 which is contrary to the General Assembly's expressed intent as evidenced by language included in this paragraph by the 2016 General Assembly which would prohibit the Department of Conservation and Recreation from accepting by gift, transfer or purchase any lands for use as a state park without the approval of the General Assembly. A companion amendment in Capital Outlay eliminates nongeneral fund appropriations for DCR to purchase park land or lands to be designated as natural area preserves.</p>
<p>365 #3h <u>GF FY2017</u> \$612,537 <u>GF FY2018</u> \$612,537</p>	<p>Youth Corps Funding Allows the Virginia State Parks to establish state funding to sponsor 25 Youth Corps programs in state parks each summer. This would allow the program to serve all 36 state parks. The youth corps program is comprised of two components, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and the Youth Service Corps (YSC).</p>

<p>365 #6h <u>GF FY2018</u> \$487,945</p>	<p>Widewater Park Operating Costs Provides funding to support the daily operations of the day use facilities at Widewater Park projected to be complete in early 2018. In order to adequately manage the daily operations and prepare for the expected high visitation, funding for four additional positions, initial equipment needs and park operational costs is necessary.</p>
<p>456 #1h</p>	<p>Recreational Access Funds for Biscuit Run Directs VDOT to utilize \$1.2 million from the Recreational Access Funds in the second year to build an entrance to Biscuit Run.</p>
<p>C-48.10 #2h <u>NGF FY2018</u> \$1,870,000</p>	<p>Capital Outlay - DCR - Widewater State Park Adds funding to support the construction of Widewater State Park, Phase II A which includes a maintenance area, trailhead parking, contact station, picnic areas and restrooms.</p>
<p>C-48.10 #3h <u>NGF FY2018</u> \$2,900,000</p>	<p>Capital Outlay - DCR - Property Acquisition Adds the acquisition of property contiguous to Loudoun State Park.</p>
<p>C-26.50 #1h <u>GF FY2018</u> \$837,000</p>	<p>Capital Outlay - DCR - Biscuit Run Park Access Road and Parking Adds improvements to Biscuit Run State Park for an access road and gravel parking lot.</p>

Budget Amendments – Senate Bill 900

<p>364 #4s <u>GF FY2018</u> \$500,000</p>	<p>Natural Heritage Program Restoration Provides an additional \$500,000 in the second year for the Natural Heritage Program as part of the ongoing base budget in support of active Natural Area Preserve and Natural Heritage Resources conservation across Virginia and the Commonwealth's 63 Natural Area Preserves as recommended by the Board of Conservation as part of an overall rebenchmark of \$2.9M. Since 2002, the Natural Area Preserve System has grown by 35 natural areas, 106 tracts of land and 37,237 acres while total staffing for the program has shrunk from 48 to 45 FTEs. These funds would support an additional 2 FTEs and provide operating expenses to support public access, boundaries, gates, gravel for roads and parking, trails development and signage, field surveys, law enforcement, invasive species control, fire management, habitat restoration, and hunting.</p>
<p>365 #2s <u>GF FY2017</u> \$400,000</p>	<p>Partial Restoration of Funding for Swift Creek Trail Partially restores funding eliminated in SB 900 for the construction of accessible mountain bike trails for disabled riders. Additional language clarifies the legislative intent of the funding is for trail construction and does not include additional structures.</p>

<p>365 #5s <u>GF FY2017</u> \$612,537 <u>GF FY2018</u> \$612,537</p>	<p>Youth Conservation Corps Allows Virginia State Parks to establish stable funding to sponsor 25 Youth Corps programs serving 36 state parks each summer.</p>
<p>456 #1s</p>	<p>Biscuit Run Recreational Area Entrance Directs the Virginia Department of Transportation to use \$1.2 million in funding from the Recreational Access Road and the Economic Development Access Programs to build an entrance to the Biscuit Run Recreational Area.</p>
<p>C-48.10 #3s</p>	<p>CO - DCR - Fund Phase II of Widewater State Park Construction Funds Phase II of Widewater State Park with Virginia Public Building Authority (VPBA) bonds in FY 2018. The amendment is silent on the amount of the project as it will be done in a pool.</p>
<p>C-25 #1s <u>NGF FY2018</u> \$2,900,000</p>	<p>CO - DCR - Loudoun State Park Land Acquisition Provides authorization for the Virginia Public Building Authority to issue bonds in the amount of up to \$2.9 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to purchase a 281-acre parcel contiguous to the 600-acre Loudoun State Park.</p>
<p>C-26.5 #1s <u>GF FY2018</u> \$837,000</p>	<p>CO - DCR - Biscuit Run Park Access Roads and Parking Provides funding of \$837,000 GF for an access road and a gravel parking lot to allow for day access to the Biscuit Run State Recreation Area.</p>

Questions

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Policy Office