

**Board of Conservation and Recreation  
Thursday, December 21, 2017  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Richmond, Virginia**

**TIME AND PLACE**

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 21, 2017 at the Department of Conservation and Recreation in Richmond, Virginia.

**BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS PRESENT**

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair

Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair

Vincent M. Burgess

Danielle Heisler

Andrew C. Jennison

Kat Maybury

Harvey B. Morgan

Esther M. Nizer

Vivek Shinde Patil, PhD

Isaac J. Sarver

**BOARD OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Nancy Hull Davidson

Dexter C. Hurt

**DCR STAFF PRESENT**

Clyde E. Cristman, Director

Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director of Administration and Finance

Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner

Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison

Melissa Jackson, Budget Manager

Sharon Partee, Director of Finance

Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources

Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage

Timothy Shrader, Eastern Field Operations Director

Thomas Smith, Deputy Director of Operations

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM**

With ten (10) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chairman Wingo called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the calling of the role. He welcomed new members Esther Nizer and Kat Maybury and asked other members and staff to introduce themselves.

Chairman Wingo reported that he had recently met with Governor-Elect Ralph Northam and had challenged him to visit all 37 state parks as Governor McAuliffe had done.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2017**

Ms. Jackson moved for the approval of the minutes of the September 21, 2017 meeting of the Board of Conservation and Recreation. Mr. Sarver seconded and the minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Director Cristman expressed his appreciation for having served as DCR Director for four years. The Commonwealth is currently going through the transition process. Governor-elect Northam has appointed Matt Strickler to be the new Secretary of Natural Resources. Mr. Strickler has served the last five years as staff to the Natural Resources Committee for the Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Governor McAuliffe introduced his outgoing recommended budget on Monday, December 17. Included in the budget recommendation is the authorization for DCR to accept a donation of a particular property near Middle Peninsula State Park.

Additional budget recommendations include:

- \$4.5 million each year for land conservation
- \$22.5 from the Water Quality Improvement Fund. About 12% of this will go to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for technical assistance
- Increased funding for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, specifically to address urban-based land conservation practices
- Funding to increase broadband connectivity

Director Cristman reminded members that this is a proposed budget and that the General Assembly will act on the recommendations.

The agency has two bills regarding to land transfers associated with Caledon and False Cape State Parks.

The General Assembly Session begins on January 10, 2018 and is a 60-day budget session. The Inauguration is January 13, 2018.

**DUPONT AND SKIFFES CREEK SETTLEMENT UPDATES** – *Tom Smith, DCR*

DCR has worked with the Secretary of Natural Resources regarding two historic settlements.

The DuPont Settlement was based on a mercury spill from the DuPont plant in the Waynesboro area from the 1930s to the 1950s. The initial settlement with the State was in the 1980s but that did not address the full impact to the South River where the sediment continued to wash downstream for up to 100 miles. Because the settlement with the federal government was not complete the case was opened back up and settled for approximately \$52 million for natural resources damages, with approximately \$21M going to land conservation projects. Decisions regarding these projects were made by the trustees, the Secretary of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Virginia Land

Conservation Foundation solicited applications and made recommendations concerning these projects. Twelve projects were funded for about \$13 million.

The Dominion Skiffes Creek Settlement provided funding in several areas. That included \$15.595 million in water quality projects that is being managed by the Virginia Environment Endowment. An additional \$12.5 million was provided to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation to administer for projects in the affected area. The VLCF approved nine projects that cover about 4,000 acres in that the James River Watershed with the focus in the lower James area.

As a result of these settlements the VLCF distributed almost \$30 million in the months October through December, making it a record year. In addition to the settlements, the VLCF awarded \$4.2 million in grants through the standard grant round.

Ms. Jackson expressed a concern that the Board did not have an opportunity to review the settlement with regard to the power line crossing the James. She noted that the Lower James is part of the Scenic River system and that previously the Scenic River Board would comment regarding those issues. That responsibility now falls with the Board of Conservation and Recreation.

Director Cristman noted that the disposition of the settlements was an expedited process and that there was not time to bring the discussion before the Board.

*Consideration of a Board subcommittee to address scenic resources*

Ms. Jackson noted that at the Claytor Lake meeting the Board had discussed the establishment of a subcommittee to review scenic resources.

Director Cristman advised that the Board was considering how to address scenic rivers and other scenic resources. He suggested that a subcommittee of the Board could take on this responsibility. There has been additional discussion with VDOT in terms of Scenic Byways.

Chairman Wingo asked that members interested in participating in the subcommittee let him know. He will work with the Director and will report back at the next Board meeting.

**STATE PARKS UPDATE** – *Tim Shrader, DCR*

Mr. Shrader gave an overview of State Park activities.

*Clinch River State Park*

- \$2.5M for acquisition authorized
- 285.5-acre parcel in Russell County is in the process of acquisition
- Others in negotiation
- The Nature Conservancy donated:
  - 1.0-acre parcel near Artrip
  - 2.3-acre parcel near Old Castlewood
  - TNC has constructed cartop launch facilities to DCR specifications

*State Park in Loudon County – Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship*

- Adjacent 280 acres
- Mission is to study, restore, interpret, and experience our land's environment and history

*Natural Bridge*

- The park now has four full-time staff
- Work is ongoing to create the "state park feel"
- Capital repairs
  - Repaving the bus access road to Cedar Creek
  - Window replacement in the manager's residence
  - A professional assessment of the HVAC system in the Visitor Center
- 2017 attendance as of November 30<sup>th</sup> is 178,934
- 2017 revenue to date is \$1,959,301.57
- *The Friends of Natural Bridge State Park* has been formed with the mission to "preserve, protect, and promote Natural Bridge State Park."

*Seven Bends*

- Staffed by chief ranger Tom Stevens
  - Improving an existing barn for use as a temporary maintenance facility
  - Establishing relationships with local law enforcement, government officials, and community groups
- VDOT completed replacement of the Lupton Road Bridge

*State Park Attendance YTD through 11/30/17*

- 9,845,374
- An ongoing attendance study is being done by Virginia Tech

*Yurts in State Parks*

- Currently renting 17
  - Pocahontas 4
  - Powhatan 3
  - Fairy Stone 4
  - Hungry Mother 2
  - Natural Tunnel 4
- Waiting on the occupancy permit for
  - Lake Anna 4
  - Shenandoah 2
  - Grayson Highlands 1
- Currently under construction or planned
  - Anticipated completion in the spring
    - § Grayson Highlands 2
    - § Occoneechee 3
    - § Chippokes 3
  - Remainder
    - § First Landing 3

§ Kiptopeke 3

*State Parks Highway Sign Project*

- 144 signs complete
- 53 in the process
- Funding is insufficient to complete all parks

*The Millennial Experience: A study on how to bring young adults into State Parks.*

- Purpose Statement: To determine relevant information and ideas to better engage young adults ages 18-30 in Virginia State Parks.
  - Millennials/iGens are more influenced by their peers than authorities, mostly through technology
  - Millennials/iGens may feel like the family oriented experience means that State Parks aren't for them
  - #Findyourpark social campaign
    - § Emphasize how Virginia State parks have something for everyone

*First Day Hikes*

- Virginia State Parks will again be hosting First Day Hikes and events on January 1, 2018.

**NATURAL HERITAGE UPDATE** – Jason Bulluck, DCR

*DCR Natural Heritage Program – 2017 in Review*

- Highland County – Jack Mountain
  - Four DNH staff
  - One day
  - Eight Natural Heritage resources documented
- Co-hosted annual meeting of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas
  - >90 attendees from 25 states, Canada, and Australia
  - 108 species recorded during field trips
  - 54% of Virginia fauna
- Native bee inventories
  - Done at five natural areas preserves
    - § Antioch Pines
    - § Blackwater Ecological Preserve
    - § Chub Sandhill
    - § South Quay Sandhills
    - § Fort A.P. Hill
  - Pollinators of federal listed plants:
    - § Swamp pink and Virginia sneezeweed
  - >7,000 native bee specimens collected
  - Several new species state records
  - First Virginia record of one genus
  - Prepared the official list of ~450 bee species native to Virginia
- Rare Mussel Surveys

- Tye River, Nelson County
- Rock Island Creek, Buckingham County
- Three new locations of a yet-to-be-described species of violet
  - All in Bath County, on shale barrens
  - Range coincident with that of several other shale endemics
  - Working with Dr. Harvey Ballard and grad students to publish discovery

Mr. Bulluck gave an overview of the data that was added to the Virginia Natural Heritage Database in 2017.

- Pipelines
  - Mountain Valley Pipeline
    - § November 28, 2017 – DEQ Isolated Wetlands Comments
    - § November 30, 2017 – VMRC Permit Comments
    - § December 6 and 7, 2017 – 401 Certification Water Control Board Hearings – DCR Karst Program Coordinator
  - Atlantic Coast Pipeline
    - § December 11 and 12, 2017 – 401 Certification Water Control Board Hearings, DCR Karst Program Coordinator
    - § December 31, 2017- VMRC Permit Comments Due
- 2017 Natural Area Preserve Additions
  - The Pinnacle – 28-acre fee-simple transfer from the TNC (03/28/17)
  - Pedlar Hills – 139 acres fee-simple purchase by DCR (04/11/17)
  - The Cedars – 154 acres dedicated to the TNC ownership (05/15/17)
  - The Cedars – Thompson Cedar Cave, 71 acres closed and dedicated by TNC (08/08/17)
  - Cowbane Prairie – 85 care fee-simple transfer from TNC (10/27/17)
- Land Protection Grants Received 2017
  - Camp Branch \$100,000 (VLCF)
  - Mount Joy Ponds \$316, 400 (VLCF)
  - Pedlar Hills \$53,000 (VLCF)
  - Antioch Pines \$419,000 (VLCF)
  - Magothy Bay \$398,400 (VLCF)
  - Difficult Creek \$174,200 (VLCF)
  - Grafton Ponds \$3,600,000 (Skiffes Creek)
  - Deep Run Ponds \$1,627,000 (DuPont)
  - Lyndhurst Ponds \$4,250,000 (DuPont)
- Raven Road Access to Crow’s Nest Opening
  - Raven Road Access open April 1, 2017
  - 8 miles of hikes on 2,872-acre preserve
  - Weekend following, 300 visitors/day
  - Average since 50-100 visitors/day
  - Simple and sufficient and successful

- Virginia Highlands Festival Trip to The Channels
  - 56 stewardship projects in FY 17
    - § 14 prescribed fire
    - § 14 outreach/education
    - § 8 public access improvement
    - § 6 habitat restoration projects
    - § 6 rare species monitoring projects
    - § 3 invasive species projects
    - § 3 wildlife management projects
    - § 2 management planning
  
- Trail Construction and Maintenance
  - ADA-compliant accessible trail opened December 19, near Cleveland Barrens Natural Area Preserve leads to viewpoint of Tank Hollow Falls, near the Town of Cleveland in the Clinch River Valley.

**PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES UPDATE** – Danette Poole

Ms. Poole gave an update regarding the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan.

The 2018 VOP Theme is: “Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Land Conservation.”

- Why the Virginia Outdoors Plan?
  - Produced in accordance with §10.1-2000 of the *Code of Virginia* (VOP)
  - Produced in accordance with §10.1-1021 of the *Code of Virginia* (Land conservation)
  - Requirement of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program.
- VOP Schedule
  - What has been completed?
    - § VOP TAC meeting – May 2017
    - § Inventory Complete – June 2017
    - § Draft text for regional chapters – November 2017
    - § Survey Complete – December 2017
  - What is next?
    - § Draft document – March 2018
    - § Public meetings – Early Spring 2018
    - § Final comments integrated – Late Spring 2018
    - § Final text to NPS – July 2018
    - § Updated VOP website – September 2018
  - The Virginia Outdoors Inventory showed:
    - § State spending for outdoor recreation
      - 74% support state funding for outdoor recreation
      - 44% of those support an increase in funding
    - § Access to outdoor recreation
      - 70% considered it “very important” to have access to outdoor recreation opportunities
      - An increase in 15% since the 2011 survey

§ Importance of Natural Resources

- 96% ranked protection of Virginia’s natural areas and open space resources as “important” or “very important”

Additional information regarding the Virginia Outdoors Plan may be found at this link:  
<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>

*Scenic Resources – Lynn Crump*

Ms. Crump gave an update regarding Scenic Resources.

- Virginia Resources Stewardship Conference: Landscape and Seascape Management in a Time of Change
  - People
  - Senses
  - Sense of Place
  - Restoration
  - Economy
  - Legal
- Scenic Virginia and DCR MOA
  - Implementing VOP recommendations
  - Virginia Viewshed crowd sourcing, registry, and education
  - Visual Resources technical committee
- Virginia ViewFinders Home Page
  - [www.VirginiaViewFinders.org](http://www.VirginiaViewFinders.org)
- Virginia Byways: VDOT and DCR MOA
  - Virginia Byway program
  - Implementing VOP recommendations
    - § Process
      - Request for review – Historic sites, local planning controls
      - Review DCR & VDOT
      - Recommendation
      - Board Resolution
      - CTB Review, Designation and Signs installed
      - Periodic review
    - § Criteria
      - Important and unique scenic values and experiences
      - Diverse landscape experience
      - Linkages and access
      - Leisurely motoring experience
      - Landscape Control and Management
      - Enhancements can occur
- Virginia Scenic Rivers
  - Designation Process
    - § Evaluate River
      - Request



- Map and literature surveys
  - Field evaluation
  - 13 eligibility criteria
- § Letter to jurisdictions confirming qualification and requesting support to move forward.
  - § Report preparation. Resolution of support from BOS and BCR and support from other agencies.
  - § Report on the web and boiler plate legislation provided to citizen/governing body
  - § Localities work with legislators to introduce legislation to the General Assembly
  - § Passage by General Assembly and Governor's signature
- Scenic River Committees
    - § Catoctin Creek (Loudoun County)
    - § Goose Creek (Loudon County)
    - § Historic Falls of the James (City of Richmond)

**FINANCIAL UPDATE** – Sharon Partee, DCR

Ms. Partee reviewed the DCR General Fund Appropriation and Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2018.

FY 2018 Legislative Appropriation	\$ 49, 922,661
Appropriation Transfers and Adjustments	
<b>Land Conservation Fund</b>	(4,500,000)
<b>SWCD Dam Repair</b>	(500,000)
<b>Dam Safety/Flood Prevention &amp; Protection</b>	(464,294)
<b>Actual 3% Salary/Benefit Increase (plus non-personnel)</b>	1,270,787
<b>Partial re-appropriation for State Parks Bike Trail</b>	200,000
	<u>(3,992,507)</u>
<b>FY 2018 Total GF Appropriation Available for Operations</b>	<b><u>\$45,929,154</u></b>

Division	FY18 Division Targets	YTD Actual (As of November 2017)	Target vs. Actual %
<b>Soil &amp; Water Conservation</b>	9,284,073	4,588,585	49.4%
<b>Dam Safety</b>	1,494,341	593,065	39.7%
<b>Natural Heritage</b>	3,319,365	1,616,655	48.7%
<b>Land Conservation</b>	1,950,312	940,471	48.2%
<b>State Parks</b>	18,788,671	12,092,926	64.4%
<b>PRR (Inc. Design &amp; Construction, Breaks)</b>	1,829,988	842,146	46.0%
<b>Director's Office – Admin – Finance</b>	<u>9,262,504</u>	<u>4,547,077</u>	<u>49.1%</u>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$45,929,154</u>	<u>25,220,925</u>	<u>54.9%</u>

Ms. Partee also reviewed elements of the Governor's proposed budget.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Jackson expressed appreciation to Director Cristman and staff for keeping the Board informed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**NEXT MEETING**

Chairman Wingo will work with DCR staff to schedule the next meeting in the late spring following the adjournment of the General Assembly session.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.