

**Board of Conservation and Recreation
Wednesday, November 2, 2016
Murphy Hall, Westmoreland State Park
Montross, Virginia**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Board of Conservation and Recreation convened at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 in Murphy Hall at Westmoreland State Park, Montross, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Bruce Wingo, Chair	Michael P. Reynold
Patricia A. Jackson, Vice Chair	Vivek Patil
Danielle Heisler	Isaac J. Sarver
Harvey B. Morgan	

MEMBERS ABSENT

Vincent M. Burgess	Dexter C. Hurt
Nancy Hull Davidson	Andrew C. Jennison

STAFF PRESENT

Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Tom Smith, Deputy Director for Operations
Jason Bulluck, Director, Division of Natural Heritage
Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner
Michael Fletcher, Board and Constituent Services Liaison
Lisa McGee, Director, Policy and Planning
Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
Suzanne Swinson, Business Administration Manager, Division of State Parks

QUORUM

With seven (7) 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 member and staff introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 23, 2016

Mr. Fletcher noted that Ms. Poole's name had been omitted from the attendance list for the September meeting.

Mr. Sarver moved for the approval of the minutes of the September 23, 2016 meeting as amended. Ms. Jackson seconded and the minutes were approved as amended.

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

Director Cristman welcomed Board members to Westmoreland State Parks. Westmoreland State Park is one of the original six parks opened in 1936 and was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is considered one of DCR's flagship parks and is one of the most popular in the system.

Response to the opening of Natural Bridge as a State Park has been phenomenal. The numbers and visitation have been strong and the gift shop is doing very well. Concern is that there will be enough revenue to cover additional needed staff.

Due to the state budget shortfall, DCR was challenged to submit general fund spending reductions of 5%. The plan accepted produced a savings of \$2.1 million or just under 5%. The biggest cut at DCR was the elimination of the Office of Environmental Education which included five positions. DCR is now looking at the functions that office performed and deciding where those may be continued in other divisions. DCR also lost \$635,000 that had been appropriated to expand the biking trails at Pocahontas.

Revenue collections are down in the Commonwealth. While unemployment is low, many people are working at lower paying jobs thus decreasing tax revenue. Additionally, Internet sales taxes are not collected in Virginia. DCR has also been challenged by the Affordable Care Act limitations of 1500 hours annually for wage employees.

DCR will have to submit a plan for another \$4 million in cuts for Fiscal Year 2018.

Ms. Jackson asked that when decisions are made the Board be given a head's up rather than learning of cuts through the media. Mr. Cristman agreed to provide that information when possible but noted that the last round of cuts took place within less than 24 hours.

CAPITAL OUTLAY PILOT PROJECT UPDATE – Lisa McGee, Director of Policy and Planning

Ms. McGee gave an overview of the Capital Pilot Project implemented in August, 2015.

Purpose of Oversight

- Capital Projects – require review by the Department of Planning and Budget and the Department of General Services.
- Non-capital Projects – require review by the Department of General Services only.

Issues

- Not all projects are equally complex.
- Review process generally treats all projects and improvements the same:
 - Same amount of plan review
 - Same amount of permit review
 - Executive Branch funding approval regardless of scope and size.

The Capital Pilot Project was established on August 23, 2015 through an Executive Memorandum from the Chief of Staff. The Memorandum recognized that not all capital projects are equally complex and that efforts should be made to streamline the processes for efficiency and to ensure that an appropriate level of oversight is maintained.

Pilot Directives

- Exempt from the Department of General Services’ Cost Review Process.
- Required submittal of capital outlay forms through the Department of General Services’ BITS system prior to the release of funds to DPB.
- Funds required to be released at the planning, construction, and equipment phases.
- Expedited approval by DPB and DGS.
- Project Delegation Request to DGS from DCR.
- Delegation of Building Code Enforcement Duties to appropriate local building official by DCR.
- Review of each project must be completed by DPB and DGS within 30 days of DCR submission.

Eligible Capital Outlay Projects

- Chapter 665 of the 2015 Acts of Assembly
 - Seven Bends State Park
 - Occoneechee State Park Spray Ground
 - Natural Tunnel State Park
 - State Park Yurts

Eligible Non-Capital Projects

- Projects for the construction, renovation, repair or replacement of plant and other improvements, demolitions, repairs and replacements to real property that require permits and other inspections that may not meet the criteria of a capital outlay project.

Ms. McGee reviewed the project comparison findings:

	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Fairy Stone HVAC On-Going	Leesylvania HVAC Completed	
Scope of Project	Replace HVAC in SP Residence	Replace HVAC in SP Residence	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$50,000	\$50,000	
Project Review Time	14 days	42 days	67%
Project Review Costs	\$200	\$2200	91%

	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Fairy Stone Deck Installation On-Going	Douthat Deck Installation Complete	
Scope of Project	Deck installation at Beach Building	Deck installation at Restaurant	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$15,000	\$15,000	
Project Review Time	1 days	63 days	98%
Project Review Costs	\$0.00	\$4140	100%

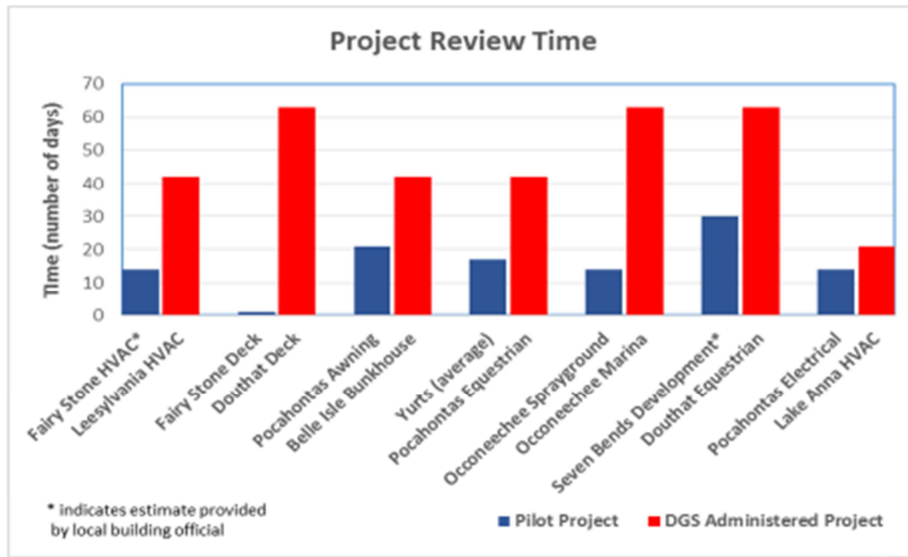
	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Pocahontas Pool	Belle Isle Bunkhouse	
Scope of Project	Replace canopy structure	Renovate Youth Conservation Bldg.	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$70,000	\$65,000	
Project Review Time	21 days	42 days	50%
Project Review Costs	\$446	\$2201	80%

	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Yurts	Pocahontas Equestrian	
Scope of Project	Installation of Yurts at several state parks with surrounding decks	Construction of equestrian area (road, parking, utilities, bathroom and workout ring)	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$1.4 Million	\$1.3 Million	
Project Review Time	17 days	42 days	60%
Project Review Costs	\$569	\$4560	88%

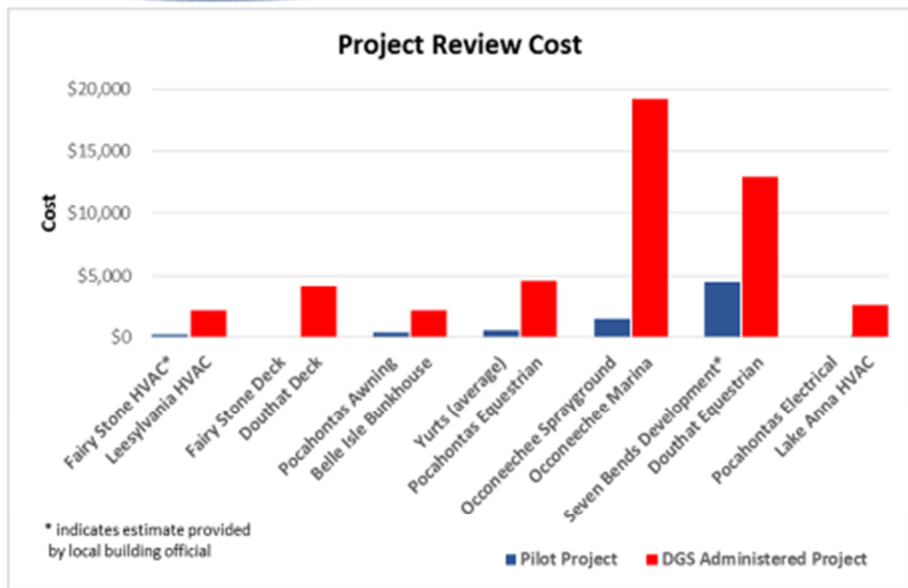
	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Occoneechee Sprayground	Occoneechee Marina	
Scope of Project	Water spray area, picnic shelter, bathroom, playground, parking area	52-Slip boating dock, parking area, vault toilet, fuel dock, utilities	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$1.5 Million	\$1.9 Million	
Project Review Time	14 days	63 days	78%
Project Review Costs	\$1476	\$19,200	92%

	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Seven Bends Development	Douthat Equestrian Area	
Scope of Project	2 parking areas, 2 vault toilets, picnic shelter, 2 canoe slides, maintenance shed	10 space overnight Camping area for trailers, a bathroom, road, picnic shelters, utilities	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$2.24 Million	\$2.4 Million	
Project Review Time	30 days	63 days	52%
Project Review Costs	\$4500	\$13000	65%

	Pilot Project	DGS Project	Time/Cost Savings
Project	Pocahontas Electrical Facilities Upgrade	Lake Anna HVAC	
Scope of Project	Upgrade facilities at amphitheater coordinating with Virginia Power	Replace Heating and Air Conditioning in Concession Building	
Estimated Construction Cost	\$35,000	\$35,000	
Project Review Time	14 days	21 days	33%
Project Review Costs	\$250	\$2700	91%



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Findings

- Average Project Review Time and Costs
 - Project Review Time

- § Pilot Project – 16 days
- § DGS Administered Project – 48 days
- Project Review Cost
 - § Pilot Projects - \$1,063
 - § DGS Administered Projects - \$6,857

Recommendations

- At a minimum, continue Pilot program.
- Increase administrative efficiency by allowing a single Delegation Request from DCR for projects within an established project scope and under at \$1Million cost threshold.
- Formalize Pilot Program in the Construction and Professional Services Manual, Budget Language or *Code of Virginia*.

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

Mr. Bulluck gave an update on natural area funding received from the latest Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Round. Twelve million dollars was appropriated to the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation. Of that twelve million, six million goes to fund land conservation projects in the following areas: natural areas, forests and farmlands, open space, historical resources.

In the natural areas category localities and non-profits can apply for grants. A team scores the applications and submits recommendations to the VLCF Board of Trustees regarding what should be funded.

In the latest grand round, seven projects were funded that will add land to the current Natural Area Preserve system lands. In addition, two more projects were funded in the Open Space category. The following projects were funded:

The Cedars Natural Area Preserve

Addition of 504 acres in Lee County. The Cedars region is a focal area for DCR due to the extraordinary biodiversity significance of the region's natural heritage resources. The tract includes 6,170 feet of frontage on the Powel River, which supports the most significant freshwater diversity in North America.

North Landing River Sawgrass Marsh

This grant to the Nature Conservancy was for a purchase of an easement on 1,275 acres of wetlands on the North Landing River within the City of Virginia Beach. This project will close the last unprotected gap along more than 13 miles on the western side of the river.

Redrock Mountain Natural Area Preserve

This grant is for the purchase of 98 acres in Smyth County as an addition to Redrock Mountain Natural Area Preserve. This will connect the Preserve with the nearby Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area and secure and inholding in one of Virginia's most significant contiguous forested landscapes.

Cowbane Wet Prairie Natural Area Preserve Addition

This area is one of the last remaining example of wet prairies and meadows that once predominated in Shenandoah Valley. The grant will acquire 84 acres along the South River and adjacent to Cowbane Prairie Natural Area Preserve in Augusta County.

Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve Addition

Although the six acres is a relatively small acquisition, this tract will be an important addition to the preserve, which is an increasingly popular public recreation destination and one of the most important scenic resources in the region. The additional land will help balance the level of public access with the level of protection.

Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve

An additional 75 acres along the Blackwater River in Southampton County will be added to Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve. Upland pine-oak woodlands are being restored with prescribed burning and native longleaf pines are being returned, while adjacent bottomland hardwood forests and swamps are being protected from timber harvest and slowly growing into maturity.

Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve

This grant acquires an approximately 110-acre parcel that lies along the west flank of the Shenandoah National Park, within a portion of the Port Republic Battlefield Study Area, and adjoining the Deep Run Natural Area Preserve.

Additional grants in the Parks and Open Space category will add 127 acres to the Crow's Nest Area Preserve in Stafford County and a 36 acre tract adjacent to the Pigg River and Bald Knob Natural Area Preserve near the Town of Rocky Mount.

Grant recipients are expected to complete the acquisitions within one to two years of the initial grant.

PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES UPDATE – *Danette Poole, Director, Division of Planning and Recreation Resources and Lynn Crump, Environmental Programs Planner*

Ms. Poole gave the update for the Division of Planning and Recreation Resources.

Virginia Treasures

The goal for Virginia Treasures is 1,000 named Natural, Cultural, Recreational, and Land Conservation Treasures. Current numbers are:

- 511 Natural, Cultural , and Recreational Treasures
- 405 Land Conservation Treasures

Governor McAuliffe dedicated Natural Bridge State Park as the 925th Virginia Treasure at the park's opening on September 24, 2016.

Virginia Outdoors Plan

DCR continues the work on the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan. The plan will again be presented in digital format and will include links to local and regional recreational and conservation resources.

A Joint VRPS (Virginia Recreation and Park Society) DCR Award, to include the resolution adopted by the Board in July, 2016, will be presented at the VRPS conference on November 6 to three Virginia Outdoors Plan Technical Advisory Committee/VRPS members for outstanding service to the outdoor recreation profession.

Virginia Outdoors Plan Regional meetings are being conducted with the planning district commissions across the Commonwealth.

The target date for the completion of the Outdoor Recreation Inventory is December 2016.

DCR will contract with a university to conduct the 2017 Virginia Outdoors Survey.

Design and Construction

- Projects Completed
 - High Bridge Access Road
 - Powhatan Campground
 - Mulberry Hill HVAC/Roof
 - Westmoreland Boat Ramp
 - Lake Laura and Birdhaven Dams
 - Kiptopeke Cabins
- Ongoing Projects
 - New Cabins – Lake Anna, Natural Tunnel, Claytor Lake, Twin Lakes
 - Widewater – Phase 1A (Construction in 2017)
 - Occoneechee Sprayground
 - Seven Bents – Phase 1
 - Water system, drain and roof repairs – numerous parks (approximately \$2.7 million in maintenance reserve funds)
- New Bond Projects
 - 15 projects – approximate total value of \$44 million
 - Project Priorities:
 - § Widewater – Phase 1B
 - § Clinch River
 - § Foster Falls Hotel
 - § Walnut Valley Farm

Statewide Trails Advisory Committee

Ms. Poole provided members with a copy of the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee report submitted to the General Assembly in October, 2016. Report contents include:

1. Virginia Outdoors Plan recommendations
2. Statewide Trail Planning Topics
3. Youth Engagement
4. Old Growth Forest Specialty Trails
5. Historic Specialty Trails

6. Advisory Committee Support
7. Appendix items included materials shared at VOP meetings

The next meeting of the Statewide Trails Advisory Committee will be Thursday, December 1, 2016 at Natural Bridge Hotel. Topics of discussion will include:

- Conclusion of discussion topics assigned by the General Assembly
- Presentation on the Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail.

A Trails Conference is planned for April 24-27, 2017 in Williamsburg in partnership with VAULT.

Recreation Grants

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - Grant round of approximately \$2.6 million (combined 2015 & 2016 apportionments) anticipated in late November.
 - Awaiting approval of OPSP and scoring criteria by the NPS.
- Recreational Trails Program
 - 15 applications requested over \$3.29 million in assistance.
 - Approximately \$1 million available.
 - Committee recommended 5 projects to go forward: 3 additional are “wait listed.”
 - New FHWA program requirements – incremental funding

Scenic Rivers Program

Ms. Crump gave an update regarding the designation of the Upper James River as a Virginia Scenic River. She reviewed the map of the proposed sections.

The Scenic River Program is for river resource protection and relies on the individual riparian property owner. The Scenic River Act does not authorize any additional restrictions on riparian land uses.

The extension process includes:

- Request by locality, legislators, or Board
- Field study and qualification
- Legislation to amend the *Code of Virginia*

Field evaluation criteria include:

- Corridor vegetation
- Streambed modifications
- Human development – city, town or rural development
- Historic features
- Landscape – diversity and views
- Fishery and natural heritage
- Water Quality
- Parallel roads and crossings

- Special features and overall aesthetic appeal
- Public recreation and land protection

Ms. Crump reviewed the designation process for the Upper James.

1. Field Evaluation – Complete
2. Letters sent to all jurisdictions confirming qualifications and requesting support to move forward – Complete.
3. Resolutions of support from Boards of Supervisors and Councils – 2 Completed.
4. Localities work with legislators to introduce legislation to the General Assembly.
5. Passage by General Assembly and Governor’s signature.

Ms. Crump requested that the Board take action to endorse the designation of the Upper James River as outlined in her presentation.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation endorse the designation of the segments of the Upper James River as a Virginia Scenic River as presented by staff. Mr. Sarver seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

STATE PARKS UPDATE – *Suzanne Swinson, Business Administration Manager, Division of State Parks*

Ms. Swinson reviewed the final recommended changes to the report entitled “An Examination of Public-Private Partnerships in Virginia State Parks.” Changes made since the September 23, 2016 Board meeting included:

- Addition of an executive summary.
- Additional information regarding park concessions.
- Expanded information regarding park revenues.
- A section added about special events.
- Information about corporate sponsorships.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Reynold moved that the Board of Conservation and Recreation approve the report entitled “An Examination of Public-Private Partnerships in Virginia State Parks” as presented by staff. Ms. Jackson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Wingo asked for an update regarding the time table for development of Widewater and Seven Bends State Parks.

Director Cristman advised that the contract had been executed for Widewater State Park and the hope was to break ground soon. Work at Seven Bends State Park has been delayed due to the weight limit on two low water bridges that provide access to the park. The bridges do not have capacity for the large equipment required for building demolition. VDOT is in the process of upgrading the bridges. DCR is planning to do demolition and construction at the same time once the bridges have been adapted.

Regarding Clinch River State park appraisals have been done on three properties, however the appraisals were lower than land owners had hoped. Negotiations continue.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Patil reported that he had been able to attend one of the Outdoors Plan public meeting and was very impressed with how DCR staff work with communities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Wingo advised that he would work with the Director to establish a late January meeting date.

Ms. Jackson asked what the Department might be proposing to the General Assembly.

Director Cristman reviewed the reports being submitted by DCR:

- Capital Outlay Report
- Public-Private Partnership Report
- A report on State Park Fees
- State Trails Advisory Committee Report – already submitted

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Bruce Wingo
Chair

Clyde E. Cristman
DCR Director