

**Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Board Room, 4000 West Board Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230**

July 27, 2010

Present: Ms. Sherry S. Crumley, Madam Chair, F. Scott Reed; **Executive Director:** Robert "Bob" W. Duncan; **Chief Operating Officer:** Matt Koch; Senior Leadership Team: Gary Martel, Charlie Sledd, and Larry Hart.

[\(Listen: Welcome\)](#)

The Chairman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The Chairman noted for the record a quorum was present for the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: [\(Listen: Approval of Minutes\)](#) The minutes of the May 24, 2010 meeting have been posted on the Website and copies were distributed to the Committee members for review. **The Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Reed made the following motion: Madam Chair, I moved the minutes of the meeting be approved as distributed. Motion seconded by Crumley: Ayes: Crumley and Reed.**

Public Access for Department Programs: [\(Listen: Public Access for Department Programs\)](#) Ms. Crumley called on Mr. Ellis to report on Public Access for Department Programs. During the May 24, 2010 Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting, Mr. Yates requested the Committee and Staff to begin a dialogue on Public Access for Department Programs. Mr. Ellis distributed handouts related to this issue. These publications were titled *Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States* (a survey conducted by Responsive Management) and *Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States: Virginia Results* (produced by Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation).

These studies identify some of the issues currently being addressed by other states. The Wildlife staff will continue to review the reports to develop the program. Mr. Ellis noted the reason for the study was to obtain information for the Open Field Program by the Farm Service Agency and the USDA.

Mr. Ellis indicated that he and Mr. Cale Godfrey participated in a conference call along with 30 other states conducted by the Farm Services and the USDA dealing with the USDA Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. This is a new program that provides competitive grants to states and tribes. The primary objective of the program is to encourage owners and operators of privately held farms, ranch and forest lands to voluntarily make the land available for access by the public for wildlife-dependent recreation including hunting, fishing, and other programs implemented by state or tribal government. The call addressed concerns of the states regarding the criteria for application into the program. On August 3 and 4, staff will participate in a grant-writing Webinar to help everyone meet the objectives of applying for the grant. Applications are due on August 23rd. The state can apply for monies for a specific public access program or expand a current public access program already in place. Due to the short time frame, Mr. Ellis recommended to the Committee that he put a working group together to develop a project for the application process next year. A discussion was held on the environmental impact study. The Director suggested once the program has been developed, he would recommend a presentation to the Agency Advisory Group.

The Committee directed the staff to move forward as recommended with the development of a plan to improve public access to department programs.

Ms. Crumley directed the Board Secretary to show this as a recurring action item for future committee meetings. The Chairman thanked staff for their report.

(Links to material reference in this presentation are listed on page 4)

Review of Boating Safety and Education Requirements: ([Listen: Review of Boating Safety and Education Requirements](#)) The Chairman called on Mr. Charlie Sledd to present a review of the Boating Safety Education Requirements. As noted at the July 13th Board meeting, Virginia had two rather high-profile boating fatalities over the July 4th holiday weekend. While each incident resulted in considerable media interest, as well as some discussion with Legislative Services, the Department's response was greatly facilitated by the fact that Virginia has the education compliance requirement in place (currently those personal watercraft {PWC} operators age 35 or younger must be in compliance - we are half-way through the age category phase-in for PWC operators). Mr. Sledd presented the Committee an information notebook of relevant material from the boating safety education program. Mr. Sledd thanked Ms. Stacey Brown and Mr. Tom Guess (Statewide Boating Safety Education Coordinators) for preparing this information.

Update on Draft Elk Management Plan: ([Listen: Update on Draft Elk Management Plan](#)) Ms. Crumley called on Mr. Ellis to give the Committee an update on the Draft Elk Management Plan ([view presentation](#)). Mr. Ellis stated five public hearings were conducted in Southwest Virginia. Mr. Ellis distributed to the Committee a handout which highlighted public comments since the period opened on June 9th. As of July 22, 2010 a total of 484 comments from the website or in written form were reviewed by VDGIF. Four hundred (400) comments were in favor of some type of elk restoration while 84 comments were against. Noted in the summary was that many people only commented that they wanted or did not want elk, with no further comment. The issues that stood out being commented about were: recreational impacts, economical impacts, damage concerns, disease concerns and effects on environment.

Mr. Ellis stated staff will make their recommendation regarding the plan during the August 17, 2010 Board Meeting.

A discussion was held by the Committee, Director and Staff.

Ms. Crumley thanked Mr. Ellis for his report.

Update on Hunting and Trapping Amendment Issues: ([Listen: Update on Hunting and Trapping Amendment Issues](#)) Ms. Crumley called on Mr. Cale Godfrey to provide an update on Hunting and Trapping Amendment Issues ([view presentation](#)).

Mr. Godfrey reviewed the current regulation amendment process for the 2010 Fishing, Boating, and Wildlife Diversity Regulation Review and Amendment Process and the 2011-2012 Hunting and Trapping Regulation Review and Amendment Process.

The scoping period has been completed for the 2011-2012 Hunting and Trapping Regulation Review and Amendment Process.

- Comments Received
 - Web – 459
 - Additional comments
 - Forwarded from Fish, Boating, and Wildlife Diversity comment periods
 - Letters and other written comments
 - Constituent interaction
- Issues
 - Legislative - Sunday Hunting, Waterfowl Blinds, Right-to -Retrieve
 - Legislative/Regulatory – Licenses and License Structure
 - Regulatory – General, Deer, Bear, Waterfowl, Turkey, Raccoon
 - Local issues – County Firearms Ordinances

Staff will meet with regulation committees on the issues identified and the Regulatory issues/concepts will be presented to the Board on August 17, 2010.

A discussion was held by the Committee, Director and staff. Ms. Crumley thanked Mr. Godfrey for his report.

Discussion of Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits: ([Listen: Discussion of Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits](#)) Ms. Crumley called on Mr. Ellis to lead the discussion of Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits. Ms. Crumley stated she had contacted other Board Members to see if they had questions on the Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits. Mr. Ellis said he had not received any comments from the Board.

Mr. Ellis and Mr. Gary Costanzo recently attended the Atlantic Flyway Technical Session and Council Meeting. During this meeting, staff discussed seasons and bag limits for the upcoming season. .

Staff will present the Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits for adoption by the Board during the August 17, 2010 Board Meeting

Ms. Crumley thanked Mr. Ellis for his report.

Director's Comments: ([Listen: Director's Comments](#)) Ms Crumley called on the Director for his report. The Director reported on the following items:

- Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show
- Agency response to complaints on cast netting in the Shenandoah Valley
- Deer populations in Northern Virginia
- Meeting with the Appalachian Wildlife Foundation
- Virginia Forever
- Virginia Hunting Preserve Association Meeting
- 25th Anniversary of the Virginia Deer Hunters Publication

A discussion was held by the Committee, Director and staff on the deer populations in Northern Virginia.

Ms. Crumley thanked the Director for his report.

Chairman's Remarks: ([Listen: Chairman's Remarks](#)) Ms. Crumley thanked everyone for their reports and attendance at today's meeting. Ms. Crumley recently accompanied Mr. Jay Jefferies on a tour of our new Short Hills Wildlife Management Area. This wildlife management area will be featured in the *Virginia Wildlife* magazine.

([Listen: Next Meeting and Adjournment](#))

The next Committee Meeting will be held September 14, 2010 at 10:00am. Hearing no further business, **Ms. Crumley called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Reed made the following motion: Madam Chair, I hereby move this meeting be adjourned. Motion Seconded by Ms. Crumley. Ayes: Reed and Crumley.**

Respectfully submitted,

Beth B. Drewery, Secretary
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries

Reference Material Links:

The USDA Voluntary Public Access program

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=pahp>

The FWS SEIS on Annual Regulations for hunting Waterfowl

<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/NewReportsPublications/Hunting/SEIS%207%20June%20b%202010.pdf>

The Responsive Management Hunter Access survey

http://www.responsivemanagement.com/news_from/2010-01-13.htm