

Final Meeting Minutes

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Henrico, VA 23228

January 17, 2024
3:00 pm

Present: Mr. John Daniel chaired the meeting in Mr. Formica's absence; Mr. James Edmunds;
Absent: Dr. Mamie Parker; Mr. Michael Formica; **Board members present:** Mr. Jon Cooper, Mr. Woody Woodall, Mr. Tom Sadler, Mr. Leon Boyd (virtual), Mr. Will Wampler; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Rob Lewis, Mr. Paul Kugelman

The Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that a quorum was present for the meeting.

Approval of the October 25, 2023, Meeting Minutes: The Chair called for a motion to approve the October 25, 2023, Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Daniel made a motion to approve the October 25, 2023, Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Edmunds seconded the motion. Ayes: Edmunds and Daniel

Public Comment – Non-Agenda Item: The Chair called for Public Comments on Non –Agenda Items, hearing none, the Chair continued with the meeting.

Becoming a VA Hunter: The Chair called on Mr. David Hennaman for a report.

Mr. Hennaman gave a report on Becoming a VA Hunter and how the agency is involved and are working with Partners and hosting workshops. He introduced how DWR puts together new workshops through Strategy, Classes, Analytics, and Action. He discussed Next Steps as DWR moves ahead.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Hennaman for his update and report.

End of the Year – Hunting Education Report: The Chair called on Mr. Jimmy Mootz for a report.

Mr. Mootz gave an end of the year report on Hunter Education about how many classes and the number of folks that had taken the Hunter Education courses last year.

There were 296 Active Volunteers teaching Hunter Education classes in 2023. One volunteer who was 93 years old is retiring this year. With the 296 volunteers there were 170 Basic Classes, and 2,787 students were taught Hunter Education in person. In money, that relates to \$247,000 in volunteer time.

Outreach Division Update: The Chair called on Mr. Bob Smet.

Mr. Smet Reported:

- Called on Mr. George Braxton for report.

Mr. Braxton reported on “Developing Firearm Ownership and Sport Shooting R3 Communications for Black Americans.”

Black Americans represent one of the fastest growing segments of firearm owners and sport shooters. The latest sport shooting participation trend survey conducted by Responsive Management in 2023 for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) found that Black residents are the most likely group to be new sport shooters, meaning those who have taken up the activity within the past 5 years. Further, a recent NSSF survey of firearm retailers determined that Black Americans’ purchases of firearms in 2020 were 58% higher than in the previous year; that upward trend continued the following year, with roughly half of firearm retailers reporting increased traffic from Black gun purchasers. Similarly, a recent Responsive Management survey for the Sportsmen’s Alliance Foundation found that latent interest in sport shooting among active military personnel is associated with being Black (among other characteristics). The National African American Gun Association, which was founded in 2015, now has over 45,000 active members across more than 100 chapters nationwide (notably, about half of the organization’s members are female). Despite this promising grassroots activity, significant gaps remain in the available research on the R3 needs and opportunities of Black Americans when it comes to firearm ownership and sport shooting participation. The purpose of this project is to develop targeted R3 strategies, communications, and outreach materials for Black Americans regarding their purchases of firearms and their participation in target and sport shooting activities. The overall goal is to ensure that Black Americans’ initial experience with a firearm is a positive experience and not a negative experience, especially through R3 programs and messages that focus on the unique motivations that drive Black Americans to buy firearms and regularly engage in sport shooting. The project will employ new data collection to better understand firearm ownership and sport shooting participation from the perspective of Black U.S. residents. New messaging and communications outreach material to encourage interest and participation in

sport shooting among Black people will then be developed by JMI, a Richmond, Virginia-based, Black-owned-and-operated marketing, and communications firm.

Mr. Smet continued with his Director's Report:

- PIO position closed on January 5th
- Volunteer Coordinator position has been filled with Kristin Mullins who will be joining us on January 25, 2024
- Lynda Richardson our Art Director will be retiring in February
- The Outreach Division met in the 4th quarter of 2023 to lay out their vision for the upcoming year. Goals discussed included:
 - Incorporating conservation messaging into all deliverable/programming
 - Become outdoor recreationists go to source of information about public lands opportunities in the Commonwealth
 - Prioritize engagement and connection both externally and internally
 - Recruit new hunter and anglers
 - Establish agreed upon divisional priorities
- Education will be focused on providing more workshops and classes to connect people to the outdoors. Working toward monetizing our volunteer hours to satisfy federal grant match requirements.
- The Creative services section will be promoting the Explore the Wild app we've heard about in previous committee meetings. We will begin to actively promote the tool in March and will include a homepage feature, email campaign to our entire customer list, social media campaign
- Working with VTC on a multifaceted partnership which will include promoting EtW at visitor centers across the state and on their media channels.
- Increased presence on YouTube
- Planning on increasing our hunting and fishing "How To" videos
- The Virginia Wildlife Grant Program opened on January 1st and runs through February 1

Director's Report: The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for his Director's Report.

The Director reported that the Board meeting on Thursday will be a large crowd and would be a long day.

Chair's Report:

The Chair thanked all the staff for their informative updates.

The Chair asked if anyone had any further questions or comments and hearing none, the Chair announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 20, 2024, and adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell