

Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Board of Wildlife Resources  
7870 Villa Park Drive  
Henrico, VA 23228

March 21, 2024

9:00 am

**Present:** Mr. Tom Sadler, **Chair,** Mr. Jon Cooper, **Vice Chair;** **Board Members:** Mr. John Daniel, Mr. Leon Boyd, Mr. George Terwilliger, Mr. Woody Woodall, Mr. Will Wampler, Mr. James Edmunds, Mr. Michael Formica and Mr. Brian Vincent; **Absent:** Dr. Mamie Parker; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan J. Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. Rob Lewis, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Ms. Rebecca Lane, Colonel John Cobb, and Mr. Stock Watson.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that a quorum was present.

The Honorable Travis Voyles, Secretary of Natural Resources attended the Board meeting. Ms. Kelci Block, Assistant Attorney General attended the Board meeting.

**Recognitions of Employees and Others:** The Chair called on Director Ryan Brown for Recognitions of Employees.

The Director called on Ms. Becky Gwynn who introduced Mr. Michael Lipford, the new Wildlife Division Director.

The Director recognized and thanked Secretary of Natural Resources for attending the Board meeting.

The Director called on Mr. Cale Godfrey who called Mr. Marc Puckett to the podium to be recognized for his induction into the National Bobwhite & Grasslands Initiative Hall of Fame in 2023.

**Approval of the January 18, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of the January 18, 2024, Board meeting minutes have been distributed and posted to the website for review. The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Cooper made a motion to approve the January 18, 2024, Board meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Vincent.

Ayes: Mr. Woodall, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Edmunds, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Vincent, Mr. Boyd, Mr. Wampler, Mr. Sadler, Mr. Terwilliger, Mr. Formica.

**Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items:**

The Chair called for Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items:

Ms. Amanda Lemmon spoke regarding dog hunting (in person)

Mr. Chris Patton spoke regarding impacts of invasive species on quail habitat and population (in person)

Mr. Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding dog trespass on private land (virtual)

The Director and Chair Sadler made comments on the Board meeting of March 20, 2024, and thanked IT staff and others for a job well done on making the meeting run smoothly.

**Committee Reports:**

**Wildlife and Boat Committee:**

The Chair called on Mr. Jon Cooper who called on Mr. Ben Lewis to present the Migratory Game Bird Seasons & Bag Limits.

After comments and questions the Chair thanked Mr. Lewis for his presentation.

The Chair called for any public comments.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Cooper made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of Wildlife Resources adopt the 2024-2025 Migratory Game Bird Season and Bag Limit proposals as presented by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Boyd. Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd, Wampler, Sadler, Terwilliger, Formica.

Mr. Cooper continued with the Fisheries and Boating Committee report with comments on scoping period for sportfishing, boating and non-game regulations.

The Chair thanked Mr. Cooper for his Wildlife and Boat Committee report.

**Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee:** The Chair called on Mr. George Terwilliger for a report.

Mr. Terwilliger called on Mr. Robert Lewis who gave a report on the sampling of reporting visualizations from DWR's new data analysis team.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Terwilliger and Mr. Lewis for their report.

**Law Enforcement Committee:** The Chair called on Mr. John Daniel to give an update on the Law Enforcement Committee.

Mr. Daniel gave an update on Law Enforcement:

- CPO Progressive Program
- March 20, 2024, Awards ceremony – 53 officers and staff received recognition

Colonel Cobb spoke regarding the March 20, 2024, Yearly Awards ceremony

Mr. Terwilliger commended the CPOs for their participation and professionalism at the Wednesday, March 20, 2024, Board Meeting and offered a round of applause.

**Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report:** The Chair called on Mr. Formica for a report on the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee.

Mr. Formica gave an update of the EPO Committee:

Mr. Formica opened his report commending Law Enforcement and DWR staff on a well job done for the Wednesday, March 20, 2024, Board meeting, bringing the Hunters together and he was looking forward to working on the Resolutions together with everyone.

- The Explore the Wild App launched on March 4, 2024. The Outreach Division has received a lot of feedback from users. They are working to add a mapping feature to the app and hope this app becomes the “go to” source of information about where to get outside for all Virginians.

- The spring edition of Becoming a Virginia Hunter took place on March 9th – this time the focus was on spring turkey hunting. Registration for this program was full.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual One -Shot Turkey Hunt will take place on April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Outreach and watchable wildlife staff are hosting the inaugural Virginia Birding Classic from April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup>. Teams of 3 to 6 birders will select one day to head onto public lands and record all the different species of birds they see. Winners receive bragging rights and the opportunity to participate in some pretty neat DWR experiences. Interest has been high in this event; we are looking forward to seeing what the final numbers look like.

Mr. Boyd commented and thanked staff for all the work that was done on the Elk Lottery and how much he personally appreciated it.

**Director’s Report:** The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for his report.

Mr. Brown reported on:

- Called on Becky Gwynn to speak on the DCR Grant
- Congratulated Law Enforcement on their Awards Ceremony –nicely done!
- Announced that Katie Martin received the VA Chapter of Wildlife Society Mosby Award and her husband Brandon received the National Wildlife Turkey Federation award
- George Braxton Client Survey – Best Place to Work Survey follow up for staff
- Will be attending the 89<sup>th</sup> North American Conference - Where Virginia will be recognized for the Best Law Enforcement in the country, He serves on the Fall Flight Committee and the International Committee
- One shot for 2024 will be April 20, it has a lot of Partner participation.

**Chairman’s Report:** The Chair thanked Ryan and the agency staff for all the work and support concerning the Board meeting on March 20, 2024.

He remarked he had attended the LDP meeting and was very impressed with the leadership of this agency.

- He nominated Mr. Vincent, Chair and Mr. Edmunds and Mr. Formica as the Nominating Committee for 2024-2025 to nominate the slate for the 2024-2025 Chair and Vice Chair of the Board. Their report will be presented at the May 23, 2024, Board meeting.

**Additional Business/Comments:** The Chair asked if any additional business or comments.

Mr. Woodall commended Law Enforcement for all the tremendous work they do and commended Becky Gwynn who works tirelessly for this agency.

**Next Meeting Date:** The Chair announced that the next meeting date will be Thursday, May 23, 2024.

**Closed Session:** The Chair announced the Board would go into Close Session at 10:30 am.

Mr. Sadler read the Close Session Motion; it was seconded by Mr. Cooper.

Ayes: Woodall, Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd, Wampler, Sadler, Terwilliger, Formica

**Closed Meeting Motion, March 21, 2024**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**I move that the Board go into a closed meeting:**

***Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia for discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the Department of Wildlife Resources, specifically regarding the performance of the Director.***

***This closed meeting will be attended only by members of the Board. However, pursuant to Section 2.2-3712(F), the Board requests the Department Director to also attend this meeting, as it believes his presence will reasonably aid the Board in its consideration of topics that are the subject of the meeting.***

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 11:45 AM.

The Chair called on Mr. Edmunds to read the Certification of Closed Meeting. It was second by Mr. Cooper.

***Certification of Closed Meeting***

***March 21, 2024***

***WHEREAS, the Board of Wildlife Resources conducted a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom Information Act; and***

***WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;***

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Wildlife Resources hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board.***

The Board Secretary took a roll call vote: Ayes: Woodall, Edmunds, Cooper, Vincent, Boyd, Wampler, Sadler, Terwilliger, Formica

Mr. Daniel left after Close Session.

The Chair asked if anyone had any further comments or questions, hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Boswell

/s/