

Draft Meeting Minutes
Wildlife and Boat Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive – Board Room
Henrico, VA 23228

May 22, 2024
10:00 am

(Although the March 20, 2024 Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting was cancelled, the Wildlife and Boat Committee met August 17, 2023, October 26, 2023, January 18, 2024 and May 22, 2024 in accordance with its Charter)

Present: Mr. Jon Cooper, **Chair**, Mr. Leon Boyd, Mr. Will Wampler (alternate); **Absent:** Mr. Michael Formica and Mr. Brian Vincent; **Board Members** in attendance: Mr. George Terwilliger and Mr. Tom Sadler; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Bob Smet, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Mr. Michael Lipford

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and noted for the record that a Quorum was present for today's meeting.

Approval of the January 17, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes:

The Chair called for a motion to approve the January 17, 2024, Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Boyd made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024, committee meeting. Mr. Wampler seconded the motion. Ayes: Cooper, Wampler, Boyd, Vincent

Public Comment - Non-Agenda Item: The Chair called for Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items.

- Mr. Gary Kimberlin (virtual) spoke concerning equitable hunting opportunity for bear.

Staff Recommendation for Regulatory Amendments – Aquatics: The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski

Dr. Bednarski gave a presentation of staff recommendations for sportfishing regulations.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Boyd made a motion, I move that the Board of Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources propose the amendments to the general regulations as presented by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Wampler. Ayes: Cooper, Boyd, Wampler

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Dr. Bednarski for his presentation.

Staff Recommendation for Regulatory Amendments – Boating: The Chair called on Ms. Stacey Brown.

Ms. Brown gave a presentation of Staff Recommendation for Boating regulations.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Boyd made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources propose the amendments to the general regulations as present by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Wampler. Ayes: Cooper, Boyd, Wampler

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Ms. Brown for her presentation.

Staff Recommendations for Regulatory Amendments – Nongame: The Chair called on Ms. Amy Martin.

Ms. Martin gave a presentation of Staff Recommendations for Non-Game Regulations.

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Wampler made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife & Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources proposing the amendments to the nongame regulations as present by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Boyd.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Ms. Martin for her presentation.

Wildlife Disease Update – CWD/Mange: The Chair called on Dr. John Tracey.

Dr. Tracey gave an update on DWR Chronic Wasting Disease and how DWR is working with next steps to help handle control.

- Mr. Sean Clarkson spoke regarding Sarcoptic mange outbreak in black bears.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Dr. Tracey for his update.

Wildlife Division Update: The Chair called on Mr. Michael Lipford.

Mr. Lipford reported:

- The Spring Turkey Harvest for 2024 was 21,988, Hunter and interest and engagement in the spring season was high.
- Local populations are increasing in many areas of the state.
- Wildlife Division staff are in process of updating the Department Wild Turkey Management Plan
- Southeast Deer Partnership - WildTail Documentary, as a member of the Partnership Steering Committee, DWR contributed to all aspects of the development of the documentary, Outreach Division is using our social media channel as well as promotional graphics in our newsletters and blogs to share the messages of Wild Tail.
- Wildlife Habitat Management – DWR is releasing a bid in early May to identify a contractor to enhance over 100 acres of historically ditched forested wetlands on Doe Creek WMA, a newly acquired property located on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. This wetland enhancement project will consist of plugging manmade ditches to raise the water table and restore hydrology. Through partnership between Ducks Unlimited, DWR, and Fort Walker construction began in April 2024.
- Waterfowl - DWR staff throughout the agency conducted Virginia’s portion of the 2024 Atlantic Flyway Breeding Waterfowl Surveys by airplane, boat. The primary species of waterfowl targeted during the survey were black ducks, Canada geese, mallards, and wood ducks.
- Watchable Wildlife - DWR’s Virginia Birding Classic brought together 28 teams of bird watchers across agencies and partners from all over the Commonwealth to find as many species as they could on public lands in a 24-hour period. Team members included Carol Rubinfeld (Captain), Mallory White, Jenn Allen, Steve Living, Jeff Trollinger and Michael Lipford

Fish Division Update: The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski.

Mike Bednarski reported:

- In April, DWR staff removed the BBER Mill Dam on Rock Island Creek in Buckingham County Weyerhaeuser Forestry property. This removal provides access for sea lamprey – and ecosystem engineer – and James spiny mussel – a species of greatest conservation need.
- Reports of largemouth and smallmouth bass with sores and lesions, which is normal this time of year. Fish are stressed spawning activity and this a common occurrence throughout Virginia.
- Welcome Mallory Whit as our Human Dimensions Program Manager and Hannah Schul as our Environmental Services Manager.

Nongame Program Update: The Chair called on Ms. Amy Martin.

Ms. Martin reported:

- Ms. Martin introduced two new staff to the Non-Game Program, Ms. Susan Watson and Mr. Tim Owen.. She gave an update on Ft Wool, 453 royal terns nests, 97 sandwich ern nests. Brown Pelican, laughing gull and snowy egret nesting is in full swing and there are snowy egrets hatching. St the Barges - common terns, laughing gulls, royal terns, American oystercatchers, clack skimmers, and gull billed terns. As of 5/16/24 there were hatched chicks.
- Our Allegheny Woodrat camera trapping project has identified a few sites where woodrats have become a “nuisance: The plan is to trap some rats from these locations and them to breeding programs at the Baltimore and Toledo Zoo.
- Peregrine Falcons - RVA 4 healthy chick, banding on Friday, May 24
- Big Sandy Crayfish release on the McClure River occurred Tuesday, May 14. Section 6 (endangered species grants) project, West Liberty University, Propagation at White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery.
- Successful chicken turtle surveys – 6 adults (5 recaptures) and 2 hatching.
- BBS surveys the 1st week of June – VDWR and partners will be surveying known Black banded Sunfish (BBS) sites within the Chowan system. The main purpose of the survey will be to collect tissue samples that will be used to determine genetics of each population. Information gathered will assist the agency to select sites that are appropriate to use as sources to reintroduce into other parts of the drainage.

Boating Division Update: The Chair called on Ms. Stacy Brown.

Ms. Brown reported:

- Recognized National Safe Boating Week! It is time what states across the country remind boaters of safe practices when on the water before the unofficial start of the boat season, Memorial Day!
- New recreational boating safety manager kicked the week off last Friday by soliciting staff to wear their life jacket to work. She also received the assistance from Meghan Marchetti in our Outreach Division to develop the slightly silly PSA on wearing your life jacket to work, Outreach is also providing great support this week to send out the boating safety messages through social media post along with law enforcement and our new Public Information Officer Shelby Crouch
- Customer service is working to ensure that we maintain the high level of service for our customers.
- 13 boating incidents including 3 fatal incidents.
- Our boating safety staff attend the International Boating and Water Safety Summit and attended on water training at this event.

Director’s Report: The Chair called on the Director’s for his report.

- Good job to everyone on their Division updates
- Closed out Spring Gobbler with a little under 2,000
- Turkey Plan Update
- Elk Hunt Update
- Thank Becky Gwynn on spearheading the 2024 Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference

Chair's Report: The Chair thanked staff for presentations and all the information on all the topics.

Next Meeting Date: The Chair announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Additional Business/Comments: The Chair asked if there were any additional comments?

Mr. Wampler commented how much he enjoyed going on a Ride -Along with our CPO's and how busy they were and how many different things other than hunting and fishing they were called for. He thanked them for letting him ride along and for all their work.

Mr. Boyd thanked staff for attending their workday along with 117 volunteers and how much he appreciated their continued help.

Adjournment: The Chair asked for any further comments or questions, hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Frances Boswell
/s/