

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

May 24, 2023  
10:00 am

**Present:** Mr. Leon Boyd, **Chair**, Mr. Jon Cooper, Ms. Catherine Claiborne; Mr. George Terwilliger arrived at 10:50 am; **Absent:** Mr. Michael Formica, **Board Members** in attendance: Mr. G. K. Washington, Dr. Mamie Parker; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director’s Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. Tom Guess, Mr. George Braxton (virtual)

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 March 15, 2023, Committee Meeting Minutes:**

The Chair called for a motion to approve the March 15, 2023, Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting minutes. Ms. Claiborne made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023, committee meeting. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. Ayes: Boyd, Cooper, and Claiborne

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

- Mr. Eric Fagerholm spoke regarding Master Naturalists
- Mr. Sean Clarkson spoke regarding DWR Bear Team and the VA Chapter of the American Bear Foundation.

**Wildlife Regulation Proposals:** The Chair called on Mr. Cale Godfrey for a presentation.

Mr. Godfrey presented the 2023-24 Wildlife Regulation Proposals and the Public Comments received.

Mr. Godfrey recognized and thanked all the staff that worked on the Staff Proposals.

Mr. Godfrey presented the Block Format Regulations:

After comments and questions, the Chair called for a motion. Mr. Terwilliger made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife & Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources the adoption of the regulation amendments contained within the block format as presented by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper. Ayes: Boyd, Claiborne, Cooper, Terwilliger

Elk Regulations:

4VAC15-90-530 (elk hunt lottery)

4VAC15-90-540 (landowner program)

General Regulations:

4VAC15-20-66 (Access permit)

4VAC15-20-130 (T&E species list)

4VAC15-40-195 (remote trap check)

4VAC15-40-276 (sale of parts)

Harvest Reporting:

4VAC15-40-290 (New, combined species)

4VAC15-90-500 (elk outside EMZ)

4VAC15-90-510 (elk inside EMZ)

Fox Regulations:

4VAC15-110-20 (red fox season)

4VAC15-110-25 (New, gray fox season)

4VAC15-110-35 (New, gray fox bag limit)

4VAC15-110-80 (taking by landowner)

Fox Squirrel Regulation:

4VAC15-230-60 (open season)

Sea Duck Zone Regulation:

4VAC15-260-120 (redelineate zone)

Mr. Godfrey presented the Deer Regulations:

- Ms. Stefanie Taillon spoke regarding the Deer Regulations (in person)

After comments and questions, the Chair called for a motion. Mr. Cooper made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources adoption of the proposed deer regulation amendments as presented by staff with the modification that the late antlerless only firearms season in Bedford County close on January 31<sup>st</sup> each year. It was seconded by Mr. Terwilliger. Ayes: Boyd, Claiborne, Cooper, Terwilliger 4VAC15-90-10, 4VAC15-90-80, 4VAC15-90-89, 4VAC15-90-90, 4VAC15-90-91, 4VAC15-40-285.

Mr. Godfrey presented the Bear & Wild Turkey Regulations:

- Ms. Stefanie Taillon spoke regarding the Bear & Wild Turkey Regulations (in person)

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Cooper made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife & Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources adoption of the proposed amendments to the bear and wild turkey regulations as presented by staff. It was seconded by Mr. Terwilliger. Ayes: Boyd, Claiborne, Cooper, Terwilliger

4VAC15-50-10, 4VAC15-50-10; 4VAC15-240-31, 4VAC15-240-32, 4VAC15-240-40, 4VAC15-240-51

Mr. Godfrey presented the Waterfowl Blinds regulations.

Following discussion, no motion was offered to advance the Waterfowl Blinds regulations. 4VAC15-260-85 (New), 4VAC15-260-85 (New),

After final comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Godfrey for his presentations of the Wildlife Regulation proposals.

**Boat Regulation Proposals:** The Chair called on Mr. Tom Guess for Boat Regulation Proposals.

Mr. Guess presented the Boat Regulations Proposals.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Guess for his presentation.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Cooper made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee approve the Boating Regulations Amendments as reported by staff and

forward them to the full Board for their consideration. It was seconded by Ms. Claiborne. Ayes: Boyd, Claiborne, Cooper, Terwilliger

4VAC15-390, Chapter 420, 4VAC15-390, 4VAC15-390-10, 4VAC15-390-11 through 70, 4VAC15-390, 4VAC15-390-80, 4VAC15-390-90 through 140, 4VAC15-390-150 and 160, Chapter 420 4VAC15-420-10 (proposed) Chapter 420-4VAC15-420-20 through 110, 4VAC15-420.

**Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan:** The Chair called on Ms. Jenn Allen for a presentation.

Ms. Allen presented the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Allen for her presentation.

**Contributions of Freshwater Fishing to Virginia's Economy:** The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for presentation.

Dr. Bednarski gave a presentation on the contributions of Freshwater Fishing to Virginia's Economy.

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

**Wildlife Division Update:** The Chair called on Deputy Director Becky Gwynn for an update.

Ms. Gwynn reported:

- The Department has received (2) \$100,000 Grants for Wetland Projects
- DWR staff in Region 4 and the VA Chapter of the American Bear Foundation are working together with the help of the hunters on the Bear population
- Falcons will be banded in downtown Richmond on Friday 5/26/23, attending will be the Director and Ms. Gwynn and staff from the Secretary of Natural Resources office
- The Sea Birds are back at Ft. Wool, somewhere upwards of 3,500

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Gwynn for her update.

Mr. Sadler arrived at 11:55 am.

**Fish Division Update:** The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for an update.

Dr. Bednarski reported:

- Free Fishing Days, June 1-4
- Stocked 10,000 catfish into our FishLocalVA waters in mid May, These fish are stocked as catchable individuals and provide recreational opportunity for those fishing in developed areas.
- Please join us on June 3 for our annual Free Fishing Days events, which will occur at Lake Burke, Hungry Mother Lake, Dorey Park, and Mt. Trashmore. These efforts are organized by Outreach and supported by the Aquatics staff

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Bednarski for his comments.

**Boating Division Update:** The Chair called on Mr. Tom Guess for an update.

Mr. Guess reported:

- We are in the middle of National Safe boating Week through Memorial Day
- Operation Dry Water is the weekend of July 4 and is a national campaign to target getting impaired boat operators off of the water who are under the influence of alcohol and /or drugs.
- Just returned from the National Boating Safety Advisory Committee meeting in Annapolis MD which is the Federal Advisory Committee for the U. S. Coast Guard. We worked on the National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) strategic plan and federal regulatory directives and items moving forward.
- The 2022 Virginia Boating Incident Summary is available on our website now. It came out this March.
  - We experienced 87 reportable boating incidents
  - 114 vessels were involved
  - There were 39 injuries
  - 17 fatalities
    - Alcohol was a factor in 23% of the fatalities
    - 29% involved paddlecraft
    - 94% of the fatalities involved people not wearing lifejackets
    - The total of the incidents involved nearly \$500,000 in property damage.

NOTE: for an incident to be reportable it has to involve a fatality, missing person, injury beyond first aid, or damage to the boat or property of a least \$2,000.

Made comments on the economic impact of boating.

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

**Director's Report:** The Chair called on Executive Director Ryan Brown for his report.

The Director reported:

- Thanked Staff for the work and preparation that goes into their presentation for the Regulations to be voted on.
- Commented on the successful turkey season
- Commented on the Elk license planning
- Attended the Front Royal Hatchery Re-Opening

The Chair thanked the Director for his report.

**Chair's Report:** The Chair thanked everyone for attending the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting and for the updates and presentations and can appreciate all the work that goes into putting them together.

The Chair also commented and thanked the Board and Staff for attending the Board Retreat at Breaks Interstate Park and how much he enjoyed and appreciated everyone's attendance.

The Chair asked if anyone had any further comments or questions, hearing none, he announced that the next meeting will be Wednesday, August 16, 2023, and adjourned the meeting at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Boswell

/s/