

AGENDA

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

August 21, 2024
3:00 pm

Committee Members: Mr. Will Wampler, Chair, Dr. Mamie Parker, Mr. John Daniel,
Mr. Michael Formica

DWR Staff Liaison: Mr. Bob Smet

1. Call to Order and Welcome
Mr. Wampler
2. Approval of January 17, 2024 and May 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes **Final Action**
Mr. Wampler
3. Public Comment – Non- Agenda Item
Mr. Wampler
4. Hunting with Hounds Outreach Deliverables
Mr. Bob Smet
5. Corporate Engagement Strategy
Ms. Kelsey Steenburgh
6. Hunting Outreach Programming
Mr. David Hennaman and Mr. Jimmy Mootz
7. Virginia Birding Classic
Mr. Max Goldman

8. Outreach Division Director
Mr. Bob Smet
9. Director's Report
Mr. Ryan Brown
10. Chair's Report
Mr. Wampler
11. Additional Business/Comments
Mr. Wampler
12. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 (to be approved)
Mr. Wampler
13. Adjournment
Mr. Wampler

Draft 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

Draft Meeting Minutes

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

May 22, 2024
3:00 pm

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

Present: Mr. Formica, Chair, **Absent:** Dr. Mamie Parker; Mr. John Daniel, Mr. James Edmunds; **Board members present:** Mr. Jon Cooper, Mr. Tom Sadler, Mr. Leon Boyd, Mr. George Terwilliger; 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, Ms. Shelby Crouch, Mr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Michael Lipford.

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 there was not a quorum present for the meeting.

Approval of the January 17, 2024, Meeting Minutes: The Chair noted the January 17, 2024, Meeting Minutes could not be approved for lack of a quorum.

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

Virginia Wildlife Grant Update: The Chair called on Ms. Kelsey Steenburgh for an update.

Ms. Steenburgh gave a Virginia Wildlife Grant Update.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Steenburgh.

Restore the Wild Art Contest: The Chair called on Mr. Steve Living for an update.

Mr. Steve Living gave an update on the Restore the Wild Art Contest and who the winners for this year's art contest were and how the species was chosen.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Living.

Explore the Wild App Launch: Chair called on Mr. Tim Tassitano and Ms. Caitlyn Fralin Jabcobus for a report.

Mr. Tassitano and Ms. Jabcobus gave a report on the Explore the Wild App on what new is added to the app and how beneficial to the agency and the sportsmen this app is.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Tassitano and Ms. Jabcobus.

DWR Inclusive Excellence Plan Report: The Chair called on Mr. George Braxton for a report.

Mr. Braxton gave an Update on the Annual report on the DWR Inclusive Excellence Plan.

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

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

Mr. Smet Reported:

- Thanks to Molly Kirk and staff for the presentation of the VA Wildlife – showed a video of the promoting VA Wildlife magazine.
- Several new You Tube commercials available.
- Introduced new PIO – Ms. Shelby Crouch
- Staff has of Outdoor Events – Black Bear Festival, Free Fishing Days, Fly Fishing – showed a video of new hunter telling her first story as a hunter.
- Elk Hunt Lottery – announcing May 30, 2024
- AFWA – Project Wild Award recipient - Courtney Hallacher

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

- Congratulated Courtney Hallacher on receiving the AFWA Project Wild Award
- Thanked the staff for the amazing, incredible work.

Chair's Report:

The Chair thanked all the staff for their informative updates and presentation of all the fantastic projects that Outreach staff worked together to support this agency.

The Chair called on Mr. Sadler,

Mr. Sadler, commented on all the recognition this agency received based on the project the Outreach Division puts together and how much is benefited from it.

The Chair called on Mr. Terwilliger,

Mr. Terwilliger commented how proud to be a part of an agency with the talent and what the staff at DWR produce.

The Chair asked if anyone had any further questions or comments and hearing none, the Chair announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, August 21, 2024, and adjourned the meeting at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell



The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to continuing the tradition of hunting with hounds for both wildlife management and recreational benefits. Furthermore, DWR is committed to ensuring that hunting practices are consistent with and respect the rights of private property owners.



Best Practices for Living in Hound Hunting Counties

Post Your Property with No Trespassing Signs

Posting your property makes it easier for others to know where your property lines lie. Including a phone number or other information will also make it easier for a hunter to contact you if they need to retrieve a dog.

Hunting Season and Hounds

If you live in a county where hunters use hounds to chase deer or bear, please be aware that this tradition has been part of the culture for generations. Most hunters have a safe system of casting, running, and hunting over hounds. Please be patient and considerate of legal hunting during this time.

Hounds on Your Property

Living in a county where hunting with hounds is legal doesn't mean you have to tolerate illegal or unethical behavior. Always report violations to Law Enforcement as soon as the violation occurs.

- Hounds in pursuit of wild game should be left alone when possible.
- Hounds that pose a threat to your property, family, pets, or livestock can be captured and reported to animal control immediately.
- Report any hunting violation you see to Law Enforcement immediately using Virginia's Wildlife Crime Line number (800) 237-5712.
- Never remove a collar from a hound or capture and keep the hound for an extended period without first calling the number on the collar.
- Hounds that appear lost should be collected — call the number on the collar immediately. If the hunter/owner does not respond, call animal control.

Hunting with Hounds:

Best Practices for Hunters & Landowners



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

Best Practices for Hunting with Hounds in Virginia

Hunting Safety

Buckshot travels further than most people realize. Know your surroundings and beyond before taking a shot.

1 Make a plan:

- Know where your hunting partners are and plan your Zone of Fire accordingly.
- Never take a shot when there is the possibility of someone being downrange of you.
- Always have a safe backstop. Know where you bullet will go if you miss.

2 Use caution when taking multiple shots. Keep to your safe Zone of Fire.

3 Stick to your plan:

- Do not move positions during a hunt.
- Beware of tunnel vision (big buck fever) – Maintain your safe Zone of Fire.

4 Whenever possible, hunt from an elevated position.

Optics and Ethics

Just because it is not illegal doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. Every hunter has the responsibility of modeling safe, responsible, and ethical behavior.

- Parking and/or standing on the side of a roadway gives the impression that you are hunting from the road.
- Cast dogs and conduct your hunt in a manner to maximize opportunities to prevent them from entering roadways or lands where they are not wanted.
- Using hounds to intentionally chase deer off property where you do not have permission is unethical.
- Always communicate with landowners before entering their property to retrieve your dogs.
- Always identify yourself and show respect and courtesy to landowners. When possible, introduce yourself to landowners in the area that you intend to hunt prior to the season.
- Never drive your vehicle or carry a firearm onto property that you do not have permission to access.
- Always collect your dogs immediately after the hunt.
- Ensure each dog is collared with your name and up-to-date contact information so lost dogs can be returned.
- Hitting a moving target is difficult. Only shoot at an animal you know you can kill quickly, humanely, and ethically.
- If you take a shot at an animal, always take the time to track and retrieve that animal.

To find out more about Best Practices surrounding hunting with hounds for both hunters and landowners, as well as the Virginia laws pertaining to hunting with hounds, please visit dwr.virginia.gov/hunting-with-hounds

Respect Private Property

Hunters can take steps to minimize or eliminate hounds entering property without permission from the landowner.

- Make a plan to keep dogs on the property where you have permission to hunt.
- Communicate with adjacent landowners.
- Only release hounds on property where you have permission. Releasing hounds with the intent of going on property where you do not have permission is illegal.
- Only use hounds that are appropriate for the size of the property you have permission to hunt. The smaller the property, the smaller the hound. Consider using a different breed of hunting dog if conditions warrant it.
- Never use hounds to intentionally chase deer off property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Always retrieve your dogs as soon as the hunt has ended.

Hound Hunting Technology

- Use the technology available to you (electronic collars) to assist with preventing dogs from entering properties where they aren't wanted.
- Use the technology available to you to collect your dogs immediately after the hunt and before they wander onto property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Never use technology as an excuse or means to trespass on property where you do not have permission.
- Always remain in close contact with your dogs, visually, electronically, or otherwise.



About **Hunting** **with Hounds** in Virginia



Hunting with hounds is a practice with a long tradition in Virginia and is a means of both public recreation and wildlife management. As Virginia has become more populated and land ownership patterns have changed over time, promoting positive interactions between hound hunters and landowners has become more important than ever.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to continuing the tradition of hunting with hounds for both wildlife management and recreational benefits. Furthermore, DWR is committed to ensuring that hunting practices are consistent with and respect the rights of private property owners.



To find out more about Best Practices surrounding hunting with hounds for both hunters and landowners, as well as the Virginia laws pertaining to hunting with hounds, please visit dwr.virginia.gov/hunting-with-hounds or scan the QR code.

Deer and Bear Hunting with Dogs: Review and Evaluation

Board Resolution 4 - A review and evaluation of existing relevant DWR outreach efforts, along with information pertaining to outreach used by other states in which deer and bear hunting with dogs occurs, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024.

Outreach Efforts

To date, DWR's outreach efforts to the public have been generalized. DWR has intentionally avoided drawing attention to potentially controversial issues like hunting with dogs and trespass. Outreach messages have historically focused on broad topics, such as: "Deer are on the move" and "Hunting Season has Started." The Virginia Hunter Education Student Manual includes a section on ethics that stresses the importance of hunter behavior and image (actions, appearance, speech) and respect for hunting companions, nonhunters, landowners, the law, and wildlife. Instructors focus primarily on laws pertaining to hunting and specifically, hunting with dogs.

Southeast states, including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida that have some form of hunting with dogs use a similar outreach strategy. No state surveyed had a robust hunting with dogs communications strategy in place. Several states reported actually seeing an increase in the number of complaints regarding hunting with dogs when specific outreach messages were used. See **Appendix A** for program references and a summary of actions taken by several southeastern states with regard to hunting big game with dogs.

In 2008, 2021, and 2023 DWR conducted multiple comprehensive outreach efforts aimed at landowners and hunters that use dogs to pursue deer or bear. The 2008 effort, led by DWR and Virginia Tech, included multiple public meetings, small focus groups, and a stakeholder advisory group. That effort produced a comprehensive report with recommendations titled *Hunting with Hounds in Virginia: A Way Forward*. The report can be found on DWR's website: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunters-landowners-sac/#documents>.

In 2021 after receiving public comments from landowners and hunters that use dogs, the DWR Board worked with representatives from both organizations to develop a set of three resolutions to reduce conflicts between the two groups. DWR reached out to hunters and landowners to receive comments on the Board's resolutions. Following a public comment period and public board meeting, the resolutions were adopted in June of 2021. Similar to the effort in 2008, DWR conducted additional outreach to landowners and hunters in 2023 with the assistance of the University of Virginia. The final report from the 2023 effort is available at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunters-landowners-sac/#documents>.

In addition to DWR's outreach efforts, many organizations have educational materials, codes of conduct, and/or mission statements that address hunting with dogs. The Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance, Master of Foxhounds Association, United Eastern Virginia Hunting Dog Association, and the Virginia Bear Hunters Association are examples of organizations with some form of education or code of conduct that is communicated to their membership.

Board Resolution 4 - Evaluation of the development and delivery of public awareness efforts, including locally held public forums in areas where complaints are above average, that provide information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices and applicable laws and regulations, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024.

Public Awareness: Forums, Meetings

Reported conflicts between landowners and hunters that use dogs are not uniformly dispersed across Virginia. Evidence suggests that certain regions, counties, or even communities may have a greater need for information about hunting with dogs. DWR's Outreach and Education staff have created a website, brochures, and presentation materials that can be used by DWR regional and law enforcement staff and volunteers for public outreach efforts in specific areas of the state.

<p>Outreach Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create Best Management Practices (BMP)s for both Hunters and Landowners (Appendix C).• Update the Hunter Education curriculum to include BMPs and ethics (Appendix B). See (Appendix E) for curriculum outline.• Create printable pdf version of BMPs for the website and for Conservation Police Officers, biologists, and volunteers to use when speaking to groups.

Board Resolution 4 - The creation and delivery of educational information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices, and applicable laws and regulations, to be made available annually by August 1 to localities and local law enforcement agencies where deer and bear hunting with dogs occurs and encourage their sharing of this information through relevant communication channels.

Educational Information

Educational programs and information can encourage people to obey laws, respect the property and rights of others, and create an understanding of different points of view. DWR's Hunter Education and Outreach staff have created (or updated) a series of educational materials to be included on the website, outreach materials, and hunter education curriculum. Information on Hunting ethics, Best Management Practices for Landowners and Hunters, and a list of hunting laws that pertain to hunting with dogs are included in (**Appendices B-D**). This information will be reviewed and updated annually. Inquiring parties will be directed to those resources as needed.

***Board Resolution 4** - An evaluation of the establishment of a staff liaison position at the Department, to enhance communications and relationships with both hunters using dogs and landowner interests, with a report made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024*

Outreach Proposal

- Evaluate the establishment of a staff liaison position at the Department, to enhance communications and relationships with both hunters using dogs and landowner interests (**Appendix F**).

***Board Resolution 5** - The development of a “best practices” document for deer and bear hunters using dogs and for private landowners by August 1, 2024, and inclusion of this content on the DWR website and, summarized as appropriate, in the annual Hunting and Trapping in Virginia digest*

Outreach Proposal

- Create Best Management Practices (BMP)s for both Hunters and Landowners (**Appendix C**).

***Board Resolution 5** - A compilation of laws and regulations pertaining to deer and bear hunting with dogs, as well as those protecting hunting dogs, and inclusion of this content on the DWR website by August 1, 2024.*

Outreach Proposal

- Create compilation of laws and regulations pertaining to deer and bear hunting with dogs, as well as those pertaining to protecting hunting dogs (**Appendix D**).

Board Resolution 5 - A review and evaluation of existing relevant DWR hunter educational efforts, content and materials, such as the additional materials integrated into the Virginia Hunter Education Program basic curriculum in 2021, with a report to be made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by October 31, 2024; and

Outreach Proposal

Hunter Education will promote Best Hunting Practices included BMPs for hunters and landowners and ethics for hunting with hounds (**Appendices B-C**) within the Hunting Ethics section of the Basic Hunter Education Course. Implementation of the promotion will include a mandatory training for all Hunter Education volunteer instructors. In addition, all curriculum both on-line and in-person will be updated with BMPs and ethics for hunting with hounds.

Hunter Education Curriculum

Hunter Education in Virginia has historically focused on safety, with a goal of reducing the number of hunting accidents to zero. Safe handling of firearms is the first priority and hunting stand (tree-stand) safety has been a growing topic of concern for the program. Regarding hunting with dogs, though not specifically called out, the most relevant portions of Virginia's Hunter Education curriculum are "know your target and beyond" and "zone of fire." These two topics, along with blaze orange, are intended to prevent firearm incidents where hunters may be shooting at moving targets and/or groups of hunters are hunting in close proximity to each other. The Hunter Education curriculum also includes an Ethics section that covers the following topics: hunting laws, respect for others, set an example, and "clean kill". In 2021, the Hunter Education curriculum added an additional point related specifically to hound hunting.

Board Resolution 5 - Evaluation of a potential advanced training program for Virginia Hunter Education instructors, particularly for those in areas where complaints associated with bear or deer hunting with dogs are above average, that provides more details and insights to be conveyed during their delivery of hunter education programming, with a report to be made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by October 31, 2024, regarding potential approaches, associated costs, and anticipated benefits.

Outreach Proposal

All hunter education instructors east of the Blue Ridge (where hunting deer with hounds is legal) will be required to take advanced training classes that include best management practices, laws, and ethics related to hunting with dogs. An outline of the curriculum is provided in (**Appendix E**). Classes will be made available to instructors through a variety of delivery methods including in-person classes at advanced training events, virtual streaming workshops, and recorded presentations available on-line or within the volunteer portal.

Advanced Training for Hunter Education Instructors

The Hunter Education program has added “Hunting with Hounds” and “Bear Hunting 101” including hunting bear with hounds, as optional classes for hunter education instructors at this year’s Spring and upcoming Fall Advanced Training. Classes included discussion of laws, culture, and techniques intended to give instructors a better understanding of the perspective their students may have and enable the instructors to address dog hunting questions from a basic hunter education class.

Appendix A

Summary of Action Taken by Southeastern States with Regard to Hunting with Dogs

Alabama – By 1997, some Alabama counties had shortened seasons and established minimum acreages for dog hunting. The majority of Alabama counties prohibit hunting deer with dogs or place restrictions on the activity. Dog hunting has been eliminated in 15 counties and placed under a permit program with acreage minimums in 5 counties. Specific regulations begin on page 21 of the following document:

<https://www.outdooralabama.com/sites/default/files/Enforcement/2023-2024%20REGULATION%20BOOK%20FINAL.pdf>.

Arkansas – Arkansas is regulated by zone, with some zones having dog hunting and some zones without. This is based primarily on regional preferences. A restriction on the size of dogs used for deer hunting was considered but unsuccessfully implemented. In the past, a proposal, supported by the Arkansas Dog/Deer Hunters Association, to implement a plan similar to Georgia's was put forward. This plan was never put in place. The current commission has decided not to further address the issue until the commission has been replaced.

<https://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/Home/FTPDocument?path=%2FAssembly%2FMeeting+Attachments%2F08%2FI14649%2F9+22-16+Dog+Hunting+Overview.pdf>.

Florida – The Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission adopted policy guidelines to reduce conflicts regarding dog hunting in 1997. To address continued trespass and other complaints, a pilot program requiring dog registration began in 2004 in northwest Florida and has since been expanded statewide. The registration identifies which property the dog is authorized to hunt upon.

<https://myfwc.com/license/recreational/hunting/deer-dog/#:~:text=A%20no-cost%20deer%20dog,on%20private%20property%20in%20Florida.>

Georgia – Because conflicts had escalated and resulted in proposals to eliminate deer hunting with dogs in Georgia, the Georgia Dog Hunters Association promoted a law to protect both landowner and deer dog hunting interests in 2003. This legislation now requires a dog-deer license and requires a minimum acreage (1000) for hunting deer with dogs. <https://gadnrle.org/dog-deer-hunting-permit>

Kentucky – Deer hunting with dogs is prohibited.

Louisiana – Over the course of several years, hunting deer with dogs has been prohibited in more areas of the state. In some regions, hunting deer with hounds is only allowed towards the end of the season. The issue came to a head in 2006 with a stakeholder group being established. Nothing resulted from this endeavor. The issue is ongoing with the possibility of another attempt to come to consensus in the near future. <https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Regulations/2024-2025-Hunting-Regulations.pdf>

Mississippi – Deer hunting with dogs is limited to a maximum of 37 days during the deer season which runs from October 1 to January 31. However, much of the season is archery and/or primitive weapons only so hunting deer with dogs is not applicable. Hunters that use dogs can hunt 37 days out of the approximately 50 days that are open to modern firearms hunting. <https://www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/general-hunting-rules-regulations.>

North Carolina – Through passage of a state law, counties can regulate hunting with dogs in North Carolina. Some counties have prohibited hunting with dogs in part of or the entire county, some counties have regulated dog hunting (acreage minimums, etc.) in all or part of the county. North Carolina added a section to Hunter Education to address dog conflicts and best practices. They are currently looking at additional measures to address continued conflicts (no tracking equipment during hunting.) <https://www.eregulations.com/northcarolina/hunting/deer-hunting-with-use-of-dogs>.

South Carolina – In 2008, South Carolina conducted an extensive stakeholder process to address conflicts. Out of this process the “Renegade Hunter Act” was created. This requires hunters to have permission from the landowner on one side of a public road, to hunt within the right-of-way. They conducted another abbreviated study in 2015 that did not result in any new regulations. <https://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/pdf/dogreport11212008.pdf>

Tennessee – Deer hunting with dogs is prohibited.

Texas – The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department shortened the dog season for deer hunting in 1986 to address tensions between landowners and hunters. This change only seemed to intensify conflict between dog and non-dog-deer hunters and decreased support for the Department. In 1990, deer hunting with dogs was prohibited in Texas.

Appendix B

Hunting Ethics

While laws tend to be clear cut, ethics are more subjective. Hunting ethics include:

1. Follow all federal, state, and local laws with regard to hunting seasons, bag-limits, firearms, and ammunition. Laws are enacted for very important reasons.
2. People are watching and you are representing all hunters. You have a responsibility to be a good example.
3. Only take a shot that will result in a "clean kill." Do not take a shot that may wound an animal.
4. Have respect for other hunters, landowners, nonhunters, and yourself.
5. Use of hounds while hunting:
 - a. Proper Care of Dogs
 - b. Owner's Contact Information on Dogs
 - c. Quick Dog Retrieval After Hunt
 - d. Respect Private Property
 - e. Proper Home for Excess Dogs
 - f. Act as Guest of Landowner
 - g. No Property Damage or Litter
 - h. Fair Chase & Ethical Dog Treatment
 - i. Legal and Safe
 - j. Mentor the Next Generation
 - k. Be Respectful When Recovering Dogs
 - l. Be a Good Representative

Appendix C

Best Management Practices for Hunters and Landowners

Best Management Practices Hunting with Hounds in Virginia

Hunting Safety

Buckshot travels further than most people realize. Know your surroundings and beyond before taking a shot.

- Make a Plan
 - Know where your hunting partners are and plan your Zone of Fire accordingly.
 - Never take a shot when there is the possibility of someone being downrange of you.
 - Always have a safe backstop. Know where your bullet will go if you miss.
- Use caution when taking multiple shots. Keep to your safe Zone of Fire.
- Stick to your plan:
 - Do not move positions during a hunt.
 - Beware of tunnel vision (Big Buck Fever) – Maintain your safe Zone of Fire.
- Whenever possible hunt from an elevated position.

Trespass on Private Property

Hunters can take steps to minimize or eliminate hounds entering property without permission from the landowner.

- Make a plan to keep dogs on the property where you have permission to hunt.
- Communicate with adjacent landowners.
- Only release hounds on property where you have permission. Releasing hounds with the intent of going on property where you do not have permission is illegal.
- Only use hounds that are appropriate for the size of the property you have permission to hunt. The smaller the property, the smaller the hound. Consider using a different breed of hunting dog if conditions warrant it.
- Never use hounds to intentionally chase deer off property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Always retrieve your dogs as soon as the hunt has ended.

Optics and Ethics

Just because it is not illegal doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. Every hunter has the responsibility of modeling safe, responsible, and ethical behavior.

- Parking and/or standing on the side of a roadway gives the impression that you are hunting from the road.
- Cast dogs where the opportunities for them to leave the property or enter roadways are minimized.
- Using hounds to intentionally chase deer off property you do not have permission is unethical.
- Always communicate with landowners before entering their property to retrieve your dogs.

- Always identify yourself and show respect and courtesy to landowners.
- Never drive your vehicle or carry a firearm onto property you do not have permission to access.
- Always collect your dogs immediately after the hunt.
- Ensure each dog is collared with your name and up-to-date contact information so lost dogs can be returned.
- Hitting a moving target is difficult. Only shoot at an animal you know you can kill quickly, humanely, and ethically.
- If you take a shot at an animal, always take the time to track and retrieve that animal.

Hound Hunting Technology

- Use the technology available to you (GPS collars, radio telemetry) to ensure dogs stay on the property you have permission to hunt.
- Use the technology available to you to collect your dogs immediately after the hunt and before they wander onto property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Never use technology as an excuse or means to trespass on property where you do not have permission.
- Always remain in close contact with your dogs, visually, electronically, or otherwise.

Best Management Practices
Living in Hound Hunting Counties
Landowners and Still Hunters in Virginia

Post Your Property with No Trespassing Signs

Posting your property makes it easier for others to know where your property lines lie. Including a phone number or other information will also make it easier for hunter to contact you if they need to retrieve a dog.

Hunting Season and Hounds

If you live in a county where hunters use hounds to chase deer or bear, please be aware that this tradition has been part of the culture for generations. Most hunters have a safe system of casting, running, and hunting over hounds. Please be patient and considerate of legal hunting during this time.

Hounds on Your Property

Living in a county where hunting with hounds is legal doesn't mean you have to tolerate illegal or unethical behavior. Always report violations to Law Enforcement as soon as the violation occurs.

- Hounds in pursuit of wild game should be left alone when possible.
- Hounds that pose a threat to your property, family, pets, or livestock can be captured and reported to animal control immediately.
- Report any hunting violation you see to Law Enforcement immediately using Virginia's Wildlife Crime Line number (800) 237-5712.
- Never remove a collar from a hound or capture and keep the hound for an extended period without first calling the number on the collar.
- Hounds that appear lost should be collected - call the number on the collar immediately. If the hunter/owner does not respond, call animal control.

Appendix D

Laws Pertaining to Hunting with Dogs

Trespass by Hunters using Dogs and Right to Retrieve

§ 18.2-132.1. Trespass by hunters using dogs; penalty.

Any person who intentionally releases hunting dogs on the lands of another which have been posted in accordance with the provisions of § 18.2-134.1 to hunt without the consent of the landowner or his agent is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. A second or subsequent violation of this section within three years is a Class 1 misdemeanor and, upon conviction, the court shall revoke such person's hunting or trapping license for a period of one year. The fact that hunting dogs are present on the lands of another alone is not sufficient evidence to prove that the person acted intentionally.

§ 18.2-136. Right of certain hunters to go on lands of another; carrying firearms or bows and arrows prohibited.

Fox hunters and coon hunters, when the chase begins on other lands, may follow their dogs on prohibited lands, and hunters of all other game, when the chase begins on other lands, may go upon prohibited lands to retrieve their dogs, falcons, hawks, or owls but may not carry firearms or bows and arrows on their persons or hunt any game while thereon. The use of vehicles to retrieve dogs, falcons, hawks, or owls on prohibited lands shall be allowed only with the permission of the landowner or his agent. Any person who goes on prohibited lands to retrieve his dogs, falcons, hawks, or owls pursuant to this section and who willfully refuses to identify himself when requested by the landowner or his agent to do so is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

Permits for Certain Field Trials Required and Penalty

§ 29.1-422. Permits for field trials.

The Board is authorized to grant permits to bona fide field trial clubs and associations to hold field trials with dogs under such regulations it deems proper. The fee established by the Board for a field trial permit shall be an amount sufficient to defray the costs of processing the permit and administering the permitted activity but shall not exceed twenty-five dollars per event. It shall be unlawful to hold such trials without the permit herein authorized during the closed season for game. If wild game is to be shot over or in front of dogs engaged in such field trials, the person actually shooting must have a license permitting him to do so.

Captive birds of any species released and immediately shot or recovered during such trials shall not be considered to be wild birds under this chapter or § 29.1-521.

§ 18.2-403.3(6). Offenses involving animals — Class 4 misdemeanors.

The following unlawful acts and offenses against animals shall constitute and be punished as a Class 4 misdemeanor: . . .

6. Failure by any person to secure and exhibit the permits required by § 29.1-422 pertaining to field trials, night trials and foxhounds.

Hunting Dogs to Wear Tags; Penalty for Removing Transmitting Device

§ 29.1-516.2. Hunting with dogs; dogs to wear tags.

Any person engaged in lawful hunting with a dog shall ensure that the dog has a tag identifying the name of the owner or custodian and a current phone number. The tag shall be securely fastened to a substantial collar by the owner or custodian and worn by such dog.

§ 18.2-97.1. Removal of a transmitting device; penalty.

Any person who removes an electronic or radio transmitting device from a dog, falcon, hawk, or owl without the permission of the owner and with the intent to prevent or hinder the owner from locating the dog, falcon, hawk, or owl is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Upon a finding of guilt, the court shall order that the defendant pay as restitution the actual value of any dog, falcon, hawk, or owl lost or killed as a result of such removal. The court may also order restitution to the owner for any lost breeding revenues.

Using Dogs to Track Wounded Game

§ 29.1-516.1. Using tracking dogs to retrieve bear, deer, or turkey.

Tracking dogs maintained and controlled on a lead may be used to find a wounded or dead bear, turkey, or deer statewide during any archery, muzzleloader, or firearm bear, turkey, or deer hunting season, or within 24 hours of the end of such season, provided that those who are involved in the retrieval effort have permission to hunt on or to access the land being searched. A licensed hunter who is engaged in such tracking may have in his possession a weapon permitted under this title and may use such weapon to humanely kill the wounded bear, deer, or turkey being tracked, including after legal shooting hours. Such weapon shall not be used to hunt, wound, or kill any animal other than the animal that the hunter is tracking, except in self-defense.

Using Dogs to Assist in a Hunt – Handler has met Tag Limit

§ 29.1-521(A)(3). Unlawful to hunt, trap, possess, sell, or transport wild birds and wild animals except as permitted; exception; penalty.

A. The following is unlawful: . . .

3. To hunt or attempt to kill or trap any species of wild bird or wild animal after having obtained the daily bag or season limit during such day or season. *However, any properly licensed person, or a person exempt from having to obtain a license, who has obtained such daily bag or season limit while hunting may assist others who are hunting game by calling game, retrieving game, handling dogs, or conducting drives if the weapon in his possession is an unloaded firearm, a bow without a nocked arrow, an unloaded slingbow, an unloaded arrowgun, or an unloaded crossbow. Any properly licensed person, or*

person exempt from having to obtain a license, who has obtained such season limit prior to commencement of the hunt may assist others who are hunting game by calling game, retrieving game, handling dogs, or conducting drives, provided he does not have a firearm, bow, slingbow, arrowgun, or crossbow in his possession.

Appendix E

Hunter Education will promote Best Hunting Practices within our Hunting Ethics section of the Basic Hunter Education Course (in-person and online).

Best Practices for Bear and Deer Hunting with Dogs

1. Hound Hunters

- a. Be Safe! Safe Hunting Practices
 - i. Hunt from elevated stands.
 - ii. Safe zone of fire.
 - iii. ID target and beyond.
 - iv. Only take ethical shots. Only take a shot at an animal you know you can kill cleanly and ethically. Retrieve you game after you take a shot.
- b. Be Ethical! Ethical Hunting Practices
 - i. Use good judgement!
 - ii. Respect for others land and other hunters. Using dogs to chase deer off property you don't have permission to hunt is not ethical and may interfere with other hunters on that property.
 - iii. Communication
 1. Develop respectful relationships with landowners in the area you hunt.
 2. Hound Hunters should contact landowners prior to entering private property.
 - iv. Use technology to retrieve hounds in a timely manner and to contact landowners first.
 - v. Use dogs (breeds) that are appropriate for the size of property that you have permission to hunt.
 - vi. Only take a shot at an animal you know you can kill cleanly and ethically. Retrieve you game after you take a shot.
 - vii. Do not park / hunt from road. **Note:** talk about visibility and optics of hunting from or along the roadway. You represent all hunters!
 - viii. Only take a shot at an animal you know you can kill cleanly and ethically. Retrieve game after you take a shot.

2. Landowners and Still Hunters

- a. Communication
 - i. Use clearly posted **No Trespassing** signs and include a contact number on signage.
 - ii. When possible, be open to conversations with the local hunting clubs to build respectful relationships.
- b. Contact the hunter if a dog is on your property. Do not trap or capture hunting hounds.
- c. Report violations / dogs on your property.
- d. Do not impede or interfere with a lawful hunt in progress.

3. Care and Handling Hounds:

- a. Ensure hounds are well kept with appropriate cover and space, adequate food and water, veterinary care, vaccinations, and collect all hounds after each hunt.
- b. Ensure all dogs wear a collar with owner/contact information.
- c. Follow state and county regulations.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Hunting with Dogs Ethics Module Talking Points For Hunter Education Instructors While Teaching the Basic Hunter Education Class

1. Hunters will promote respectful pursuit of game animals and ethical treatment of hunting dogs.

- Take only ethical shots at game animals. Clean kills should be a priority for every hunter. Hunters should devote sufficient time and effort to locate wounded game.

2. Firearm safety practices must be strictly adhered to. Game laws and regulations must be followed. Those who violate game laws and regulations should be reported to law enforcement.

- Adhering to common safety practices such as not traveling with loaded firearms or shooting from VDOT roads or right of ways is important.
- Deer and other animals should not be run out of season.

3. It is a moral and ethical responsibility to retrieve every dog as quickly as possible at the end of the hunt, when a dog leaves the area where the hunter has permission to hunt, or when the dog engages in the pursuit of a non-target species. Hunters should work diligently to retrieve their dogs upon the conclusion of a hunt. If a dog is not located by the end of the hunt, retrieval should take place as quickly thereafter as reasonably achievable.

4. Releasing dogs on property where hunters do not have permission to hunt is illegal. Releasing dogs near property where hunters do not have permission to hunt is unethical. The high likelihood of dogs entering property where hunters have no permission to hunt increases the chances of conflict between hunters and landowners.

5. Proper identification and contact information, including name and current phone number, must be present on all dogs used for hunting.

6. Hunters are a guest of the landowner, whether private, state, or federal. Seeking permission beforehand and behaving in a respectful manner ensures hunters will be welcome in the future and protects the reputation of all hunters.

7. Participants in a hunt should tread lightly while afield. Only established roads and trails should be used for travel, gates should be left as they were found (open or closed), and hunters must leave no litter.

8. Recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters ensures the future of the sport. Mentoring and supporting young and new hunters is an important component of introducing others to the hunting culture. Hunters should actively seek out opportunities to share the excitement and joy that time afield provides.

9. Hunters must be aware that they represent the entire hunting community when afield or in public. Maintaining high standards of behavior when interacting with others (hunters, non-hunters, property owners), caring for their dogs, and pursuing game protects and preserves hunting's traditions and reputation.

10. Finding a proper home or shelter for any dog a hunter determines they cannot or will not keep is important. Abandoning any dog is unacceptable. Dog abandonment by hunters should not be condoned or accepted and is illegal.

11. Hunters should be respectful of all landowners. Attempting to contact property owners prior to accessing their property to retrieve hunting dogs, being respectful and considerate, minimizing the number of hunters involved in dog retrieval, and refraining from causing any damage to others' property protects the reputation of all hunters. Hunters should encourage their fellow hunters to do the same.

12. Proper care for dogs, including food, water, medical care, and shelter is a basic responsibility of dog ownership. Dogs should receive sufficient food to maintain appropriate physical condition. Committing to providing proper care and insisting other hunting dog owners do the same is expected of ethical hunters.

Appendix F

Evaluation of the establishment of a staff liaison position at the Department, to enhance communications and relationships with both hunters using dogs and landowner interests.

Position objective: To serve as a liaison to Virginia's hound hunting and landowning communities with the goal of increasing outreach and education and reducing conflict between hound hunters and landowners. To enable the position to maintain relationships with all parties, this position would not be tasked with law enforcement or regulatory development.

Position location: This position would ideally be assigned to DWR Headquarters, though it could also be assigned to other locations in reasonable proximity to hound hunting counties.

Organizational setting: This position would be placed in the agency's Outreach Division, which currently houses the Department's Hunting Outreach Coordinator and Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Coordinator positions, as well as the agency's Hunter Education program.

Background/Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: Knowledge of hound hunting practices and laws/regulations applicable to hunting with hounds; knowledge of property laws/other laws and regulations affecting landowners; strong interpersonal skills; background in conflict resolution techniques; strong verbal and written presentation skills.

Core Responsibilities:

Impartial liaison to hound hunting and landowner organizations, hound hunting clubs, and other private and governmental entities as necessary. Within this role, this position serves to receive and disseminate information, rather than as a decision maker on policy or administrative matters.

Provide information to the interested public on hound hunting practices as well as applicable laws and regulations in response to inquiries and as determined to be advantageous to effective outreach and education on the topic of hound hunting and avoidance/resolution of hunter/landowner conflicts.

Coordination with agency law enforcement and other agency divisions and staff to best inform agency programs as to perspectives of the hound hunting and landowning communities.

Coordination with local governments and local law enforcement agencies to convey information relative to conditions in their jurisdiction and receive their input on matters of local concern.

Attendance at events and meetings by invitation as advantageous to the goals of the position.

Budget information: This position is currently unbudgeted and would need to be established within the agency's budget, as well as approved for establishment by the Administration (as with all positions the agency seeks to fill). Salary and fringe benefit costs would be dependent on qualification of the selected candidate, but total costs (salary plus fringe) would be estimated to range from \$90,000 to \$120,000 per year. It is also likely that an agency vehicle would need to be made available for regular use, so related expenses would need to be budgeted as well. These funds do not currently exist and would need to be identified.

Hunting with Hounds Outreach Deliverables



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

Board Resolution 4

A review and evaluation of existing relevant DWR outreach efforts, along with information pertaining to outreach used by other states in which deer and bear hunting with dogs occurs, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024;

DWR's historic outreach efforts to the public regarding this topic have been generalized.

- General hunting awareness messaging.
- The Virginia Hunter Education Student Manual includes a section on ethics that stresses the importance of hunter behavior and image (actions, appearance, speech) and respect for hunting companions, nonhunters, landowners, the law, and wildlife.
- Instructors focus primarily on laws pertaining to hunting and specifically, hunting with dogs.
- DWR has conducted multiple comprehensive outreach efforts aimed at landowners and hunters that use dogs to pursue deer or bear in 2008, 2021, and 2023.

Southeast states, including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida that have some form of hunting with dogs use a similar outreach strategy. No state surveyed had a robust hunting with dogs communications strategy in place.



Board Resolution 4

Evaluation of the development and delivery of public awareness efforts, including locally-held public forums in areas where complaints are above average, that provide information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices and applicable laws and regulations, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024;

DWR's Outreach and Education staff have created a website, brochures, and presentation materials that can be used by DWR regional and law enforcement staff and volunteers for public outreach efforts in specific areas of the state.



Hunting with hounds is a practice with a long tradition in Virginia and is a means of both public recreation and wildlife management. As Virginia has become more populated and land ownership patterns have changed over time, promoting positive interactions between hound hunters and landowners has become more important than ever.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to continuing the tradition of hunting with hounds for both wildlife management and recreational benefits. Furthermore, DWR is committed to ensuring that hunting practices are consistent with and respect the rights of private property owners.



To find out more about Best Practices surrounding hunting with hounds for both hunters and landowners, as well as the Virginia laws pertaining to hunting with hounds, please visit dwr.virginia.gov/hunting-with-hounds or scan the QR code.



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Evaluation of the development and delivery of public awareness efforts, including locally-held public forums in areas where complaints are above average, that provide information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices and applicable laws and regulations, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024;



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Best Practices for Living in Hound Hunting Counties

Post Your Property with No Trespassing Signs

Posting your property makes it easier for others to know where your property lines lie. Including a phone number or other information will also make it easier for a hunter to contact you if they need to retrieve a dog.

Hunting Season and Hounds

If you live in a county where hunters use hounds to chase deer or bear, please be aware that this tradition has been part of the culture for generations. Most hunters have a safe system of casting, running, and hunting over hounds. Please be patient and considerate of legal hunting during this time.

Hounds on Your Property

Living in a county where hunting with hounds is legal doesn't mean you have to tolerate illegal or unethical behavior. Always report violations to Law Enforcement as soon as the violation occurs.

- Hounds in pursuit of wild game should be left alone when possible.
- Hounds that pose a threat to your property, family, pets, or livestock can be captured and reported to animal control immediately.
- Report any hunting violation you see to Law Enforcement immediately using Virginia's Wildlife Crime Line number (800) 237-5712.
- Never remove a collar from a hound or capture and keep the hound for an extended period without first calling the number on the collar.
- Hounds that appear lost should be collected — call the number on the collar immediately. If the hunter/owner does not respond, call animal control.

Hunting with Hounds:

Best Practices for Hunters & Landowners



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

Board Resolution 4

Evaluation of the development and delivery of public awareness efforts, including locally-held public forums in areas where complaints are above average, that provide information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices and applicable laws and regulations, with a report provided to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024;



Best Practices for Hunting with Hounds in Virginia

Hunting Safety

Buckshot travels further than most people realize. Know your surroundings and beyond before taking a shot.

- 1 Make a plan:**
 - Know where your hunting partners are and plan your Zone of Fire accordingly.
 - Never take a shot when there is the possibility of someone being downrange of you.
 - Always have a safe backstop. Know where you bullet will go if you miss.
- 2 Use caution when taking multiple shots. Keep to your safe Zone of Fire.**
- 3 Stick to your plan:**
 - Do not move positions during a hunt.
 - Beware of tunnel vision (big buck fever) – Maintain your safe Zone of Fire.
- 4 Whenever possible, hunt from an elevated position.**



Optics and Ethics

Just because it is not illegal doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. Every hunter has the responsibility of modeling safe, responsible, and ethical behavior.

- Parking and/or standing on the side of a roadway gives the impression that you are hunting from the road.
- Cast dogs and conduct your hunt in a manner to maximize opportunities to prevent them from entering roadways or lands where they are not wanted.
- Using hounds to intentionally chase deer off property where you do not have permission is unethical and illegal.
- Always communicate with landowners before entering their property to retrieve your dogs.
- Always identify yourself and show respect and courtesy to landowners. When possible, introduce yourself to landowners in the area that you intend to hunt prior to the season.
- Never drive your vehicle or carry a firearm onto property that you do not have permission to access.
- Always collect your dogs immediately after the hunt.
- Ensure each dog is collared with your name and up-to-date contact information so lost dogs can be returned.
- Hitting a moving target is difficult. Only shoot at an animal you know you can kill quickly, humanely, and ethically.
- If you take a shot at an animal, always take the time to track and retrieve that animal.

To find out more about Best Practices surrounding hunting with hounds for both hunters and landowners, as well as the Virginia laws pertaining to hunting with hounds, please visit dwr.virginia.gov/hunting-with-hounds

Respect Private Property

Hunters can take steps to minimize or eliminate hounds entering property without permission from the landowner.

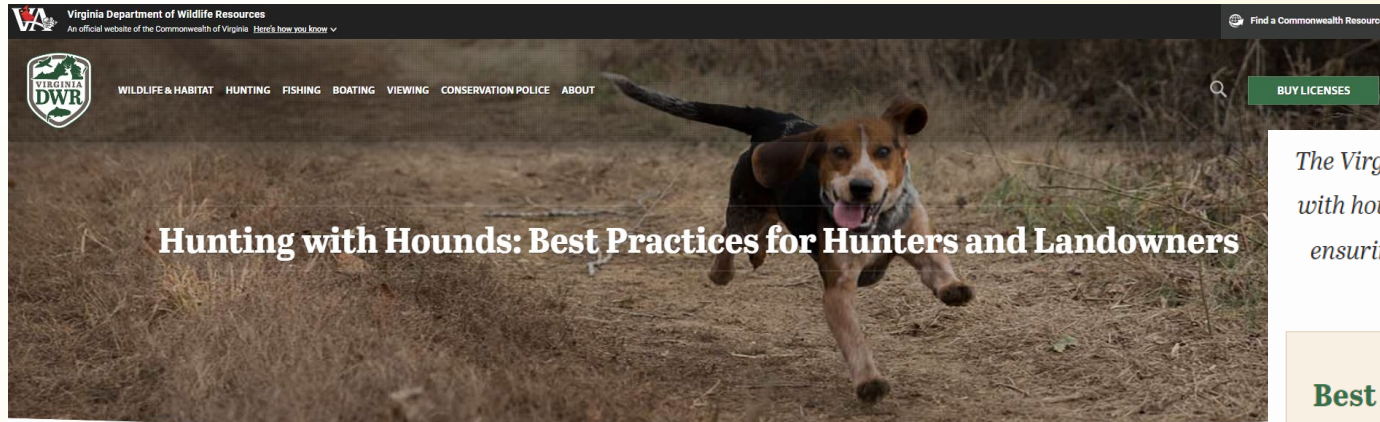
- Make a plan to keep dogs on the property where you have permission to hunt.
- Communicate with adjacent landowners.
- Only release hounds on property where you have permission. Releasing hounds with the intent of going on property where you do not have permission is illegal.
- Only use hounds that are appropriate for the size of the property you have permission to hunt. The smaller the property, the smaller the hound. Consider using a different breed of hunting dog if conditions warrant it.
- Never use hounds to intentionally chase deer off property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Always retrieve your dogs as soon as the hunt has ended.

Hound Hunting Technology

- Use the technology available to you (electronic collars) to assist with preventing dogs from entering properties where they aren't wanted.
- Use the technology available to you to collect your dogs immediately after the hunt and before they wander onto property you do not have permission to hunt.
- Never use technology as an excuse or means to trespass on property where you do not have permission.
- Always remain in close contact with your dogs, visually, electronically, or otherwise.

Board Resolution 4

The creation and delivery of educational information about deer and bear hunting with dogs, including ethics, best practices, and applicable laws and regulations, to be made available annually by August 1 to localities and local law enforcement agencies where deer and bear hunting with dogs occurs and encourage their sharing of this information through relevant communication channels.



[Home](#) > [Hunting with Hounds: Best Practices for Hunters and Landowners](#)

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to continuing the tradition of hunting with hounds for both wildlife management and recreational benefits. Furthermore, DWR is committed to ensuring that hunting practices are consistent with and respect the rights of private property owners.

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Best Practices for Hunting with Hounds in Virginia



Best Practices for Living in Hound Hunting Counties: Landowners and Still Hunters in Virginia



Laws Pertaining to Hunting with Dogs



Board Resolution 4

An evaluation of the establishment of a staff liaison position at the Department, to enhance communications and relationships with both hunters using dogs and landowner interests, with a report made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by August 1, 2024;

Impartial liaison to hound hunting and landowner organizations, hound hunting clubs, and other private and governmental entities, as necessary.

Position would receive and disseminate information, rather than act as a decision maker on policy or administrative matters.

Provide information to the interested public on hound hunting practices as well as applicable laws and regulations in response to inquiries.

Coordination with agency law enforcement and other agency divisions and staff to best inform agency programs as to perspectives of the hound hunting and landowning communities.

Coordination with local governments and local law enforcement agencies to convey information relative to conditions in their jurisdiction and receive their input on matters of local concern.

Attendance at events and meetings by invitation as advantageous to the goals of the position.



Board Resolution 5

The development of a “best practices” document for deer and bear hunters using dogs and for private landowners by August 1, 2024, and inclusion of this content on the DWR website and, summarized as appropriate, in the annual Hunting and Trapping in Virginia digest;

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Buckshot travels further than most people realize. Know your surroundings and beyond before taking a shot.

- Make a plan
 - Know where your hunting partners are and plan your Zone of Fire accordingly.
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- Whenever possible, hunt from an elevated position.

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Hunters can take steps to minimize or eliminate hounds entering property without permission from the landowner.

- Make a plan to keep dogs on the property where you have permission to hunt.
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- Always retrieve your dogs as soon as the hunt has ended.



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Board Resolution 5

A compilation of laws and regulations pertaining to deer and bear hunting with dogs, as well as those protecting hunting dogs, and inclusion of this content on the DWR website by August 1, 2024;

Laws Pertaining to Hunting with Dogs

Trespass by Hunters using Dogs and Right to Retrieve

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Board Resolution 5

A review and evaluation of existing relevant DWR hunter educational efforts, content and materials, such as the additional materials integrated into the Virginia Hunter Education Program basic curriculum in 2021, with a report to be made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by October 31, 2024;

Hunter Education will promote Best Hunting Practices included BMPs for hunters and landowners and ethics for hunting with hounds within the Hunting Ethics section of the Basic Hunter Education Course. Implementation of the promotion will include a mandatory training for all Hunter Education volunteer instructors. In addition, all curriculum both on-line and in-person will be updated with BMPs and ethics for hunting with hounds.

Evaluation of a potential advanced training program for Virginia Hunter Education instructors, particularly for those in areas where complaints associated with bear or deer hunting with dogs are above average, that provides more details and insights to be conveyed during their delivery of hunter education programming, with a report to be made to the Board's Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee by October 31, 2024;

All hunter education instructors east of the Blue Ridge (where hunting deer with hounds is legal) will be required to take advanced training classes that include best management practices, laws, and ethics related to hunting with dogs. Classes will be made available to instructors through a variety of delivery methods including in-person classes at advanced training events, virtual streaming workshops, and recorded presentations available on-line or within the volunteer portal.



E P O C o m m i t t e e M e e t i n g :
A u g u s t 2 1 s t , 2 0 2 4

Corporate Engagement Strategy



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



DWR Internal Partnership Survey

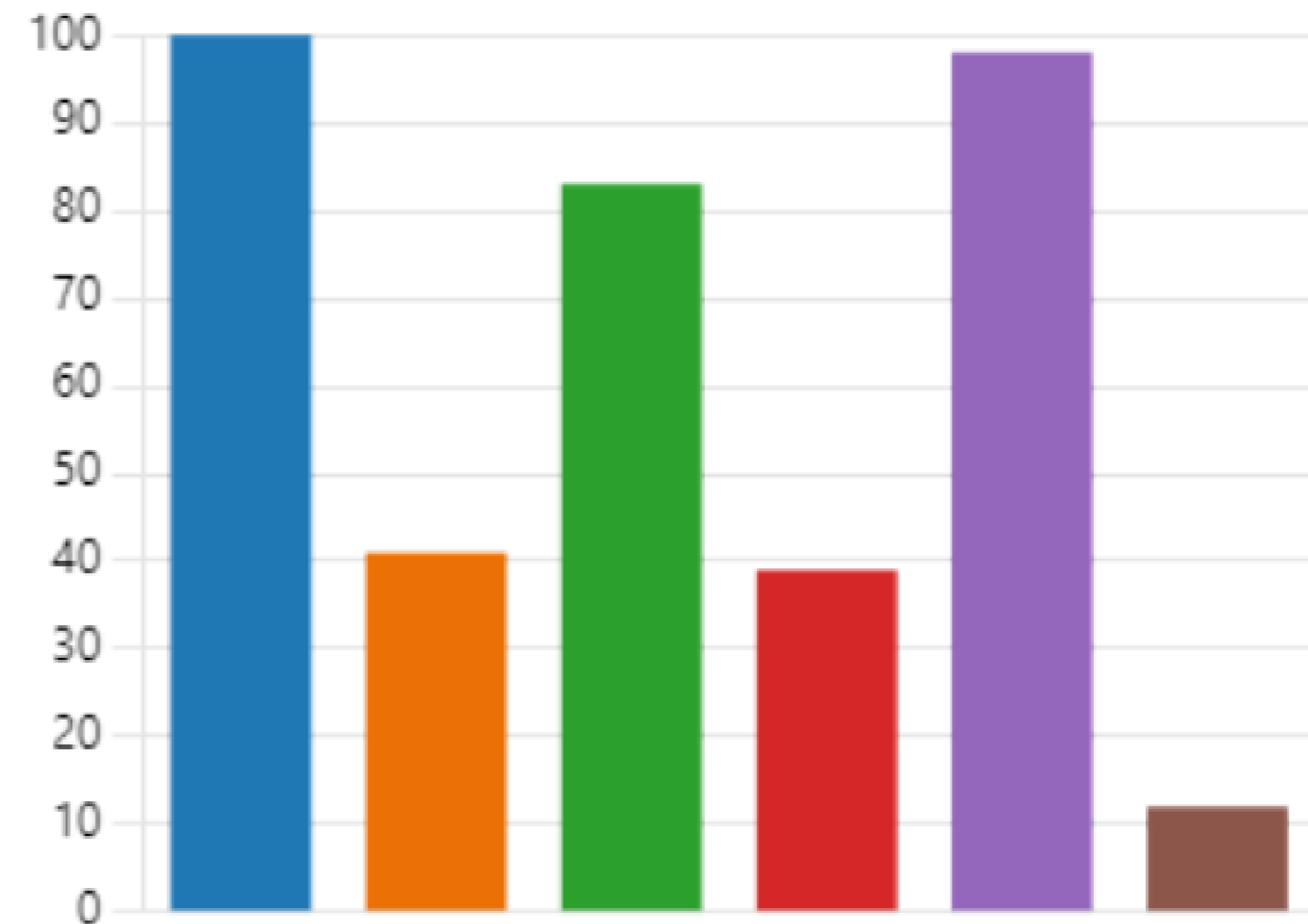
- 119 Responses
 - Wildlife: 31
 - Aquatics: 23
 - Law: 27
 - Outreach: 12
 - Boating, Executive Office, Planning and Finance: 6
 - HR: 1
- What did we ask?
 - Partner Definition
 - Types of Partnerships
 - Current Partners
 - Communication
 - Ideas
 - Support



Survey Findings

7. What have you/DWR given as part of your collaboration with a partner organization? (select all that apply)

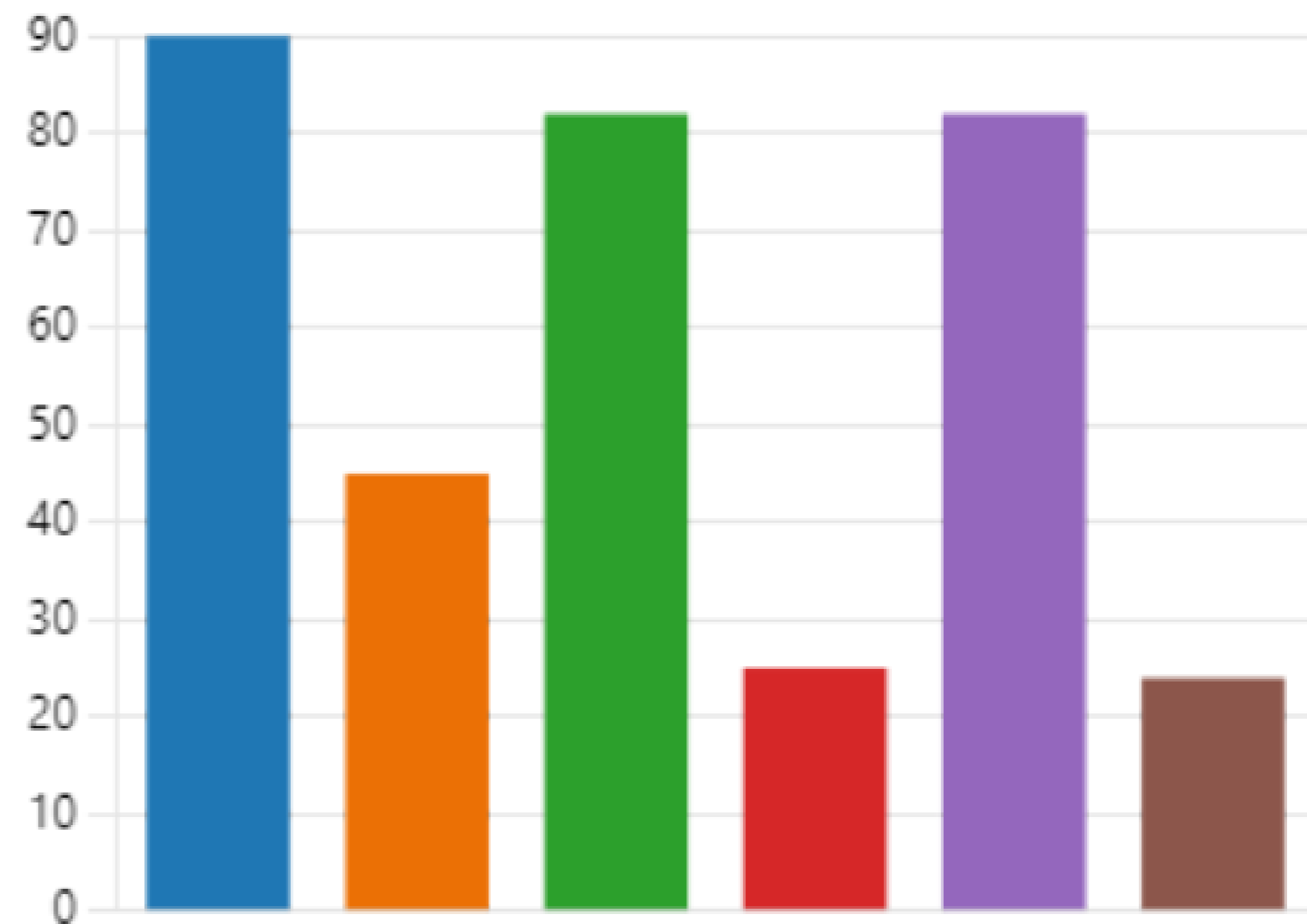
● Expertise	100
● Money	41
● Resources (ex: materials, equip...)	83
● Swag or Giveaway Items	39
● Time/Labor	98
● Other	12



Survey Findings





8. What has the partner organization given as part of the collaboration with you/DWR? (select all that apply)

● Expertise	90
● Money	45
● Resources (ex: materials, equip...	82
● Swag or Giveaway Items	25
● Time/Labor	82
● Other	24



Survey Findings

10. How do you formalize a partnership? (select all that apply)

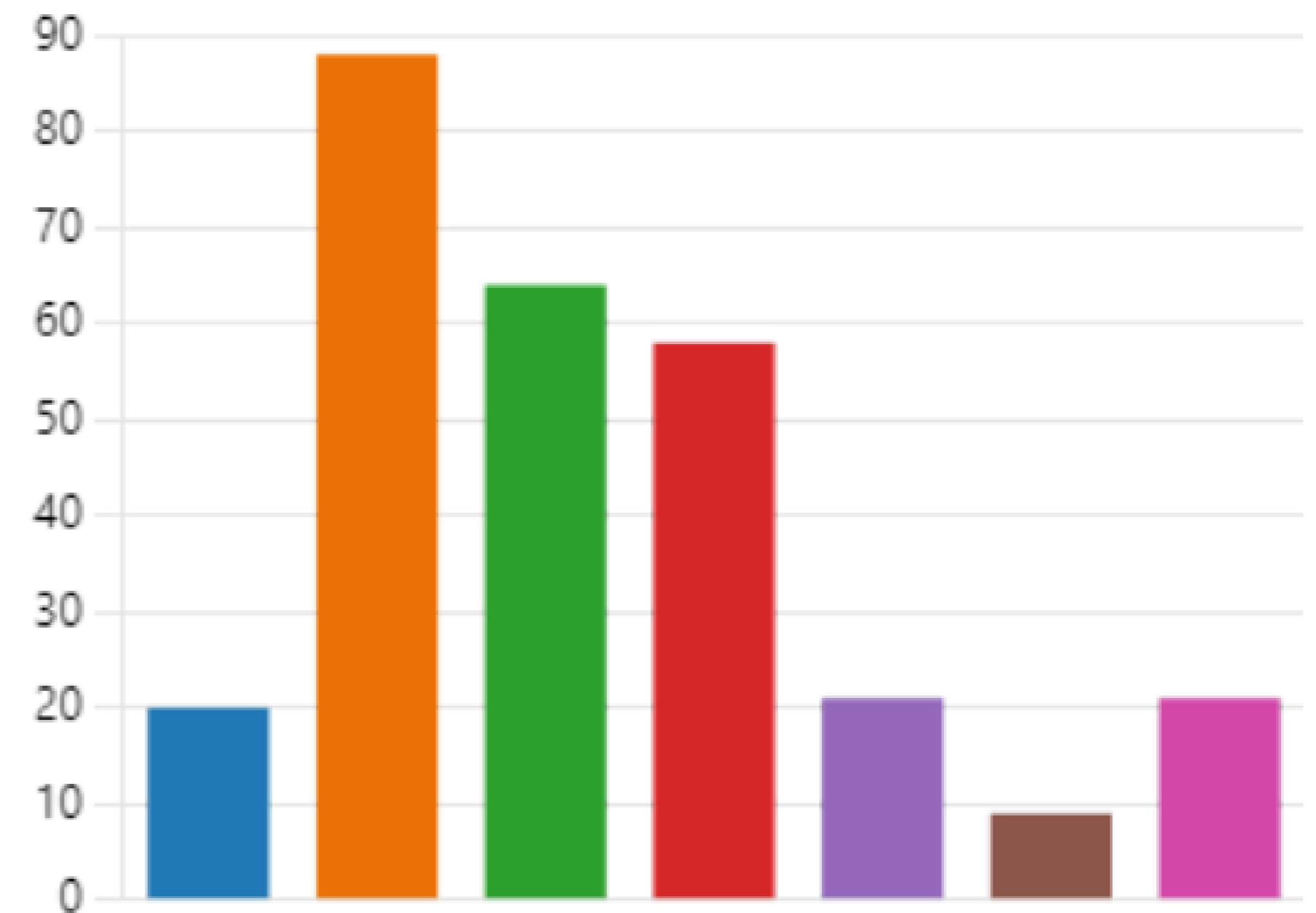
	Formal contract or agreement	62
	Informal/handshake agreement	61
	No formal/informal agreement	72
	Other	13



Survey Findings

11. How do you thank or recognize the partners that you work with? (select all that apply)

● Handwritten note	20
● Personal email	88
● Phone call	64
● Public recognition (DWR comm...)	58
● Swag or giveaway items	21
● I do not currently thank or reco...	9
● Other	21



Survey Findings

12. How do you keep partners informed about DWR initiatives or updates? (select all that apply)

More Details

● Direct them to DWR communica...	42
● Personal email	67
● Phone call	57
● I do not inform partners about ...	24
● Other	16



What did DWR staff say?

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW PARTNERS OR COLLABORATIONS

I think the agency does a good job of partnering/collaborating with traditional hunters, but we need to start partnering with non-traditional users and underrepresented groups that may only be interested in wildlife viewing or recreation.

Avoid partnerships that are in name only...make sure there is give and take and real collaboration. And be willing to do things to help them. Don't ask them for help and then turn around and refuse to help them. That's not a partnership, and treat partners as equals, and vice versa.

*I'm interested in a partnership/collaboration strategy as opposed to picking up partnership by happenstance, which is what I've kind of done for the last 20 years.
Corporate sponsorship of large initiatives.*

Formalize and enhance current partnerships.



What did DWR staff say?

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS OR COLLABORATIONS?

Shared responsibility for wildlife and habitat management in VA and having them engage others to spread that message and obligation

Expand our constituency. Expose more underrepresented groups to outdoor activities by amplifying those who do.

Continuing wildlife habitat development and management efforts. It is IMPARATIVE to work with partners, particularly now that DWR's budget situation is an all-time low and having a bleak financial future, to get habitat and wildlife conservation on the ground. Without increasing budget appropriations or no new funding source DWR's wildlife and habitat management programs will continue to decline in effort and effectiveness.



What did DWR staff say?

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS OR COLLABORATIONS?

Engage more people with our WMAs and give them a chance to see how much goes into their management. There is also a potential for volunteering and achieving more with our limited resources when we mutually gain from a partnership. For instance, DOF can only practice bulldozer work on state property but they need to maintain proficiency by operating dozers a certain number of hours each year. We volunteer our properties for this purpose and get work done at the same time. DOF benefits by having a place to practice putting in fire lines, clearing trees from roads, invasive plant removal, etc.

I get a great deal of satisfaction by sharing agency work and accomplishments with partners and offering them a "behind the scenes" look to see what their support has helped us accomplish. Fully recognizing their contributions adds transparency and respect for what they have done. Partners/partnerships have great imagination and think differently than we do and we need to keep these interactions moving forward to remain relevant. Without the collaborations I have personally been involved in many projects would have never gotten past the idea/wish list stage and no benefits would have reached wildlife, habitats, or people. Also, these partnerships aid us by developing new contacts and keeping up with traditional constituents.



What did DWR staff say?

WHAT COULD LEADERSHIP DO TO BETTER SUPPORT AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS/COLLABORATIONS?

There should probably be more communication to recognize our partnerships and collaborations. Some communication has been done, but there is always potential for more. If future funding improves, more funding towards many of our partnerships is always helpful, too.

Prioritize partnerships on a statewide level, create a basic set of "guidelines" for partnerships.

Develop standard MOUs and other documents

Offer more sponsorships, have templates to more efficiently and more universally reach out to partners

Provide us with tools to better acknowledge partners



Survey Insights

- **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**
- **STAFF RESOURCES**
- **RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATIONS**
- **CORPORATE AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS**





Action Items

- ✓ Determine current partners
- ✓ Developing Public/Private Guidelines
- ✓ Resources for Staff
- ✓ Shepherding in new partners
- ✓ Communications



Communications

Your contributions can help us restore wildlife habitat when you become a Restore the Wild member or connect youth to the outdoors through the Virginia Wildlife Grant Program!



Contribute to a Cause



Volunteer & Mentorship

Whether you volunteer with us, take the time to mentor a new hunter, or refer a friend to go hunting or fishing, you can make a difference!





RECENT MILESTONES

- DEVILS BACKBONE
- ACI
- ONX
- TRIPLE CROSSING
- DWR ARCHERY
OPEN



DEVILS BACKBONE BREWING

- \$33,000 (over 3 years)
- Habitat Restoration
- Internships
- Event support
- Product collabs





ACI Conference

- 18 Sponsors / 2 in-kind
- \$31,750 raised
- \$4,800 raised in the auction



Triple Crossing and Falcon Cam

- Cross-Divisional
- Product Collabs
- Raffle Opportunities
- Outreach Events



onX and Explore the Wild

- In App Communications
- Hike for the Wild
- Free Trial Codes
- Agency Donations





DWR Archery Open

- January 2025
- Sponsorship Exhibitor
Opportunities
- Ward Burton Wildlife
Foundation Partnership

A scenic landscape featuring a wide river flowing through a lush, green forest. In the foreground, two people are fly fishing in the water. The person on the left is wearing a blue shirt and a dark cap, while the person on the right is wearing a blue shirt, a red cap, and a backpack. The background shows a dense forest of tall trees, with a large, forested hillside visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Questions?

Hunter Education Program Update

Jimmy Mootz
Hunter Education Team Lead



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Hunter Education: A New Direction







Hunter Education

~ Year One Accomplishments

•Registered Participants:

- 2022/23 **433**
- 2023/24 **772** *78% increase

•Volunteer Engagement:

- 2022/23 **4727** hours
- 2023/24 **8636** hours *83% increase



DWR's New Hunting Mentor Program

New Hunting Mentor Program Launched July 15th

Managed roll out to accept
hunting mentors and novice hunters for the
2024/25 Hunting Season

Current

34 approved mentors
64 novice hunters

2023/24

5 active mentors



Hunter Education Outreach

Recruit, Retain, Reactivate

... while building lasting relationships

Becoming a Virginia Hunter



Beyond Basic Hunter Ed





Deer Processing Workshops

Getting From Here...



To Here!



the **OUTDOORS** *are*
Better **TOGETHER**



Questions?

Jimmy Mootz
Hunter Education Team Lead



Becoming a Virginia Hunter



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

The Fallen Outdoors Late Season Dove Hunt



2024 MCO Youth Waterfowl Hunt
-Over 100 youth hunters with parents
-46 Ducks and Geese harvested





BAVH Turkey Workshop

- Marketed to the same audience
- 6 returning participants from BAVH Deer
- 7 Couples
- Mother/adult son group
- 26 out of 30 participants showed



2024 MCO Youth Turkey Hunt
126 Youth Hunters
30 Turkeys Harvested



Occoquan Hunts

Worked with Joe, NWTF and USFWS

2 youth hunters on youth Saturday

2 Female apprentice hunters

3 turkeys harvested

2 Harvests filmed by DWR Staff!!!

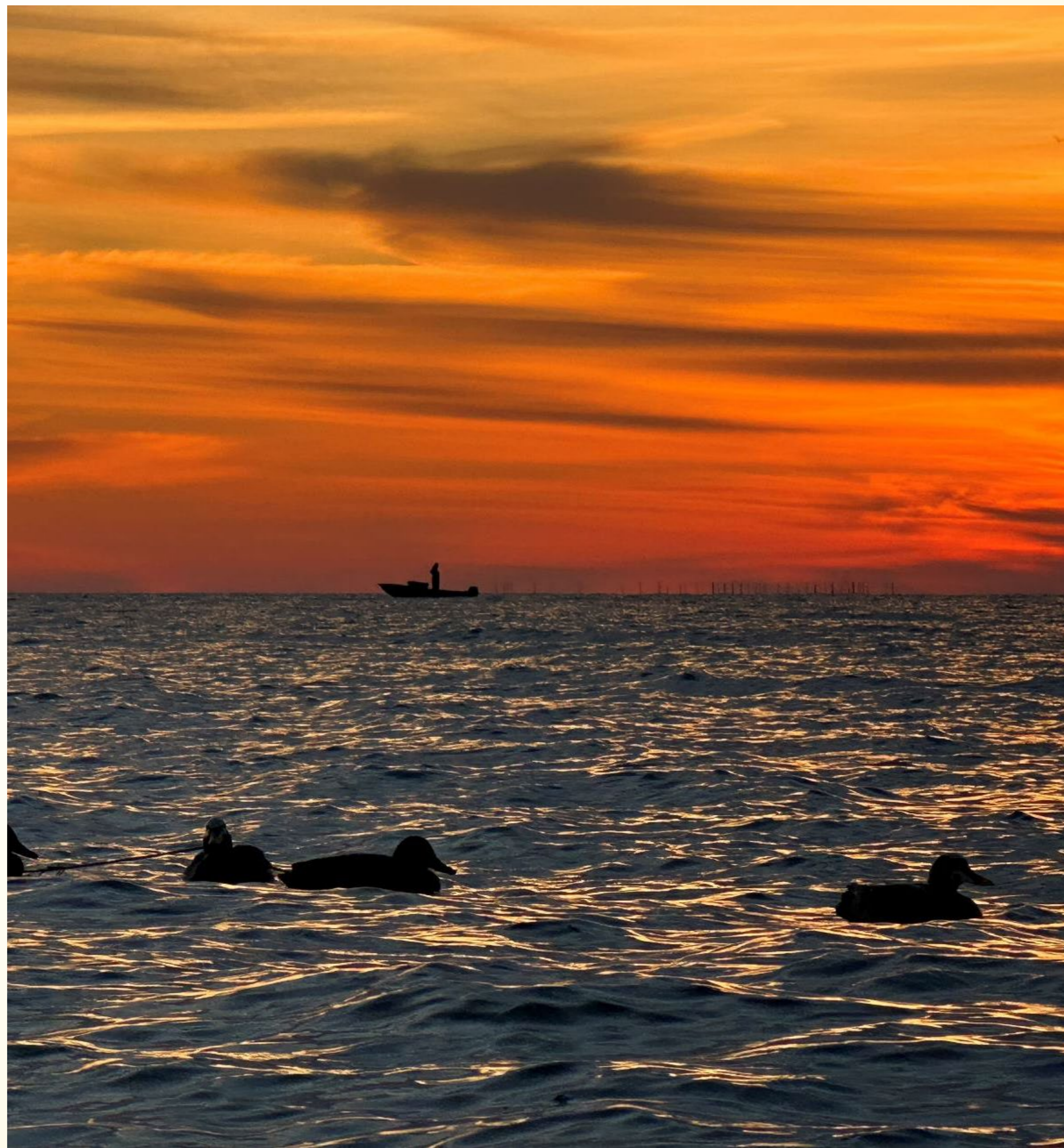




First Hunts Foundation: Share the **HER**itage and Forgotten Rights

- Partnered with Monquin Creek Outdoors
- 5 female hunters
- 2 day hunt in Essex County
- 3 turkeys harvested





Moving Forward

- OnX Codes for Workshop Participants
- Youth Deer Weekend
- Veteran Hunt with Backwoods Warriors
- Women's Deer, Waterfowl, Turkey hunts
- Beyond Boundaries and Jacob's Chance relationship
- Adaptive Upland hunt at The Preserve at Dundee
- Delta Waterfowl UHP
- The Bird Dog Society workshop
- Youth/Veteran Waterfowl
- Country Club of VA relationship



Max Goldman

Statewide Access Coordinator
Outreach Division



VIRGINIA

Birding

CLASSIC

2024

Education, Planning, and Outreach
Committee Meeting

August 21st, 2024



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



How long is he going to talk?

- Define the VA Birding Classic 1 slide
- Goals 1 slide
- Development Process 1 slide
- Results 1 slide
- Prizes 1 slide
- Partnerships 1 slide
- Future Plans 1 slide





What is the VA Birding Classic?

The Virginia Birding Classic is a statewide birding competition developed by DWR's Outreach division and Watchable Wildlife section that invites teams of 2-6 birders to register with DWR and choose a 24-hour period each spring to go birding on Virginia's public lands.

Teams submit their species list to DWR and the team with the highest total wins!





PROCESS

- Technical challenges (Is this even possible?)
- Build the team (who do we need to make this great)
- Develop the event
 - Logistics (registration, who gets the money)
 - Rules
 - Branding
 - Supporting materials
 - Prizes
 - Promotion
- Launch! (registration opened March 1st, 2024)



RESULTS

28 Teams



100+ Birders



42 Properties Visited

13 County/City

10 DCR

8 Federal (NWR/NPS)

7 DWR

5 Misc.



4 DWR Regions



204 Species Identified

of 490 known to occur in VA



\$5k+ Raised
for the VA Wildlife Grant Program

DoWitcheRs

Carolyn Rubinfeld

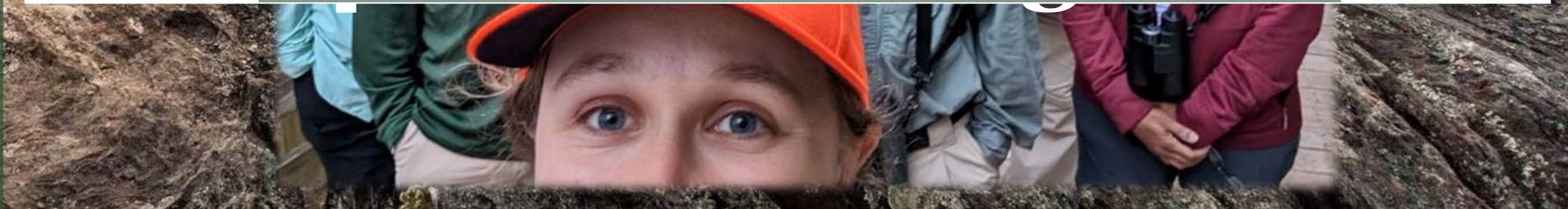
Jeff Trollinger

Melanny White



The Baskin' Robbins

2024 Virginia Birding Classic
1 Property, 35 Species



GRAND PRIZE

The Winning Team Got to Choose:

A uniquely DWR experience

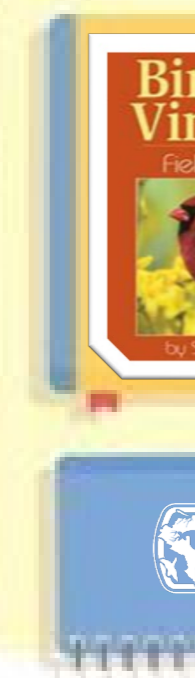
- Golden or Bald Eagle banding with Jeff Cooper
- Peregrine chick banding with Sergio Harding
- Ft. Wool Seabird Colony tour with David Norris
- Elk Viewing Tour in the Elk Management Zone



&

An elementary school to receive 3 Birding Backpacks for their library

**BIRDING
BACKPACKS**



Donated By





Planning Committee



powered by: **eBird**





FUTURE PLANS

- Meet with multiagency planning committee in Fall 2024 to debrief and brainstorm
- Add new event and prize categories
 - i.e. Big Sit, human powered, youth category
- Develop inter/intra school competition
- Broaden sponsorship base
- Expand “DWR Birding Backpacks” into stand-alone program
- Promote 2025 VA Birding Classic!





QUESTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION

Max Goldman

Statewide Access Coordinator
Max.Goldman@Virginia.DWR.gov

DWR PLANNING TEAM

MEAGAN THOMAS
CAROLYN RUBINFELD
KELSEY STEENBURGH
&
TIM TASSITANO



A woman wearing a plaid shirt, a white t-shirt, a baseball cap, and a large backpack is hiking through a forest. She is looking to the right. The background is a dense forest with trees and rocks.

Outreach Division

Director's Update



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ASSOCIATION *for*
CONSERVATION
INFORMATION, INC.



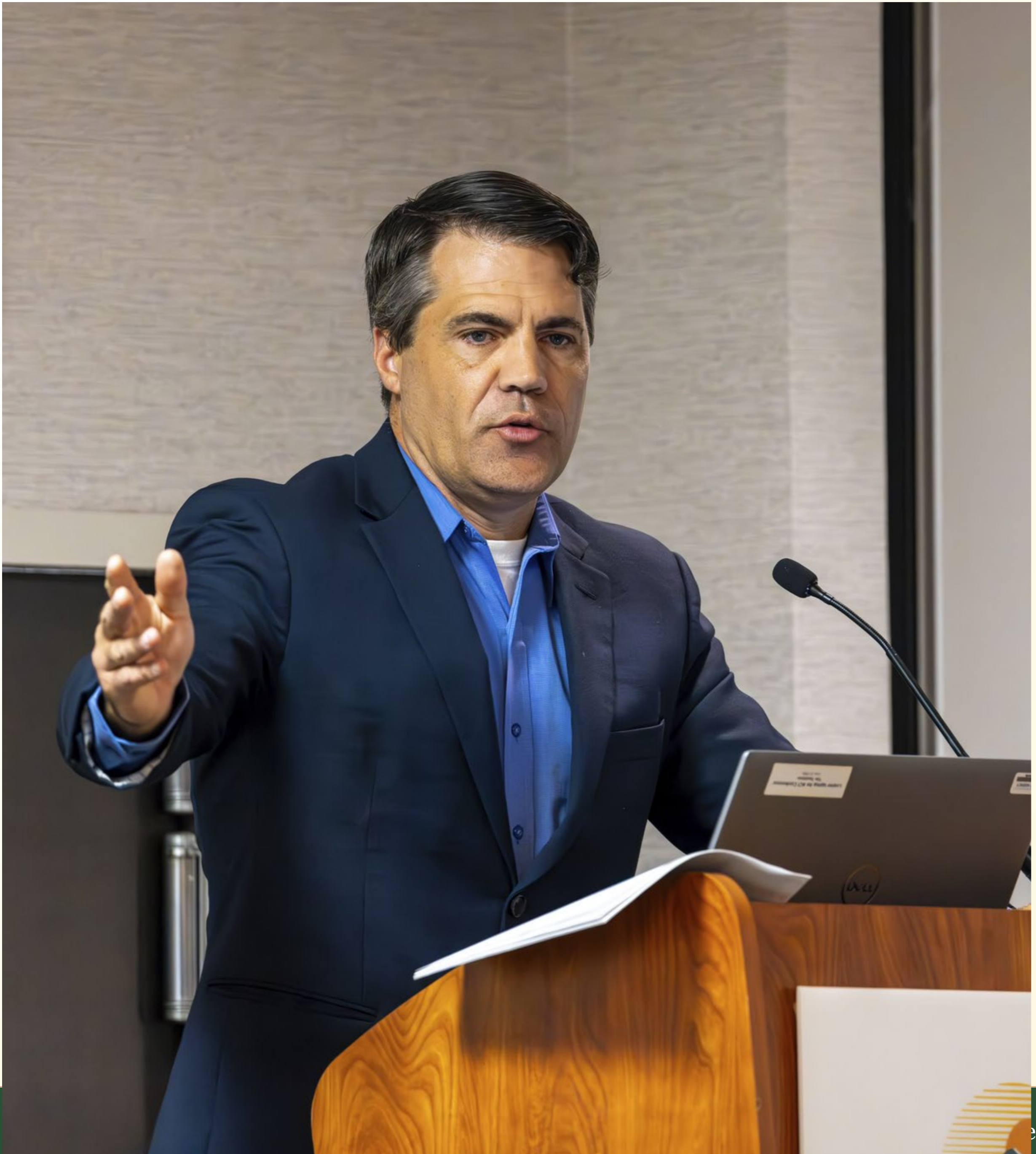
DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE RESOURCES
CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



















VS

WATERSNAKE

COTTONMOUTH


A person is seen from behind, carrying a large, dark-colored animal carcass on their back. They are walking through a field with a fence in the background. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.


Exposing a Prolific Poacher





TRUE *Wildlife* CRIME


EP 001



Comments 21 

 @markcrowe107 4 minutes ago
I started watching this morning and there were only 88 views. This video has already hit over 2,220 views since I started! Obviously, you've hit a very important channel of communications to all sportsmen and sportswomen who want to preserve our hunting legacy and conserve our wild turkey populations. Great start to what I hope will be a very active YouTube channel!

 @jimkogle8509 2 hours ago
Great interview and interesting case. The CPO exhibited excellent professionalism and certainly was a terrific representative of DWR.

“ I started watching this morning and there were only 88 views. This video has already hit over 2,220 views since I started! Obviously, you’ve hit a very important channel of communications to all sportsmen and sportswomen who want to preserve our hunting legacy and conserve our wild turkey populations. Great start to what I hope will be a very active YouTube channel!”

@markcrowe107