

AGENDA

Board of Wildlife Resources
Law Enforcement Committee
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Henrico, Virginia 23228

August 21, 2024
2:00 pm

Committee Members: Mr. Michael Formica, Chair, Mr. George Terwilliger, and Mr. Jon Cooper
DWR Staff Liaison: Colonel John Cobb

1. Call to Order and Welcome
Mr. Formica
2. Approval of May 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes **Final Action**
Mr. Formica
3. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Item
Mr. Formica
4. Update on Law Enforcement Training for Hound Hunting
Major Ryan Shuler
5. Hollywood Buck Presentation Case
Sergeant Tyler Bumgarner and Senior Special Agent Zach Howlett
6. Law Enforcement Chief Update
Colonel John Cobb
7. Director's Report
Mr. Ryan Brown

8. Chair's Report
Mr. Formica
9. Additional Business/Comments
Mr. Formica
10. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2024 (to be approved)
Mr. Formica
11. Adjournment
Mr. Formica

Draft Meeting Minutes
Law Enforcement Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Richmond, Virginia 23228

May 22, 2024
2:00 pm

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

Present: Mr. John Daniel, **Chair**, Mr. Jon Cooper, and Mr. Tom Sadler; **Board Members in attendance:** Mr. Leon Boyd, Mr. Michael Formica; and Mr. Terwilliger **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan J. Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Colonel John Cobb, Mr. Rob Lewis, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Shelby Crouch

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that there was a quorum present for the meeting.

Meeting Minutes: The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024, committee meeting. Mr. Cooper made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024, meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Sadler. Ayes: Daniel, Cooper, and Sadler

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

The Chair called for Public Comment, hearing none, the Chair continued with the meeting.

Colonel Cobb called on Major Milt Robinson for an introduction and recognition.

Major Robinson introduced Mr. Tim Wyatt, Field Services Coordinator with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services who came and presented First Sergeant Amanda Nevel and Major Milt Robinson with their Re-Certification Certificate.

Basic Academy Recruit Introductions: The Chair called on First Sgt. Amanda Nevel.

First Sgt. Amanda Nevel introduced the 22 recruits who came in and gave their name and location in front of our Board members.

Board Resolution Update: The Chair called on Colonel Cobb for an Update.

Colonel Cobb gave an update on the Illegal Trade of Reptiles and Amphibians Resolution.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Colonel Cobb for his update.

Law Enforcement Chief Update: The Chair called on Colonel Cobb for an update.

Colonel Cobb reported:

- The Academy is coming along and doing great
- During the last quarter, along with Outreach Division, CPOs worked 205 events, with an average of 35,000 participation and were face to face with 13,000 people.
- Law Enforcement has 2 new dogs.
- The National Law Enforcement Wildlife groups is growing with more states and efforts are going well
- Researching Public/Private Scholarships
- Rick Perry is working hard on Documenting our Law History

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

The Director remarked on the Academy and what it takes for Law Enforcement to put a class together and lead them through 32 weeks. He wanted to commend Law Enforcement for that effort.

Chair's Report:

The Chair thanked Law Enforcement staff for their presentations.

The Chair announced the next Law Enforcement committee meeting will be Wednesday, August 21, 2024, and asked if there were any additional comments, hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 2:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Frances Boswell

Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training Overview

Major Ryan Shuler



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Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training

On March 20, 2024, the Agency Board directed the Executive Director to develop and implement enhanced law enforcement directives, procedures, strategies and trainings specific to the hunting of deer and bear with dogs. Furthermore, the Board directed the Executive Director to place a priority upon enforcement of the prohibition against hunting outside of the open season – specifically using the open season to hunt coyotes and foxes to chase other game animals.



Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training

- On April 10, 2024, the Law Enforcement Division created a workgroup made up of subject matter experts to develop a training lesson plan.
- The Workgroup:
 - Major Ryan Shuler (Advisor)
 - Lieutenant Joshua Thomas – Region 1 (Group Leader)
 - Sergeant Tyler Bumgarner – Region 1 (Deer dog enforcement subject matter expert)
 - Sergeant Cory Harbour – Region 2 (Bear dog enforcement subject matter expert)



Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training

- Overview of the Training:
 - History of Hunting with Hounds in the Commonwealth of Virginia
 - The early era of hound hunting vs the modern era, and the differences
 - Hound Hunting Best Practices
 - Highlight the best practices that were developed by the Outreach Division
 - Potential Indicators of Unlawful Activity
 - Behaviors exhibited that may indicate that a hunter is in violation
 - Code of Virginia and Agency Regulations
 - Title 18.2 (Trespass Laws), Title 29.1 (Wildlife Laws), Title 46.2 (Traffic Laws)
 - Agency Regulations
 - Civil Statutes
 - Domestic dog related code sections



Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training

- Overview of the Training:
 - Hunting Dog Tracking Technology
 - An overview of how the technology works with specific information on the collars and the receivers – this portion will be presented by Sergeant Richard Howald that supervises our K9 Unit.
 - Hurdles to Enforcement
 - Loopholes created within the Code of Virginia and other enforcement related challenges.
 - Investigative Techniques
 - Case examples with further discussion on proven enforcement tactics and techniques.
 - Investigating Hunting Dogs Caught in Traps
 - Overview of relevant code sections and regulations that pertain to trapping
 - Overview of lawful sets, unlawful sets and unlawful devices (snares).



Law Enforcement Hound Hunting Training

- Training Delivery:
 - The training will be delivered to select Agency staff on August 28th as a dry run and an opportunity to solicit feedback from the Executive Director, Law Enforcement and Wildlife Staff.
 - The training will be presented to Regions 1 and 4 on September 30th in Henrico Co.
 - The training will be presented to Regions 2 and 3 on October 8th in Roanoke Co.
 - This training will also be incorporated into the basic academy starting with the 14th Basic that will begin in March 2025.



The Hollywood Buck

A Timeline of Events and Tactics Used



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TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

History

- The Hollywood Buck. Why was this deer so significant.

Timeline

- The initial Call for Service through Adjudication

Tactics

- Methods used by Officers to close this case.





S i g n i f i c a n t I m p o r t a n c e

History of the Hollywood Buck

The Hollywood Buck, or Prince, was a non-typical 29 point deer.

The deer was known to frequent Hollywood Cemetery, and Mt. Calvary Cemetery, within the City of Richmond for the better half of 8 years.

Widely known and recognizable deer due to its unique antlers and mass.

Arguably one of the most well known and photographed deer in the Commonwealth.



How Did we Get Here

Social Media

- Star City Whitetails 12/14/23
- Facebook Post 2.4k Comments

Citizen Outreach

- Dozens of tips and emails received within days of the post

Local/National Media Attention



Call For Service

- Initiated approximately 3:30pm on 12/14/2023
- Initially informed by Master Officer Adams and DWR Employee D. Hennaman of Facebook post to Star City Whitetails



First 5 Hours

Attempt to interview the Suspect

Locate Key evidence in vicinity of suspect's residence

Review Harvest Data

Preservation of digital evidence.



First 24 Hours

- Unable to make any contact with suspect
- Further investigation into the primary suspect. Determined that multiple deer had been taken illegally.
- Neighborhood Canvas for Security footage; Ring Cameras, Building Security Cameras, Flock Cameras.
- Attempt to locate Suspect, working against time.



Timeline of Events Continued

First 36 Hours

Interview main suspect Jason Walters on 12/15/23 – 3 hour interview.

2 sets of Deer Antlers recovered as well as key evidence seized from suspect

Walters arrested on outstanding Warrant out of Richmond for embezzlement

First 48 Hours

2nd Suspect Identified as Alan Proffitt.

Search Warrant executed on Proffitt's vehicle

Key pieces of evidence seized from Proffitt.

Begin filing for additional Search Warrants

Additional Preservation Orders Sent

Following Days

Search warrants executed on Walters and Proffitt's Residences.

Search Warrants executed for cellular data and phone content

Footage obtained from Ring Doorbells and Security Cameras

Piecing the puzzle back together. Building the timeline



Tactics Used

- **Multiple Interviews**
- **Search Warrants**
 - **Residences**
 - **Vehicles**
 - **Digital Media**
- **Outside Agency Assistance**
 - **Richmond PD**
 - **Chesterfield SO**
 - **Henrico PD**
 - **New Kent SO**
 - **ATF**
- **Social Media**
- **Public Outreach**
- **Security Footage**
- **FLOCK Camera Systems**



Results and Court Ruling

- **10 DWR Officers assisted with case.**
- **10 Search Warrants Executed.**
- **20 Wildlife charges taken out against Jason Walters.**
- **6 Wildlife charges taken out against Alan Proffitt.**
- **Jason Walters pleads guilty to all 20 wildlife violations.**
- **Ordered to pay \$2500 in fines; \$11000 in replacement costs**
- **Serve 3 months in jail. (69 months suspended)**
- **Hunting Revocation 24 years (100 years, 76 suspended)**
- **Alan Proffitt pleads guilty to all 6 wildlife violations.**
- **Ordered to pay \$1250 in fines**
- **1 month house arrest (5 months suspended).**
- **Hunting Revocation 6 years (30 years, 24 suspended)**

