

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

October 23, 2024  
10:00 am

**Present:** Mr. James Edmunds, **Chair**, Mr. Woody Woodall, Ms. Laura Walters, Mr. Will Wampler (alternate), **Absent:** Mr. Brian Vincent; **Board Members** in attendance: Mr. Jon Cooper, Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, and Dr. Mamie Parker; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director’s Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Shelby Crouch.

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

**Recognitions of Employees:**

The Chair called on Director Ryan Brown for Recognition of Employees.

The Director called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for presentation of an award. Dr. Bednarski called Mr. John Odenkirk to the podium to accept the Biologist of the Year award.

The Director called on Mr. Michael Lipford for presentation of an award. Mr. Lipford called Mr. Brad Mawyer to the podium to accept the SOBA award.

The Director called on Ms. Becky Gwynn for presentation of an award. Ms. Gwynn called Ms. Meagan Thomas to the podium to accept the AFWA’s Mark J. Reef Award.

The Director and Wildlife and Boat Committee applauded and congratulated the recipients of their awards.

**Approval of the August 21, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes:**

The Chair called for a motion to approve the August 21, 2024, Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Woodall made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2024, committee meeting. Mr. Walters seconded the motion. Ayes: Edmunds, Woodall, Walters, Wampler

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

- Mr. Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding hunting regulations.

The Chair thanked Mr. Kimberlin for his comments.

**Proposed Aquatic Regulations:** The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for a presentation.

Dr. Bednarski gave a presentation on the Proposed Aquatic Regulations.

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

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Woodall made a motion, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee of Wildlife Resources recommend the amendments to the general aquatic regulations as presented by staff for adoption by the full board. It was seconded by Ms. Walters. Ayes: Edmunds, Woodall, Walters, Wampler

**Proposed Boating Regulations:** Mr. Edmunds called on Ms. Stacey Brown for a presentation.

Ms. Brown gave a presentation on the Proposed Boating Regulations.

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

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Woodall made a motion. I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee of the Board of Wildlife Resources recommend the amendments to the Proposed Boating Regulations as presented by staff for adoption by the full board. It was seconded by Ms. Walters. Ayes: Edmunds, Woodall, Walters, Wampler

**Proposed Non-Game Regulations:** Mr. Edmunds called on Ms. Amy Martin for a presentation.

Ms. Martin gave a presentation on the Proposed Non-Game Regulations.

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

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Woodall made a motion, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources final adoption of the amendments to the Non-Game Regulations as presented by staff. It was seconded by Ms. Walters. Ayes: Edmunds, Woodall, Walters, Wampler

**Wildlife Division Update:** The Chair called on Mr. Michael Lipford for his Wildlife Division update.

Mr. Lipford reported:

- Deer updates for the 2024 deer season
- Staff working new 10-year Turkey Management Plan
- Attended the Atlantic Flyway Council meeting.
- Staff attended the VA Bear Hunters Association Field Trail
- Update on news of Bear Sarcoptic Mange
- Annual Safety and Operations meeting held by Lands and Access Team
- 2025 – 2026 Wildlife Regulatory Review Process
- Elk Hunt – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual hunt was held on October 12-18, 2024.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Lipford for his update.

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

Dr. Bednarski reported:

The Aquatics Division provided an overview of the impacts of Helene to the hatchery system. Five hatcheries were damaged.

Buller received significant damage to the water intake structure, dam, and several roads with an approximate impact of \$115,000. About 2000 lbs. of trout were lost.

Paint Bank experienced tree damage and loss of power, at a cost of about \$5,000.

Montebello experienced extensive erosion at a cost of about \$63,000.

Marion was impacted by flood waters, incurring \$12,500 of costs and the loss of about 750 lbs. of trout.

Vic Thomas received shoreline damage, with an estimate of \$150,000 to repair.

The Aquatics Division is preparing to revise the Stocked Trout Management Plan, with a survey to go out to constituents this winter. Of particular interest is how DWR shares information relative to trout stocking events.

Outreach has selected the Atlantic sturgeon for the Restore the Wild Art Contest, and Dr. Bednarski will be speaking at the ceremony.

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

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

Ms. Martin reported:

- Impacts of Hurricane Helene at the Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC)

- Decline in our bat population due to white-nose syndrome is massive (90-99%) but seems to be plateauing. We'll be keeping an eye on them.
- Just started a scarlet kingsnake project at Big Woods WMA. This beautiful snake was first described in Virginia in 2007 and we are still learning about it.
- Nongame staff meeting – held at HQ, in person all healthy full-time staff attended.
- Continuing to work on our Sea Turtle and Marine Mammal Conservation Plans. We have been editing the sea turtle plan based on expert reviewer comments and hope to have it finalized soon.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Martin for her Update.

**Boating Division Update:** The Chair called on Ms. Stacey Brown for a Boating Division Update.

Ms. Brown reported:

- 80,000 customer contacts
- New staff in Customer Service – Brooke Landers and Paul; Mashak
- New Regional boating coordinator - Manuel Overby
- New Boating Division Assistant Director Jim Patrillo has been promoted
- Thanked the Grants Team for their assistance in applying for the Federal 2025 USCG Annual Grant to the States as well as their assistance in amending the grant closeout from the Federal Fiscal Year 2023
- Over 20,000 students take a boating safety course.
- 80 boating incidents
- Fatalities rose to 14

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

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

- Attended the Hunter guide dinner (Elk) in Southwest VA
- Commended and proud of staff in region 3 staff for all their efforts and work during the Helene Hurricane.
- Public has until December 6, 2024, for public comments on Hunting Regulations

**Chair's Report:** The Chair called on Cale Godfrey to respond to how DWR reaches the public for comments on Hunting Regulations.

- Mr. Godfrey commented that we send emails to a list of 1,000+ who sign up wanted the notice, Notes of the Field has around 600,000 email addresses we send to, and we put on our web site.

The Chair reported the next meeting will be Wednesday, January 22, 2025, and asked for any additional business or comments. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:50 noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Frances Boswell  
/s/