

BOARD OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES
AD HOC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Collaborative Solutions for Hound-Hunters & Private Landowners

STATUS UPDATE



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

17 AUGUST 2023

Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC or Committee)

Collaborative Problem-Solving

Recommend to the Board on how to reduce conflicts between landowners and hound-hunters for deer and bear concerning the presence of hunting hounds on private lands



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Today's Agenda

1. Current Progress - Key Milestones

- Jenn Allen, DWR

2. Highlights from the Stakeholder Assessment Report & First Committee Meeting

- Mike Foreman, UVA-Institute for Engagement & Negotiation (IEN)

3. Questions & Comments



A close-up photograph of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the background being a soft-focus green field.

Hound-Hunters & Private Landowners Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Key Milestones

- 1. Stakeholder Assessment**
- 2. Committee Representatives**
- 3. Committee Meetings**



MILESTONE #1: Stakeholder Assessment

Online Survey - IEN

- Specific questions for: (1) Hunters (those who hunt with & without hounds); (2) Landowners impacted by hunting with hounds; (3) Others who are interested in this issue
- Fully open to the public June 5-23, 2023 - 8,868 survey responses

Interviews - IEN

- 18 stakeholders interviewed - interests, concerns, suggestions

Stakeholder Assessment Report - IEN

- Draft report complete – final report available soon
- *Mike Foreman/IEN will present highlights in a few minutes*

General Public Comments - DWR

- Via the SAC webpage



Public Comments via SAC Webpage

- Webpage provides information and status updates
- Allows the public to email DWR with any questions and comments
- 1,024 emails submitted
 - May 25 – Aug 16, 2023
- Comment themes are tracking very closely with the results from the Stakeholder Survey and Interviews
 - *Mike Foreman/IEN will share these themes soon...*

<https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunters-landowners-sac>

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MILESTONE #2: Committee Representatives

- Committee Members bring together the perspectives of:
 - private landowners
 - hound-hunters
 - local governments
 - still hunters
 - Native Americans
 - agricultural landowners
 - wildlife management interest groups
- Some Committee Members represent more than one of these perspectives
- 19 Committee seats
- Each organizational body (except for the At-Large Citizen seats) selected its own primary and alternate representatives



19 Committee Seats - Representatives

- 1 representative each for 11 Organizations
 - American Bear Foundation, Virginia Chapter
 - Appalachian Habitat Association
 - B&W Hunt Club
 - Sporting Dog Coalition of Virginia
 - Virginia Association of Responsible Sportsmen
 - Virginia Bear Hunters Association
 - Virginia Deer Hunters Association
 - Virginia Farm Bureau
 - Virginia Hound Heritage
 - Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance
 - Virginia Property Rights Alliance
- 5 representatives serving as At-Large Citizen Representatives
- 1 representative from a Native American Tribe (Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe)
- 1 representative each for 2 Local Governments (Louisa & Spotsylvania Counties)



MILESTONE #3: Committee Meetings

- Five meetings are planned
 - 1st meeting occurred last week! (August 10)
 - Next meeting (August 31)
 - Future meeting dates TBD by the Committee
- Goal is for Committee to provide recommendations to the Board at the end of this Calendar Year 2023
- Number of meetings and schedule could shift if more time is needed for the Committee's critical conversations



DWR & IEN Roles for the Committee Meetings

Stakeholder-Driven Process

DWR Staff Team	IEN Facilitation Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate the Committee's work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all voices and interests are heard
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote understanding of different viewpoints
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Logistical meeting support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support collaborative problem-solving
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support a productive process for the Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guide a consensus-based approach for recommendations



A Few Thoughts on Solving this Problem...

- We have many key ingredients now (maybe not all yet)...
- We need to commit *and* stay committed to listening to, learning from, and collaborating with one another...
- Critical conversations will be necessary to find resolutions that work...
- Let's allow ourselves to take this one step at a time.





Board of Wildlife Resources

DWR Staff Team

- Director's Office
- Wildlife Division
- Law Enforcement Division
- Outreach Division

UVA's IEN

**9,000++
Stakeholders**

Committee Members

***Mike Foreman (IEN) will now
share the Stakeholder
Assessment results...***



Hound-Hunters & Private Landowners Stakeholder Advisory Committee: DWR Board Presentation August 17, 2023



INSTITUTE *for* ENGAGEMENT & NEGOTIATION
Shaping Our World Together

Institute for Engagement & Negotiation



Photo Credit: Eze Amos

Founded in 1980, IEN is a public service organization of the University of Virginia.

MISSION: To catalyze and facilitate the shared creation of equitable solutions for organizations, communities, and leaders through research, collaboration, and training.

DWR PROJECT TEAM

- Kelly Altizer, Associate Director of Operations
- Mike Foreman, Special Projects Manager
- Chamie Valentine, Project Consultant
- Anson Tse, Student Research Associate

Stakeholder Assessment Report

- **Our Process**
 - Situation Assessment:
Survey and Interviews
 - Stakeholder Advisory
Committee (SAC) Meetings
 - Recommendations to the
DWR Board
- **Survey Results**
- **Interview Results**
- **Summary Results and Topics
for SAC Consideration**

Summary of Survey/Interview Themes

- **Survey and Interview Themes are Very Similar.**
- **Hunter Themes**
 - Hunting with hounds has an important, historical legacy in Virginia involving generations of families and has significant community involvement.
 - The “Right to Retrieve” law is viewed as an important element to those who hunt with hounds.
 - It is acknowledged that there has been and continues to be conflict with landowners and those interactions have had negative consequences.
 - New landowners who move to rural areas sometimes do not understand or appreciate the historical significance of hunting with hounds and are not aware of the legal framework in which hound hunters operate. In addition to pressure from new land development, this has contributed to a decrease in hunting opportunities.

Summary of Survey/Interview Themes

- **Landowner Themes**

- The presence of hunters and hounds on their properties has affected their overall quality of life, including disturbances to their peace, concerns for the safety of their children and animals, ability to use and enjoy their property, and the general inconvenience caused by these issues.
- Landowners shared that hunters with hounds often cross properties without permission.
- Law enforcement personnel do not act in a consistent manner on incidents when reported.
- Many landowners support stricter enforcement, revisions to the "Right to Retrieve" law, and better protection of landowners' rights in relation to hunting activities.

Survey and Interview Areas of Agreement

- Law enforcement staffing gaps need to be filled.
- Communication between the groups needs to be consistent and transparent.
- Respect and trust are paramount to successful interaction and to reduce potential for conflict.
- Educational efforts for both groups, including new landowners, need upgrading.
- Hunt clubs could enhance communication efforts using a landowner ombudsmen approach program.
- Hound identification mechanisms could be improved.
- Electronic tracking collars should be considered statewide.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee: Possible Areas of Focus

There was considerable common ground on possible areas for improvement, many of which were discussed in prior stakeholder contributions as well as the current survey and interview process.

- **Law Enforcement**
- **Safety**
- **Use of Public Lands**
- **Use of Technology**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Continued Work on Ethical Hunting Practices**
- **Consideration of Other State's Laws**

First Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

Those 7 topics will be our starting place for recommendations.

- Five total meetings are planned.
- Sixteen primary members and 2 alternate members attended.
- IEN presented an overview of the draft Stakeholder Assessment Report.
- Members actively participated and began to identify common ground in their discussion.
- The next meeting will be held on August 31st in New Kent County

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Process

Any Questions or Comments!