

**Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Meeting Minutes
4000 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230**

April 7, 2009, 9:00am

Present: C. T. Hill, Chairman, Dr. William T. Greer, Jr., Vice-Chairman, Mary Louisa Pollard, Richard E. Railey, Jr., Ward Burton, Sherry Crumley, John W. Montgomery, Jr., Charles Yates, Thomas Stroup; James W. Hazel; and Randy Kozuch; **Director:** Robert “Bob” W. Duncan; **Senior Staff:** Charlie Sledd, Ray Davis, David Whitehurst, Lee Walker, Bob Ellis, Colonel Dee Watts, Gary Martel, Larry Hart.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00am. The Mission Statement was read into the record by Ms. Crumley and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Yates. The Chairman noted for the record that a quorum was present for today’s meeting and a closed session will be called during today’s meeting.

Recognition of Employees and Others: The Chairman called upon Mr. Bob Duncan for the Recognition of Employees. Mr. Gary Martel, Director of the Fisheries Division, presented Mr. Bill Kitrell the Eugene Surber Award. This is the most prestigious professional fisheries recognition award within the Commonwealth. Mr. Kitrell is assigned as the Regional Fisheries Manager in the Region 3 Marion Office.

On behalf of the Fisheries Division, Mr. Gary Martel accepted the Sport Fish Restoration Outstanding Project Award. The Fisheries Administrators’ Section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) has selected the DGIF Federal Aid Project, “Restoration and Enhancement of the New River Walleye Fishery, ” as the national award recipient for an outstanding Sport Fish Restoration project in fisheries research.

Colonel Dabney Watts presented the Virginia Conservation Police Officer of the Year Award to Senior Conservation Police Officer Brett Saunders. Senior CPO Saunders is assigned to the Nottoway County Area.

Colonel Dabney Watts presented the Virginia Boating Officer of the Year Award to Senior CPO Wes Billings. Senior CPO Billings is assigned to the Southwest Virginia Area.

Mr. Vernie Kennedy, President of the Virginia Hunter Education Association presented Senior CPO E. D. Sprinkle an award plaque in recognition of the outstanding effort in planning, organizing and implementing a special youth deer hunt for children in Bedford County Virginia in the fall of 2008.

On behalf of the Board, The Chairman congratulated everyone on their awards and thanked them for their service and dedication to the Agency.

Ms. Crumley stated that Senior CPO Saunders would represent Virginia in the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year competition held during the National Wild Turkey Federation Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

Mr. Duncan congratulated everyone on their awards and thanked them for their service and dedication to the Agency.

Mr. Duncan also thanked Mr. Bob Curry, President of Fisheries Administrators Section of the American Fisheries Society and the North Carolina Fisheries Director for his attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Duncan introduced our new IT Manager David Simmons.

The Chairman presented Mr. Bob Duncan his 30 year Service Award.

Public Comments Non-Agenda Items:

All persons requesting to make public comment on agenda items are requested to complete the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Board Meeting Comment Form. This form requests the following information: Date; Topic of Discussion; Name and address; Telephone number; Whether or not you are representing a group and, if so, the name of the group represented; Are your comments for or against the proposals; other.

The Chairman stated those who had registered to speak on agenda items would be recognized during those portions of the meeting. The Chairman stated if you are representing a group or organization, you have 5 minutes and if you are speaking as an individual, you have 3 minutes.

Floyd F. Smith, Goochland, Virginia, spoke regarding the Quail Plan.

Pete Davis, Lexington, Virginia, who represented the Goshen Alliance, spoke regarding Little North Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and comments.

Approval of February 27, 2009 Meeting Minutes: The Chairman stated the minutes of the meeting have been distributed for review and posted to the Web Site. He called for discussion and approval of the October 23, 2008 meeting minutes: **Mr. Railey made the following motion: Mr. Chairman, I move the minutes be approved as submitted. Motion seconded by Ms. Crumley. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Railey, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup and Hazel.**

Nominations Committee Presentation of the 2009-2010 Slate of Officers for Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman called for the Nominations Committee Report for the 2009-2010 Slate of Officers for Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Mr. Montgomery presented the committee's nomination for the 2009-2010 slate of officers for consideration: Vice Chairman, Mr. James W. Hazel and Chairman, Mr. Charles Yates and **moved that the Board accept the Committee report. Motion seconded by Ms. Crumley. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Railey, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup, and Hazel.** The Chairman called for any other nominations from the other Board members, none were presented, and the nominations were closed. The Chairman reminded the full Board that the vote to elect the Board Officers for 2009-2010 will be taken during the June Meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their report.

Committee Reports: The Chairman called for reports from the following committees:

Finance, Audit and Compliance: Mr. Bob Duncan gave an updated financial report through February 2009. A brief discussion was held by the Director and Board Members. The Chairman thanked Mr. Duncan for the update. Mr. Stroup, Committee Chairman, stated he would be attending a meeting today with the Director, Administrative Services Staff, and the Auditor of Public Accounts. The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2009 at 5:30PM.

Education, Planning and Outreach Committee: Dr. Greer stated during the February 27, 2009 Board Meeting, the Committee report presented a draft Board Vision Statement that had been developed during the Committee Meetings held on December 15, 2008 and February 5, 2009. **Dr. Greer made the motion on behalf of the Committee for the Board to adopt the Vision statement as presented. Motion Seconded by Mr. Hazel. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Railey, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup and Hazel.** The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2009 at 1:00PM.

Wildlife and Boat Committee: Mr. Railey, Committee Chairman, stated his committee has not met since the February Meeting. The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2009 at 9:30AM.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their reports.

Elk Presentation – Representatives from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The Chairman called upon Mr. Duncan to introduce the guest speakers for the Elk Presentation. Mr. Bob Duncan introduced Mr. David Ledford, Director of the Appalachian Wildlife Initiative with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Mr. Doug Hensley, 7th District Commissioner with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Mr. Ledford and Mr. Hensley gave the following presentation on the Elk Program currently conducted in Kentucky.

Quick Facts about the Elk Foundation:

- 2009 is the 25th Anniversary of the Elk Foundation
- 160,000 members
- 465 chapters
- 10,000 + volunteers
- 5.5 million acres

There are four focus areas for the mission of the foundation: Permanent land protection, habitat enhancement, and elk restoration and conservation education/hunting heritage. The Elk Foundation works with their partners to restore elk populations. The Foundation has never stocked elk anywhere and they never intend to do so. They assist in planning, facilitation and building of partnerships, communications and funding.

In Kentucky, stocking began in 1977 with 7 elk from Kansas. Annual stocking continued through 2002 with elk from 5 more states and the hunting started in 2001. The 2009 statistics for the program include:

- 11,300 elk after 2009 calving season
- 1,000 elk tags in 2009, 250 bulls, 750 cows
- 80% + fertility rates
- 95%+ survival rates
- 16 Counties, 4 million acres
- 2 full-time KDFWR staff elk biologist

- A growing positive economic impact
- Elk becoming a brand/identity for the region

Kentucky contributes the success of the program to: strong leadership and support from within and throughout the agency; strong leadership in their Commission; consistent communication with partners; strong partnership with coal industry and corporate landowners and moved forward aggressively. Kentucky also encountered at least two identifiable problems: RMEF (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation) cash flow was negative because the spending out paced the fundraising and there was some public perception that the Kentucky was spending all resources on elk and ignoring grouse, small game, etc.

Mr. Ledford presented DGIF with some suggestions to consider based on his experience with programs from Kentucky and other states.

Develop a Vision with Multiple Stakeholders

Develop a Desired Future Condition: What do you want from an elk herd?

Why do you want to restore elk?

Tourist attraction to boost local economies?

Want to elk hunt? If so, how many hunters?

Right thing to do?

Where do you want them?

Who are the key partners?

Identify Barriers

Public Opinion

Money

Local, state political support

Source elk for importation if needed

Landowner cooperation

Habitat quality on public land

Human conflicts

Internal agency support

Armed with a vision and knowing your barriers, then:

Develop strategies to overcome barriers.

Develop tactics

Estimate costs

Determine feasibility, adjust as needed

Develop plan for securing funding

Secure funding and get rolling

RMEF/VDGIF Funding Plan

Jointly develop an estimate of expenses over a 3 to 5-year period, and establish a budget.

Develop a fundraising plan in which we will all be involved.

Create a MOU.

Semi-annual and annual accountability meetings.

Set milestones for action.

What affects costs?

Scope and scale of restoration

Intensity of monitoring

Research questions (do not need another food habits or brainworm study)
Political agendas
Amount of cooperation with neighbor elk states
Shared responsibility and accountability

Common problems with elk

Human acclimation
Fences, they tend to walk through them
Graveyards
Gardens and Shrubs
Rural airports
Golf courses
Car wrecks
Are they benefiting people that live with them?
Indirect conflicts (Example: KY free range livestock grazing and ATV use)

Benefits of Elk

Folks look at the hills differently
High profile, easily observed, highly appealing flagship animal to sell wildlife conservation
The sound of the bugle
Economic driver for rural areas
Increased focus on habitat conservation in elk country
Indirect benefits (Example: KY landowner access agreements, LIP)

Once elk restoration begins, develop a habitat conservation plan with partners to ensure the future of your **elk**, other wildlife, and their habitat.

A discussion was held following the presentation. The Chairman and Mr. Duncan thanked Mr. Ledford and Mr. Hensley for their presentation.

The Chairman asked the Director and Wildlife Staff to conduct a survey to gather information on the interest of Elk Hunting in Virginia.

Mr. Bobby Hughes of the Richmond Chapter of the Virginia Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation was also present.

The Chairman called for a 10 minute break at 11:21am. The Chairman called the meeting back to order at 11:31am.

The Chairman requested the Director and Wildlife Division Staff to present a proposal to the Board on the implementation and recommendations on how to study the possibility of Elk Hunting in Virginia.

Director's Report: The Chairman called upon Mr. Bob Duncan to present the Director's Report.

Mr. Clyde Cristman, staff to the Senate Finance Committee, gave the Board an update on the new Headquarters Location. Mr. Duncan stated he has received support from Hanover County and the surrounding businesses regarding the Agency relocation to Hanover.

Mr. Duncan and Mr. Larry Hart presented the conveyance of the Beaverdam Properties Tract of the Cavalier Wildlife Management Area located in the City of Chesapeake. During the 2009

General Assembly Session, House Bill 1901 was enacted and will be effective July 1, 2009. The bill authorizes the Board to convey approximately 7.11 acres at the Cavalier Wildlife Management Area in Chesapeake to an adjoining landowner. HB 1901 originated from a challenge to the boundary as surveyed by a contractor for DGIF. The land in question is farmed property, part of a larger tract farmed by the adjoining landowner, and across a ditch from the property we manage for wildlife. It is a long triangular piece of land, almost 3000 ft. long, ranging from just inches to about 55ft. wide. The staff recommends the land be transferred. Additional information was forwarded to you in your briefing package.

After a brief discussion, The Chairman called for a motion to transfer the property as recommended by staff. Mr. Montgomery made the following motion: Mr. Chairman, I hereby move the conveyance of approximately 7.11 acres in the City of Chesapeake pursuant to House Bill 1901 as recommended by staff. Motion seconded by Mr. Railey. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup, Hazel, and Railey.

Mr. Duncan called upon Mr. Bob Ellis of the Wildlife Division to provide an update on the CWD Surveillance, Floating Blind Licenses and the recent public hearings on the proposed Wildlife Regulation Amendments.

Mr. Duncan called upon Mr. David Whitehurst to give an update on the White-Nose Syndrome found in Bats. Recent testing has confirmed the presence of the fungus associated with white-nose syndrome in bats from two caves in Virginia. Mr. Whitehurst indicated precautionary measures are being taken to prevent this disease from continuing to spread in Virginia. The Agency continues to work with USFWS and DCR on this issue. A handout was provided to the Board with additional information for their review.

Mr. Duncan provided the Board an update on a staff project that is looking at ways to increase the Agency's revenue. This subject is one of the outcomes from the Management Study and the project is being headed up by Gary Martel. In a recent work session, the project committee identified a substantial list of possibilities to increase the potential revenue streams for the Agency. Mr. Duncan reminded the Board that while we are coming up on the time allowed by the Code for a license fee revision, we will not be making that recommendation at this time. It is our view that additional time should be taken to do the needed groundwork and that any change to license fees should be looked at as a part of the larger effort to address the Department's revenue. The staff will continue its work in this area and we will come back to the Board at a later date with a more comprehensive look and plan of action for some possible revenue suggestions. The Board requested a list of the ideas/suggestions developed so far.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Duncan and staff for their reports.

At 12:25pm, the Chairman called for the motion to move into a Closed Session. Mr. Hazel made the following motion:

Mr. Chairman,

I move that the Board go into a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia for discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

specifically regarding the performance of the Director. This closed meeting will be attended only by members of the Board and the Executive Director. However, pursuant to § 2.2-3712(F) of the Code of Virginia, the Board requests members of the Management Study Team from The North Highland Company (Mr. Rodney Willett and Mr. Derrick Strand) and Ms. Becky Gwynn, DGIF Staff Project Manager, to attend because it believes that their presence will reasonably aid the Board in its consideration of the topics that are the subject of this part of the closed meeting. Motion Seconded by Mr. Stroup. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Railey, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup and Hazel.

At 1:52 pm, the Chairman called for the Certification of the Closed Meeting, Mr. Hazel made the following certification:

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board. Certification Seconded by Ms. Crumley. Ayes: Pollard, Greer, Montgomery, Railey, Burton, Crumley, Hill, Kozuch, Yates, Stroup and Hazel.

Additional Business/Comments: The Chairman stated that a package of Public Comments received to date on the proposed Wildlife Regulation Amendments had been distributed to Board Members for their review. A preliminary list of staff suggestions on possible revenue sources for the Agency has also been distributed for review.

Mr. Hazel, Mr. Gary Martel and other DGIF Staff participated in the Youth Trout Fishing Day at Graves Mountain Lodge. Everyone enjoyed the day and there were over 400 participants.

The Chairman stated he has received a lot of positive feedback on the February Board Meeting.

Next Meeting Date: The Chairman announced the next meeting of the Board would be on June 2, 2009. During this meeting the Board will elect its Board Officers for 2009-2010, will approve the Budget for FY 2010, and will take final action on the proposed Wildlife Regulation Amendments.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth B. Drewery
Board Secretary