

Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive
Henrico, VA 23228

January 23, 2025
9:00 am

Present: Mr. Jon Cooper, **Chair:** **Board Members:** Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, Mr. Will Wampler, Mr. James Edmunds, Mr. Michael Formica, Mr. George Terwilliger, Mr. John Daniel; **Absent:** Mr. Woody Woodall, Mr. Brian Vincent, Dr. Mamie Parker, Ms. Laura Walters; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan J. Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Stacey Brown, Ms. Rebecca Lane, Colonel John Cobb.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that a quorum was present.

Ms. Kelci Block, Assistant Attorney General attended the Board meeting.

The Chair led the Pledge to the Flag.

Approval of the October 24, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the October 24, 2024, Board meeting minutes have been distributed and posted to website for review. The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Terwilliger made a motion to approve the October 24, 2024, Board Meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Formica. Ayes: Cooper, Daniel, Edmunds, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica.

Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items: The Chair called for speakers on Non-Agenda Items.

- Mike Carter spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- John Balasa spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Greg Austin spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Chris Patton spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Glenda Grubbs spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Steve Knicely spoke regarding Bear Mange
- Cyrus Baird spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Maurice Rheame spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Don Watson spoke regarding hunting with hounds
- Lee McLaughlin spoke regarding Bear Management
- Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding comments from wildlife Committee meeting (virtual)
- Sean Clarkson spoke regarding Public Scoping and Bear Management (virtual)

- Hunter Thrasher spoke regarding Bear Regulation proposals (virtual)
- Jake Levy spoke regarding Hound Hunting (virtual)
- Judge Charlton spoke regarding Hunting with Hounds (virtual)

Recognition of Employees and Others: The Chair called on Director Brown for recognitions.

The Director called on Mr. Cale Godfrey who recognized Mr. Marc Puckett as Wildlife Biologist of the Year for the Wildlife Division for 2024 and the Biologist of the Year for the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for 2024 and for the Firebird Award and on his recent Retirement.

The Director called on Mr. Michael Lipford who recognized and thanked many staff members for all the extra Teamwork hours during the Hurricane Helene storm in Southwest Virginia. Each staff member was presented with a plaque.

The Director recognized Mr. Tom Sadler and presented him with his outgoing Board Plaque for serving as Board Chair in 2024 and a plaque for his 4-years of service on the board.

The Director recognized Mr. Leon Boyd (virtually) with his outgoing Board plaque for his 11 years of service to the board.

Mr. Jon Cooper made a motion to name the Elk Room, The Leon Boyd Elk Room. It was second by several Board members. Ayes: Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica

Committee Reports:

Wildlife and Boat Committee:

The Chair called on Mr. James Edmunds for an update of the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting.

Mr. Edmunds gave a report on the Wildlife and Boat Committee meeting from January 22, 2025.

Mr. Edmunds presented the Proposals regarding Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits Aquatic Regulations.

The Chair called for a motion. Mr. Wampler made a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the Board approve the 2025-2026 Migratory Game Bird Season and Bag Limit recommendations as presented by staff, to be advertised for public comments. It was seconded by Mr. Formica. Ayes: Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica

Mr. Wampler made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Board of Wildlife Resources authorize the Director to work with Mr. Michael Lipford and Mr. Ben Lewis and the Atlantic Flyway Council to split the hunting dates for the Canada geese 3 ways rather than 2 ways. It was seconded by several board members. Ayes: Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica

In addition to the 2025-2026 Migratory Game Bird Season and Bag Limit, Mr. Edmunds reported on:

- Smallmouth Bass Management Plan
- Fish Division Update
- Nongame Program Update
- Boating Division Update

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

Finance, Audit, & Compliance Committee Report:

The Chair called on Mr. George Terwilliger for an update on the Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee meeting from January 22, 2025.

Mr. Terwilliger gave an update on the Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee meeting of January 22, 2025.

Mr. Terwilliger reported on:

- Mid-Year FY 25
- Program and Personnel Review
- General Assembly Report on the Budget

After questions and comments, The Chair thanked Mr. Terwilliger for his report.

Law Enforcement Committee Report:

The Chair called on Mr. Michael Formica for an update on the Law Enforcement Committee meeting of January 22, 2025.

Mr. Formica gave an update on the Law Enforcement Committee meeting of January 22, 2025.

Mr. Formica reported on:

- NASBLA Port Security Grant Training
- CPO Recruitment and Selection

Mr. Formica made a motion: I move that The Board of Department of Wildlife Resources endorse the CPO Enhanced Retirement benefits Resolution from Valor's to Spores, it was seconded by Mr. Terwilliger, Ayes: Daniel, Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica

Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report:

The Chair called on Mr. Will Wampler for an update on the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee meeting of January 22, 2025.

Mr. Wampler gave an update on the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee Report of January 22, 2025.

Mr. Wampler reported on:

- Restore the Wild Art Contest 2025
- True Wildlife Crime Podcast Series
- Bear Wise

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

- General Assembly is in session, DWR has several bills that are being monitored.
- Recognition of Travis Voyles who has left the Secretary's office and gone to the Trump administration.
- Thanked the Board for everything they do to help the agency and their constituents in their districts.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman thanked all Divisions, the Wildlife and Boat Division, Fisheries, Law Enforcement, Outreach and Finance Division for all their work to keep DWR moving ahead.

Additional Business/Comments: The Chair asked if any additional business or comments.

Mr. Terwilliger commended Director Brown for all the time and work that has gone into the Hound Hunting, while the Board does not have the legal authority, only the legislators, he understands the frustration, he appreciates Law Enforcement putting together a reference guide to help the public.

Next Meeting Date: The Chair announced that the next meeting date will be Thursday, March 20, 2025.

Closed Session: The Chair announced the Board would go into Close Session at 11:30 am.

Mr. Formica read the Close Session Motion; it was seconded by Mr. Wampler.
Ayes: Edmunds, Cooper, Daniel, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica, Terwilliger

Closed Meeting Motion, January 23, 2025

Mr. Chairman,

I move that the Board go into a closed meeting:

First, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia, for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically regarding real estate located Buchanan, Dickenson, and Wise counties.

And secondly, 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 Wildlife Resources, specifically regarding the performance of the Director.

This closed meeting will be attended only by members of the Board. However, pursuant to Section 2.2-3712(F), the Board requests the Department Director and the Deputy Director to also attend this meeting, as it believes their presence will reasonably aid the Board in its consideration of topics that are the subject of the meeting.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 1:00 pm

The Chair called on Mr. Broaddus to read the Certification of Closed Meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Terwilliger. Ayes: Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Terwilliger, Formica

Certification of Closed Meeting

January 23, 2025

WHEREAS, the Board of Wildlife Resources conducted a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom 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 Wildlife Resources 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.

The Board Secretary took a Roll call vote: Ayes: Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica, Terwilliger

The Chair called on Mr. Wampler to read a Resolution from the Closed Session.

WHEREAS, The Board of Wildlife Resources has approved the acquisition of an open space/public access easement on up to +/- 150,000 acres currently owned by the Cumberland Forest Highlands, LLC, in Buchana, Dickenson, Wise, and Russell counties; and

WHEREAS, procedures established by the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission require the Applicant's Governing Body to certify by resolution the approval of the Applicant to apply for Southwest Virginia Grants funds; and

WHEREAS, this project appears consistent with the intent of the Commission's grant program intent to make investments to revitalize and diversify the economy of the region it supports, particularly in the areas of business development, sites, and infrastructure, and tourism;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Wildlife Resources of the Commonwealth of Virginia that the Board does hereby:

1. Approve the filing of an application by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (Department) for a Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission grant; and

2. Certifies that the Department understands its legal obligations to the Commission upon approval of the grant; and
3. Certificates that the Department will implement the project with diligence once funds are available and the Department has reviewed, understands, and concurs with the Project Agreement; and
4. Certifies that the Department will provide the required matching funds (as applicable) and
5. Authorizes Department staffs specifically identified by the Executive Director to conduct all negotiations, execute, and submit all documents including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, amendments payment requests, and reports which may be necessary for the completion of the project.

Adopted by the Board of Wildlife Resources at its regular meeting on January 23, 2025, and signed by Mr. Jon Cooper, Chairman and Frances Boswell, Board Secretary.

Ayes: Edmunds, Cooper, Wampler, Broaddus, Formica, Terwilliger

The Chair asked if anyone had any further comments, hearing none, he adjourned the Board meeting at 1:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell