

AGENDA

Board of Wildlife Resources
Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee
7870 Villa Park Drive
Henrico, Virginia 23228

August 19, 2026
1:00 pm

Committee Members: Mr. Woody Woodall, Chair, Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, Vice Chair, Ms. Laura Walters, Mr. Cyrus Baird, Mr. Jon Cooper

DWR Staff Liaison: Mr. Darin Moore

1. Call to Order and Welcome
Mr. Woodall
2. Approval of the May 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes **Final Action**
Mr. Woodall
3. Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items
Mr. Woodall
4. Staff Recommendations for Regulatory Amendments to Increase Certain
Licenses and Fees **Final Action**
Mr. Darin Moore
5. FY27 Budget Update
Mr. Tim Springer
6. Director's Report
Mr. Ryan Brown
7. Chairman's Report
Mr. Woodall

8. Additional Business/Comments
Mr. Woodall

9. Next Meeting Date: TBD
Mr. Woodall

10. Adjournment
Mr. Woodall

Draft Meeting Minutes
Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Richmond, Virginia 23228

May 20, 2026
1:00 pm

Present: Mr. Woody Woodall, **Chair**, Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, Mr. Jon Cooper, Mr. James Edmunds; **Board Members in attendance:** Ms. Laura Walters, Mr. Will Wampler, Ms. Marlee Dance, and Mr. George Terwilliger; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. George Braxton, Dr. Mike Bednarski, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Shelby Crouch, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Mr. Bob Smet, Colonel John Cobb.

The Committee Chair welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. The Chair noted for the record that a quorum was present for the meeting.

Approval of the March 18, 2026, Meeting Minutes: The Chair called for a motion for the March 18, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Broaddus made a motion to approve the March 18, 2026, committee meeting minutes. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. Ayes: Woodall, Cooper, Edmunds, Broaddus

Public Comments- Non-Agenda Items: The Chair called for Public Comments, hearing none, he moved on with the Agenda.

FY 2027 Budget Proposal: The Chair called on Mr. Tim Springer and Mr. John Kirk.

In Introductory comments, Mr. Darin Moore recognized the 2027 Budget team and thanked them for their work on the budget.

Mr. Tim Springer presented the FY2027 Budget Proposal and Mr. John Kirk presented the FY2027 Capital Outlay Budget.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Springer and Mr. Kirk for their presentations.

The Chair called for a Motion, Mr. Broaddus made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move to recommend to the full Board for consideration the FY 2027 Operating Budget for \$67,973,436 and the Capital Budget for \$9,495,000 as presented. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper. Ayes: Woodall, Broaddus, Cooper, Edmunds

Staff Recommendations for Regulatory Amendments to Increase Certain Licenses and Fees. The Chair called on Mr. Darin Moore for a presentation.

Mr. Moore gave a presentation on the Staff Recommendations for Regulatory Amendments to Increase Certain Licenses and Fees.

After questions and comments, The Chair thanked Mr. Moore, for his presentation.

The Chair called for a motion: Mr. Woodall made a motion, I move that the Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources that the license and boat fee proposed increases, as presented by staff, be put out for public comment. It was second by Mr. Broaddus. Ayes: Woodall, Broaddus, Cooper, Edmunds

Director's Report: The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for a Director's Report.

- The Director also thanked Mr. Woodall for Chairing the Finance Committee and for the work of the members of the Budget Team.

Chairman's Report: The Chair thanked the staff on the Budget Team for all of their great work over the last several months.

Additional Business/Comments: Mr. Woodall asked if there were any additional business and hearing none, he announced the next meeting would be Wednesday, August 19, 2026, and adjourned the meeting at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell

4VAC15-20-65. Definitions and Miscellaneous: In General; Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing License and Permit Fees.

SUMMARY:

The proposal is to update certain hunting, fishing, and trapping fees up to the amount allowed by law to offset increased costs associated with managing fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them and providing and maintaining access to these resources. ***The final staff recommendation is to adopt the proposed changes as advertised, with an October 1, 2026, effective date.***

PROPOSED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

4VAC15-20-65. Hunting, trapping, and fishing license and permit fees.

In accordance with the authority of the board under subdivision 16 of § 29.1-103 of the Code of Virginia, the following fees are established for hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses and permits:

Virginia Resident Licenses to Hunt	
Type license	Fee
One-year Resident License to Hunt, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$22.00 <u>\$27.00</u>
Two-year Resident License to Hunt, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$43.00 <u>\$53.00</u>
Three-year Resident License to Hunt, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$64.00 <u>\$79.00</u>
Four-year Resident License to Hunt, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$85.00 <u>\$105.00</u>
Resident Three-Day Trip License to Hunt	\$11.00 <u>\$16.00</u>
County or City Resident License to Hunt in County or City of Residence Only, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$15.00 <u>\$20.00</u>
Resident Senior Citizen Annual License to Hunt, for licensees 65 years of age or older	\$8.00
Resident Junior License to Hunt, for licensees 12 through 15 years of age, optional for licensees younger than 12 years of age	\$7.50
Resident Youth Combination License to Hunt, and to hunt bear, deer, and turkey, to hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season, and to hunt with muzzleloading guns during muzzleloading hunting season, for licensees younger than 16 years of age	\$15.00
Resident Sportsman License to Hunt and Freshwater Fish, and to hunt bear, deer, and turkey, to hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season, to hunt with muzzleloading guns during muzzleloading hunting season, to fish in designated stocked trout waters (also listed under Virginia Resident Licenses to Fish)	\$99.00 <u>\$129.00</u>
Resident Hunting License for Partially Disabled Veterans	\$11.00
Resident Infant Lifetime License to Hunt	\$130.00
Resident Junior Lifetime License to Hunt, for licensees younger than 12 years of age at the time of purchase	\$260.00
Resident Lifetime License to Hunt, for licensees at the time of purchase:	

through 44 years of age	\$265.00 \$270.00
45 through 50 years of age	\$215.00 \$220.00
51 through 55 years of age	\$165.00 \$170.00
56 through 60 years of age	\$115.00 \$120.00
61 through 64 years of age	\$65.00 \$70.00
65 years of age and older	\$25.00 \$30.00
Totally and Permanently Disabled Resident Special Lifetime License to Hunt	\$15.00
Service-Connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veteran Resident Lifetime License to Hunt or Freshwater Fish (also listed under Virginia Resident Licenses to Fish)	no fee

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Virginia Resident Licenses for Additional Hunting Privileges	
Type license or permit	Fee
Resident Deer and Turkey Hunting License, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$22.00 \$27.00
Resident Junior Deer and Turkey Hunting License, for licensees younger than 16 years of age	\$7.50
Resident Archery License to Hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season	\$17.00 \$22.00
Resident Bear Hunting License	\$20.00 \$25.00
Resident Muzzleloading License to Hunt during muzzleloading hunting season	\$17.00 \$22.00
Resident Bonus Deer Permit	\$17.00
Resident Fox Hunting License to hunt foxes on horseback with hounds without firearms (not required of an individual holding a general License to Hunt)	\$22.00
Resident Elk Hunt Lottery Application	\$15.00 \$20.00
Resident Special Elk Hunting License (not required outside of the Elk Management Zone and only awarded to individuals through a department elk license program)	\$40.00
Virginia Nonresident Licenses to Hunt	
Type license	Fee
Nonresident License to Hunt, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$110.00 \$135.00
Nonresident Three-Day Trip License to Hunt	\$59.00 \$74.00
Nonresident Youth License to Hunt, for licensees:	
younger than 12 years of age	\$12.00
12 through 15 years of age	\$15.00
Nonresident Youth Combination License to Hunt, and to hunt bear, deer, and turkey, to hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season, and to hunt with muzzleloading guns during muzzleloading hunting season, for licensees younger than 16 years of age	\$30.00
Nonresident Annual Hunting License for Partially Disabled Veterans	\$55.00
Nonresident Annual Hunting License for Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans	\$27.50
Nonresident Infant Lifetime License to Hunt	\$275.00

Nonresident Lifetime License to Hunt	\$580.00 <u>\$630.00</u>
Virginia Nonresident Licenses for Additional Hunting Privileges	
Type license or permit	Fee
Nonresident Deer and Turkey Hunting License, for licensees:	
16 years of age or older	\$85.00 <u>\$135.00</u>
12 through 15 years of age	\$15.00
younger than 12 years of age	\$12.00
Nonresident Bear Hunting License	\$150.00 <u>\$175.00</u>
Nonresident Archery License to Hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season	\$30.00 <u>\$45.00</u>
Nonresident Muzzleloading License to Hunt during muzzleloading hunting season	\$30.00 <u>\$45.00</u>
Nonresident Shooting Preserve License to Hunt within the boundaries of a licensed shooting preserve	\$22.00 <u>\$27.00</u>
Nonresident Bonus Deer Permit	\$30.00
Nonresident Fox Hunting License to hunt foxes on horseback with hounds without firearms (not required of an individual holding a general License to Hunt)	\$110.00
Nonresident Elk Hunt Lottery Application	\$20.00 <u>\$25.00</u>
Nonresident Special Elk Hunting License (not required outside of the Elk Management Zone and only awarded to individuals through a department elk license program)	\$400.00
Miscellaneous Licenses or Permits to Hunt	
Type license or permit	Fee
Waterfowl Hunting Stationary Blind in Public Waters License	\$22.50 <u>\$27.50</u>
Waterfowl Hunting Floating Blind in Public Waters License	\$40.00 <u>\$45.00</u>
Foxhound Training Preserve License	\$17.00
Public Access Lands for Sportsmen Permit to Hunt, Trap, or Fish on Designated Lands (also listed under Miscellaneous Licenses or Permits to Fish)	\$17.00 <u>\$22.00</u>
<u>Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp</u>	<u>\$14.00</u>
Virginia Resident and Nonresident Licenses to Trap	
Type license	Fee
One-year Resident License to Trap, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$45.00 <u>\$50.00</u>
Two-year Resident License to Trap, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$89.00 <u>\$99.00</u>
Three-year Resident License to Trap, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$133.00 <u>\$148.00</u>
Four-year Resident License to Trap, for licensees 16 years of age or older	\$177.00 <u>\$197.00</u>
County or City Resident License to Trap in County or City of Residence Only	\$20.00 <u>\$25.00</u>
Resident Junior License to Trap, for licensees younger than 16 years of age	\$10.00
Resident Senior Citizen License to Trap, for licensees 65 years of age or older	\$8.00
Resident Senior Citizen Lifetime License to Trap, for licensees 65 years of age or older	\$25.00 <u>\$30.00</u>
Totally and Permanently Disabled Resident Special Lifetime License to Trap	\$15.00
Service-Connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veteran Resident Lifetime License to Trap	\$15.00

Nonresident License to Trap	\$205.00 \$255.00
Virginia Resident Licenses to Fish	
Type license	Fee
One-year Resident License to Freshwater Fish	\$22.00 \$27.00
Two-year Resident License to Freshwater Fish	\$43.00 \$53.00
Three-year Resident License to Freshwater Fish	\$64.00 \$79.00
Four-year Resident License to Freshwater Fish	\$85.00 \$105.00
County or City Resident License to Freshwater Fish in County or City of Residence Only	\$15.00 \$20.00
Resident License to Freshwater Fish, for licensees 65 years of age or older	\$8.00
Resident License to Fish in Designated Stocked Trout Waters	\$22.00 \$27.00
Resident License to Freshwater and Saltwater Fish	\$38.50 \$43.50
Resident License to Freshwater Fish for Five Consecutive Days	\$13.00 \$18.00
Resident License to Freshwater and Saltwater Fish for Five Consecutive Days	\$23.00 \$27.00
Resident Sportsman License to Hunt and Freshwater Fish, and to hunt bear, deer, and turkey, to hunt with archery equipment during archery hunting season, to hunt with muzzleloading guns during muzzleloading hunting season, to fish in designated stocked trout waters (also listed under Virginia Resident Licenses to Hunt)	\$99.00 \$129.00
Resident Fishing License for Partially Disabled Veterans	\$11.00
Resident Infant Lifetime License to Fish	\$130.00
Resident Special Lifetime License to Freshwater Fish, for licensees at the time of purchase:	
through 44 years of age	\$265.00 \$270.00
45 through 50 years of age	\$215.00 \$220.00
51 through 55 years of age	\$165.00 \$170.00
56 through 60 years of age	\$115.00 \$120.00
61 through 64 years of age	\$65.00 \$70.00
65 years of age and older	\$25.00 \$30.00
Resident Special Lifetime License to Fish in Designated Stocked Trout Waters, for licensees at the time of purchase:	
through 44 years of age	\$265.00 \$270.00
45 through 50 years of age	\$215.00 \$220.00
51 through 55 years of age	\$165.00 \$170.00
56 through 60 years of age	\$115.00 \$120.00
61 through 64 years of age	\$65.00 \$70.00
65 years of age and older	\$25.00 \$30.00
Totally and Permanently Disabled Resident Special Lifetime License to Freshwater Fish	\$15.00
Service-Connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veteran Resident Lifetime License to Hunt and Freshwater Fish (also listed under Virginia Resident Licenses to Hunt)	no fee
Virginia Nonresident Licenses to Fish	
Type license	Fee
Nonresident License to Freshwater Fish	\$46.00 \$71.00

Nonresident License to Freshwater Fish in Designated Stocked Trout Waters	\$22.00 <u>\$47.00</u>
Nonresident License to Freshwater and Saltwater Fish	\$70.00 <u>\$95.00</u>
Nonresident Fishing License for Partially Disabled Veterans	\$23.00
Nonresident Annual Fishing License for Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans	\$11.50
Nonresident License to Freshwater Fish for One Day	\$7.00 <u>\$19.00</u>
Nonresident License to Freshwater Fish for Five Consecutive Days	\$20.00 <u>\$35.00</u>
Nonresident License to Freshwater and Saltwater Fish for Five Consecutive Days	\$30.00 <u>\$45.00</u>
Nonresident Infant Lifetime License to Fish	\$275.00
Nonresident Special Lifetime License to Freshwater Fish	\$580.00 <u>\$630.00</u>
Nonresident Special Lifetime License to in Fish in Designated Stocked Trout Waters	\$580.00
Miscellaneous Licenses or Permits to Fish	
Type license or permit	Fee
Permit to Fish for One Day at Board-Designated Stocked Trout Fishing Areas with Daily Use Fees	\$7.00 <u>\$12.00</u>
Public Access Lands for Sportsmen Permit to Hunt, Trap, or Fish on Designated Lands (also listed under Miscellaneous Licenses or Permits to Hunt)	\$17.00 <u>\$22.00</u>
Special Guest Fishing License	\$60.00

RATIONALE:

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources administers numerous programs that support the management of fish and wildlife populations, as well as lands and waters, throughout the state; public access to these resources; enforcement of fish and wildlife laws and regulations; hunter and angler safety training; and public awareness. These services are paid for, in part by fees paid to hunt, fish, and trap in Virginia. In 2025, the DWR issued over 198,000 hunting licenses to individuals; 305,000 individual fishing licenses (including 55,000+ trout licenses); 63,000 sportsman's licenses; more than 1,500 trapping licenses; 22,000 fee fishing area licenses; 96,000 freshwater/saltwater fishing licenses; 26,000 Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamps; and 5,400 waterfowl blind licenses. In that same period, the agency also issued nearly 24,000 lifetime licenses (hunting, freshwater fishing, trout, and trapping). Except for lifetime licenses, most licenses sold are valid for not more than a year.

Under its authorities outlined in the Code of Virginia (§29.1-103.16), the Board of Wildlife Resources may, by regulation, adopt revisions to fees charged for all hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses authorized under Articles 1 (§ [29.1-300 et seq.](#)) and 2 (§ [29.1-340 et seq.](#)) of Chapter 3 of Title 29.1. These fees may not be raised or lowered more than once every three years and by not more than \$5 at any one time for resident licenses or \$50 at any one time for nonresident licenses. The Board of Wildlife Resources last implemented broad scale fee changes to fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses in 2011.

Since the Board's last broad scale action on license fees, prices in the U.S. have increased by roughly 43.8%, representing an average annual inflation rate of 2.63%. The value of the dollar has also decreased, with \$1 in 2012 having the purchasing power of 70 cents in 2026. Equally

dramatic changes have occurred in construction costs, with cumulative increases of more than 40% just between 2020 and 2026. Over this same period, DWR revenues have remained generally static. Those trends, coupled with unpredictable changes have placed the agency in an unsustainable financial position. Such a situation is untenable over time due to needs to replace equipment, ensure employee safety, and implement priority programs. The DWR's operating budget for fiscal year 2012 was approximately \$55.2 million, which would equate to a comparable budget of just over \$79.5 million in fiscal year 2027 (beginning July 1, 2026). The agency's proposed operating budget for fiscal year 2027 is approximately \$65 million.

During this same period (2012-2026), demands on the agency have increased substantially, with little additional revenue to offset the resulting costs. Public expectation of timely and in-person responsiveness to human-wildlife conflict resolution has significantly changed how conservation police officers and wildlife biologists spend their time. A growing, diverse population presents both challenges and opportunities for increasing outdoor recreation participation. Capital maintenance of DWR facilities (hatcheries, dams, boating access, WMA infrastructure) needed to provide safe and meaningful access has not kept pace with use, with an estimated current infrastructure liability of more than \$275 million.

The DWR provided a comment period from July 6 – August 5, 2026, to solicit public feedback regarding the proposed fee changes. The agency shared information about the proposals via its various monthly newsletters, a statewide press release, advertisement in six major newspapers across the state, and on its website. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the DWR had received 581 comments regarding license fee increases through the online website portal and 55 comments emailed to the DWR Regulatory Coordinator. A team of DWR staff members reviewed each comment submitted to understand the perspective of the commenter. The DWR also posted the proposed regulations on the Virginia Town Hall and received no comments through that portal. Of the comments received, 176 were in support of the proposed changes; 97 were neutral; and 339 were in opposition.

Comments in support of the changes acknowledged that increasing inflation has resulted in increased costs to the DWR; that they supported increases if services remained at current levels or higher; that the fee increases represent a small step towards increasing overall funding for the agency; and that protection of natural resources is important and deserves adequate funding. Comments in opposition to the fee increases expressed concern that updated costs would decrease participation or become a barrier to entry in the sports; that there would be disproportionate impacts on those that are economically disadvantaged; that hunters and anglers already shoulder more than their share of conservation costs; that services should increase with increased costs; and that the DWR should be more fiscally responsible.

While the DWR has made great strides finding efficiencies in programs, including an overall reduction in employee numbers, the agency is struggling to maintain the level of service to which the public has grown accustomed. Enforcement of laws and regulations that protect the recreating public, providing access, and managing Virginia's fish and wildlife populations, as well as the habitats that support them, remain top priorities. The proposed updated fees would help offset increased costs across all program areas, allowing the agency to better address the needs of hunters, anglers, and recreationists across Virginia's lands and waters. Accounting for a

relatively minor churn rate of 3%, the agency expects these increases to generate approximately \$6.39 million in additional annual revenue. This additional revenue will help to support the economic impact of fishing, hunting, and boating, which are estimated to contribute \$3.2 billion, \$1.2 billion, and \$4.4 billion, respectively, to the Virginia economy. With the exception of non-resident fishing licenses, the proposed increases keep the license fee schedule generally in line with fees charged by adjacent states.

4VAC15-20-155. Definitions and Miscellaneous: In General; Camping on Wildlife Management Areas and other department-owned or department-managed lands.

SUMMARY:

The proposal is to establish a fee of \$10 associated with authorization for camping on Wildlife Management Areas and other department-owned or department-managed lands to offset increased costs associated with maintenance of these lands, enforcement of laws and regulations on these lands, and related administrative costs. *The final staff recommendation is to adopt the proposed changes as advertised, with an October 1, 2026, effective date.*

PROPOSED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

4VAC15-20-155. Camping on Wildlife Management Areas and other department-owned or department-managed lands.

1 A. Authorization. It shall be unlawful to camp at any time without purchasing a \$10 camping
2 authorization.

3 B. Camping periods. Unless otherwise posted or authorized, it shall be unlawful to camp for
4 more than 14 consecutive nights, or more than 14 nights in a 28-day period on department-
5 owned or controlled lands.

6 C. Allowed and prohibited locations. Back country camping is allowed. Adjacent to roadways,
7 camping is allowed only in previously cleared areas. No vegetation may be cut, damaged, or
8 removed to establish a campsite. Enclosed camping trailers or camping vehicles are allowed if
9 they do not occupy the entire available parking area in that location. It shall be unlawful to camp
10 within 300 feet of any department-owned lake, boat ramp, or other facility. It shall be unlawful
11 to camp at other specific locations as posted. This section shall not prohibit active angling at
12 night along shorelines where permitted.

13 D. Removal of personal property and refuse. Any person who establishes or occupies a camp
14 shall be responsible for the complete removal of all personal property and refuse when the
15 camping authorization has expired. Any personal property or refuse that remains after the
16 camping authorization has expired shall be considered litter and punishable pursuant to § 33.2-
17 802 of the Code of Virginia.

18 E. It shall be unlawful when camping on department-owned or department-managed lands to
19 store or leave unattended any food (including food for pets and livestock), refuse, bear attractant,
20 or other wildlife attractant unless it is (i) in a bear-resistant container; (ii) in a trunk of a vehicle
21 or in a closed, locked, hard-sided motor vehicle with a solid top; (iii) in a closed, locked, hard-
22 body trailer; or (iv) suspended at least 10 feet clear of the ground at all points and at least four
23 feet horizontally from the supporting tree or pole and any other tree or pole. It shall be unlawful
24 to discard, bury, or abandon any food, refuse, bear attractant, or other wildlife attractant unless it
25 is disposed of by placing it inside an animal-resistant trash receptacle provided by the
26 department.

27 F. Any violation of this section or other posted rules shall be punishable as a Class III
28 misdemeanor, and the camping permit authorization shall become null and void. The permittee
29 shall be required to immediately vacate the property upon summons or notification. A second or

30 subsequent offense may result in the loss of camping privileges on department-owned or
31 managed properties.

RATIONALE:

In 2020, the Board adopted regulations requiring anyone camping on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), or on other Department-owned or Department-managed sites, to secure a no-cost camping authorization. This authorization provided a means for the DWR to know who was using DWR areas, document known start and end dates by camper, and have a way to contact campers in the event of an emergency. Up to six individuals are allowed under one camping authorization. Additionally, the authorization ensured that campers adhered to certain rules and requirements to reduce impacts to properties and reduce associated staff maintenance costs. During 2025, the Department issued approximately 2,400 camping authorizations.

Prior to the implementation of the camping authorization, the agency had many instances of individuals setting up long-term camp sites or abandoning campers, tents and other equipment when not in use. The Department does not have the funding or staffing to manage long-term camping. Further, long-term camping can degrade wildlife habitat, which is a primary function of WMAs. In most cases, suitable camping locations are limited. Camping for longer than 14 nights could prevent others from enjoying DWR properties. Even with the implementation of camping authorizations, the DWR continues to incur increased expenses associated with maintaining these areas on the WMAs and enforcing rules, regulations and laws on the areas.

The DWR provided a comment period from July 6 – August 5, 2026, to solicit public feedback regarding the proposed fee changes. The agency shared information about the proposals via its various monthly newsletters, a statewide press release, advertisement in six major newspapers across the state, and on its website. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the DWR had received 137 comments regarding the new camping fee through the online website portal and 46 comments emailed to the DWR Regulatory Coordinator. A team of DWR staff members reviewed each comment submitted to understand the perspective of the commenter. The DWR also posted the proposed regulations on the Virginia Town Hall and received no comments through that portal. Of the comments received, 54 were in support of the proposal; 9 were neutral; and 119 were in opposition.

Comments in support of the changes acknowledged that increasing inflation has resulted in increased costs to the DWR; that they supported increases if services remained at current levels or higher; that the fee increases represent a small step towards increasing overall funding for the agency; and that protection of natural resources is important and deserves adequate funding. Comments in opposition to the fee increases expressed concern that updated costs would decrease participation or become a barrier to entry in the sports; that there would be disproportionate impacts on those that are economically disadvantaged; that hunters and anglers should be able to camp for free; that services should increase with increased costs; and that the DWR should be more fiscally responsible.

The proposed DWR \$10 camping authorization fee will help offset on-going maintenance and development costs associated with both infrastructure and habitat on Department-owned and

Department-managed lands, as well as law enforcement patrols needed to ensure user compliance with WMA rules, regulations, and laws and safety of the public on these properties. Acknowledging that there may be a nominal churn rate of 3%, the DWR anticipates that the new camping authorization fee will generate \$23,450 additional revenue annually.

4VAC15-380-120. Watercraft: Motorboat Numbering; Certificate of Registration and Titling Fees.

SUMMARY:

The proposal is to increase fees associated with registering and titling certain watercraft by \$5 (the amount allowed by law) to offset increased costs associated with boating-related activities, including law enforcement, education, maintenance of boating access sites, and administrative functions. *The final staff recommendation is to adopt the proposed changes as advertised, with an October 1, 2026, effective date.*

PROPOSED LANGUAGE OF AMENDMENT:

4VAC15-380-120. Certificate of registration and titling fees.

- 1 A. The following fees shall be paid by applicants for certificates of registration:

<u>Temporary registration certificate</u>	<u>\$15</u>
For a motorboat under 16 feet	<u>\$32 \$37</u>
For a motorboat 16 feet to less than 20 feet	<u>\$36 \$41</u>
For a motorboat 20 feet to less than 40 feet	<u>\$42 \$47</u>
For a motorboat 40 feet and over	<u>\$50 \$55</u>
For first 10 actively registered motorboats by the same owner	<u>\$32 \$37</u>
For more than 10 actively registered motorboats by the same owner	<u>\$26 \$31</u>
For a duplicate certificate of registration or decal	<u>\$14 \$19</u>

- 2 B. The following fees shall be paid by applicants for certificates of title:

Titling fee	<u>\$40 \$15</u>
Duplicate title	<u>\$7 \$12</u>
Change of motor on title	<u>\$7 \$12</u>
Record supplemental lien on previously titled watercraft	<u>\$40 \$15</u>

RATIONALE:

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources administers numerous programs that support boaters on the waters of Virginia, including boat registration, titling, and customer service; boating safety law enforcement (including boat incident investigation); boating education and safety training and public awareness; waterways management (including administration of regulatory markers); and public boating access maintenance and renovation. These services are paid for, in part by fees paid to register and title watercraft. In 2025, the DWR issued more than 72,000 registrations; more than 27,500 titles; more than 7,000 duplicates, changes of motor, and recordation of supplemental lien; and over 400 livery registrations. Registrations are issued for a three-year period; titles are typically a one-time transaction.

Under its authorities outlined in the Code of Virginia (§29.1-701.1), the Board of Wildlife Resources may, by regulation, adopt revisions to fees charged for motorboat registration certificates and certificates of title. These fees may not be raised or lowered more than once every three years and by not more than \$5 at any one time. The Board of Wildlife Resources last

considered fee changes in 2019. The temporary registration certificate, authorized in the Code (§29.1-703.1) with a \$10 fee, has never been adjusted. In 2025, the DWR issued more than 8,000 temporary registration certificates.

Since the Board's last action on registration and titling fees, there has been significant increases in printing and postage needed for registration, titling, and education activities; and increased costs for equipment, such as boats and motors (and related gas/oil), needed for on-the-water patrols and inspections of waterway markers. Construction and related materials costs have increased more than 40% since 2020, meaning that the DWR is only able to address renovation of one or two of its 230 facilities annually with current revenues. Demand for additional access to public waters is well-documented not only in the DWR's Boating Access Site and Facilities Management Plan, but also in the updated Virginia Outdoors Plan, where access to water continues to be one of the top 10 most desired outdoor recreation opportunities, identified as the fourth most needed outdoor recreation asset.

The DWR provided a comment period from July 6 – August 5, 2026, to solicit public feedback regarding the proposed fee changes. The agency shared information about the proposals via its various monthly newsletters, a statewide press release, advertisement in six major newspapers across the state, and on its website. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the DWR had received 100 comments regarding registration and titling fee increases through the online website portal and 44 comments emailed to the DWR Regulatory Coordinator. A team of DWR staff members reviewed each comment submitted to understand the perspective of the commenter. The DWR also posted the proposed regulations on the Virginia Town Hall and received no comments through that portal. Of the comments received, 35 were in support of the proposed changes and 107 were in opposition.

Comments in support of the changes acknowledged that increasing inflation has resulted in increased costs to the DWR; that they supported increases if services remained at current levels or higher; and that the fee increases represent a small step towards increasing overall funding for the agency. Comments in opposition to the fee increases expressed concern that updated costs would decrease participation or become a barrier to entry; that services should increase with increased costs; and that the DWR should be more fiscally responsible.

While the DWR has made great strides in moving registration, titling, and educational programming online, which have reduced certain costs, those systems must be maintained and upgraded to provide quality service to constituents. Enforcement of laws and regulations that protect public recreating on Virginia waters, and providing access, remain top priorities with an increased number of boats in the state. The proposed updated fees would help offset increased costs across all program areas, allowing the agency to still meet the needs of anglers, boaters and recreationists on Virginia's waters. Accounting for a relatively minor churn rate of 3%, the agency expects this increase to generate about \$556,000 in additional annual revenue.