

AGENDA

Board of Wildlife Resources
Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Henrico, Virginia 23228

October 22, 2025
2:30 pm

Or

Following adjournment of the Law Enforcement Committee

Committee Members: Ms. Laura Walters, Chair, Mr. Lynwood Broaddus, Ms. Marlee Dance,
Mr. Parker Slaybaugh, Mr. Woody Woodall

DWR Staff Liaison: Mr. Bob Smet

1. Call to Order and Welcome
Ms. Walters
2. Approval of August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes **Final Action**
Ms. Walters
3. Public Comment – Non- Agenda Item
Ms. Walters
4. Inclusive Excellence Report for 2025
Mr. George Braxton
5. Governance Manual, Code of Ethics and Conduct, and Committee Charter Reviews **Action**
Mr. Aaron Proctor
6. Outreach Division Director
Mr. Bob Smet

7. Director's Report
Mr. Ryan Brown
8. Chair's Report
Ms. Walters
9. Additional Business/Comments
Ms. Walters
11. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 21, 2026
Ms. Walters
12. Adjournment
Ms. Walters

Draft Meeting Minutes
Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room
Henrico, VA 23228

August 20, 2025
3:00 pm

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

The Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 3:15 pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair noted for the record that there was a quorum present for the meeting.

Approval of the March 19, 2025, and the May 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes: The Chair called for a motion to approve the March 19, 2025, and the May 21, 2025, Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Broaddus made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2025, and the May 21, 2025, committee meetings. It was seconded by Mr. Woodall.

Mr. Smet welcomed new staff member to Outreach Division, Mr. David Moore, our Hunter, and Landowner Engagement Coordinator

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

- Mr. Judge Charlton spoke regarding hound hunting. (v)

The Chair thanked Mr. Charlton for his remarks.

Sponsorship and Partnership Program Overview: The Chair called on Mr. Darin Moore, Ms. Kelsey Steenburg and Mr. Tim Tassitano for an overview.

Mr. Moore, Ms. Steenburg and Mr. Tassitano gave an overview on Charitable Giving and Corporate Engagement Strategy.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Moore, Ms. Steenburg, and Mr. Tassitano.

Triple Crossing Falcon Cam Collaboration: The Chair called on Ms. Kelsey Steenburg and Ms. Megan Thomas for a presentation.

Ms. Steenburg and Ms. Thomas gave an impressive presentation on Triple Crossing Collaboration.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Steenburg and Ms. Thomas for their presentation.

Governance Manual, Code of Ethics and Conduct and Committee Charter Reviews: The Chair called on Mr. Aaron Proctor for presentation.

Mr. Proctor gave an overview of the Governance Manual, Code of Ethics and Conduct and Committee Charters emphasizing any updates and changes.

A vote was deferred to the October 22, 2025 meeting.

Outreach Division Update: The Chair called on Mr. Bob Smet for an Outreach Division Update.

Mr. Smet reported the events that Outreach Division have organized and participated in.:

Mr. Smet welcomed new staff member to Outreach Division, Mr. David Moore, the Hunter, and Landowner Engagement Coordinator

- Association for Conservation Information Conference:
One time publication: Book/Report - 1st place – “2024 Annual Report”
Molly Kirk, Meghan Marchetti, and Maria Lalima
- Magazine: General Interest Article – 2nd place – “Clinton Mooney Captures Calendar Worthy Moment”.
Andee Naccarato, Maria Lalima, Meghan Marchetti, Molly Kirk
- Magazine: Fisheries Article – 2nd place – “Snakes on the Water”
Ron Messina, Maria Lalima, Meghan Marchetti, Molly Kirk

- Communications Campaign: Marketing – 2nd place – “Explore the Wild Campaign”
Caitlyn Jacobus, Tim Tassitano, Will Arnold, Meghan Marchetti, David Murr
- Graphics: Layout - 3rd place – “Snakes on the Water”
Maria Lalima, Ron Messina, Meghan Marchetti
- Video: PSA/Marketing – 3rd place - “The story Behind the Virginia Wildlife 2025
Calendar Cover”
Meghan Marchetti, Damien Kincannon, Andee Naccarato
- Pleased to see the progress being made on the sponsorship and partnership programs
Alternative revenue streams are obviously an important part of DWR’s future.

The Chair thanked Mr. Smet for his Division update.

Director’s Report: The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for his Director’s Report.

- Congratulated all Outreach Staff on the numerous awards they received
- Thanked Staff for great presentations today
- Thanked Mr. Woody for attending several of the DWR events

The Chair thanked Mr. Brown for his report.

Chair’s Report: The Chair commended the Outreach Division staff for all their awards and remarked was looking forward to being a part of the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee as Chair and if any of the committee members had questions or ideas, please let her know.

Additional Business/Comments:

The Chair asked if there was any further business or comments, hearing none, he announced the next EPO meeting would Wednesday, October 22, 2025, and adjourned the meeting at 4:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Frances Boswell

DWR Inclusive Excellence Plan Report

2024-2025



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

Introduction

In 2022, the Department of Wildlife Resources (“DWR”) embarked on a journey towards Inclusive Excellence with the establishment of the 2022-2026 Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan (the Plan). The Plan is a product of the “business case” for diversity, opportunity, and inclusion, which is based on measurable, sustainable outcomes that benefit the agency’s overall goals. The Plan was segmented into four “core principles:”



These areas are where DWR must demonstrate excellence to best serve all Virginians and become a workplace where all can reach their full occupational potential.

Each core principle has goals that are accomplished by executing specific Strategic Initiatives. To be intentional in producing results, the Plan features Targeted Outcomes which will ultimately determine success. While creating a diverse and inclusive workplace is the responsibility of every employee, some divisions are more responsible for the execution of specific initiatives than others. The Plan includes Accountable Divisions charts that assign responsibility for each initiative.

This second report will continue to assess DWR’s progress towards the desired outcomes highlighted in the Plan, address progress towards the recommendations from the 2022-2023 report, and recommend the next steps to ensure sustainable progress towards those outcomes.

For each core principle, we will review the definition and goals and offer narratives based on analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. Included are quotes from both the 2024 Climate Survey that are indicative of the workforce perspectives. Also, the report will gauge the progress for each strategic initiative using red (less than 25% accomplished or progressing), yellow (26-75% accomplished or progressing), and green (over 75% accomplished or progressing).



Recruiting

Using a broad spectrum of talent acquisition best practices to attract a diverse and highly skilled applicant pool.

To manage a process free from artificial barriers that would discourage the hiring of underrepresented candidates.

GOALS

- Complete transparency of the recruitment and selection process allowed within federal and state law and Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) policy.
- Elimination of all artificial barriers to hiring.

The recruitment process at DWR follows the Department of Human Resources Management's requirements. Positions are posted, and applicants are first screened by DWR Human Resources staff and then interviewed by a panel of DWR employees who make a recommendation to the hiring manager. To reach the widest talent pool possible, the recruitment manager, with the assistance of the Law Enforcement Division, develops a comprehensive schedule which includes college career fairs, targeted outdoor events, and law enforcement specific recruiting events. In 2024, DWR participated in FEWER events that directly targeted specific underrepresented groups, but focused on larger, more diverse opportunities. Most of these events can be considered "pipeline development" as they do not yield direct applications, such as posting of specific positions. We believe this type of outreach is crucial in exposing younger people earlier to the careers offered at DWR.

Unlike other state agencies, DWR endures several challenges in recruiting non-sworn employees. The Wildlife and Aquatics divisions, specifically, face challenges in recruiting people of color as most positions typically require education and experience in specific biological areas in which minorities are underrepresented in higher education

institutions. Additionally, many of the positions available are stationed outside of Virginia's major population centers, where there is more racial diversity.

The agency is an active participant in the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (SEAFWA) Conservation Access, Relevancy, and Engagement Committee (C.A.R.E.) which identifies best practices and recommends initiatives or programs that member agencies may implement to enhance the recruitment, professional development, and retention of highly skilled employees. One such initiative is the C.A.R.E. Fellowship Program which funds a workshop for college students at the SEAFWA conference. This program has yielded several entry-level employees for state agencies.

However, the lack of entry-level positions in conservation jobs at DWR presents another challenge that is being met, in small part, by the agency's paid internship program. The most consistent source of entry-level positions at the agency remains the Law Enforcement Division (Conservation Police Officers). The Law Enforcement Division has conducted three academies in the past four years.

Below is the demographic breakdown of the agency at the conclusion of 2021 (prior to the implementation of the Plan) and 2023.

	DEC. 31, 2021	DEC. 31, 2023	DELTA '21-'23	DEC. 31, 2024	DELTA '23-'24
Total	472	503	31 (6.5%)	516	13 (2.5%)
Male	344 (72.9%)	351 (69.8%)	7 (2.0%)	358 (69.4%)	7 (1.3%)
Female	128 (27.1%)	152 (30.2%)	24 (18.8%)	158 (30.6%)	6 (1.2%)
White	402 (85.2%)	436 (86.7%)	34 (8.5%)	443 (86.9%)	7 (1.3%)
Black/Afr. Am.	30 (6.4%)	29 (5.8%)	(1)(-3.3%)	26 (5.0%)	(3)(-.6%)
Hispanic/Latino	9 (1.9%)	11 (2.2%)	2 (2.2%)	7 (1.9%)	(4)(-.8%)
Asian/Pac. Isl.	2 (0.4%)	4 (0.8%)	2 (50.0%)	6 (1.2%)	2 (.4%)
Alaskan Native/ American Indian	6 (1.3%)	7 (1.4%)	1 (16.7%)	6 (1.2%)	(1)(-.2%)
Two or more race	3 (0.6%)	4 (0.8%)	1 (33.3%)	7 (1.9%)	3 (.6%)
Not applicable/ No response	20 (4.2%)	12 (2.4%)	(-8) (-40%)	21 (4.1%)	9 (1.7%)

In 2024, DWR experienced an overall workforce growth of 2.5% or 13 employees. While the gender percentages were marginally affected by the addition, there was some slight attrition in the Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American ranks. During that same period, we saw an uptick in the number of employees self-identifying as “two or more races,” or chose not to identify in any racial group. The latter is a trend as there is a growing sentiment against any racial identification, and a fear of backlash from identifying.

Post-employment communication with some departing employees generally reveals better opportunities with other employers or retirement as causes of attrition. However, there is both qualitative and quantitative data from the Climate Survey that would suggest that there are pockets of negative culture that could contribute to attrition.

LEADERSHIP

Below is the demographic makeup of the Director’s Working Group (the agency’s senior leadership team) at the conclusion of 2021, 2023, and 2024. The leadership team shows some incremental growth in racial and gender diversity since 2021, however, the diversity of professional backgrounds and experiences are more indicative of the inclusive excellence at DWR.

	DEC. 31, 2021	DEC. 31, 2023	DEC. 31, 2024
Total	13	11	12
Male	9	7	8
Female	4	3	4
White	12	9	9
Black/Afr. Am.	1	2	2

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

In 2019, the Office of the State Inspector General issued an audit of the natural resources law enforcement agencies targeting the lack of gender and racial diversity in each agency's division. The Department of Wildlife Resources proposed several corrective actions that would result in diversifying the number of sworn officers in the Law Enforcement Division. In the prior report, there were two recommendations regarding Conservation Police Officer (CPO) recruiting and retention. Below are the results:

2023 Recommendation #1:

"The agency conducts a barrier analysis of the CPO recruiting and vetting process."

Consulting firm, the Spark Mill, was retained to review the CPO academy process as well as other issues that could lead to barriers in the law division. They conducted multiple interviews with both civilian and CPO participants in the recruitment process, former CPOs, and a former recruit.

2023 Recommendation #2:

"Establish and Exit Interview/Survey process where data are analyzed and shared with the Director's Group Annually."

Currently, the Law Division employs a "Separation Interview" worksheet that is completed by the exiting officer. It includes eleven questions that can be used as data towards retention efforts. Information from these worksheets have not been combined into a single report to date.

Key findings and recommendations included:

- Increase Presence in Diverse Marketplace
- Ensure Marketing Is Reflective of the Actual Job
- Consider a Job Task Analysis
- Modernize Background Checks to Reduce Subjectivity
- Reorient Screening to Interpersonal Skills
- Streamline the Hiring Process

The Audit and Barrier Analysis in its entirety can be found at **ADDENDUM A.**

APPLICANT FLOW DATA REPORT

Prior to the current CPO academy, the agency had some success in recruiting new women officers. However, this academy class only yielded only one woman recruit in a class of 17 men. This triggered a closer examination of this specific recruitment process via applicant flow data.

Below is a summary of how women applicants moved through the process:

- 15.2% of the applicant pool
- 14.4% of those invited to take the written test
- 13.3% of those who passed the written test (pass rate of 64.3%)
- 11.8% of those who passed both the written and physical test (pass rate of 83.3%)
- 22.2% of withdrawals (over-representation)

At this point, there are only 11 women remaining in the process.

- 5 women were not recommended for interview.
- 4 women were not recommended after background check.
- 1 woman was admitted to the academy.

The 14th Academy Applicant Flow Data report can be found in its entirety at **ADDENDUM B**.

The physical test has, in the past, proved a barrier to women recruits but it has been less so over time. The most significant attrition in the applicant flow takes place during the more subjective parts of the process: interviews and background checks.

Below are recommendations to continue efforts to utilize inclusion to recruit the most qualified employees:

Recommendation #1:

Adopt findings from the Audit and Barrier Analysis. Specifically, modernizing background checks to reduce subjectivity and reorient screening to interpersonal skills.

Recommendation #2:

Combine data from the exit interview worksheets into a report with actionable recommendations on CPO retention.

RECRUITING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SCORECARD

	2023 STATUS	2024 STATUS
1. Create a college and university recruitment plan featuring internships and mock interviews that is inclusive of historically Black colleges and universities in the Commonwealth and contiguous states.		
2. Develop enhanced relationships with college administrators and proficiency with HANDSHAKE[1] technology to assist in recruitment.		
3. Track applicant flow data for various demographics. Provide a semi-annual report to leadership for action and accountability consideration.		
4. Engage diverse recruiting venues, websites, magazines, business publications, and professional and college outdoors-oriented affinity organizations.		
5. Provide clear applicant preferred education qualifications and certification requirements to all colleges and universities.		
6. Engage subject matter expert(s) to review interview processes to ensure objectivity in candidate selections.		
7. Establish an employer branding strategy which includes images of underrepresented and underserved populations.		
8. Develop a centralized Internship Program for all divisions with one point of contact, a start-to-finish participation plan, and a way to capture participant and division feedback with the goal of full-time employment.		
9. Foster an environment in which interns are paid a wage that will allow them to live independent of other income during the internship.		
10. Review the LawFit measurables and water swimming requirements to ensure that they are appropriate and/or can be obtained at the conclusion of a CPO academy.		
11. Offer training to ensure that individuals conducting background investigations are doing so equitably and the process is free from bias.		
12. Expand advertisements through all avenues that will attract a diverse population such as radio, billboards, social media sites, LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.		
13. Communicate and follow hiring timelines including the requirements for completing the Conservation Police Officers academy.		
14. Standardize the sharing of information regarding prerequisites and conditions of positions to all interviewing candidates.		
15. Perform salary studies to ensure equity in all offers of employment.		
16. Avoid including minimal requirements in a position description that can be obtained after employment.		



Culture

To promote and sustain a workplace that is inclusive of all people, talents, and ideas so that members of the workplace may achieve their highest level of engagement and full occupational potential.

GOALS

- Develop a workforce that resembles the diverse racial, gender, and cultural differences of the Commonwealth.
- Value non-traditional approaches and skill sets that can further DWR's mission.
- Adopt a "best idea wins" approach to decision-making.
- Treat others as THEY wish to be treated and not as YOU wish to be treated.

Workplace Culture is the cornerstone of employee engagement. An organization can excel at acquiring talent, but if culture does not encourage employee retention, high employee turnover will be the result. It is imperative that DWR leadership remain knowledgeable of the concerns of the workforce while developing policies and initiatives that send a clear message as to what behaviors are valued, encouraged, and prohibited.

The DWR conducts an Employee Climate Survey, a study of employees' perceptions and perspectives, every 18 months. The second survey was conducted in June, 2024. The survey addressed attitudes and concerns that helps agency leaders instill positive changes.

Survey participation remained high, with 77% (353) of the workforce participating.

Below are some of the demographic specifics of survey participants:

Male	59%
Female	24%
Non-binary	.7%

White	75%
Black	4%
Hispanic	3%

Native American	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
Bachelor's Degree or more	79%

Below are some key takeaways from the survey.

EMPLOYMENT AT DWR

- 79% of respondents are “satisfied with DWR as a place to work.” This is nominally down from 80% in 2022.
- 72% of respondents are “satisfied with how my contribution to DWR’s valued.” This is a nominal increase from 70% in 2022.
- While most responses are positive, there remains a perception that promotions and hiring decisions are not decided primarily by merit. Leadership has addressed this with increased transparency in the process and will continue to do so.

Below are comments from the Climate Survey:

“Promotions are not based on merit. They are based on whether or not you are on the right ‘team.’ Management wants to work in an echo chamber. “Tell me what I want to hear and I’ll promote you”. Tell me what you really think, your honest opinion, and I hope you like your current position because that’s as far as you are going.”

“There have been multiple instances in the last couple years of promotions being given with no competitive process in the law division. Although personally [not] effecting me, it is disrespectful to officers with as much as 20-30 years of experience that had to compete for the same position. It creates poor morale in the field force.”

LEADERSHIP AT DWR

Since 2022, there has been some turnover in the DWR Director's Working Group. Despite the current team's efforts to foster transparency and opportunity, there has been a setback in the perceptions of the workforce.

- 23% believe DWR leadership proactively identifies and addresses agency challenges. This is down from 41% in 2022.
 - 33% responded that DWR leadership works to foster a culture of efficiency and effectiveness. This is down from 41% in 2022.
 - 55% responded that DWR leadership works to foster a culture of inclusion and mutual respect. This is down from 61% in 2024.
 - 66% stated that DWR leadership places a priority on workforce diversity. This is down from 68% in 2022.
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DIVERSITY, OPPORTUNITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Diversity and inclusion at DWR reveal another disconnect between the Plan's goals and employee perceptions. While an overwhelming majority of the employees recognize DWR's emphasis on inclusion in the workplace, comments reveal that some refer to an "over-emphasis" on diversifying the workforce and others see an agency with little diversity that is merely "checking the boxes." A repeated theme among commenters self-identifying as CPOs is that the hiring of women and people of color is somehow compromising the effectiveness of the force. However, hiring statistics do not support any critical mass of hiring of underrepresented candidates in that division.

Despite many of the comments below, over 75% of respondents feel that colleagues make them feel that they belong at DWR. Unfortunately, almost 25% of respondents expressed not feeling connected to the agency and their colleagues. This is an increase from 2022.

Fortunately, a large majority expressed that they feel safe, and the agency holds employees accountable for harassment and other discriminatory behaviors and over 80% of respondents are aware of the process to report harassment and other discriminatory behavior.

A full comparison of the 2022 and 2024 Climate Surveys may be found at **ADDENDUM C**.

Below are some comments from the survey on diversity, opportunity, and inclusion:

“Hiring practices focus on racial/religious/gender diversity more than KSA’s recruiting less qualified employees being paid more, hired more often, with higher employee turnover, due to racial bias, than fully qualified stereotypical applicants that are overlooked in the application process due to their race or personal identifiers that lack diversity.”

“I’ve witnessed a shift in diversity, and I think it’s great.”

“Workforce diversity does not appear to be present.”

“I think DWR leadership is working hard to improve workforce diversity. However, all natural resource agencies across the country face the same issues with funding and what they can afford to pay their employees. ‘Lower Level’ or ‘entry level’ positions in the agency do not pay enough in certain parts of the state to allow for a diverse applicant pool. I am aware of many colleagues that are only able to work in the positions they do because they are privileged with a partner and second income, support from family, etc. Low pay seriously limits the applicant pool and excludes many underrepresented groups from being able to afford to work for DWR.”

“In my division we don’t have much diversity. I’m sure the leadership places a priority on it but it is not being translated into hiring more minorities.”

“Leadership is focused on artificial, superficial ‘diversity, equity and inclusion’ at the expense of employee efficiency, effectiveness, and even competency. Further, this focus on superficial DEI mandates actual homogeneity of thought among employees, squelching outside the box thinking and ideas that may be seen as going against the DEI framework. It also harms new hires, as other employees are all but directly informed that new hires/promotions are based on DEI factors yet are expected to pretend that new hires were not hired based on superficial characteristics.

“The position of DEI coordinator has helped, and DWR has taken multiple actions over the last decade to be more inclusive. Not just more inclusive by hiring, but also by making people feel accepted. Unfortunately, the political climate in our country has now swung in reverse of that.”

“I haven’t been on the receiving end of harassment, but I’ve heard MANY comments from DWR employees across divisions that would be considered microaggressions or are just plain offensive (e.g. referring to a black man as ‘colored’ or ‘negro’, hearing numerous people say things like ‘he, him, she it, whatever they want to be called, I don’t know about this pronoun nonsense’)”

2023 Recommendation #3:

Establish a mentoring pilot program to invest in the success of newer hires, assist in the transfer of institutional knowledge, and further engage our more experience employees.

Since submitting the report, the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) instituted the “Commonwealth Mentoring Program.” It was decided that DWR would participate in this pilot program rather than initiate one internally. We are planning to use the report on the pilot to determine if having an in-house program is ideal for DWR.

CULTURE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SCORECARD

	2023 STATUS	2024 STATUS
1. Challenge and ensure accountability for unacceptable cultural behaviors by both employees and customers.		
2. Conduct an annual climate survey of the workforce. Track progress and course correct towards a more inclusive work environment.		
3. Move beyond the “rites of passage” approach to starting a career in conservation to one which does not present barriers based on means.		
4. Allow employee work profiles and screening criteria to include bonafide and relevant non-career activities when measuring an applicant's qualifications and interests.		
5. In the employment process, when not in contradiction with any state, federal or local law or regulations, consider how an applicant's views and past actions align with the vision, mission and values of DWR.		
6. Develop an Ombudsman Program that provides a safe space for those who have difficulty in the workplace.		
7. Develop an Employee Appreciation Program and demonstrate authentic appreciation that is communicated to entire staff. Ensure that recognition awards are given annually.		
8. Establish a standardized on-boarding process that includes a presentation on "Inclusive Excellence at DWR" and agency-wide introduction of new staff.		
9. Challenge seemingly innocuous office practices that could ultimately exclude certain members of the workforce.		
10. Conduct a standardized exit interview/survey of all departing staff members with data reported annually to leadership for future action.		
11. Emphasize non-traditional/practical experience as a proxy for academic credentials whenever possible.		
12. Require specialized cultural awareness education for all customer-facing personnel.		
13. Encourage participation and transparency in career development practices for all DWR employees.		
14. Conduct a review of all policies, practices, and procedures to ensure alignment with Inclusive Excellence goals.		
15. Create a framework for the development of employee resource groups where employees with similar background and interest may network, mentor, and create a safe space consistent with DWR's policies.		

Several items among the Culture Strategic Initiatives remain to be initiated. Some, like the development of Employee Resource Groups, may not prove to be ideal for an organization that lacks centralization. However, the need for employee mentoring and support is evident from the Climate Survey.

Recommendation #3:

Workforce diversity, opportunity, and inclusion initiatives should be preceded by an explanation of how larger, more diverse pools of applicants are more likely to yield stronger candidates, thus countering the myth that merit only exist within certain racial and gender profiles.



Awareness

To develop learning opportunities to equip members of the workforce with the ability to promote inclusive excellence and be active and accountable in building an inclusive work environment.

GOALS

- Initiate Agency-wide, mandatory Inclusive Excellence training.
- Integrate Inclusive Excellence principles in all policies, practices, and procedures going forward.
- Build training to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Since the inception of the Plan, the agency has been very intentional in providing training that would advance inclusion in the workplace. In the 2024-2025 time period, cultural diversity training was provided to the Law Enforcement Division. Additionally, per Virginia law, members of the 14th CPO academy were trained on encountering neurodivergent citizens by the Autism Society of Central Virginia. The entirety of the CPOs will receive this training in FY26.

Despite these efforts, there are still elements of the workforce that participate in harassing and other negative behaviors. Inclusive Excellence training has confirmed leadership's expectations from members of the workforce, but it has also reinforced to some that there is an over-emphasis on fairness in the workplace.

2023 Recommendation #4:

“Future training should consider a ‘live’ component in the regions. Connectivity limitations in some parts of Virginia make virtual meetings a challenge and the cost of bringing participants to Richmond could prove prohibitive.”

Since that time, Human Resources has instituted a regional meeting initiative where each region is visited annually by the DWG where various awards, updates, and micro-trainings are offered. Currently, the agency is still dependent on live streaming to run training simultaneously for some of our divisions due to budgetary restrictions.

Some comments on AWARENESS from the 2024 Climate Survey:

“Denial of a professional development opportunity: When DEI is the determining factor in hiring, there’s no need to seek an opportunity, unless that individual meets the criteria within DEI.”

“During a training on workplace harassment, I was in a conference room with maybe a dozen CPO’s. I’m not sure if there was someone in a leadership role in the room, however, the training was streamed to the room and there was not an in-person facilitator. As soon as the training started, people started cracking jokes

and making inappropriate comments about situations presented in the training. Nobody stood up to ask people to be quiet or stop cracking jokes and the behavior lasted for the entire two-hour training. This left me feeling that I could not safely or comfortably report inappropriate workplace behavior to anyone in law enforcement. I was disappointed that these law enforcement officers charged with upholding the law would be so flippant about topics like sexual and physical harassment or assault.”

AWARENESS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SCORECARD

	2023 STATUS	2024 STATUS
1. Offer regular training on Inclusive Excellence, cultural competency and awareness.		
2. Regularly communicate information that raises awareness and promotes civility in the workplace.		
3. Hold agency leadership accountable, via 360 reviews, for creating an environment within their divisions that promotes inclusive excellence.		
4. Develop training courses that are tailored appropriately for employee's roles and responsibilities.		
5. Bring broader perspectives with the use of third-party trainers with experiences beyond DWR.		
6. Offer training specifically for hiring managers that emphasizes development of job descriptions, bias recognition and elimination, panel selection, etc.		
7. Focus training and awareness opportunities on integrating Inclusive Excellence concepts into all aspects of the agency.		
8. Educate outreach personnel, conservation police officers, and other public facing personnel, on cultural competency and building relationships across cultures.		
9. Require management training of all new managers within one (1) year of hiring/promotion.		
10. Produce annual report on advancement of Inclusive Excellence by Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.		
11. Maintain an engaged Inclusive Excellence Council composed of members of each division who will champion Inclusive Excellence throughout the agency.		



Connecting

Utilizing resources and strategies to make the outdoors available, accessible, and safe for all Virginians.

GOALS

- Increase education about and access to, Virginia’s wild spaces and the fish and wildlife that live in them.
- Provide targeted, direct outreach to underrepresented and underserved populations.
- Expand partnerships with outdoor-oriented affinity organizations.

The “Connecting” core principle has been the most successful at DWR. Unlike workforce diversity issues, where some see employment and promotion as a zero-sum game, most employees recognize that “the outdoors is for everyone.” They embrace initiatives to connect with those underrepresented in outdoor activities. Every division has worked intentionally to broaden the DWR constituency through access and connection.

2023 Recommendation #5:

“The Outreach Division should publish a comprehensive calendar of all events that chronicle DWR participation and allow the public to know of DWR presence.”

We are pleased to report that this recommendation has been completely executed by the Outreach Division.

Several projects from the previous year’s report have continued to grow or reached completion:

The study and marketing project targeting Black recreational shooters has completed with several deliverables that allow state wildlife agencies to develop campaigns for more recreational shooters.

DWR continues to work with the “Blue Sky Fund” in several capacities, including “Hike for Kids.” This organization is a youth development non-profit that provides transformational experiences for Richmond area youth through outdoor education.

Patricia Clement, a social media influencer using the handle “Rivah Sistah” remains influential in sharing her outdoor lifestyle on multiple platforms. Her partnership with DWR has yielded both content and results in influencing underrepresented populations.

Some of the newer initiatives listed by division are below:

Wildlife Division

- Completed a Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) agreement in Tazewell County which will provide and enhance access to wildlife viewing through the construction of a barrier-free trail.
- VPA-HIP landowners opened their properties for turkey hunting this spring for four special needs, neurodivergent hunters.
- Incorporating Virginia’s tribal community into the planning processes by having members of the Chickahominy tribe serve on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee of the Wild Turkey Management Plan.
- Completing a barrier-free trails – there is currently 2,500 linear feet of barrier-free trails at the Clinch Mountain wildlife management area (WMA). Plans on moving forward to complete more trails on Big Survey WMA. Currently, barrier free trails are available on at least one WMA in each of the four DWR regions.
- Maintaining universally accessible fishing piers on DWR-owned and managed lakes. Currently, there are accessible fishing piers at Laurel Bed Lake and Rural Retreat Lake in Region 3.
- Revising public access maps to make them useful for those who have vision impairments related to color.

Aquatics

- Continues to stock fish in urban and other areas frequented by underserved populations to encourage angling.

Boating Division

- Approved an on-line boating course in Spanish.
- Developed a rack card for CPOs to utilize when encountering Spanish speaking constituents on the water.

Outreach Division

- Developed “Virginia Outdoor Women,” a series of events for women of all skill level to increase competencies in the hunting, fishing, and outdoor skills.
- Volunteer Support:
 - “Field Day with Outdoor Afro”
 - “MLK Day Youth Outdoor Experience”
 - “Hooked on Freedom: Hook, Line & Sinker” free fishing clinic at Dorey Park in Eastern Henrico County.

CONNECTING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SCORECARD

	2023 STATUS	2024 STATUS
1. Create DWR branded content that highlights DWR's mission and ways to get involved to be distributed at parks, schools and colleges.	Yellow	Green
2. Create branded content for the Project WILD educational program.	Red	Red
3. Establish strategic relationships with outdoor affinity organizations to better understand their views on outdoor activities and conservation.	Green	Green
4. Include more diverse images in both print and electronic media.	Green	Green
5. Implement a language access strategy for multi-lingual speakers and individuals with disabilities.	Yellow	Green
6. Update website with images and languages that are inclusive of those in the Commonwealth.	Green	Yellow
7. Partner with other Virginia outdoor organizations to create synergy in messages to diverse audiences.	Yellow	Yellow
8. Seek opportunities to acquire and develop lands and waters that will assist in promoting high-quality outdoor wildlife experiences closer to our urban communities.	Yellow	Yellow
9. Seek to convert or expand the usage of DWR's current lands and waters to accommodate activities in which underrepresented groups participate.	Yellow	Green
10. Host events that target underrepresented populations.	Green	Green
11. Seek sponsorships and participation in outdoor programs and events that are held by, or target, underrepresented populations.	Green	Green
12. Develop a Community Engagement Plan and dedicate an employee to its execution.	Yellow	Green
13. Share Inclusive Excellence awareness content on website and social media	Yellow	Yellow

Recommendation #4:

Continue to explore appropriate uses of DWR lands that align with growing outdoor activities (such as wildlife viewing and recreational shooting) which demonstrate a growing interest among non-traditional populations.

Conclusion

The Department of Wildlife Resources remains committed to recruiting and retaining a workforce selected from a large, qualified, and diverse talent pool; maintaining work environments that will allow employees to reach their full occupational potential; and strategically utilizing agency resources to make the outdoors safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all Virginians. As stated in the last report, long-term, sustainable change is incremental, but we are seeing progress towards our commitment.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

George P. Braxton, J.D., C.D.E.
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

BOARD OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

GOVERNANCE MANUAL

Revised ~~March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

I. PURPOSE

The Board of Wildlife Resources for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has established this Governance Manual in accordance with §29.1-102, Paragraph B, of the Code of Virginia to provide guidance and structure for the deliberations and decisions necessary for it to fulfill its statutory responsibilities and to accomplish its mission. It fully recognizes that the General Assembly has given stewardship responsibilities for the Commonwealth's wildlife and boating resources to the Department on behalf of Virginia's citizens and has entrusted the Board with the moral ownership of the Department on behalf of the public. Therefore, the Board will strive to understand the public's values regarding wildlife and boating resources and shall govern its actions based on those values.

II. AUTHORITY

Section 29.1-102 of the Code establishes the Board of Wildlife Resources, delineates the composition and selection of its members, and provides basic instructions regarding the structure and function of the Board. Section 2.2-2100 of the Code defines a supervisory board as one that is responsible for agency operations, including approval of appropriations requests, appointment of the agency Director, and compliance by the agency Director with all Board and statutory directives. The responsibilities and authorities of the Board are set forth in §29.1-103 and in other sections of Title 29.1. The Board is accountable to the purposes and provisions of Title

29.1 of the Code of Virginia and has specific authorities as summarized below:

A. Administration

The Board shall:

Serve as trustee of the Lifetime Hunting and Fishing Endowment Fund (§29.1-101.1).

Adopt rules and procedures for the conduct of its business that shall be set forth in a Governance Manual. The Board may establish committees to assist with its duties and responsibilities. All decisions by a committee shall be reviewed by the Board, and shall only take effect if approved by the Board (§29.1-102.B).

Elect one of its members as its chair whose duties shall be limited to (i) presiding at all regular and called meetings of the Board; (ii) serving as Board liaison to the Director, other Board members, and the Secretary of Natural Resources; and (iii) the other duties set forth in the Governance Manual as approved by a majority of the Board. The Board shall also elect a vice-chair to preside in the absence of the chair. Any additional duties of the vice-chair shall be set forth in the Governance Manual. The Board shall annually elect one of its members as chair and one of its members as vice-chair (§29.1-102.C).

Meet at least once every quarter of the calendar year for the transaction of its business, and other meetings may be called if necessary by the chair or at the request of any three members. The majority of the members shall constitute a quorum (§29.1-102.D).

Meet in Richmond or at such other places within the Commonwealth as may be necessary (§29.1-102.D).

Appoint the Director, subject to confirmation and reconfirmation every four years by the General Assembly, to head the Department and to act as principal administrative officer and ensure his compliance with statutory and Board directives. The Director is subordinate to the Board (§§2.2-2100, 29.1-109.B, and 29.1-103.1).

Approve requests for appropriations (§2.2-2100).

Manage gifts of property or money in such a way as to maximize their value to the citizens of Virginia (§29.1-104).

Reduce all rules, resolutions, regulations, and policies of the Board to writing for the Director; these writings shall be public documents and shall be available to the public on request (§29.1-107).

Open minute books and other records of the Board to examination by the Governor, members of the General Assembly, and Auditor of Public Accounts, or their representatives, at all times. The accounts of the Board shall be audited in the manner provided for the audit of other state agencies. In addition, the Board shall ensure that the Auditor of Public Accounts, or an entity approved by him, conducts an annual audit of a fiscal and compliance nature of the accounts and transactions of the Department. The Board may order such other audits as it deems necessary and desirable (§29.1-108).

Pay twenty-five percent of the proceeds from timber sales on lands owned by the Board to the locality in which the timber was located (§29.1-111).

Enter into a cooperative agreement with the United States Forest Service to define the means and methods to improve the fish and wildlife resources of the national forests in Virginia and shall program the expenditure of all funds derived from the sale of the national forest stamp (§29.1-411).

Designate (Board Chair) a Motorboat Committee with three members from the Board (§29.1-701).

The Board is authorized to:

Designate funds to the Capital Improvement Fund and may transfer an amount equal to fifty percent or less of the revenue generated annually from the sales and use tax which has been deposited in the Game Protection Fund pursuant to subsection E of § 58.1-638 (§29.1-101.01).

Adopt resolutions or regulations conferring upon the Director all such powers, authorities, and duties as the Board possesses and deems necessary or proper to carry out the purposes of Title 29.1 (§29.1-103.12).

Administer and manage the Virginia Fish Passage Grant and Revolving Loan Fund pursuant to Article 1.1 (§29.1-101.2 et seq.) of Chapter One of this title (§29.1-103.13).

Receive gifts, grants, bequests, and devises of property, real or personal, and money, which, if accepted, shall be taken and

held for any uses prescribed by the donor, grantor, or testator and in accord with the purposes of Title 29.1 (§29.1-104).

Enter into contracts, with the approval of the Governor, for the lease of lands or buildings owned by the Board (§29.1-105).

Enter into reciprocal agreements for sport-fishing licenses with adjoining jurisdictions having inland waters adjacent to Virginia (§29.1-535).

Perform all such acts as may be necessary for the establishment and implementation of cooperative wildlife restoration projects and fish restoration and management projects, as defined in the provisions of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of September 2, 1937 (16 U.S.C. § 669 et seq.), as amended, and to the provisions of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of August 9, 1950 (16 U.S.C. § 777 et seq.), as amended, and the implementing regulations promulgated thereunder. Revenues derived from license fees paid by hunters and fishermen, as well as interest, dividends, or other income earned on such revenues, shall not be diverted and shall be used solely for the administration of the Department's fish and wildlife programs (§29.1-103.2.)

B. Acquisition

The Board is authorized to:

Acquire by purchase, lease, or otherwise lands and waters in the Commonwealth and to establish buildings, structures, dams, lakes, and ponds on such lakes and waters (§29.1-103.2); lands and waters for game and fish refuges, preserves or public

shooting and fishing, and establish such lands and waters under appropriate regulations (§29.1-103.4); lands and structures for use as public landings, wharves, or docks, to improve such lands and structures, and to control the use of all such public landings, wharves, or docks by regulation (§29.1-103.5).

Pursuant to Chapter 906 of the 2007 Virginia Acts of Assembly, the Board shall act in accordance with the policy of the Commonwealth that there shall be no net loss of those public lands managed by the Department that are available for hunting in Virginia (§29.1-103.2).

C. Conservation of Wildlife

The Board is authorized to:

In consultation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the State Veterinarian, and representatives of appropriate agriculture agencies and organizations, to promulgate regulations pertaining to diseases in wildlife populations (§29.1-103.1.).

Conduct operations for the preservation and propagation of game birds, game animals, fish and other wildlife in order to increase, replenish, and restock the lands and inland waters of the Commonwealth (§29.1-103.3).

Acquire and introduce any new species of game birds, game animals, or fish on the lands and within the waters of the Commonwealth, with the authorization and cooperation of the local government for the locality where the introduction occurs (§29.1-103.6).

Restock, replenish, and increase any depleted native species of game birds, game animals, or fish (§29.1-103.7).

Control land owned by and under control of the Commonwealth in Back Bay, its tributaries, and the North Landing River from the North Carolina line to the North Landing Bridge (§29.1103.10).

Exercise powers it may deem advisable for conserving, protecting, replenishing, propagating, and increasing the supply of game birds, game animals, fish, and other wildlife in the Commonwealth (§29.1-103.11).

Determine when dams or other obstructions interfere with the free passage of anadromous and other fish within the streams of the Commonwealth and also to determine “suitable fishways” (§29.1-532).

Take such regulatory or other action as it may determine to be necessary to enable the Commonwealth to become a party to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, as authorized in Article 2.1 (§ 29.1-530.5) of Chapter 5, and to implement the Compact in the Commonwealth (§29.1-103.17).

D. Education

The Board shall:

Establish regulations and rules to administer and enforce a hunter education program (§ 29.1-300.2)

~~Establish one full-time hunter education coordinator position per administrative region of the Department~~ Staff the hunter education program with appropriate personnel to ensure that

hunter education, training, workshops, and volunteer management are carried out across the Commonwealth (§29.1-300.2).

The Board is authorized to:

Have educational matter pertaining to wildlife published and distributed (§29.1-103.8).

Hold exhibits throughout the Commonwealth for the purpose of educating school children, agriculturists, and other persons in the preservation and propagation of wildlife in the Commonwealth (§29.1-103.9).

E. Regulations and Rules

The Board shall:

Regulate or prohibit by regulation any drilling, dredging, or other operation designed to recover or obtain shells, minerals, or other substances on land owned by and under control of the Commonwealth in Back Bay, its tributaries and the North Landing River from the North Carolina line to North Landing Bridge to prevent practices and operations which would harm the area for fish and wildlife (§29.1-103.10).

Conform its regulations regarding the hunting of migratory game birds with the regulations of the United States government in regards to open seasons and bag limits (§29.1-515).

Promulgate regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of Chapter 6 of Title 29.1 pertaining to the licensing and operation of shooting preserves (§29.1-600.1).

The Board is authorized to:

Promulgate regulations pertaining to the hunting, taking, capture, killing, possession, sale, purchase, and transportation of any wild bird, wild animal, or inland water fish and the feeding of any game, game animals, or fur-bearing animals as defined in § 29.1-100, or the feeding of any wildlife that results in property damage, endangers any person or wildlife, or creates a public health concern. (§29.1-501).

Prescribe the seasons and bag limits for hunting, fishing, trapping, or otherwise taking such wild birds, animals, and fish in the Commonwealth (§29.1-506) and on lands and waters owned or controlled by the Board (§29.1-508).

Close or shorten open seasons under certain conditions by giving public notice (§29.1-507).

Promulgate regulations to change the shotgun shell capacity (§29.1-519).

Adopt regulations permitting trappers to visit traps less frequently than at least once every 72 hours under specified conditions (§29.1-521).

Promulgate regulations establishing model ordinances for hunting with firearms that may be adopted by counties or cities (§29.1-528).

Promulgate regulations establishing model ordinances for hunting with bow and arrow that may be adopted by counties or cities (§29.1-528.1).

Prescribe distances less than 500 yards between waterfowl hunting blinds and the use of such blinds with restrictions (§29.1-351).

Establish a practical system of identification of trout offered for sale for table or other uses that it prescribes (§29.1-531).

Declare endangered and threatened species of fish and wildlife and to prohibit the taking, transportation, processing, sale, or offer of sale within the Commonwealth (§29.1-566).

Declare birds and animals as predatory and undesirable or nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species and control the importation and possession of such animals (§§29.1-542, 29.1573).

E. Fees, Licenses, and Permits

The Board shall:

Establish by regulation a procedure for selling bonus deer permits and set the fee for this permit according to some restrictions (29.1-305.1).

The Board is authorized to:

Establish and collect admittance, parking or other use fees at certain Department-owned facilities according to certain restrictions (§29.1-103.14).

Establish and collect a use fee through the issuance of an annual hunting stamp required to hunt on private lands managed by the department with certain requirements (~~§29.1-403.15~~ 29.1-113).

Revise, as it deems appropriate, through the promulgation of regulations, the fees charged for hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses with certain restrictions (§29.1-103.16).

Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the apprentice hunting license statute (§29.1-300.4.)

Designate agents for the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and appoint agents for the sale of licenses and permits via telephone and electronic media (§§29.1-323 and 29.1-337).

Create a separate special license for the hunting of bear in the Commonwealth according to fees and requirements (§29.1-305).

Impose daily use fees and issue permits to fish in specially stocked trout streams (§29.1-318).

Administer a permit system to allow certain privileges for the collection, holding, etc. of wildlife according to regulations, reports, and fees as it may prescribe (§29.1-413).

Grant permits to bona fide field trial clubs and associations to hold field trials with dogs under regulations and fees that it establishes (§29.1-422).

Issue permits to raise, purchase, release, and hunt pheasant on private lands under rules, regulations, and seasons that it may require (§29.1-514).

Recognize persons, companies, or corporations with canneries or processing plants in other states that are duly licensed to operate such facilities in those states so that those entities can possess, transport, sell, etc. wild animals, birds, fish that are

packaged in a can, tin, pot or other receptacle outside of the Commonwealth (§29.1-543).

Permit the taking and possession, etc. of endangered or threatened (§29.1-568), predatory and undesirable (§29.1-542), and nonindigenous aquatic nuisance (§29.1-575) species under special conditions.

Adopt revisions to the fees charged for motorboat registration and title certificates (§29.1-701.1).

F. Boating

The Board shall:

Promote the interest of retail buyers of watercraft and may prevent unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices (§29.1-802).

The Board is authorized to:

Make rules and regulations as it deems necessary and proper for the effective administration of Chapter 7 of Title 29.1 concerning boating laws (§29.1-701.E).

Allow exceptions to the requirement to display decals showing the expiration date of motorboat registrations on the side of motorboats (§29.1-703).

Adopt regulations as it deems appropriate for the safe and reasonable operation of vessels and for proper equipment (§29.1-735).

Promulgate regulations to implement a boating safety education program for all motorboat and personal watercraft operators to meet boating safety education requirements (§29.1-735.2).

Promulgate regulations applicable to the commercial operations of parasail operators on waters of the Commonwealth (Acts of Assembly Chapter 625 of the 2007 Session).

Promulgate regulations governing the takeoff, landing, and taxi of seaplanes on impoundments located on the inland waters of the Commonwealth (§29.1-735.1).

Establish special or general rules regarding safe and reasonable operation of vessels on any waters within any political subdivisions of the Commonwealth upon application from that subdivision or on its own motion (§29.1-744).

Promulgate regulations within the provisions of the Watercraft Dealer Licensing Act (§29.1-805).

III. PRINCIPLES

A. COMMITMENT

The Board is devoted to accomplishing the Department's mission and fulfilling its vision, as follows:

Mission: To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth;

To provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating, and related recreation and to work diligently to safeguard the rights of the people to hunt, fish and harvest game as provided for in the Constitution of Virginia;

To promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting, and fishing;

To provide educational outreach programs and materials that foster an awareness of and appreciation for Virginia's fish and wildlife resources, their habitats, and hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities.

Vision: The Board of Wildlife Resources seeks to provide long-term direction and resources to the Department to firmly establish and maintain it as a leader among wildlife and boating agencies within the ~~Nation~~ country. The Board's deliberations and decisions will be based on sound scientific principles and procedures, as developed, researched, recognized, and accepted within the bounds of comprehensive professional wildlife resource management, and will focus on excellence in service to the citizens of Virginia. The Board will strive to provide an environment that fosters ethical behavior, teamwork, professional development, and distinction in performance among its members and the employees of the Department. The Board is fully committed to excellence in governance and in fulfilling its responsibilities as stewards of these most valuable resources.

B. APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE

1. To achieve its vision for the Department, the Board will govern according to the following values:
 - a. An outward vision;
 - b. A long-term perspective;
 - c. A proactive approach to governance;
 - d. Strategic leadership;
 - e. Consideration of multiple viewpoints during deliberations, integration of ideas or consensus building in decision-making, and accord following decisions; and
 - f. Clear distinction between the roles and actions of the Board and those of the staff, particularly in regards to the role of the Director.
2. The Board will be guided by the following principles in all of its deliberations, decisions and actions:
 - a. The Board will convey its organizational values and perspectives to the Department with the development of broad policies that are founded on the principles of openness, integrity, and accountability.
 - b. The Board's focus will be on long-term goals, expressed as "Ends" statements, that address the Department's mission, and not on the operational approaches or "means" of attaining those goals.

- c. The Board will develop policies in four areas as follows:
- Ends – properly targeted, mission-related goals, results, impacts or outcomes;
 - Executive Limitations – articulation of limits and boundaries for staff actions;
 - Board-Executive Relationship – delegation of authority to the Director and evaluation of how that delegated authority is used within the context of the Department’s mission and the Board’s policies; and
 - Board Process – the way that the Board governs itself and provides leadership and direction to the organization.
- d. While the Board expects staff recommendations regarding Board policy requirements, the Board will initiate policy development according to its needs. Additionally, the Board will review and update its policies as a part of its three-year review of the Governance Manual or at any other time it determines to be necessary. The Board will be responsible for excellence in governing.
- e. The Board will apply self-discipline as necessary to govern with excellence. Discipline will apply to all aspects of Board activities, such as preparation

for meetings, interactions with the public and staff, behavior and attendance at Board events, policy development principles, and adherence to Board processes as established in Board policies. Board members will interact with staff to enhance their understanding of Department programs and their ability to perform their duties, but will provide direction to the Department via Board actions to the Director.

- f. The Board recognizes that it is ultimately accountable for all aspects of the Department and will conscientiously strive to accomplish its obligations to the citizens of the Commonwealth. It will allow no officer, individual, or committee of the Board to usurp this role or hinder this commitment.
- g. Officers and committees will be established to assist the Board with its responsibilities. Major decisions and actions of the Board will occur at the Board level, and when appropriate, by a vote of the entire Board.
- h. The Board will monitor and regularly assess its own policies and performance and will make adjustments as necessary to maintain and/or improve its governance of the Department.

- i. Furthermore, it will ensure the continuity and advancement of its governance skills through training and development of all Board members and through thorough orientation of new Board members.

IV. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE BOARD

A. COMPOSITION

- 1. The members of the Board are appointed and serve in accordance with §29.1-102 of the Code of Virginia, which provides, inter alia:
 - a. The Board shall consist of 11 members. The members appointed shall be citizens of the Commonwealth and shall be knowledgeable about wildlife conservation, hunting, fishing, boating, agriculture, forestry, or habitat. Each Department region, as constituted on July 1, 2014, shall be represented by two members, and three members shall be members-at-large, each representing a different Department region. Members shall be appointed for terms of one to four years; however, appointments shall be made in a manner whereby no more than three members shall have terms which expire in the same year. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be made in the same manner, but only for the unexpired term. No person shall

be eligible to serve more than two consecutive four-year terms.

- b. The Governor appoints Board members, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.
- c. The Governor may remove Board members from office during their respective terms.

- 2. All new Board members must complete an orientation program in conjunction with the first regularly scheduled Board meeting following the announcement of their first appointment to the Board or as soon as practicable following the announcement of their first appointment to the Board if orientation cannot be completed in association with the first Board meeting. The Executive Director shall be responsible for developing and presenting the orientation program, and the Board Secretary will distribute an extensive orientation manual to new Board members upon announcement of the appointments.
- 3. All Board members shall be required to sign an affirmation pledging to uphold both the letter and spirit of The Board of Wildlife Resources' Code of Ethics and Conduct within ninety (90) days of the date of their appointment to the Board or within thirty (30) days of the adoption of these policies, whichever comes later.

B. OFFICERS

Officers of the Board will consist of a Chair and a Vice-

Chair (§29.1-102.C). The Chair will appoint a Nominations Committee that will develop a slate of candidates for both positions and present it to the Board at a Board meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year. The Chair will entertain a motion to accept the Committee report and open the floor for additional nominations. After the membership has had ample opportunity to make nominations, the Chair will accept a motion to close the nominations. The Board will elect officers from the candidates for both positions by majority vote during its meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year. New officers will assume the responsibilities of their positions on July 1 and will serve through June of the next year. The term of office is one year for both positions. The Chair and Vice Chair shall not be eligible to be re-elected to their respective positions and no person shall serve more than one year as Chair and one year as Vice Chair during a four-year term. The Vice Chair does not assume the Chair's position; however, the Vice Chair can be nominated for and elected to become the Chair.

In the case of unexpected vacancies, the Board may install duly elected officers by majority vote at its next meeting. If incoming officers have not been selected, the Board may nominate and elect a member to fill the vacant position by a majority vote. Installation of the officer will occur immediately after he/she is elected by vote of the Board.

C. CHAIR

The Chair is charged with ensuring the openness, integrity, and accountability of the Board's process, motivating the Board members to focus on the long-term, mission-related "Ends" for

the Department and to fulfill their responsibilities and duties toward those Ends; and to oversee the operation of Board meetings to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of those meetings. Towards these ends, the Chair:

1. Works with the Director to develop agendas for Board meetings;
2. Presides over meetings of the Board;
3. Votes on motions as other members, except that the Chair shall not be required to cast his or her vote before hearing or counting the votes from the other members (Note: Robert's Rules of Order, which the Board has adopted, normally requires that the Chair does not vote, except in certain situations. However, since each member represents an administrative region, all should cast their votes on the public's behalf.)
4. When required, certifies actions taken by the Board;
5. Communicates to outside interests on behalf of the Board regarding specific decisions or actions made by the Board;
6. Appoints members to standing committees including a Motorboat Committee (§29.1-701) and to ad hoc committees created by the Board, subject to confirmation by the Board. The Chair may serve on standing committees, but shall not serve as a chair of a standing committee;
7. Communicates regularly, but at least quarterly, with the Secretary of Natural Resources to inform him/her regarding activities and programs of the Board and

Department and to receive information on initiatives by the Administration;

8. Designates one member of the Board, who may include the Board Chair or Vice Chair, to serve as liaison to the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia; and
9. Performs such additional duties as prescribed within this policy or as may be established by resolution of the Board.

D. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice Chair is a member of the Board, elected by a majority vote of the Board according to the procedures for the election of officers. The duties of the Vice Chair are as follows:

1. Preside over Board meetings if the Chair is unable to do so as per §29.1-102.C;
2. Serves on standing committees as appointed by the Chair;
3. Provide guidance and interpretation on Board meeting procedures according to the rules (§29.1-102) within the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, The Modern Edition.
4. Perform such additional duties as prescribed within this policy or as may be established by resolution of the Board.

E. SECRETARY

The Board instructs the Director to designate a staff member with acceptable credentials to serve as the Board Secretary. Following the Board's appointment of this individual as Board Secretary, this person shall serve in this capacity until such time as he or she is unable or unwilling to continue to do so, or until such time as the Board terminates the appointment. The Secretary to the Board has the following duties and responsibilities:

1. To maintain a current list of the membership of the Board and of each committee;
2. To notify Board members of Board and committee meetings;
3. To coordinate and disseminate information to the members of the Board;
4. To prepare correspondence for the Chair when he/she is communicating on behalf of the Board;
5. To maintain official minutes and records of all proceedings of the Board;
6. To coordinate the response to requests received by the Board under the Freedom of Information Act;
7. To ensure timely filing of reports with the Secretary of the Commonwealth under the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act;
8. To prepare, prior to each meeting of the Board and its committees, advertisements of the meeting and to place them in the appropriate media outlets, in accordance with the requirements of the Administrative Process Act.

9. To prepare, prior to each meeting and in coordination with the Board or committee Chair and the Director, an order of business (agenda) that lists all known issues to be addressed at the meeting, in their exact order of presentation;
10. To coordinate agendas and presentations for the Board;
11. To prepare a calendar of events for the Board to insure compliance with all Board requirements and deadlines; and,
12. Perform such additional duties as provided herein or as may be set by resolution of the Board.

F. MEETINGS/ATTENDANCE

The Board drafts and approves a regular meeting schedule in advance of each calendar year. Meetings will occur at least once every quarter in accordance with §29.1-102.D. The schedule may be amended by agreement of a majority of the Board. The Board may schedule additional meetings, if deemed necessary, after giving appropriate notice to all members of the Board and to the public. The Chair will schedule a meeting upon the request of three members of the Board and will notify the Director of the called meeting. The request may be made verbally during a duly convened Board meeting or in writing to the Board Chair at other times. In all cases, the purpose of the meeting must be clearly stated, and those three or more members making the request must be clearly identified.

Members are expected to attend all meetings unless there are mitigating conditions that preclude a member's presence. In

such cases, the member must notify the Board Chair and Board Secretary in advance of the meeting and give the reason for his/her absence.

G. PROCEDURAL STANDARDS

1. The Board will use the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, The Modern Edition, to govern the proceedings of all of its Board and committee meetings insofar as they are applicable and not inconsistent with law or any of the policies adopted by the Board. All meetings of the Board and its committees shall comply with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Title 2.2, Chapter 37 of the Code of Virginia).
2. Voting by proxy is prohibited by law.
3. A majority of members of the Board shall constitute a quorum at Board meetings (§29.1-102.D).
4. Approval of an action or decision shall be by a majority of a quorum of the Board.

H. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

To accomplish its trustee and administrative duties, the Board shall perform the following duties:

1. The Board shall establish the strategy for and approve all actions regarding the following policy-related items:

a. General Duties

1. Ends policies
2. Decision-making structure
3. Governance Manual
4. Annual budget
5. Wildlife and boating regulations
5. Financial reporting system
6. Internal control system

b. Administration-Related Duties

1. Agency mission and vision
2. Strategic plan and objectives
3. Executive limitations policies
4. Board/Secretary of Natural
Resources/Director relationships
5. Board/Director relationship policies
6. Director selection and performance
evaluation processes

2. The Board shall approve all actions and decisions regarding the following areas of policy implementation and Department operations:

a. General Duties

1. Creation and appointments to Standing, Advisory, and Ad Hoc Committees
2. Mandate and appointment of the Director
3. Audit function

- b. Administration-Related Duties
 - 1. Educate constituents regarding Board policies and strategic plans for the Department
- 3. The Board shall monitor the following elements to ensure compliance with, and continued appropriateness of, Board policies and guidelines:
 - a. General Duties
 - 1. Ends policies
 - 2. Decision-making structure and governance manual
 - 3. Financial reporting system
 - 4. Budget
 - 5. Internal control system
 - 6. Legislation
 - 7. Audit function
 - b. Administration-Related Duties
 - 1. Plan vision and mission
 - 2. Strategic Plan and objectives
 - 3. Executive limitations policies
 - 4. Board/Secretary of Natural Resources/Director relationship
 - 5. Board/Director relationship policies
 - 6. Director performance evaluation processes

4. The Board shall oversee each of the following and take such action as is necessary and/or appropriate:
 - a. General Duties
 1. Implementation of Ends policies
 2. Effectiveness of governance policies
 - b. Administration-related Duties
 1. Effectiveness of executive limitations policies
 2. Effectiveness of Board/Secretary of Natural Resources/Director relationship
 3. Effectiveness of board/director relationship policies
 4. Performance of the Director

V. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE SECRETARY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Board recognizes that the Department is an agency within the Natural Resources Secretariat and understands that the governance structure of the Department is unique for this cabinet of state government. While this structure is different, the Board is committed to insuring that the Department operates effectively and appropriately within this important unit of state government. Therefore, the Board will focus on its statutorily-mandated responsibilities as expressed within its mission statement and will also seek to establish and maintain regular communications and coordination of efforts with the

Secretary of Natural Resources in regards to initiatives of the Administration and government-wide procedural and process-related requirements. The Board will pursue the following actions to ensure compliance with initiatives of the Administration and government-wide requirements.

- A. The Board directs the Chair via this governance manual to communicate regularly with the Secretary of Natural Resources to keep him/her informed of Board initiatives and to receive updates on issues and directives from the Administration and the requirements of government-wide procedures.
- B. The Board will solicit input from the Secretary of Natural Resources when it develops performance plans for the Director and as it evaluates the Director's performance. The Board will specifically request that the Secretary of Natural Resources forward information regarding special initiatives or performance measures required by the Governor so that they can be incorporated into the Director's performance plan.
- C. The Board will place requirements upon the Director to meet regularly with the Secretary of Natural Resources to discuss issues relative to the Department and to provide regular, written updates to the Secretary of Natural Resources regarding initiatives, programs, and activities of the Department. The Director will provide summaries of those reports to the Board,

and the Board will solicit feedback from the Secretary of Natural Resources as to the Director's performance in this regard.

VI. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOARD AND DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

All authority delegated from the Board to the staff will be delegated through the Director; thus, all authority and accountability of Department operations and staff performance rests with the Director.

- A. The Board will instruct the Director to achieve certain results for its constituents through the development of Ends policies. The Board will institute limitations on the Director's latitude for accomplishing these Ends via the establishment of Executive Limitations policies. These policies will spell out the practices, methods, conduct, and other "means" that are available to the Director as he directs the operations of the department.
- B. As long as the Director adheres to a reasonable interpretation of the Ends and Executive Limitations policies, he/she is authorized to create additional policies, make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices, and develop all activities.
- C. The Board recognizes that changes to its Ends and Executive Limitations policies will shift the boundary between the Board and the Director as well as the Director's latitude in executing the Department's operations. The Board will recognize delegations that

are in place at such times and will respect and support the Director's choices.

- D. The Director is bound only to decisions of the Board acting as a body.
- E. Decisions or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or committee are not binding on the Director except in rare occasions when the Board has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.
- F. The Board will routinely monitor the Department's performance relative to the Ends and Executive Limitations policies and will consider the results in the evaluation of the Director's performance.

G. DIRECTOR

Pursuant to §§29.1-103, 2.2-2100, and 29.1-109.B, the Board shall appoint a Director to head the Department and to act as principal administrative officer. The Director shall have the following powers as defined in the Code of Virginia or by regulations and policies of the Board:

1. Administration

The Director shall:

Regularly brief the Secretary of Natural Resources on initiatives, programs, and activities of the Department. The Director shall meet with the Secretary of Natural Resources or his/her representative at least once every month and shall submit written reports to the Secretary on significant Department activities as requested by the Secretary. He/she shall seek guidance from the Board on mission-related matters and obtain counsel from the Secretary in regards to government-wide procedural and process-related matters and on initiatives of the Administration. The Director shall brief the Board on interactions and issues with the Secretary of Natural Resources at each of the Board's regularly scheduled meetings.

Accept service of process on behalf of the Board.

The Director is authorized to:

Employ persons necessary for the administrative requirements of the Board and to designate the official position and duties of each (§29.1-109.B.3).

Perform such acts as may be necessary to the conduct and establishment of cooperative fish and wildlife projects with the federal government as prescribed by Congress and in compliance with rules and regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior (~~§29.1-109.B.4~~ 29.1-109.B.5).

Make and enter into all contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to the performance of his/her duties and the execution of his/her powers, including, but not limited to, contracts with the United States, other state agencies, and governmental subdivisions of the Commonwealth (§~~29.1-109.B.5~~ 29.1-109.B.6).

Sign on its behalf, documents, leases, and conveyances previously approved by the Board (via Board policy).

Employ special counsel approved by the Governor to defend any Conservation Police Officer appointed by the Director who is prosecuted on any criminal charge arising out of any act committed in the performance of his official duties (§29.1-218).

Grant and acquire interests in land and water through minor land leases, easements, and contracts subject to the necessary state approvals. For the purposes of this policy only, minor land leases, easements, and contracts include utility crossings, access to properties, administrative buildings, antenna sites, boat landings, and wildlife lands; and furthermore, the value of each such minor lease, easement, or contract shall not exceed \$5,000 or a total of \$200,000 per fiscal year for all such leases, easements and contracts (via Board policy).

Recommend to the Board any policy changes that should be made (via Board policy).

Enter into agreements with individuals and entities regarding the commercial use of ~~DGIF~~ DWR facilities and to establish a fee schedule for such use (via Board policy).

2. Conservation of Wildlife

The Director shall:

Appoint regular and special Conservation Police Officers as he may deem necessary to enforce the game and inland fish laws and shall issue a certificate of appointment to each Conservation Police Officer (§29.1-200).

The Director is authorized to:

Enforce or cause to be enforced all laws for the protection, propagation, and preservation of game birds and game animals in the Commonwealth and all fish in the inland waters thereof (§29.1-109.B.1).

Initiate prosecution of all persons who violate such laws, and seize and confiscate wild birds, wild animals, and fish that have been illegally killed, caught, transported, or shipped (§29.1-109.B.2).

On request of any employer owning more than 500 acres, the Director may appoint as special Conservation Police Officers persons employed by the owner. On request of two or more adjoining landowners who own 1,000 or

more contiguous acres, the Director may appoint as special Conservation Police Officers persons employed by one or more of the landowners (§29.1-217).

When practicable, consult with, and keep informed, wildlife and boating constituent organizations so as to benefit Virginia's wildlife and natural resources, and accomplish the Department's mission (§~~29.1-109.B.6~~ 29.1-109.B.7).

Manage, harvest, and sell timber on lands owned by the Board in accordance with the best timber and game management practices (§29.1-111).

Approve the use of drugs on vertebrate wildlife (§29.1-508.1).

Allow employees of federal, state, and local government agencies, and persons holding a valid Commercial Nuisance Animal Permit issued by the Department, to visit conibear-style body-gripping traps that are completely submerged at least once every 72 hours or as otherwise permitted by regulation (§29.1-521 A.9).

Register deer enclosures in certain instances (§29.1-525.1.D).

Authorize the feeding of bear, deer, or turkey on national forest lands and department-owned lands (4VAC15-40-281).

Approve nontoxic shot for waterfowl hunting

(4VAC15-260-140).

Designate waters as “designated stocked trout waters” (4VAC15-20-190) and Trout Heritage Waters (4VAC15-330-10).

Designate waters to be included within the Urban Fishing Program (4VAC15-330-200).

3. Regulations and Rules

The Director is authorized to:

Propose adoption of modifications and amendments to the Federal Endangered and Threatened Species List in accordance with the procedures of §§29.1-501 and 29.1-502 of the Code of Virginia (4VAC15-20-130).

Establish and post rules governing certain activities on Department-owned or controlled lands (4 VAC15-40-280).

Develop rules necessary for the enforcement of the Board’s policy concerning the use of boat ramps (via Board policy).

4. Fees, Licenses, and Permits

The Director shall:

~~Deliver licensing materials to license agents or clerks before the first day of the license year, must account for unused, annually-expiring material and unsold licenses,~~

~~and shall~~ Shall determine and supply equipment and materials needs for suppliers of electronic license sales outlets (§29.1-330).

Approve all permits for threatened and endangered species issued on behalf of the Board according to Board policy.

The Director is authorized to:

Authorize the acceptance of methods of payment of licenses and permit fees (§29.1-112).

Enter into an agreement with the State Forester (Department of Forestry) so the Department can sell permits for hunting and trapping in state forests (§10.1-1152).

Permit special fishing permits for certain veterans (§29.1-312).

Issue at a regular fee up to 25 state resident fishing licenses in the name of any state institution operated by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services for use by patients of the institution (§29.1-313).

Issue special fishing permits for certain handicapped persons (§29.1-314), school classes (§29.1-315), youth camps (§29.1-316), and juveniles (§29.1-317).

Issue complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to certain representatives from federal, state, and nongovernmental organizations (§29.1-339).

Determine an electronic or computerized means for the submission of applications for waterfowl blind licenses (§29.1-348).

Require fur permit holders to submit detailed activity reports (§29.1-405).

Issue permits for the killing of deer or bear when damaging crops, livestock, etc. This authority includes the killing of deer over bait within the political boundaries of any city or town, or any county with a special late antlerless season; this authority also includes the option of using non-lethal control measures for bear and elk (§29.1-529).

Permit the importation, possession, purchase, receipt, or transportation of a nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species and to obtain warrants if necessary to enter and inspect property for the presence, seizure, or eradication of such species (§29.1-574 through 29.1-577).

Issue and revoke licenses for shooting preserves under certain conditions (§§29.1-600 and 29.1-609).

Obtain licenses, permits, stamps, or records from license agents as necessary to administer the Department's licensing program (4VAC15-20-110).

~~Appoint new consignment agents based on provisions of 4VAC15-20-120. [Repealed 9/1/2025]~~

~~Administer the Department's license agent program via 4VAC15-20-120. [Repealed 9/1/2025]~~

Set permit schedules, permit conditions, delegate signature authority, establish protocols for handling appeals to permit decisions, and for establishing policy for re-issuance of permits to individuals whose previous permits have been revoked or denied (4VAC15-30-5).

Issue special permits to reduce or control animal populations by licensed hunters or licensed trappers on areas designated by department wildlife biologists (4VAC15-40-240).

~~Issue permits and establish special rules according to procedures in 4VAC15-320-140. [Repealed 1/1/2019]~~

Authorize or renew permits to allow existing boat docks and piers on the Department's public fishing lakes (via Board policy).

5. Boating

The Director shall:

Furnish annual lists of boat registrations to commissioners of revenue (§29.1-707).

Insure that the Department has an enhanced enforcement effort from Memorial Day through Labor Day at Smith Mountain Lake that is commensurate with the level of boating activity (§29.1-739.2).

The Director is authorized to:

Designate agents for temporary boat registration agents (§29.1-703.2).

Award certificate of boat registration numbers directly or to authorize others to act as agents and award certificates of numbers (§29.1-706).

Approve or disapprove requests for placement of “no wake” buoys or other markers for private individuals upon application from a local governing body (§29.1-744.E).

Require and approve materials provided to individuals renting a personal watercraft (§29.1-749.3).

Conduct hearings, inspect records of a licensed watercraft dealer, and to take action in the name of the Commonwealth regarding complaints and violations of

the Virginia Watercraft Dealer Licensing Act (§§29.1-803, 29.1-804, and 29.1-806).

Administer the watercraft dealer licensing system pursuant to provisions of Article 2, Chapter 8, in Title 29.1 of the Code of Virginia.

To allow exemptions to the requirement that decals signifying the last month and year during which the certificate of number is valid must be displayed on each side of a motorboat as per §29.1-703. (Board Resolution, November 29, 2005).

The Director may delegate other responsibilities, duties and authority, not specified above, to members of the administrative staff of the Department to improve or advance the efficiency of the Department's operations.

VII. COMMITTEES

A. STANDING COMMITTEES

The Board may establish standing committees that it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities and fulfilling its mission. The purpose of a standing committee must be clearly stated to avoid overlap in responsibilities with other Board committees, the Board's officers, and the Director.

After it is instituted, a standing committee shall remain in existence until dissolved by appropriate action of the Board.

Additionally upon establishment, a standing committee shall develop a committee charter that will include a purpose statement, an overview of the committee's responsibilities and duties, its operating procedures, and its composition. The committee charter will be presented to the Board for review and approval. Committee Charters shall be reviewed as a part of the Board's three-year review of the Governance Manual or at any other time the Board or the committees determine necessary and will be attached to the Board's Governance Manual.

All standing committees of the Board are subject to the following principles and guidelines, unless specifically given other guidance by vote of the Board:

1. Standing committees are to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities, and in doing so, will frequently interact with the Department's staff. In those interactions, the committees may offer advice or suggestions to staff, but will not provide specific instructions or directions to staff.
2. A standing committee may not act or speak for the Board, unless the Board specifically authorizes such representation for specific purposes.
3. Standing committees will normally focus on the development of policy within specific topical areas and will provide policy alternatives and associated implications to the Board for deliberation and action. These committees will not intrude into operational issues

or decision-making that are in the Director's realm of responsibilities.

4. All standing committees shall notify all members of the Board regarding the time and place of all committee meetings. Any Board member may attend the meeting of any standing committee and participate in its discussions; however, only members of the committee may vote on items under consideration by that body.

The Board has established standing committees as follows:

1. **FINANCE, AUDIT, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee is to conduct initial and continuing reviews of issues regarding internal and external audits, and the financial conditions, both short- and long-term, of the Department. While financial expertise is not a requirement for appointment to the Board, the Board Chair shall consider the financial background of members in making appointments to the Committee. Audit reviews will include compliance with Board policies, accounting practices and auditing procedures, adequacy of financial reports and disclosures, the Director's expenses, and violations of law. Financial evaluations will focus on implementation of the Department's annual budgets as approved by the Board as well as the Department's long-term funding needs. The Committee will develop and submit reports, draft policies, and/or

recommendations regarding audits and the finances of the Department to the full Board for its consideration.

2. EDUCATION, PLANNING, AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee is to evaluate its educational, planning, and outreach needs relative to the statutory mandates, mission, and strategic plans of the Board, and to develop and submit reports, draft policies, and recommendations regarding those needs, as necessary, to the full Board for its consideration. The Committee will regularly evaluate the Department's mission, the Board's policies, its long-term planning requirements, and Governance Manual and develop recommendations regarding mission and vision statements, policy and governance changes, and strategic planning for the Board. The Committee will also investigate reported breaches of The Board's Code of Ethics and Conduct and report its findings to the Board.

3. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The Nominations Committee will interact with the membership of the Board to develop candidates for the officers of the Board for consideration by the full Board. The Committee will report its slate of candidates at a Board meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

4. WILDLIFE AND BOAT COMMITTEE

The purpose for the Wildlife and Boat Committee is to evaluate the long-term needs of the Commonwealth's wildlife and boating resources, and to draft recommendations and/or policies addressing those needs for consideration by the entire Board and to serve as the Motorboat Committee in accordance with §29.1-701 of the Code of Virginia. This Committee will also assess the needs, desires, and impacts of the users of these resources and provide guidance to the full Board as described above.

5. LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

The purpose for the Law Enforcement Committee is to evaluate the long-term needs of the Commonwealth's and the Department's Law Enforcement resources, and to draft recommendations and/or policies addressing those needs for consideration by the entire Board. This Committee will also assess the needs, desires, and impacts of the users of the law enforcement resources and provide guidance to the full Board as described above.

B. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Board may appoint advisory committees as it deems necessary to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities on behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth for the proper

stewardship of the state's wildlife and boating resources and the operation of the Department. The Board will establish the purpose, composition, and qualifications for membership of each advisory committee prior to its creation. The recommendations of an advisory committee are not binding upon the Board. The Board may instruct the Director to provide staff support to an advisory committee, but the committee will provide its reports and/or recommendations directly to the Board for its consideration.

C. SPECIAL (AD HOC) COMMITTEES

The Board may establish special (ad hoc) committees, as needed to carry out specified tasks. A special committee shall cease to exist upon completion of its assignment and presentation of its final report and/or recommendations to the Board. A special committee may not be established to carry out an assignment that overlaps existing functions of any standing or advisory committee.

VIII. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC

The General Assembly established the Board of Wildlife Resources to represent the public's interest in the wildlife and boating resources of the Commonwealth and to oversee the operations of the Department of Wildlife Resources. The Governor appoints the members of the Board to serve as stewards of those resources and the Department. As the public's trustee in these matters, the Board will conduct its business in an environment that not only allows, but also invites, public scrutiny. The Board of Wildlife Resources shall operate in full

compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) and the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act.

A. PRINCIPLES

1. The Board and the Department shall maintain open communications with the public, its constituent groups and partners in wildlife conservation, and the news media.
2. The Board and the Department will disseminate information, as appropriate, to the public through appropriate channels in an expeditious manner and will, when justified, protect the confidentiality of its transactions on the public's behalf.
3. All meetings and records of such meetings of the Board shall be open to the public except for such meetings that are closed pursuant to, and in accordance with, the provisions of Title 2.2, Chapter 37 of the Code of Virginia.
4. Board members will not engage in discussions with the public or the press about investigations or litigation. All attempts to pursue such contacts, oral or written, shall be strongly discouraged. Each member shall keep a record of any such occurrences and shall forward notice of them to the Director, who will seek guidance from the Office of the Attorney General when appropriate.

5. Because its regulatory actions are subject to review, Board members receiving ex parte contacts during official, public comment periods for pending regulatory actions will encourage the contacting party to place his or her comments into the public record and shall refer all such contacts, in writing, to the Director for inclusion in the public record.

B. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MEDIA

1. The Board speaks through its resolutions, and Board members are free to communicate with the media regarding those decisions.
2. The Board may designate the Chair or other member to be the spokesperson for specific issues or resolutions and will refer the media to the designated spokesperson in those cases. The Board herewith authorizes the following delegation:
 - i. The Director is authorized to act as spokesperson regarding administrative and operational matters.
3. The Board Chair shall review all official press releases regarding Board policy, activities, or other Board-related matters prior to release.

IX. OPINIONS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

According to §2.2-505.A of the Code of Virginia, The Board Chair or the Director shall make written requests for official advisory opinions from the Attorney General. The Director shall notify the Board Chair upon requesting an official opinion from the Office of the Attorney General and shall notify the full Board at its next meeting.

X. AMENDMENT OF GOVERNANCE MANUAL

The Governance Manual of the Board of Wildlife Resources may be amended by a majority vote of the Board as long as the proposed amendment is provided to the Board at its preceding, regular meeting.

If urgent and/or extraordinary circumstances warrant immediate action by the Board, the Board may amend an element or provision at the meeting when the proposed amendment is introduced, provided that the Board approves such action prior to consideration of the proposed amendment.

In addition to the foregoing provisions, the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee shall evaluate the Governance Manual every three years to ascertain whether refinements or changes are needed. The Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board, which will take action on the recommendations at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

XI. VALIDITY OF GOVERNANCE MANUAL

If any of the policies or provisions of the Governance Manual are found to be in conflict with any provisions of the Code of Virginia, the

statutory provisions of the Code shall apply instead of the policy or provision in the Governance Manual. In the event that any element or provision of the Governance Manual is invalid due to a conflict with the Code of Virginia, the remaining provisions of the Governance Manual shall continue in full force and effect. The Board will initiate its process to amend its Governance Manual to conform to the provisions of the Code at its next regularly scheduled meeting according to the provisions in article IX above.

Reviewed for posting to the ~~VDGIF Web Site~~ DWR website - ~~July 31, 2008~~ February 1, 2026 [pending final Board approval at January 2026 meetings]

Reviewed for presentation to the Education, Planning and Outreach Committee per the required 3-year review and evaluation – ~~September 4, 2008~~ January 21, 2026.

DOCUMENT HISTORY:

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on September 16, 2008 and the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries on October 23, 2008 (first action) and February 27, 2009 (final action). These amendments were the result of the required 3 – year review and evaluation

Reviewed for presentation to the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee per the required 3-year review and evaluation—April 2, 2012

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on May 16, 2012 and the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries on June 12, 2012. These amendments were the result of the required 3 – year review and evaluation

Reviewed for presentation to the Education, Planning and Outreach Committee per the required 3-year review and evaluation—February 10, 2015

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on March 3, 2015 and the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries on March 17, 2015. These amendments were the result of the required 3 – year review and evaluation

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on October 18, 2017 and the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries on October 19, 2017. These amendments were the result of some administrative wording changes and a change to ensure that board meetings were held once per quarter as required. These amendments were the result of the required 3-year review and evaluation.

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on October 23, 2019 and the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries on October 24, 2019. These amendments were the result of administrative wording changes regarding the Chair and Vice Chair and create two committees from the Wildlife, Boat, and Law Enforcement Committees consisting of the Wildlife and Boat Committee and the Law Enforcement Committee. These amendments were the result of the required 3-year review and evaluation.

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on January 20, 2021 and by the Board of Wildlife Resources on January 21, 2021 with final approval of the Board on March 18, 2021. These amendments were the result of the agency 51

name change from Game and Inland Fisheries to Wildlife Resources.

Amendments approved by the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee on January 21, 2026 and by the Board of Wildlife Resources on January 22, 2026 with final approval of the Board on January 22, 2026. These amendments were clerical and technical in nature and did not alter any authorities or responsibilities of the Board, Director, or Department.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

I. PURPOSE

The Board of Wildlife Resources, a supervisory board of gubernatorial appointees to represent the public's trust for wildlife and boating resources, must be self-governing, self-policing, and have consistent guidelines for its operations. The Board of Directors hereby establishes its Code of Ethics and Conduct to provide guidance to its members regarding ethical and behavioral considerations and/or actions as they address their duties and obligations during their appointment.

Compliance with the provisions of this Code will allow the Board to fully implement its Governance Manual; to enhance relationships and foster teamwork among Board members and also with staff; and to build respect, confidence, and credibility with the citizens of the Commonwealth.

II. CODE OF ETHICS

Each Board member shall adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

- A. Board members shall act with integrity and in an ethical and professional manner in their interactions with each other, the Director, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Administration, members of the General Assembly, Department employees, consultants, advisors, and the public.
- B. Board members shall maintain high ethical and moral character, both professionally and personally, so that their behavior will reflect positively upon the Board of Wildlife Resources and the Department.
- C. Board members shall act with competence and shall strive to maintain and enhance their competence and that of their fellow Board members.
- D. Board members shall use proper care and exercise independent professional judgment in the performance of their duties.
- E. Board members shall maintain confidentiality about all matters that are considered in closed meetings.
- F. Board members shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act in regards to public records, owned, prepared, or in possession of the Department.

G. Board members are required to be familiar and comply with the provisions of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, §§ 2.2-3100 et.seq. of the Code (the Conflict Act). In addition to such compliance, and beyond the definition of “conflict of interest” contained in the Conflict Act, Board members will meet the following criteria in order to avoid even the appearance of impropriety:

1. Board members will have no private contracts or business dealings with the Department.

2. Board members will recuse themselves and will not participate in the consideration of any matter or attempt to affect the outcome of any issue before the Board when to do so might result in even the appearance of a conflict of interest as defined by the Conflict Act.

3. Board members will not abuse their authority by using their offices to obtain favorable treatment by the Department for any person.

4. Board members shall receive no payments from the Department or from any funds or transactions of the Department except for appropriate compensation for their services and reimbursement for expenses as provided by law under §2.2-2813 of the Code.

H. Board members shall exercise due diligence to avoid breaches of duty via negligence, intentional action or omission, and unauthorized communications with individuals trying to influence by improper means or seeking to receive personal gains through Board decisions.

I. Board members recognize that all Board decisions and actions are to be based on integrity, competence, and independent judgment on the merits and benefits to the wildlife and boating resources and the citizens of the Commonwealth.

III. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Board members shall comply with the following standards of conduct:

- A. Board members shall not engage in conduct that would compromise, discredit, or diminish the integrity of the Board and/or the Department.

- B. The Board will respect the authority of the Director and will provide instruction and direction only to the Director. The Board will not instruct the Director in regards to specific operational decisions.

1. Board members will be sensitive to the considerable workload of the staff when making requests for assistance, and all requests for assistance will be made through the Director.
 2. The Board will respect the Director's authority in all personnel matters.
 3. Board members will reorient staff that attempt to use Board members as their representatives or use Board members as an avenue for input to the Department or the Director.
- C.** No individual member shall give orders or instructions to any employee of the Department. This does not preclude an individual member from offering his or her opinion, based upon his or her expertise and/or experience, when an employee of the Department requests such an opinion.
1. Board members must recognize that, as individuals or as subgroups, they lack the authority to give orders or direction to the Director except when such instruction is given according to the Board's Governance Manual or specific delegation.
 2. Individual Board members are not to become involved in operational management of the Department.
- D.** Board members will operate with the understanding that they represent both the citizenry of the Commonwealth as well as constituents from a particular Congressional District.
- E.** Board members will give due consideration in receiving professional and scientific input from staff, realizing that staff proposals represent the current biological thinking (§29.1-109) usually over large geographical areas.
- F.** Board members will strive to establish sound working relationships with each other by taking time to know and appreciate each other as individuals.
1. Board members will be respectful of each other and will not utilize Board meetings to upstage or embarrass colleagues.
 2. Board members will respectfully consider the opinions of others during deliberations, strive for integration of viewpoints or consensus building in decision-making, and will respect the corporate judgment of the Board in regards to its decisions.
- G.** Board members will refrain from using Board meetings or regulation approval processes to advance their personal agenda.

- H.** Board members will strive to cultivate and maintain good relations with the public, press, and constituent groups; however, they will recognize their limitations to speak for the Board as set forth in the Board's Governance Manual.
- I.** Individual Board members shall refer all proposals or other communications regarding potential or existing programs, contracts, or services to the Director.
- J.** Board members shall not communicate with persons under consideration for selection by the Board and/or the Director for contracts, acquisitions, etc. while the procurement process is in progress.
- K.** A Board member shall not participate in a breach of this Code of Ethics and Conduct by another member, contribute to the concealment of such breach, or knowingly or negligently allow such breach to occur.

IV. GIFTS

- A.** A Board member shall not solicit or receive a gift or favor from any person, company, or organization, or from any intermediary interest, that may compromise or appear to compromise the independent judgment of the member regarding his or her obligations to the Board. All gifts will be reported in accordance with the State and Local Government Conflicts Act (§§2.2-3100 et seq.).
- B.** Any gift received by a Board member that is prohibited by this policy shall immediately be returned to its source. If a gift is immediately returned to the sender or donated to a suitable charitable organization, it will not be necessary to report the gift.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A.** The provisions of this policy do not excuse any Board member from other restrictions of state or federal law regarding conflicts of interest.
- B.** Any breach of this Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be reported to the Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee. The Committee will investigate, as appropriate, and report its findings and recommendations to the Board.
- C.** All Board members will sign an affirmation pledging to honor and follow, according to both the letter and the spirit, this Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Charter of the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

The Board of Wildlife Resources hereby constitutes and establishes an Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) with responsibility and specific duties as described below.

Purpose:

As presented in the Board's Governance Manual, the Education, Planning, and Outreach Committee is to evaluate its educational, planning, and outreach needs relative to the statutory mandates, mission, and strategic plans of the Board, and to develop and submit reports, draft policies, and recommendations regarding those needs, as necessary, to the full Board for its consideration. The Committee will regularly evaluate the Department's mission, the Board's policies, its long-term planning requirements, and Governance Manual and develop recommendations regarding mission and vision statements, policy and governance changes, and strategic planning for the Board. The Committee will also investigate reported breaches of The Board's Code of Ethics and Conduct and report its findings to the Board.

Composition:

The Committee shall be comprised of no less than three (3) members of the Board of Wildlife Resources. Chair of the Board shall appoint the Committee Chair and the remaining members to each serve a term as determined by the Board Chair at the time of Committee appointment. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of a majority of the members.

Responsibility:

The Committee is to serve as the Board's primary work group to address such issues as, but not necessarily limited to, Board member orientation and training programs, Executive Director's performance plan and evaluation, legislative and/or regulatory initiatives, strategic vision and planning, agency mission, agency education programs, and agency outreach programs.

Meetings:

The Committee generally meets at least two (2) times each fiscal year, with additional meetings as deemed necessary by the Committee. Fewer meetings may be approved by the Board under extenuating circumstances. The Chair may request the Executive Director to have Department staff members be present at meetings of the Committee to provide information and/or expertise regarding the business matters, issues, and discussion topics of the Committee.

Minutes:

The minutes of each Committee meeting are to be prepared and distributed for review to Committee members. Minutes will be approved at the next scheduled Committee meeting.

Specific Duties:

1. Provide guidance to the Director for the development of an orientation program for new members appointed to the Board of Wildlife Resources. Orientation for new members shall be conducted as soon as practicable following their appointment.
2. Coordinate with the agency Director, the Secretary of Natural Resources, and the Governor's Office (as necessary) to develop the job elements and performance expectations that will comprise the annual performance plan for the agency Director.
3. Develop the performance evaluation instrument to annually conduct the Director's performance evaluation. This evaluation shall be conducted in October of each year.
4. Solicit recommendations from the Board and the Director regarding specific legislative initiatives for the agency to submit for consideration by the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Governor.
5. Review and periodically assess the agency's mission statement and provide recommendations regarding needed changes, updates, or other modifications.
6. Coordinate the development and implementation of an operational strategic vision and planning document for the Department that will serve as the foundation to establish program priorities and resource allocations.
7. Review and periodically assess the Department's educational programs to determine that these programs continue to be aligned with the agency's mission and strategic vision/plan. Recommend changes if needed.
8. Review and periodically assess the Department's outreach programs (to constituents and other aspects of the general public) to determine that these programs continue to be aligned with the agency's mission and strategic vision/plan. Recommend changes if needed.
9. Recommend, as needed, additional training/continuing education for all members of the Board to ensure that the Board is well-positioned to meet its obligations (fiduciary responsibility) and its expectations (loyalty to mission).
10. Review all Board policies and recommend changes to the full Board.

Charter of the Nominations Committee

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

As presented in the Board's Governance Manual, the Nominations Committee is to interact with the membership of the Board to develop candidates for the officers of the Board for consideration by the full Board. The Nominations Committee will report its slate of candidates at a Board meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

Purpose:

As presented in the Board's Governance Manual, the Nominations Committee is to interact with the membership of the Board to develop candidates for the officers of the Board for consideration by the full Board. The Nominations Committee will report its slate of candidates at a Board meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

Composition:

The Committee shall be comprised of not less than three (3) or more than four (4) members of the Board of Wildlife Resources. Committee members shall be appointed by the Board Chair and shall serve a term concurrent with that of the Chair. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of a majority of the members.

Responsibility:

The Committee is to serve as the Board's primary work group to develop a slate of candidates for the officer positions of the Board (Chair and Vice-Chair). In the development of a slate of candidates, the Committee will ensure that no person shall serve more than one year as Chair and one year as Vice-Chair during a four-year term pursuant to the Code of Virginia ~~§29.1-102.C.~~ §29.1-102.D.

Meetings:

The Committee shall meet as necessary to develop its slate of Board officer candidates in order to report such slate during a Board meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

Charter of the Law Enforcement Committee

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

The Board of Wildlife Resources hereby constitutes and establishes a Law Enforcement Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) with responsibility and specific duties as described below.

Purpose:

As presented in the Board's Governance Manual, the Law Enforcement Committee is to evaluate the long-term needs of the Commonwealth's and the Department's law enforcement resources, and to draft recommendations and/or policies addressing those needs for consideration by the entire Board. This Committee will also assess the needs, desires, and impacts of the users of these resources and provide guidance to the full Board as described above.

Composition:

The Committee shall be comprised of not fewer than three (3) members of the Board of Wildlife Resources consisting of the Board Chair, Vice Chair and one other member. Committee members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board with each member to serve a term as determined by the Board Chair at the time of Committee appointment. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of two members entitled to vote at a meeting.

Responsibility:

The Committee is to serve as the Board's primary workgroup to address such issues as, but not necessarily limited to law enforcement and its function within the Department and the Commonwealth as it relates to the agency's overall missions.

Meetings:

The Committee generally meets at least four (4) times each fiscal year, with additional meetings as deemed necessary by the Committee. Fewer meetings may be approved by the Board under extenuating circumstances. The Chair may request the Director to have Department staff members be present at meetings of the Committee to provide information and/or expertise regarding the business matters, issues, and discussion topics of the Committee.

Minutes:

The minutes of each Committee meeting are to be prepared and distributed for review to Committee members. Minutes will be approved at the next scheduled Committee meeting.

Specific Duties:

1. Serve as a forum for discussion of specific legislative initiatives for the Law Enforcement Program areas and make recommendations to the full Board for consideration and/or action.
2. Review and periodically assess the Department's Law Enforcement Programs to determine that these programs continue to be aligned with the agency's mission and strategic vision/plan. Recommend changes if needed.
3. Consider and make recommendations on the Capital Program needs of the Department as it relates to the potential for law enforcement services and function.
4. Conduct assessments of the needs, desires and impacts of various resource users and Department constituents and provide guidance to the full Board.

Charter of the Wildlife and Boat Committee

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

The Board of Wildlife Resources hereby constitutes and establishes a Wildlife and Boat Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) with responsibility and specific duties as described below.

Purpose:

As presented in the Board's Governance Manual, the Wildlife and Boat Committee is to evaluate the long-term needs of the Commonwealth's wildlife and boating resources and to draft recommendations and/or policies addressing those needs for consideration by the entire Board and to serve as the Motorboat Committee in accordance with § 29.1-701 of the Code of Virginia. This Committee will also assess the needs, desires, and impacts of the users of these resources and provide guidance to the full Board as described above.

Composition:

The Committee shall be comprised of three (3) members of the Board of Wildlife Resources. Two alternate members may additionally be appointed; however, the alternate members shall be counted for quorum purposes and vote only in the absence of regular members. Committee members shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board with each member to serve a term as determined by the Board Chair at the time of Committee appointment. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of two members entitled to vote at a meeting.

Responsibility:

The Committee is to serve as the Board's primary workgroup to address such issues as, but not necessarily limited to, Boating Safety and Boating Safety Education Programs, The Wildlife Action Plan, the Department's Wildlife Diversity, Fisheries and Wildlife Management Programs, Land Acquisition and Facilities Development needs, Wildlife and Boating Regulatory and legislative initiatives, and Wildlife and Fisheries health issues.

Meetings:

The Committee generally meets at least four (4) times each fiscal year, with additional meetings as deemed necessary by the Committee. Fewer meetings may be approved by the Board under extenuating circumstances. The Chair may request the Director to have Department staff members be present at meetings of the Committee to provide information and/or expertise regarding the business matters, issues, and discussion topics of the Committee.

Minutes:

The minutes of each Committee meeting are to be prepared and distributed for review to Committee members. Minutes will be approved at the next scheduled Committee meeting.

Specific Duties:

1. Serve as a forum for discussion of specific legislative initiatives for the Wildlife and Boat Program areas and make recommendations to the full Board for consideration and/or action.
2. Review and periodically assess the Department's Wildlife and Boating Programs to determine that these programs continue to be aligned with the agency's mission and strategic vision/plan. Recommend changes if needed.
3. Consider and make recommendations on the Capital Program needs of the Department as it relates to the potential for enhanced conservation and recreational opportunities.
4. Conduct assessments of the needs, desires and impacts of various resource users and Department constituents and provide guidance to the full Board.

Charter of the Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee

~~Revised March 18, 2021~~ January 22, 2026

The Board of Wildlife Resources hereby constitutes and establishes a Finance Audit and Compliance Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) with authority, responsibility, and specific duties as described below.

Purpose:

The Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee is to conduct initial and continuing reviews of issues regarding internal and external audits, and the financial conditions, both short- and long-term, of the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Audit reviews will include compliance with Board policies, accounting practices and auditing procedures, adequacy of financial reports and disclosures, the Director's expenses, and violations of law. Financial evaluations will focus on implementation of the Department's annual budgets as approved by the Board as well as the Department's long-term funding needs. The Committee will develop and submit reports, draft policies, and/or recommendations regarding audits and the finances of the Department to the full Board for its consideration.

Composition:

The Committee shall be comprised of not less than three or more than five members appointed by the Chair of the Board. The Chair may also appoint alternate members, who shall be counted for quorum purposes and vote only in the absence of regular members. These members are to be independent of management and operating executives. The majority of the members must be financially literate. One of the members shall be appointed by the Board Chairman to Chair the Committee. A quorum of the committee shall consist of a majority of the members.

Authority:

The Committee is granted the authority to investigate any activity of DWR, and all employees are directed to cooperate as requested by members of the Committee. The Committee with the approval of the Board is empowered to seek assistance from persons having special competence in these areas, as necessary, to assist the Committee in fulfilling its responsibility.

Responsibility:

The Committee is to serve as a focal point for the communication between the Board of Directors, the Chief Compliance Review Officer, the external auditors, and DWR management as their duties relate to financial accounting, reporting, risk management, and controls. The Committee is to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities as to accounting policies and reporting practices of DWR and all subsidiaries and the sufficiency of auditing relative thereto. It is to be the Board's principal agent in assuring the quality of Compliance Review, the integrity of management, and the adequacy and transparency of

financial and operating disclosures. The opportunity for the Chief Compliance Review Officer, any external auditors or people with expertise in these areas to meet with the entire Board of Directors, as needed, however, is not to be restricted.

Meetings:

The Committee generally meets at least four times each fiscal year, and as many times as the Committee deems necessary. Fewer meetings may be approved by the Board under extenuating circumstances. As necessary or desirable, the chair may request that members of management, the Chief Compliance Review Officer, and the representatives of external auditors be present at meetings of the Committee. The Chief Compliance Review Officer shall be requested to attend any meeting of the committee related to its oversight responsibilities for auditing, financial reporting, risk management or internal control structure issues.

Minutes:

The minutes of each meeting are to be prepared and sent to Committee members and approved at subsequent meetings.

Specific Duties:

The Committee is to be informed and vigilant in fulfilling the following duties:

1. Review the budgetary and financial implications of management's tactical and strategic plans submitted to the full board.
2. Review any report by DWR's Finance, Audit and Compliance ~~Review~~ Committee. Review any recommendations, implementations, and follow-up with the Chief Compliance Review Officer
3. The Committee chair or designee will serve as the Board's point of contact with the external auditors and will meet with the external auditors during the entrance and exit conferences and at other times as needed or upon request of the external auditors.
4. The Committee chair or designee will review with management and the external auditors if necessary or desirable, upon completion of their audit, financial results for the year or for the period under audit.
5. Review any deficiencies noted by the external auditors in the agency's electronic data processing procedures and controls, any serious difficulties the external auditors encountered with management in performing the audit, and any deficiencies noted by the external auditors in the internal control structure.
6. Review any activity reports from the Chief Compliance Review Officer.
7. Review with the agency's management, the Chief Compliance Review Officer and any other entity or person, it deems necessary, the agency's general policies and procedures

to reasonably assure the adequacy of internal accounting and financial reporting controls, including such controls related to the Executive Director's expenses and any use of agency assets.

8. Review with Chief Compliance Review Officer, the significant findings, current status, and management's corrective action as a result of any compliance reviews.
9. Manage the Department's internal audit function including review and approval of the internal audit's charter, annual audit work plan, reports and recommendations. The internal auditor shall report functionally to the Chair of the committee and administratively to the Department's Director or designee. The Committee shall create performance and evaluation criteria for the internal auditor, and shall conduct annual evaluations of the auditor's performance with the Director. The Committee Chairman shall participate with the Director in decisions regarding the appointment of the internal auditor, and the Committee's approval shall be obtained by the Director prior to the appointment or removal of the internal auditor.
10. Initiate any special investigations of breach of the Board's Code of Ethics and Conduct; conflict of interest; and non-compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
11. Evaluate audits and reviews conducted by any other governmental entities that involve financial or compliance matters.
12. Review with the Attorney General's Office at least on an annual basis, the status of legal matters that may have a significant impact on the agency's financial status.
13. Meet privately with the Chief Compliance Review Officer and the Department's Internal Auditor annually as deemed appropriate.
14. Submit to the Board of Directors the results of performing the foregoing duties, and submit to the Board of Directors any findings or recommendations that the Committee may have.