

## **AGENDA**

Board of Wildlife Resources  
Law Enforcement Committee  
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room  
Henrico, Virginia 23228

October 27, 2021  
9:00 am

Committee Members: Mr. Rovellet Brown, Chair, Mr. Brian Vincent, and Mr. G. K. Washington

DWR Staff Liaison: Colonel John Cobb

1. Call to Order and Welcome  
Mr. Rovellet Brown
2. Approval of August 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes **Final Action**  
Mr. Rovellet Brown
3. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Item  
Mr. Rovellet Brown
4. Welcome New Administrative Investigations Manager  
Colonel John Cobb
5. TOP FIVE Law Enforcement Division Accomplishments in the last year  
Colonel John Cobb
  - I. Awarded VLEPSC Accreditation  
Lt. Rob Ham
  - II. CPO Recruitment, Selection, and Basic and Modified Academies  
Major Milt Robinson
  - III. Implementation of the leadership Development Continuum (LDC)  
Colonel John Cobb

IV. Progress toward VCP Career Progression Program (CPP)  
Colonel Cobb

V. Potential change to the LE Supervisory Structure  
Major Ryan Shuler

6. Introduction of our 22 New Recruits  
Lt. Travis Murray

7. Annual VCP Awards Ceremony  
Colonel John Cobb

8. Director's Report  
Mr. Ryan Brown

9. Chair's Report  
Mr. Rovellet Brown

10. Additional Business/Comments  
Mr. Rovellet Brown

11. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 19, 2022  
Mr. Rovellet Brown

12. Adjournment  
Mr. Rovellet Brown

DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
Law Enforcement Committee  
Board of Wildlife Resources  
7870 Villa Park Drive, Board Room  
Richmond, Virginia 23228

August 18, 2021  
9:00 am

**Present:** Mr. Rovellev Brown, **Chair;** Mr. G.K. Washington; **Absent:** Mr. Brian Vincent; **Board Members in attendance:** Mr. Leon Boyd; Mr. John Daniel, Ms. Karen Terwilliger, Mr. Tom Sadler/Virtual; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan J. Brown; **Director's Working Group:** Ms. Becky Gwynn, Mr. Darin Moore, Mr. Tom Guess, Ms. Paige Pearson, Dr. Gray Anderson, Dr. Mike Bednarski.

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

The Chair called on the Board Secretary for a Roll Call Vote of members present: Ayes: Rovellev Brown, G. K. Washington, Leon Boyd, John Daniel, Karen Terwilliger, Tom Sadler (Virtual)

**Meeting Minutes:** The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2021, 2021. Mr. Washington made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2021 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Mr. Brown. Ayes: Washington and Brown

**Public Comment – Non Agenda Item:** The Chair called for Public Comment – Non Agenda Item.

- Mr. Abram Charlton of Charlotte, VA spoke concerning hunting dogs.

**Division Report:** The Chair called on Major Ryan Shuler for a Law Enforcement Division Report.

Major Shuler gave a report on Law Enforcement.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Major Shuler for his report.

**New Staff Introduction:** The Chair called on Major Ryan Shuler for a Staff Introduction.

Major Shuler introduced the new Major, Major Milt Robinson.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Major Shuler for his introduction and congratulated Major Robinson.

**Office of Professional Standards Update:** The Chair called on Major Milt Robinson for an update.

Major Robinson gave an update on the Office of Professional Standards.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Major Robinson for his update.

**NASBLA Accreditation:** The Chair called on Lt. Travis Murray for an update on the NASBLA Accreditation.

Lt. Murray gave an update and announced that Law Enforcement had received the NASBLA Accreditation.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Lt. Murray for his update.

**Operational Program Overview:** The Chair called on Captain Tony Fisher for an overview.

Captain Fisher gave an overview of Drones used in Law Enforcement activities.

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

Director Brown reported on:

- Proud of Law Enforcement for receiving the NASBLA Accreditation
- Busy Boating Season that's coming to an end
- Hunting Season getting ready to gear up

**Chair's Report:** The Chair thanked and appreciated everyone's efforts and work on the Agenda and on the presentations for today's meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any additional comments and announced the next meeting date will be announced later and adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Boswell

/s/



**Commonwealth of Virginia**  
**Department of Wildlife Resources**  
**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**  
7870 Villa Park Drive, P.O. Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228-0778



---

## **Law Enforcement Division Accomplishments (October 2020 to September 2021)**

The Law Enforcement Division is in a transformational period with all new senior command staff (Colonel / Majors) focused on making proactive improvements. We believe these initiatives are the strong foundation to build upon as we move forward.

### **The Top Five Law Initiatives for this year were:**

#### **1) Implementation of the VCP Career Progression Program (CPP)**

The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is committed to providing officers with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and rewarding officers in good standing with equitable pay incentives as their career progresses. We know that Conservation Police Officers are our best resource and represent the agency as the protectors of wildlife and natural resources and those who enjoy the outdoors.

With the assistance of a consultant, extensive research of other Wildlife Agencies led to the development of a VCP Career Progression Program (CPP) to meet our specific needs centered on a three-prong approach to address recruitment, retention and alignment concerns at the officer level. CPP is designed to identify those nonsupervisory sworn Conservation Police Officers (CPOs), including K9 CPOs and Special Agents, to be considered for movement to higher levels, based primarily on satisfactory years of service as a CPO with DWR. In addition, this program uses titles of Officer First Class, Senior Officer, and Master Officer to designate officers who are subject matter experts and have increased duties and responsibilities that significantly benefit the law enforcement division and agency.

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

*See VCP Career Progression Program (CPP) General Order 03-07 for further information on this critically important program.*

1

**2) Awarded VLEPSC Accreditation**

The objective of the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) Accreditation process is to provide for a consistent application of established best management standards to further increase participating agency accountability, reduce liability, and promote a continued commitment to building public trust. The Virginia Accreditation Program, operated through the Department of Criminal Justice Services, was designed and developed by professional law enforcement executives to provide a reasonable and cost-effective plan for the professionalization of law-enforcement agencies that serve the Commonwealth.

With the assistance of a consultant (Master VLEPSC assessor), Accreditation Manager led a team effort to overhaul the division's written directives and publish over 100 General Orders and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). These written directives cover, at a minimum, the 190 standards required by the commission to be awarded accreditation as well as provide clear, concise, and consistent direction to our employees. The framework of accreditation positions officers and staff to be successful in their delivery of quality public service.

In mid-August, Assessors from other agencies in the Commonwealth were welcomed to DWR for an on-site assessment. During the 3-day assessment, the assessors reviewed proofs of compliance for the 190 standards, as well as performed ride-alongs with officers on patrol and audited the division's property and evidence function. The

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

external oversight ensures that we are implementing best management practices set forth by the commission.

The division is committed to a continued pursuit of excellence, collaborating with our partner law enforcement agencies and delivering quality public service to the citizens and visitors of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**3) Implementation of the Leadership Development Continuum (LDC)**

The Leadership Development Continuum (LDC) is designed to give our officers and staff the necessary training and experiences required to manage the responsibilities of being a leader thereby earning the trust and respect of others in the organization. This continuum is vital to the Law Enforcement Division in creating succession planning with the development of future leaders who will guide and move the division forward after the inevitable changes happen within our chain of command. We need a steady stream of new leaders to fulfill our succession planning initiatives.

With the assistance of a consultant who assumed the role of the LDC Steering Committee Chair, a yearlong effort started by the O.P.S. Advisory Council resulted in the launch of various programs and initiatives to develop leaders within the agency. Primary critical in-house components of this continuum included the research, development, and implementation of the following:

- DWR Leadership Fundamentals (Required Training) VCP
- Leadership Development Program (LDP)
- Leadership Group/Team Mentoring Program

In addition, we retained the services of multiple leadership development and mentoring subject matter experts as part of this comprehensive continuum. We intend

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

to begin accepting applications soon for the second LDP Cohort while the first group moves into year two (the mentoring phase) of this multiple year program.

*See VCP Leadership Development Continuum (LDC) Program Manual (21 pages) for further information on this newly established program.*

**4) Major Change to the LE Supervisory Structure**

As an Agency that incorporates a law enforcement component we realize the importance of our field supervisors (sergeants) and the impact they have on accomplishing our mission. These are our most critical positions and they are charged with devoting the majority of their time and effort to leading our officers and serving as a coach and mentor focused on professional development. As an Agency, one of our greatest challenges in the past, and today, is geography and how it impacts the ability of our supervisors to work with their staff. Our current structure breaks the Commonwealth into four regions and then as a law enforcement division we have created 23 districts. Each of these districts is supervised by a sergeant that reports directly to a lieutenant that works in a regional office. In an effort to increase accountability, oversight, and reduce the administrative load on sergeants so they can spend more time working alongside their officers, we have begun the process of implementing the First Sergeant position.

This position will play a pivotal role in increasing uniformity across the division by bridging the gap between the first line supervisors in the field and the lieutenant (manager) that works in the regional office. We envision a structure where the first sergeant will also breakdown these district lines and utilize personnel from multiple districts to focus on chronic enforcement issues, outreach events and the investigation of major incidents. They will also better distribute equipment, which should have a cost

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

savings impact. In addition, these first sergeants will serve as the face of the division at joint incident command centers, as well represent the division as they collaborate with our partner agencies, and localities, as we work towards accomplishing common goals.

As we start a new chapter as an accredited law enforcement division, we are excited to see the impact of this position on our operations and succession planning initiatives. We recognize the need for first class leaders in a profession that has come under significant scrutiny and we see this position as a bridge to offering superior law enforcement service in the Commonwealth!

**5) CPO Recruitment, Selection, and Basic and Modified Academies (23 positions)**

In preparation for launching the 2021 CPO hiring process, an intentional effort was made to review our hiring practices, and applicable general orders to remove potential barriers. Additionally, the Training and Recruiting Section identified best practices in recruiting and engaging potential law enforcement candidates. An advertising campaign was developed that targeted females and underrepresented populations. A CPO Spotlight segment was created that showed officers with various backgrounds, rank, and duty stations. Through this social media campaign we were able to show prospective applicants that our officers come to the department with different demographic, educational and employment backgrounds. The recruiting effort also included a successful billboard campaign that targeted the areas of the state we anticipated filling the most vacancies. This was especially effective in Hampton Roads.

The Training and Recruiting Section encouraged candidates to keep engaged during the screening process through frequent phone calls, emails, and text messaging. To reduce travel and scheduling barriers, multiple testing opportunities were provided at each step in the process. This multi-option approach showed the candidates that the

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

division values them and was highly successful in reducing the candidate selfwithdrawal rate.

As a result of all of these recruitment and selection efforts, the 11<sup>th</sup> Law Enforcement Training Basic and Modified Academies began on September 27 with 23 new hires, seven of whom are women.

**Other important law enforcement accomplishments included:**

**Enhanced internal and external communication and transparency efforts**

To most effectively address this communication need, we now publish the VCP Rollcall Monthly Newsletter and provide extremely detailed Command Staff Meeting Minutes.

**Expanded the VCP Recognition and Engagement Program**

The Virginia Conservation Police (VCP) Recognition and Engagement Program recognizes officers and law enforcement staff for their state public service and strives to acknowledge their outstanding contributions to the mission and goals of the Department of Wildlife Resources and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It is our belief we must utilize employee engagement to enhance our public service delivery system and overall professionalism.

Recently added five commendation bars for dress uniform display to show honors and awards obtained by officers (i.e., Military Service, Boating Officer of the Year, National Recognition, Colonel's Leadership, and O.P.S. Professional Decree).

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

See *VCP Recognition and Engagement Handbook* (65 pages) for further information on this enhanced recognition program.

**Awarded NASBLA Re-Accreditation**

The Law Division has completed the NASBLA BOAT Program re-accreditation process. The NASBLA Accreditation requirements were developed using the US Coast Guard training and performance standards and have become the national standard of training. By using this standard, our officers are trained to a United States Coast Guard and FEMA recognized standard as true force multipliers and capable of seamless inter-agency operation.

When the Law Division first pursued NASBLA Accreditation in 2016, we already had a training program in place that was developed in-house. In order to meet these new standards of training and operation, the division had to develop and implement several general orders, standard operating procedures, training programs, and credentialing guidelines. An example of these efforts is the BOAT Task Accomplishment Record. This record documents our field force's completion of 11 areas that are relevant to marine law enforcement.

The cost for accreditation through the NASBLA BOAT Program is \$2,500 per year. This fee is offset by the reduced tuition rates that we are entitled to as an accredited agency. For example, the Tactical Operators Course can now be delivered using our own instructors for free. This is a cost savings of \$32,000 per class.

**Hired our first ever Legal Compliance Officer**

This year, DWR created the position titled Legal Compliance Officer, and filled it in late April. The person filling this position brings 24 years of legal experience, 18 of which were with the Virginia Attorney General's Office, including having previously represented this

## Department of Wildlife Resources

---

### VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE

agency and served as chief of the environmental section. This position supports the entire agency, but primarily supports the Virginia Conservation Police (VCP). The services that this position provides include reviewing statutes and cases that affect the VCP's enforcement of game and boating laws and providing guidance as appropriate, tracking and reviewing legislation that may affect the DWR and reviewing DWR's legislative packages, providing guidance on agreements, policies and procedures, as well as COIA and FOIA compliance.

Significant accomplishments include (i) completing a review and survey of the Open Fields Doctrine, which explains the limits of Fourth Amendment searches in open fields, and what has occurred in other states that have limited the use of this doctrine. This will provide the foundation for a policy on the use of field cameras to surveil potential game law violations; (ii) completing a review of enforcing Virginia's waterfowl blind laws, which served as a basis for a revised SOP on waterfowl blind enforcement; (iii) guidance on complying with the revised Community Policing Act; and (iv) reviewing the 2021 laws that affect how the VCP enforces law.

#### **Graduate of the Virginia Forensic Science Academy**

We now have a sworn officer that has successfully completed the Virginia Forensic Science Academy. This training is designed to give law enforcement officers the necessary training to enable them to fully utilize the expertise of the Department of Forensic Science (DFS). The nine-week school provides classroom instruction by qualified forensic experts and numerous practical exercises and evidence collection demonstrations. Areas of study include the following: photography, crime scene investigation, arson evidence, toxicology, forensic biology, latent print evidence, trace evidence, tool marks, firearms evidence and bullet trajectory, crime scene sketching, evidence law, drug recognition, impression evidence and criminal investigative analysis.

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

In the realm of forensics, the Virginia Forensic Science Academy is the state's premier forensic training. Upon successfully completing this training, officers will be able to properly locate, recognize, document and collect items of physical evidence utilizing a systematic approach to crime scene investigation, preserve items of physical evidence, recognize the laboratory potential of examining physical evidence, and properly package and submit physical evidence.

**Highly Successful Employee Suggestion Program (E.S.P.)**

Employee suggestion programs are an integral part of building an inclusive and collaborative workplace that seeks a proactive pathway for enhancing the quality of service delivery. The Employee Suggestion Program is a medium for employees to bring their ideas, needs and solutions to address concerns and deficiencies they see in their day to day experiences as members of the division.

All employees of the DWR Law Enforcement Division are given the opportunity to submit constructive suggestions to the O.P.S. Advisory Council for consideration, if approved by O.P.S.A.C. with consultation of senior leadership a workgroup is formed. Notable completed projects include: VCP Recognition and Engagement Handbook, Virginia Conservation Police Officer Honor Guard, Professionalism Decree (Formal Recognition Award), and Leadership Development Program.

**Examples of Current E.S.P Projects New**

**UAS (Drone) Program Overview:**

Our goal is to create a deployable UAS capability to meet the agency's mission requirements. The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Law Enforcement Division selected Division personnel to be assigned the responsibilities associated with the deployment and use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), with instructions on when and how this technology and the information it provides may be used for law enforcement,

## Department of Wildlife Resources

---

### VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE

public safety, and other purposes in accordance with law. A few examples of this could be:

Situational Awareness: To assist decision makers (e.g., incident command staff; first responders; city, county, state and federal officials) in understanding the nature, scale and scope of an incident, and for planning and coordinating an effective response, at any time before, during or after an incident.

Search and Rescue: To assist missing person investigations, AMBER Alerts, Silver Alerts, and other search and rescue missions, including missing boaters and lost hunters.

Visual Perspective: To provide an aerial visual perspective to assist officers in providing direction for wildlife law enforcement, disaster response, special field operations, assist K9s during manhunts, or other circumstances.

Scene Documentation: To document a crime scene, accident scene, or other scene (e.g., disaster management, incident response, scene investigation, evidence collection, etc.).

Natural Resource Management: To provide an aerial and visual perspective to assist DWR officers in fulfilling the DWR's natural resource control, management, restoration, conservation, and regulation mandate pursuant to Title 29.1 Game and Inland Fisheries and Boating of the Code of Virginia and Article XI, Section 4, of the Virginia Constitution.

Training: To provide training to DWR staff so that they can become proficient with safe UAS operation prior to deployments for the above listed operational objectives.

We currently have a 5-member team, which consists of a Program Manager and four Conservation Police Officers, one assigned to each patrol Region, to serve as Drone operators (Pilots), with all four pilots being FAA certified. We developed goals, conducted research, attended professional meetings and learned and gathered as much information and literature as possible. We reached out to other agencies, and other states, for assistance as we developed our program. We researched Virginia law and developed our plan accordingly as we developed our General Orders, Standard Operating

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

Procedures and Reporting documents. Finally, we researched the many different Drone manufacturers to find the best fit for our agency and then completed a purchase order requisition to purchase these units. Currently we are in the process of reviewing bids from prospective vendors.

Our primary expectation for the program is that it will be a force multiplier and a “tool” in the Law Enforcement officer’s toolbox and that it will provide a resource that can be used to help officers perform their duties in a more professional manner and that, we can potentially better protect life, limb and property. While developing such a program has inherent costs and challenges, we believe our future looks very bright.

**Body Worn Camera Feasibility Study**

As we have seen in the national and local media, there is an increase in the number of citizens and government officials that have called for more transparency within the law enforcement ranks. One method to increase transparency is to implement body worn cameras (BWC's) for uniformed officers. In the summer of 2020, the Virginia Conservation Police began a feasibility study of whether or not body worn cameras (BWC) would be an achievable and cost-effective goal for our law enforcement officers. The initiative began as a submission from the field to the Office of Professional Standards Advisory Council (O.P.S.A.C.) through the Employee Suggestion Program (E.S.P.). O.P.S.A.C. authorized a BWC Feasibility Study Group and directed 10 officers to begin work on determining how and if we could implement a BWC program.

The work group has conducted numerous discussions on the positive impacts, as well as the obstacles the division will face if the decision is made to implement. They feel that the cameras will increase officer accountability, assist officers in courtroom testimony, and aid any necessary defense of liability or misconduct claims against division officers. In terms of the hurdles, the most significant one involves the cost of the equipment and the immense amount of data storage that is required.

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

The BWC work group expects to provide the Office of Professional Standards a completed report on their findings once their study has been completed. This report will include alternative sources of funding (if available), the selection of a viable camera system and a projected cost of the program. Lastly, the group will provide a draft general order and a detailed implementation plan if the program is ultimately recommended based on available funding.

**Special Operations Division**

The Law Enforcement Division's Special Operations Unit has put a focus on the illegal reptile trade, which is a nation and international concern. Based on the seriousness and scope of this illegal trade, the division has assigned two additional officers to this group for a period of two years to focus on these efforts. These special agents have investigated complaints received from citizens using the DWR web link, as well as developing their own information from social media and personal inspections of pet stores and other businesses. Their efforts resulted in the seizure of numerous illegal turtles, frogs and crayfish. In one particular case, a business was in possession of 303 invasive red ear slider turtles that were offered for sale.

The Special Operations Unit's K9 Unit just completed their annual In-service Training and now have two K9 Handlers, and their canine partners, trained in the discipline of Human Remains Detection. They have already located three drowning victims and human remains of two deceased individuals on land.

The Special Operations Unit's Marine Fraud and Theft Unit recently selected a new full time Special Agent. This Special Agent had served in a temporary role for the unit and transitioned into the position with ease; even recovering a stolen vessel in the first week of his new assignment.

---

**VIRGINIA CONSERVATION POLICE**

\*\*\*\*\*

For future planning purposes, we retained a highly respected consulting firm and created a VCP Roadmap with actionable items as goals and objectives planned to be completed in the next three years. Currently, this detailed roadmap is being reviewed by field staff for their input, before being finalized and implemented in January of 2022.

***For enforcement statistics and other information (see Law Annual Report)***



# VCP Rollcall

September 2021 / Edition #7



## Colonel's Message:

Since last month's VCP Rollcall, there has been a whirlwind of activity with accreditation starting with the onsite static display at Osborne Landing. From the detailed VLEPSC Assessment Report where it mentions each one of the 22 officers by name who were involved in that display, the report states, *"all agency personnel that participated in the static display were knowledgeable and were able to provide thorough explanations"*. It was evident by all; our officers and staff were very well prepared and did an excellent job of describing the unique services they provide to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Next came the Ride along Component, File Review (Proofs for Standards of Compliance) and the Evidence Verification Component, all of which were received by the assessment team with outstanding remarks. Their final report was presented to the commission and last week, Director Brown, Lt. Ham and I went in front of the commission where we were unanimously granted VLEPSC Accreditation. This was a monumental accomplishment in less than two years, especially due to publishing a complete new set of general orders and addressing our unique evidence storage situations. Thanks to the entire team led by Lt. Rob Ham with the assistance of our consultant and Master Assessor Bobby Mawyer.

*Colonel John J. Cobb / Chief of Law Enforcement*



Special thanks to Sgt. Steve Garvis and Officer Mark Machen for the boat ride-alongs for two days, so I could experience some of the Eastern Shore from the bay and sea sides.

## **Proactive Initiatives:**

- At HQ and Region Meetings in a couple of weeks, we will be discussing many new initiatives in detail as we proceed forward with making improvements, to include:
  - VCP Career Progression Program (CPP)
  - General Orders and VLEPSC Accreditation
  - Leadership Development Continuum (LDC)
  - New First Sergeant Position
  - DRAFT VCP Roadmap

## **Office of Professional Standards:**

- ❖ UPDATE – Major Milt Robinson
  - The Office of Professional Standards staff have been working relentless hours this month to accomplish many objectives. As a result we have become VLEPSC Accredited and have 24 candidates (6 sworn/18 non-sworn) ready to start initial training on September 27, 2021.
  - Many thanks to Mr. Bobby Mawyer, Ms. Ashley Hart, CPO Justin Hall, Sgt. Mike Hill, Sgt. Ivan Kopelove, Lt. Rob Ham and Lt. Travis Murray and the many of you that have supported us during the past several months.
  - ***O.P.S. Advisory Council***  
Next meeting October 26, 2021/10:00am/DWR HQ
- ❖ Recruitment / Retention Initiatives
  - The 11th Academy screening process is wrapping up. The final candidates in the process are being notified.
  - As a reminder, all application status inquiries should be directed to the Human Resources Section at **804-367-0243**.
  - Even though we are not currently accepting applications, the Training and Recruiting Section is actively recruiting for future officers. Anyone who is interested in joining the DWR team can receive information about the career, the hiring process, and the training academy by emailing [recruiter@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:recruiter@dwr.virginia.gov). Prospective applicants can also visit the CPO Recruiting website, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/conservation-police/recruiting/>. There, they will find useful information and answers to many frequently asked questions.
  - Sgt. Mike Hill has been attending career fairs and other events at colleges and military installations throughout the Commonwealth recruiting for the next 2022 Basic Academy. If you need support with an event or career day, please do not hesitate to contact Mike or any of our training personnel.

- **Virginia State Fair Dates-** September 24-October 3, 2021 <https://www.statefairva.org/>
- **Green Top Outdoor Expo Dates-** October 2-3, 2021 <https://www.greentophuntfish.com/outdoor-expo/>

❖ Training (Basic and In-service) / Training Offered to Other Agencies

- The training plans for the 11<sup>th</sup> Academy have been approved. Sgt. Kopelove has been working with the instructors to finalize their course lesson plan updates. We will have a basic law enforcement training academy and a modified law enforcement training academy for those new hires who are currently sworn in Virginia.
- Both training plans will include general law enforcement and natural resource specific courses.
- The beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Academy is set for Monday September 27, 2021.
- We have several advanced training courses set for September:
  - **Firearms Training Make-up- September 14** – The make-up session for the annual firearms qualification is being held at the Virginia State Police facility in Blackstone, Virginia. This session provides training to improve firearm skills and competency. The qualification course uses targets that turn at timed intervals, and the officers will shoot from 5-50 yards away.
  - **OUI Refresher Make-up-** This 4-hour refresher training will provide our officers with refresher training of the NASBLA Seated Battery of Field Sobriety Tests (SFST's). These validated SFST's are used by DWR's officers to enforce Virginia's operating under the influence laws- keeping our waterways safe. The class will be held at HQ on September 20, and will begin at 8am.
  - **ASP/OC Recertification Make-up-** This course is designed to reinforce the operational use of the ASP expandable baton and OC spray. The training includes basic carrying and deployment techniques as well as defensive application procedures. Course participants will have met a competency-based standard of knowledge and performance. The class will be held at HQ on September 20<sup>th</sup>, and begin at 1pm
  - **Officer Water Survival- Sept. 21-22-** In recognition of the officer safety risks involved when performing law enforcement services on and near the water, the division has adopted the NASBLA Officer Water Survival Course (OWS) as its standard for water survival. We have been working toward implementing this course over the last three years. We have assembled an instructor cadre who are now nationally credentialed through NASBLA's BOAT Program. Through their efforts, we can offer this course free of charge- saving us the \$18,000 tuition per session. This

course prepares officers for sudden immersion situations and is designed to help participants build confidence in the water. Prince William Police Department is providing two rescue divers as well as sending two officers to participate in the course.

- DWR Law Division - [Training Calendar](#)
- ❖ Citizen Feedback / Employee Suggestion Program (E.S.P.)
  - [E.S.P. Project List and Completion Tracker](#)
  - Have a suggestion? Submit [VCP-180](#) to [LawESP@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:LawESP@dwr.virginia.gov).
- ❖ Accreditation



- The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Law Enforcement Division is a VLEPSC Accredited Agency.
- Accreditation takes the dedication of the entire division. I want to thank everyone for their efforts in achieving accreditation for the division.
- The real work begins as we maintain compliance with the accreditation best management standards.
- ❖ Peer Support
  - The Peer Support Team met on August 31 and received training on the Virginia EAP services. Please get with one of our Peer Support Team members if we can guide you through some of the many services EAP offers.
    - Virginia EAP is more than just Counseling, they provide numerous free services from free legal consultations, Will making software, Financial Planning resources, and a host of other resources for free or at a discounted cost.
    - [Virginia Anthem EAP](#) (Click Login → Company type in Virginia)
  - We are looking for more team members especially in Region 2 and 3. If you are interested in joining the peer support team, please email [PeerTeam@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:PeerTeam@dwr.virginia.gov) with a one-page letter of interest in joining the team.
  - Want to talk to a Peer Team Member? [Contact Information](#)

## Support Services:

- ❖ UPDATE - Support Services Major
  - The Support Services shop has been very busy in August working on numerous projects and tasks specific to records management, increasing access to Zuercher and GoOutdoors on your issued cell phones, communications, and fleet management. One of the highlights for the month was our first ever attendance of the National Police Fleet Expo, which happened to be in Richmond this year. A small group of division staff members attended this weeklong expo and had the opportunity to inspect and drive the newest fleet options being offered by Ford, Chevy and Dodge. In addition, they were able to attend seminars, meet with vendors and consult with engineers. This was a very beneficial experience and one we hope to continue moving forward.
  
- ❖ Tires
  - One of the hottest topics during the expo and during our debrief as a group was the tires that we have been putting on our patrol vehicles. In the near future you will see an appendix that outlines the specific tire(s) that are allowable for each make, model and year of vehicle we have in-service.
  
- ❖ Cell Phones
  - We are currently working on a large cell phone refresh, as most of you are overdue for an upgrade. All CPO's and district SGT's will be receiving the newest Samsung Galaxy on state contract at no additional cost as long as you are eligible for an upgrade.
  - During the region meetings, Robert Schmidt will be installing the new Law Enforcement GoOutdoors application on your cell phone. In addition, Lenee and Jay will be installing the new Agency LECA app, which is very similar to onXmaps.
  
- ❖ Communications Center
  - Dispatcher Jennifer Garnett has an anticipated return date of Oct 1 to full time duty. We are looking forward to her being back in the seat.
  - Everyone's radio alias was changed to reflect your Unit #. Now, upon key up, your Unit # is immediately seen vs. having to crosscheck the old Radio ID#. Thanks to Gary Sargent for setting this up.
  - Sgt. Bell is requesting that **CPOs requesting 10-27 or 10-28 information slow the articulation of the numbers or letters.** With other talkgroups and phone traffic in the background, it is often difficult to hear each digit when spoken quickly. It will help prevent Dispatchers from having to ask to repeat or replay audio traffic to get numbers. Thanks!

#### ❖ Legal Articles of Interest

- Paul Kugelman has several things to share...
- First, I am close to wrapping up two projects - guidance on waterfowl blinds and an overview of the open fields doctrine, including the use of technology and an overview of other states taking steps to limit its use.
- Second, I wanted to summarize what I have shared with officers in a recent class and with Command Staff about when an officer gets sued, and what qualified immunity really is - and why it is important to understand that, even if it is repealed in Virginia, you will still be afforded the same protections in so far as legal defense and covering any judgment goes.
  - In short, the Commonwealth, through the Attorney General's Office or outside counsel, will provide representation for civil matters, and will cover any judgment entered. (There is an exception for punitive damages - paying those requires the approval of the Attorney General and the Governor.)
  - If qualified immunity is repealed, the Commonwealth still provides the same coverage - counsel and payment of judgment. As Col. Cobb has mentioned, both candidates for governor said that they would not sign into law any legislation that repeals this immunity.
  - As for criminal charges, whether the Commonwealth will provide representation is determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### ❖ Fleet Management

- Four Ram Pickups have been issued (will need Core system updated with Version 5)
- Remaining five Rams have completed radio installations. Grille guards and tonneau covers being installed 9/8 - 9/9. Emergency light installation will commence the week of 9/13.
- F250s being delivered to VSP for radio installation.
- KO2 tires being installed on F250s
- Grille guards for F250s due near middle of the September
- Emergency lighting installation will commence pending grille guard installation and completion of Ram Pickups.
- Still waiting delivery of the 9th F250 from factory

#### ❖ IT Systems

- Need Help - Call a member of the [IT Cadre](#) to set-up either individual assistance or a small group training session
- If you have IT questions, sent them to [LawITCadre@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:LawITCadre@dwr.virginia.gov) mailbox

- Two main projects are moving ahead for the IT section, ID Cards and Field Ops.
  - We are designing a new ID Card, not a building access card, which is specific to the Law Division that will meet a higher standard for security purposes.
  - The second project is the Field Ops software for Mobile phones. We have received an updated quote for the number of licenses needed and this has been sent to Finance for approval. Once the purchase has been made we will work with VITA to update the security rules and then we can begin testing and training.

## **Law Enforcement Operations:**

### ❖ UPDATE - Major Ryan Shuler

- It was not an easy decision to request a transfer to the Operations Major position as I am, and always have been, very passionate about our support services sections. These folks are the behind the scenes staff that really keep the division running. I am not sure where we would be without SGT Bell and his communications officers, Paul Kugelman, Robert Schmidt, Gary Sargent, and Karen Winn. With that being said, I have always considered myself a GW/CPO, regardless of what rank was on my sleeve or collar, and could not think of a better way to contribute to the continued success of the Agency and division than taking on this role. As we get into the fall months, I will be spending time in the field in each region and I look forward to working with as many of you as possible. As you go about your daily duties, please consider these primary objectives as you plan your day and make enforcement decisions: **Public Safety, Resource Protection, Protecting our Agency properties, and License and Permit compliance.** These four primary objectives should assist you in developing your goals and seeking to meet the mission of the Agency.

### ❖ Recent Enforcement Efforts

- Activity Reports:
  - [Weekly Report Aug. 4-10 \(External Link\)](#)
  - [Weekly Report Aug. 11-17 \(External Link\)](#)
  - [Weekly Report Aug. 18-24 \(External Link\)](#)
  - [Weekly Report Aug. 15-31 \(External Link\)](#)
  - [Weekly Report Sep. 1-7 \(External Link\)](#)
- [CPO Notebook](#)

### ❖ General Information

- The dates listed for the crow season in the 2021-2022 Hunting and Trapping in Virginia digest are incorrect. Should you receive any questions, the proper

dates for the 2021-2022 crow season are:

- Season Dates: August 21, 2021 – March 18, 2022 (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays)
- On National Forest and Department lands: September 1, 2021 – March 9, 2022 (Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only)
- The website will be updated with the proper dates.

## **Personnel:**

### ❖ Officer Commendation of the Month

- Goes to Officer Michael Morris

This Citizen Feedback Submission read in part, *“Help put away \_\_\_\_\_ (see further info below) and some of his crew. And helped clean up Bedford co that the police department and justice system has failed to do. We thank goodness for the hard work Mike Morris put in. All my text and calls to him about what was going on wasn't never over looked. He took my concerns and what I was seeing to heart and followed up and made the arrest and stopped it. Thank God for him. Can't remember the exact date and time cause it went on for while but he never gave up.”*

This suspect has not only been a well-known game law violator, but also has been a suspect in many other cases, including this case. On this particular case, CPO Michael Morris recovered 2 boats and trailers in Pittsylvania County that lead to the suspects conviction and sentence of 10 years in prison with 6 suspended. Altogether, approximately \$200,000 dollars in recovered items has been identified, including:

- Two stolen side-by side UTVs, one of which had been missing for about 3 years in Bedford County,
- A stolen water truck from the pipeline
- An F750 boom truck

Officer Morris is working with three separate jurisdictions in this case, Bedford County SO, Franklin County SO and Pittsylvania County SO.

### ❖ Promotions

- Lt. Randy Hickman is now the Region 1 Lieutenant - effective 8/10/2021
- Officer Paul Inge assigned to Special Operations as a Special Agent (Boat Theft and Fraud) - effective 9/10/2021

### ❖ Transfers

- Major Shuler is now the Operations Major - effective 8/25/2021
- Officer Medina is assigned to Loudoun County - effective 9/1/2021

## Upcoming Important Dates:

- The new [Virginia Conservation Police Calendar \(Link must be accessed through your DWR google account\)](#) a division wide calendar with important dates for the division staff is under construction. Please add this to your google calendar to stay informed with important dates and reminders.
- Region Meeting - October 4, 5, 6 and 7 and HQ Meeting - September 30
- 2021 Annual VCP Award Ceremony - October 27





# VCP Rollecall

October 2021 / Edition #8



## Colonel's Message:

As I said to you all at the HQ and Region Meetings this week, it is truly my honor to lead this Law Enforcement Division, which is made up of passionate and dedicated officers and staff who have been and will continue to make outstanding contributions for this agency. My role is to be the visionary and to be focused on making proactive improvements that will allow you to be even more successful in fulfilling our mission. For each of us to reach our maximum potential, I will need your input along the way, as well as your support. I know we can have both a great profession and organization with collaborative teamwork.

I want to thank those who accompanied me this week out to each region and for bringing their expertise and knowledge to these meetings, including Majors Ryan Shuler and Milt Robinson, Lt. Rob Ham, Attorney Paul Kugelman, Robert Schmidt, Lenee Pennington and Jay Kapalczynski. It sure was a road trip like no other across the Commonwealth. On the next page is a list of some of the proactive initiatives that we talked about coming soon.

*Colonel John J. Cobb / Chief of Law Enforcement*



## **Proactive Initiatives:**

- The following “Suggestions for Improvement” that were provided by officers and staff in the process of being implemented within the Law Enforcement Division:
  - To greatly aid our recruitment, retention and alignment at the LEOII level, the VCP Career Progression Program (CPP) as well as the HR CPO Compensation Plan were formally presented with their upcoming implementation plans.
  - An update was provided on our VCP Leadership Development Continuum (LDC) and the importance of succession planning and the development of employees.
  - The introduction of “Game Warden Experiences” to provide hands-on training in smaller groups over a multiple day retreat on the more challenging aspects of being a CPO, including the enforcement of waterfowl, turkey, bear bait, etc.
  - After much research and development, we are excited for the implementation of the First Sergeant position and the positive effect it will have on field operations.
  - Go Outdoors Law Enforcement Mobile App was installed in officer’s phones.
  - LECA was rolled out to the field by the GIS section, which is a mobile collection app that they had specifically designed for DWR’s Law Enforcement Officers.
  - Mobile “Field Ops”, an RMS phone app, should be a very useful piece of technology that CPO’s will have as a tool when away from their vehicles.
  - The Glock Model 45 MOS (9mm) have been ordered and we anticipate taking delivery around mid-December.
  - The preferred option for our fleet moving forward is the Ford F-150 Responder, which is a pursuit rated pickup truck. We are waiting for the contract to drop.
  - We have also made some significant improvements to our emergency equipment and we encourage you to take a minute to talk to an officer that has been issued a new RAM or F150. The most apparent changes are the addition of red lighting and the Arges 360 degree remote spotlight.
  - Transitioning to a new uniform. As you saw during the region meetings, we will be implementing a mix of Blauer and First Tactical uniform items.
  - The Safariland outer carriers with laser cut molle have been ordered. The pouches for the outer carriers have also been ordered. Unfortunately, we are looking at a 120-day turnaround on this order.
  - The Uniform Committee is committed to providing you all the best equipment possible and will continue to field test other uniform items.
  - We will be participating in No Shave November this year as a way to promote cancer awareness and raise money for cancer research. <https://no-shave.org>
  - Finally, we discussed the VCP Roadmap that will outline our efforts over the next three years and the opportunity for all officers and staff to provide input on any of the proposed “proactive projects” (actionable items) and to add new projects.

**Note: With recent HQ/Region Meetings, this is an abbreviated newsletter.**

## **Miscellaneous:**

- ❖ Training (Basic and In-service) / Training Offered to Other Agencies
  - [Training Calendar](#)
  
- ❖ Peer Support
  - Want to talk to a Peer Team Member? [Contact Information](#)
  
- ❖ Recent Enforcement Efforts
  - Activity Reports:
    - [Weekly Report 9/8 - 9/14 \(External Link\)](#)
    - [Weekly Report 9/15 - 9/28 \(External Link\)](#)
    - [Weekly Report 9/29 - 10/5 \(External Link\)](#)
  - [CPO Notebook](#)

## **Personnel:**

- ❖ Officer Commendation of the Month
  - Goes to Officer First Class Amanda Nevel

This Citizen Feedback Submission read in part, *“On opening day of Archery season, my dad and I were hunting public land. We both had bought our licenses the day before online and missed a step. CPO Amanda was there when my dad came out the woods and explained that we did not have the complete license and that we would have to buy it or stop hunting. She was extremely Professional and went over and beyond to show me on my phone what I was missing and educated me on the laws. I wanted to thank her and thank the Department for training such an exceptional officer who could have fined my dad and me but used her judgment and could see we made an honest mistake. Thanks for all that you do.”*
  
- ❖ Awards & Honors
  - As part of CPP, following officers received recognition as “Officer First Class”
    - ❖ Bonnie Braziel
    - ❖ Zachary Howlett
    - ❖ Kyle Jones
    - ❖ Joshua Joyce
    - ❖ Mark Machen
    - ❖ Amanda Nevel
    - ❖ Anthony Pennino
    - ❖ Daniel Rabago
    - ❖ Christopher Smith

- ❖ Nicholas Belotte
- ❖ Jacob Chaffin
- ❖ Brett Clawson
- ❖ James A Hale
- ❖ Cory Harbour
- ❖ Adam Roberts
- ❖ Tyler Routon
- ❖ Nicholas Sumner
- ❖ Kevin Webb
- ❖ Keith Wilson
- ❖ Shane Wilson
- ❖ Leslie Wright
- ❖ Bruce Young
- ❖ Matthew Arnold
- ❖ Corey Gardner
- ❖ Joshua Guizar
- ❖ Dylan Harding
- ❖ Matthew Meade
- ❖ Derrick Rickels
- ❖ William Bostic
- ❖ Brandon Chester
- ❖ Michael Chittum
- ❖ Gregory Goff
- ❖ Justin Hall
- ❖ Daniel Newton
- ❖ Roger Palmisano
- ❖ Philip Pritt
- ❖ Katiana Quarles
- ❖ Justin Sumpter
- ❖ John Daniel

- As part of CPP, following officers received recognition as “Senior Officer”
  - ❖ Joel Early
  - ❖ Alan Hatmaker
  - ❖ David Hennaman
  - ❖ James Patrillo
  - ❖ Joseph Rollings
  - ❖ Joshua Thomas
  - ❖ Tyler Blanks
  - ❖ Michael Owens
  - ❖ Stephen Ritchie
  - ❖ Benjamin Boyette
  - ❖ Eric Rorabaugh

- ❖ George Rutledge
- ❖ Mark Shaw
- ❖ Tyler Sheets
- ❖ Matthew Cavazos
- ❖ Justin Chambers
- ❖ Paul Inge
- ❖ Derrick Kekic
- ❖ Alberto Medina
- ❖ Ian Ostlund
- ❖ Christopher Gilmore
- ❖ Daniel Smith
- ❖ Daniel Hyman

- As part of CPP, following officers received recognition as “Master Officer”

- ❖ Krista Adams
- ❖ Steve Bratton
- ❖ Daniel Corley
- ❖ Cameron Dobyns
- ❖ Jon Hart
- ❖ Joseph Morris
- ❖ Isaac Boulanger
- ❖ Eric Dotterer
- ❖ Gavin Fariss
- ❖ Brandon Harris
- ❖ Christopher Heberling
- ❖ Richard Howald
- ❖ Michael Morris
- ❖ Dallas Neel
- ❖ Matthew Sandy
- ❖ Joseph Williams
- ❖ Wesley Billings
- ❖ William Harris
- ❖ David Peake
- ❖ Daniel Ross
- ❖ George Shupe
- ❖ Mark VanDyke
- ❖ Donald Wirt
- ❖ Christopher Day
- ❖ Mark Diluigi
- ❖ Sarah Druy
- ❖ Daniel Eller
- ❖ Michael Entsminger

- ❖ Owen Heine
- ❖ Sean Hicklin
- ❖ Steven Hicks
- ❖ Neil Kester
- ❖ Beth McGuire
- ❖ Eric Plaster
- ❖ Mark Sanitra
- ❖ Jonathan Simmons
- ❖ Frank Spuchesi
- ❖ James Croft
- ❖ Raymond Solomon
- ❖ Austin Wakefield

- The following officers and staff received recognition for military service:



- |                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| ❖ Daniel Corley    | ARMY |
| ❖ Joseph Morris    | ARMY |
| ❖ Austin Wakefield | ARMY |
| ❖ Joel Early       | ARMY |
| ❖ David Hennaman   | ARMY |
| ❖ Matthew Cavazos  | ARMY |
| ❖ Daniel Hyman     | ARMY |
| ❖ Kyle Jones       | ARMY |
| ❖ Nicholas Belotte | ARMY |
| ❖ Nicholas Sumner  | ARMY |
| ❖ Matthew Arnold   | ARMY |
| ❖ Philip Pritt     | ARMY |
| ❖ Anthony Fisher   | ARMY |
| ❖ Ronald Warren    | ARMY |
| ❖ George Shupe     | NAVY |
| ❖ Richard Landers  | NAVY |
| ❖ Paul Kugelman    | NAVY |
| ❖ John Daniel      | NAVY |
| ❖ Jon Hart         | USAF |
| ❖ Mark VanDyke     | USAF |
| ❖ James Patrillo   | USAF |
| ❖ Keith Wilson     | USAF |
| ❖ Roger Palmisano  | USAF |
| ❖ Mark Brewer      | USAF |

❖ Kevin Leonard	USAF
❖ Richard Howald	USMC
❖ Dallas Neel	USMC
❖ Amanda Nevel	USMC
❖ Adam Roberts	USMC
❖ Tyler Routon	USMC
❖ Matthew Meade	USMC
❖ Michael Chittum	USMC
❖ Gregory Goff	USMC
❖ Joel Wiedel	USMC
❖ Paul Drumheller	USMC

- The following officers received recognition for being a State Boating OTY:



❖ James Croft	2003
❖ Baxter Bell	2004
❖ James Hale	2007
❖ Wesley Billings	2009
❖ John Koloda	2010
❖ Dallas Neel	2013
❖ Cameron Dobyys	2014
❖ Brandon Harris	2014
❖ Mark Shaw	2015
❖ Kenneth Williams	2016
❖ Matthew Sandy	2017
❖ Joseph Rollings	2018
❖ Brett Clawson	2019

- The following officers received recognition for their national honor:



❖ James Croft	AFWA
❖ Joseph Williams	AFWA
❖ William Harris	AFWA
❖ Paul Inge	AFWA
❖ Richard Bumgarner	AFWA
❖ Timothy Dooley	AFWA

- ❖ Jessica Fariss           NAWEOA
- ❖ Daniel Hall             NFWF
- ❖ Cleggett Funkhouser   NWTF
- ❖ Christopher Thomas   NWTF
- ❖ Richard Howald        SEAFWA

- The following officer received recognition for Colonel’s Leadership Award:



- ❖ Davis Hennaman       2020

- The following officers and staff received recognition for O.P.S. Decree:



- ❖ Richard Goszka        2019
- ❖ Robert Schmidt       2019
- ❖ Denise Harrison       2019
- ❖ Amanda Nevel         2020
- ❖ Baxter Bell            2020
- ❖ Brandon Harris        2020
- ❖ Charles Ferguson      2020

**With these additional five, we now have nine commendation bars:**



❖ Recent Separations (from DWR Service)

- K-9 Officer David Hennaman                   10/9/2021   (8 years)
- Officer Matthew Dean                         10/3/2021   (5 years)

## Upcoming Important Dates:

- The new [Virginia Conservation Police Calendar \(Link must be accessed through your DWR google account\)](#) a division wide calendar with important dates for the division staff is under construction. Please add this to your google calendar to stay informed with important dates and reminders.

