



Board of Forestry Meeting

August 26, 2016
Roanoke, VA

Call to Order

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by Vice-Chairman Worrell at the Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center in Roanoke, VA. He thanked Ron Jenkins and the Virginia Loggers Association (VLA) for their hospitality. Vice-Chairman Worrell reminded the Board of the Anti-trust acknowledgement and policy. Vice-Chairman Worrell introduced Jobe Timm, the new Forest Supervisor for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. Mr. Timm introduced Troy Morris – his new integrated resources staff officer.

Board of Forestry Members Present (roll call by Mary Weaver):

Don Bright, Franklin Myers, Greg Scheerer, Keith Drohan, Joel Cathey, Beth Flippo Hutchins, Ken Morgan Jr., Glen Worrell, James Harder, John Burke III and William Snyder

Members Absent:

Anne Beals and Dr. David Smith

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Virginia Department of Forestry Present:

Bettina Ring, State Forester; Rob Farrell, Deputy State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Chief of Operations; Dean Cumbia, Director of Resource Management; Ed Stoots, Western Regional Forester; Lori Chamberlin, Forest Health Manager; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

Steve Frebren, citizen; Susan Seward, Virginia Forest Products Association; Shannon McCabe, Virginia Forestry Association; Andrew Smith, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation; Katie Frazier, VA Agribusiness Council; CK Green, Virginia Loggers Association; Ron Jenkins, Virginia Loggers Association

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

Hearing of Citizens

CK Greene thanked the Board members for all their hard work.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the May 13, 2016 meeting minutes as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

State Forester's Report

Ms. Bettina Ring welcomed everyone and thanked the VLA Board for hosting the Board of Forestry. No representative from the Secretary's office at this meeting. Thanked Mr. Timm and Mr. Morris for attending the meeting and look forward to deepening and strengthening the VDOF's working relationship with them and the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Todd Haymore has accepted the position of Secretary of Commerce and Trade beginning Sept. 6, 2016. Basil Gooden, Ph.D., will be the new Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry.

There will be a celebration Monday August 29, at the Augusta Forestry Center. Governor McAuliffe will be announcing the additional Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) funds and additional funding for Emergency Response Equipment. VDOF is moving forward with purchasing the new equipment. Southern Group of State Foresters will be holding another tour, and Virginia has been selected to host it. This will be an opportunity for VDOF to showcase all the good work that is being done. They are especially interested in the RT program.

Ms. Ring presented at the Congressional Forestry Caucus; about 50 congressional staff members attended the meeting that focused on private forestland management. Ms. Ring has been invited to give testimony to the House Ag Committee. This will be another good opportunity to keep Virginia front and center and highlight the VDOF Forest Health Program.

Mr. Ed Stoots dedicated an educational pavilion at Matthews State Forest. Dr. Smith presented at that event.

Ms. Ring updated the board on the Longleaf focus area:

- more prescribed fire; had First Lady out doing a prescribed burn;
- a new longleaf coordinator was hired;
- looking at how to secure money to grow longleaf pine in Virginia instead of growing in North Carolina, and
- Jerrie Creighton recently received an award and it will be presented to him at the Longleaf conference in Savannah, GA, for his research efforts.

We are working with the Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters on the "Keeping Forests as Forests" initiative in the South. Strategically planning on how to keep the private forestland coverage that we have or expanding it for the future.

VDOF is hoping to have the Century Forest inaugural class this fall.

Ms. Ring thanked Mr. John Burke for hosting a tour on his property for the Office of Management & Budget to remind them of why we need federal dollars to leverage state dollars.

Looking at timber theft and what we can do to address this issue. We want to ensure we are taking care of industry and landowners to have the resources they need to sell their timber. Mr. Rob Farrell spoke in regards to the meeting that was held to find solutions to reduce the problem. Working on a draft paper of the solutions and what the next steps will be for the 2018 legislation.

The latest Forest Inventory Analysis for 2014 is available. Ms. Ring will send that out to anyone who is interested.

Ms. Ring reminded everyone of the good work Charlie Becker is doing promoting forest products from Virginia. Charlie has recently visited Germany, Mexico and Vancouver.

New hires at the VDOF: Barbara White is now the Urban and Community Forestry Program Manager and Lara Johnson has become the Urban and Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator.

Fires out West continue to be a concern for us. Working with the US Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters to try and have a funding fix around the cost of those fires and how it affects our budgets.

Informational Items

Pine Sustainability Strategy/Decision-Making Tool:

Mr. Ed Zimmer updated the Board on the current pine sustainability strategy. VDOF has increased and redoubled longleaf efforts in southeast Virginia (its native range). We have developed some strong partnerships that will be very helpful in getting additional longleaf in the ground over the next few years.

Mr. Zimmer also updated the Board on the Loblolly strategy. VDOF received three additional positions and full funding of Reforestation of Timberland match out of the latest state budget. All three positions are being recruited – an area

forester for Brunswick County and two pine resource foresters. VDOF is doing everything it can to grow the most and best pine trees in our high sustainability area. Unexpected end-of-year Reforestation of Timberland funds was put into the pine sustainability area. Mr. Ken Morgan expressed the importance of outreach and education to the landowners. Ms. Ring informed the Board that VDOF is going to have a very strong focus on outreach. An Integrated Media Specialist has been hired and will focus on communication, digital and by newspaper, as well as updating the website. The Board inquired on the impediments of growing longleaf pine in Virginia. Mr. Dean Cumbia addressed some of the issues: seeders, containers, supply and demand, and seed production.

Mr. Morgan inquired about which county VDOF offices were open. The VDOF website has a listing of offices and cell numbers for field staff.

Deputy Forester Rob Farrell presented to the Board a Loblolly Pine Establishment Decision Tree that will give our foresters day-to-day guidance to help landowners determine if pine management is right for their property. Mr. Farrell discussed the following about the decision tree:

- ◆ Purpose
 - Support the Pine Resource Sustainability;
 - Increase level of pine management being recommended by our foresters;
 - Support consistency among agency foresters, and
 - Provide framework for training.
- ◆ Approach
 - Use when recommending loblolly pine establishment;
 - Classify each site based on landowner's objectives and site's potential, and
 - Intensity of management recommended varies depending on site class.
- ◆ Four Management Classes
- ◆ Landowner Management Objectives – Minimal, Low, Moderate and High
- ◆ Soil/Site Potential factors to consider
 - Loblolly pine site index;
 - Topography;
 - Soil Drainage;
 - Site accessibility and proximity to markets;
 - Tract size, and
 - Harvest impacts, such as debris loading or soil compaction.
- ◆ Planting Recommendations.

Mr. Farrell discussed question and answer guidance process for establishment of management classes. The next steps will be:

- ◆ Pilot this process with experienced and new foresters;
- ◆ Provide training and roll out;
- ◆ Establish expectations and track outcomes, and
- ◆ Develop Return on Invest (ROI) alternatives.

The Board discussed: are landowners growing for saw timber or pulp wood; the importance of the ROI information for landowners; thinning unlikely; generation rotations, and following up with landowners. Ms. Ring spoke about the importance of communicating with VDOF partners and reaching and following up with landowners. The Board expressed the decision-tool process is a good approach. An interactive, web-based tool could incorporate all kinds of information for the landowners. Mr. Farrell would like to get anyone who is interested together to discuss the numbers and recommendations. An electronic draft version will be sent to all Board members.

Reforestation of Timberlands Program:

Mr. Cumbia included in the packet the Virginia Administrative Code and the Code of Virginia Legislative Code for Reforestation of Timberlands along with the Code of Virginia Forest Products Tax Legislative Code for background information. Mr. Cumbia updated the Board in regards to the RT program history; FY 2016 final budget; FY2016 final project accomplishments; the FY 2017 interim budget; the FY 2017 interim project accomplishments, and the forest products tax revenue quarterly tracking. The leftover RT funds from 2016 were reallocated to the FY2017 budget. The Board inquired on what percentage of projected RT income comes from hardwood and what is the volume of pine saw logs and pulpwood crossing the state line and the correlation to tax being collected. At the next Board meeting, we will spend a greater amount of time on RT and the effects since the Forest Products Tax code change. Charlie Becker will attend to share information and answer any questions.

Forest Health Update:

Ms. Lori Chamberlin gave a presentation to the Board in regards to the Forest Health Program. Ms. Chamberlin began with discussing priorities of the program:

- ◆ Provide training and educational opportunities for VDOF field personnel;
- ◆ Emphasize prevention at workshops and presentations to a diverse audience;
 - Virginia Association of Forest Health meeting to be held January 30-31.
- ◆ Conduct ground and aerial surveys to detect recurring and unanticipated forest health conditions;
- ◆ Disseminate information concerning new and emerging forest health threats;
- ◆ Empower landowners to make smart management decisions based on current scientific data, and
- ◆ Collaborate with other forest health professionals and support research.

Ms. Chamberlin reviewed some Forest Health Programs and positive action:

- ◆ Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program
 - Pre-commercial thinning – Thin to 300-500 tpa, 60% cost-share;
 - Longleaf restoration – Site prep, planting, burning, 60% cost-share, and
 - Logger incentive program – First commercial thinning on 5-25 acres, 50% cost-share.
- ◆ Non-Native Invasive Weed Cost-Share Pilot Program
 - 50% cost-share
- ◆ Blue Ridge PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management)
 - First Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) in Virginia;
 - Collaborative partnership among landowners and private & public agencies, and
 - Work to combat non-native invasive plants.

The current challenges for Forest Health are:

- ◆ Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
 - Incredibly destructive and invasive;
 - Officially confirmed in 38 counties of Virginia;
 - Biological control agents are being researched and released to combat EAB;
 - Chemical treatment could be a good short-term treatment, and
 - EAB will feed on trees as small as one inch in diameter.
- ◆ Gypsy Moth
 - Gypsy Moth has decreased in general, and
 - Possibility Gypsy Moth is on the rise in Virginia, depends on what the weather is this spring.

The future goals are:

- ◆ Work Area Visits
 - Better communication and coverage throughout the state, and
 - Visit all VDOF work areas and discuss forest health issues.
- ◆ Forest Health Liaisons
 - Use handful of current VDOF foresters;
 - Supply them with some specialized forest health training, and
 - They would be Forest Health points of contact throughout the state.
- ◆ Continued improved outreach inside and outside of the agency.

Action Items

None

Committee/Liaison Report

Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Subcommittee:

Mr. Greg Scheerer discussed the meeting the RT subcommittee had with the VDOF staff and the committee's intent to meet frequently and provide on the ground knowledge. If the Board has any input they would like to share, let the committee know. Mr. Glen Worrell refreshed the Board that the subcommittee was created to focus a little more time on RT.

Ms. Bettina Ring discussed the continuous and challenging forest inventory. Currently, two plots a day are being done – approximately 20% a year. VDOF is working at a national level on continuing efforts to secure more funding.

Hardwood Management Subcommittee:

Mr. John Burke reviewed why the Hardwood Management subcommittee was created. Mr. Burke shared with the Board the hardwood management strategy that the committee created. There are three key points:

- ◆ Research and Training – Landowners, Foresters and Loggers;
- ◆ Incentives – money matters – Return on Investment, and
- ◆ Partnerships – Broad appeal in different organizations.

The goal is to start a Hardwood Strategy to leave our hardwood resource better than we found it.

Mr. Farrell discussed the three things that need to happen at the same time to get this strategy going:

- ◆ Recommend work - generate landowner interest;
- ◆ Build demand for the work - create the expertise to help generate landowner interest, and
- ◆ Get the work done - develop the contractor/logging crew to do the work that would generate the interest based on the expertise.

Incentives will be an important part; some examples:

- ◆ Paying for practices that a landowner wouldn't necessarily pay for;
- ◆ Marking trees;
- ◆ Doing crop-tree release practices;
- ◆ Thinning that doesn't justify itself on its own, and
- ◆ Logger incentives.

There are several ways to promote hardwood to landowners:

- ◆ Alternative income streams that can be done while waiting for trees;
- ◆ Incorporating hardwood into to everything we can – cost-share programs, invasive projects, and
- ◆ Improving hardwood management through the tax base.

The next phase will be the implementation phase.

The Board discussed the many benefits of growing hardwood; the goals and visions for hardwood strategy; thinking in advance what you're going to plant, and incentives to target proper location.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Next meeting:

Bettina inquired for suggestions on next meeting date. The next meeting will be held in Charlottesville, VA, February 2017. Mary will send out a Doodle poll to determine what would be the best date, looking at the week of February 20. Shannon invited the Board to meet in conjunction with the VFA Summit in May at Roanoke. Warrenton, VA, was suggested as another possible meeting area at the 4H center with field trips to urban forestry in the area. A Doodle poll will be sent out to determine date and location of the second board meeting.

Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Worrell called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made to adjourn the August, 2016 meeting at 12 p.m. and seconded. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant