



# Board of Forestry Meeting

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January 04, 2018  
Charlottesville, VA

## Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

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The Board of Forestry special meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Worrell at the headquarters board room in Charlottesville, VA. Chairman Worrell reminded the Board of the Anti-trust acknowledgement and policy.

## Roll Call:

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### *Board of Forestry Members Present*

Glen Worrell (at Charlottesville)

Joel Cathey, Franklin Myers, Dr. David Smith, Greg Scheerer, Ken Morgan Jr., James Harder, Anne Beals, William Snyder John Burke, III, Don Bright and Keith Drohan (attended by conference call)

### *Members Absent*

Beth Flippo Hutchins

## Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

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### *Virginia Department of Forestry Present*

Bettina Ring, State Forester; Rob Farrell, Deputy State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Chief of Operations; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant (at Charlottesville)

Andy Alvarez (attended by conference call)

### *Recognition of Guests and Visitors*

Jonathan Harding, Virginia Agricultural Business Council; Susan Seward, Forest Products Association; Ron Jenkins, Virginia Loggers Association; Paul Howe, Virginia Forestry Association; Sarah Kammer, Virginia Forestry Association; (attended by conference call)

## Adoption of Agenda:

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

## Hearing of Citizens:

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None

## Approval of Minutes:

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A motion was made to approve the August 18, 2017 minutes as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

## Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Update:

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None

## State Forester's Report:

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Ms. Bettina Ring welcomed everyone to the meeting and announce her appointment to Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry by Governor-elect Northam. She is excited for this opportunity to be able to promote agriculture and forestry and support the agency in this new capacity.

Ms. Ring is working closely with the transition team on next steps related to our Secretariat. The State Forester position may or may not be appointed by January 13. If not, an acting state forester will be appointed. Ms. Ring will work closely with the new state forester, once appointed, to help ensure a smooth transition.

Much has happened since the last board meeting in August of 2017:

- ◆ The new Chief of the Forest Service Tony Tooke was appointed. Tony previously served as the regional forester in the Atlanta Regional Office. He is a Tree Farmer and from the south – knows State and Private Forestry, NFS and Research. He believes in active forest management and will be a great advocate and partner moving forward.
- ◆ Secured \$330K from signing the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA). This funding will be used to support VICC and will be jointly planned for and spent by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The first GNA project will hopefully be in place this spring.
- ◆ VDOF has received funds from the USFS for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) project. A part-time position has been filled to manage and coordinate our prevention efforts for EAB.
- ◆ The Urban Wood project has been very successful and we hope to secure additional federal funding for this project.
- ◆ Charlie Becker (utilization and marketing program manager) has been working closely with VDOF partners to continue to expand and promote VA forest products. He recently participated in Governor McAuliffe's AFID announcement in Essex County for the expansion of a forest products company.
- ◆ It has been a relatively light fall fire season fortunately. Ed Zimmer is working closely with the Regional Foresters and the fire team to make improvements to the VDOF fire program – including increasing our prescribed fire accomplishments.
- ◆ BMP Water Quality program remains intact and very effective.
- ◆ VDOF received \$1.6 million in funding from the DuPont Settlement for the purchase of our 25<sup>th</sup> state forest, Boone's Run Farm, 583 acres in Rockingham County adjacent to the George Washington National Forest.
- ◆ VDOF presented the First Lady with the Longleaf Cooperators Award at the Virginia Forever reception.
- ◆ Ms. Ring will be working to ensure that the funding for growing containerized longleaf and loblolly seedlings at VDOF nurseries remains in the Governor's budget. Requests are already being received from VDOF industry partners to grow containerized loblolly for them.
- ◆ VDOF is now holding approximately 160 working forestry easements thanks to the hard work of the VDOF Land Conservation Team.
- ◆ The Forest Health Professionals meeting is coming up January 29-30 at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton, Virginia.
- ◆ VDOF is hosting the annual SGSF Conference at the Omni Hotel in Richmond, Virginia June 4-7 with an offsite reception and dinner at the WestRock building on June 6.

Thank you for all you've done in supporting me in my role as State Forester. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with you in a different role as the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

## Informational Items:

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### *Personnel Changes*

Mr. Ed Zimmer discussed several position changes that have taken place;

- ◆ Special Assignment Position – Mr. Stoots has been given a Special assignment for the next year working on the Good Neighbor Agreement with the forest service. He will also look at how VDOF can assist other State Agencies in managing their lands more effectively
- ◆ Regional Fire Program Specialists – Hired three Fire Program Specialist, one for each region. Used funding savings from when long tenure employees retired and were replaced with newer employees combined with some grant money. These positions were all hired internally helping create increased opportunities within the agency.
- ◆ Acting Regional Forester – Appointed Chris Thomsen as Acting Western Regional Forester while Mr. Stoots is on special assignment.
- ◆ Acting Deputy Regional Forester – Appointed Brad Carico as Acting Deputy Regional Forester while Mr. Thomsen is Action Regional Forester. Working on appointing an Acting Water Quality Specialist to replace Brad Carico while he is Acting Deputy Regional Forester.

### *Budget Update*

Mr. Andy Alvarez reviewed the proposed 2018-2019 budget with the Board. General Assembly will begin on January 10 and end on March 11. A few significant points of interest:

- ◆ A \$113,000 one-time funding was removed from the budget proposal. This was a reimbursement from our new fiscal system that would have been carried over.
- ◆ A reduction of \$500,000 in federal appropriation is a reflection of what we anticipated is going to happen to federal funding as we prepared the draft budget.
- ◆ An addition of \$236,000 in general funding for FY2019 to begin the production of containerized Longleaf and Loblolly seedlings.

We will provide you a better understanding and detailed analysis when the General Assembly is over.

### *Strategic Plan Update*

Mr. Rob Farrell reviewed with the board the process VDOF staff used in preparing the strategic plan.

- ◆ All the feedback received was taken and broken into five buckets; Human Resources, Operations, Admin, Outreach and Emerging Opportunities.
- ◆ Agency staff was brought in and developed strategies based on the five areas.
- ◆ Each of the areas came up with a plan.
- ◆ The Executive Team is meeting the consultant on Tuesday to merge those pieces together to become the agency's Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Plan to have completed the early part of the New Year.

## Action Items:

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None

## Committee/Liaison Reports:

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### *Hardwood Management Sub-Committee*

Mr. John Burke shared with the Board a quick update on the Hardwood Management Plan. The Board received a draft plan at the last meeting and had good discussion. We now have the Board's support, VDOF's support and activities planned to roll out. We are now ready to proceed with our action items. Mr. Farrell explained the next steps:

1. Meet with the sub-committee to identify and reach out to potential stakeholders that will hopefully lead the Hardwood initiative going forward. We don't foresee this being a Board or a VDOF singly lead initiative. The forestry community will have to take this on for it to be successful going forward over the long term. Improving Hardwood Resources will take a long time.
2. Looking at some sort of workshop to get the word out to landowners and stakeholders. Possibly a Landowners workshop, a practitioners' workshop or a larger stakeholder "get out the word meeting".

Implementing the Hardwood Strategies will be one of the elements of the new Strategic Plan. This will be an area of emphasis for the agency going forward.

Ms. Ring mentioned new opportunities moving forward with VA Tech, USFS and the GNA. USFS received additional funding for white oak and hopefully more funding will be coming.

### ***Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Sub-Committee***

The sub-committee will meet on January 10. No current updates.

## **Unfinished Business:**

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### ***Timber Theft Strategies***

Mr. Farrell discussed the status of the Timber Theft Strategies VDOF has continued to work with the stakeholders on the language for the legislation. An agreement of final language was reached in November. Everyone agreed that it was too close to the General Assembly to present this year. Will spend 2018 working with the new administration and present at the 2019 General Assembly. This will allow us more time to collect information and testimonials.

## **New Business:**

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Discussed possible meeting dates for the next Board meetings. Plan to meet in conjunction with the Virginia Loggers Association expo in August 23-25. Ms. Weaver will send out a doodle poll for meeting dates in March for either Richmond or Charlottesville. The rates for Reforestation Timber will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. John Burke express what a pleasure it has been to work with the Ms. Ring as State Forester and look forward to working with her as the Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry. Board members agreed.

Chairman Worrell expressed that it would be an interesting General Assembly coming up with great opportunity to educate the new administrative.

## **Adjournment:**

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Chairman Worrell called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made to adjourn the January 4, 2018 meeting at 12:00p.m. and seconded. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant