



Board of Forestry Meeting

August 24, 2018
Williamsburg, VA

Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Worrell at the Williamsburg Lodge in Williamsburg, VA. Chairman Worrell thanked the Virginia Loggers Association (VLA) for the great dinner last night and for inviting the Board to the VLA Loggers Annual Conference. Chairman Worrell reminded the Board of the Anti-trust acknowledgement and policy.

Roll Call:

Board of Forestry Members Present

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

Members Absent

Dr. David Smith and Anne Beals

Adoption of Agenda:

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

Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP) Present

Rob Farrell, State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Deputy State Forester; Andy Alvarez, Chief of Administration; Harvey Darden, Director of Agency Lands; Terry Lasher, Eastern Regional Forester; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Brad Copenhaver, Chief Deputy Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Heidi Hertz, Special Assistant Agricultural and Forestry; Kyle Shreve, Virginia Agricultural Business Council; Ron Jenkins, Virginia Loggers Association; Shannon McCabe, Association of Consulting Foresters; Elizabeth Buhl, Virginia Forestry Association; Matt Well, Westrock; David Buck; Glen Morris; CK Greene, Brunswick County

Hearing of Citizens:

None

Approval of Minutes:

Correction to the minutes: Mr. William Snyder was present for the March 15, 2018 meeting

A motion was made to approve the March 15, 2018 minutes as amended; seconded. All present were in favor.

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry (SAF) Update:

Secretary Ring thanked VLA for inviting the Board to join them at their annual Virginia Loggers Association Conference. The Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry team is now fully staffed and Secretary Ring introduced them with a brief summary of their experience and duties.

- ◆ Deputy Secretary Brad Copenhaver – staff lead for legislative and policy matters and Economic Development.
- ◆ Assistant Secretary Heidi Hertz – serves as point of contact for Food Security, helping lead Farm to School efforts and staffs the Children’s Cabinet.
- ◆ Greg Evans, borrowed from VDOF – serves as staff lead on Chesapeake Bay matters along with Brad.
- ◆ Executive Assistant Brandon Hatcher – assists the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry team.

Secretary Ring discussed aligning SAF priorities with Governor Northam’s:

- ◆ Make Virginia #1 for business again, currently #5.
- ◆ Balancing economic development and environmental protection, especially protection of the Chesapeake Bay.
- ◆ Everyone has an opportunity to be healthy.

Representing VDOF, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and Virginia Racing Commission (VRC), Secretary Ring talked about the top four areas of emphasis for the secretariat’s office:

- ◆ Economic Development
 - Supporting existing business, the expansion as well as the recruitment of new business to Virginia.
 - Promotion of Virginia products domestically and abroad; lumber and logs are in the top percentile for Virginia exports.
 - Continue to promote AFID program incentive for agricultural and forestry to leverage public and private funding. Funded three forestry projects since January 2018.
 - Homestead Building Systems in Orange, Virginia – makes trusses.
 - Mountain Top Timber in Scott County – wood chipping operations, new sawmill and kiln drying.
 - Speyside Bourbon Cooperage and Stave Mill in Washington County – procure 80% of their white oak from Virginia.
- ◆ Forest and Farmland Retention
 - Want to be able to keep land intact, in forest (or farmland) and in the family.
 - VDOF’s model program, Generation NEXT, received a USFS grant to expand this program. VDOF is offering more workshops, including mini-sessions.
 - Working with the Black Family Land Trust on their campaign, “A Tree is a Tree is a Tree,” to address heir property issues as well as get more minority landowners engaged in forest management.
 - Continue to emphasize the importance of working forests and farms in the state’s land conservation efforts.
- ◆ Food Insecurity
 - Working to expand the Farm to School programs to make it easier for farmers and producers to connect to the school system.
 - Working to increase urban agricultural opportunities and making food more accessible to all people.
 - Farmers Markets
 - Public Health
 - Intersection with forestry and agriculture.
- ◆ Gaming

- Historic Horse Racing and bring Colonial Down back to Virginia.

Secretary Ring talked about her various travels and how other countries want to see more Virginia products.

- ◆ USDA Trade Mission – Went to China with Marketing and Development Director Stephanie Agee. There were numerous discussion about the impact of tariffs along with the fumigation issue due to China enforcing a fumigation law that had not been enforced in 15 years. We are looking at new ways to increase our fumigation capacity in Virginia. Virginia Tech is conducting some interesting research on using steam/heat – vacuum to fumigate.
- ◆ Governor’s first trade mission – Visited UK and companies that are importing Virginia Lumber; Latham and Brooks Brothers. Met with the Climate Committee to discuss forest sustainability in Virginia and the US. One day in Italy and focused on beekeeping and honey. Two days in Germany. First Lady went to Forest Kindergarten introducing pre-school awareness about the importance of active forest management in the EU. Visited the largest sawmill in Europe. The size of the trees and the volume, as well as the focus on quality and efficiency was incredible.

We have some challenges before us but we have more opportunities in front of us.

- ◆ Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) and the role forestry has been playing and can continue to play in water quality protection.
- ◆ Implementing the hardwood strategies that BOF developed with VDOF.
- ◆ Explore new sources of funding for landowner incentives for hardwood management.
- ◆ William Snyder and John Burke, III are serving on the Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders group.

Secretary Ring and State Forester Rob Farrell presented reappointment certificates to John Burke, III, Frank Meyers and Glen Worrell.

Chairman Worrell asked Secretary Ring after being in the official government for eight months what was your biggest surprise? She replied she was excited to see the potential that forestry has in a way we have not had in the past.

Don Bright mentioned that it is very important to make sure when we are exporting products out of Virginia, we do everything properly and follow procedures so we don’t create problems overseas.

CK Greene asked to remember not to forget the importance of our biomass.

State Forester’s Report:

Rob Farrell reviewed with the Board agency updates:

- ◆ New Deputy State Forester is Ed Zimmer.
- ◆ Currently looking at how to reformat the Chief of Operations position.
- ◆ New Public Information Officer is Michelle Stoll.
- ◆ Dedicated the VDOF Headquarters Building to James W. Garner.
- ◆ Hosted the Southern Group of State Forester’s annual meeting in Richmond, Virginia.
- ◆ Held an all VDOF employee meeting. First time in twelve years that we had everyone together in one place.
- ◆ Another record year of harvest volume and forest products tax.
- ◆ No significant legislative items from our agency mostly housekeeping items.
- ◆ Looking for legislators to lead the timber theft legislation effort.
- ◆ Budget priorities;
 - Support for Hardwood Management Program
 - Education for Landowners, VDOF staff, Industry

- Program to help landowners put a better hardwood management in place.
 - Economic Development – deeper bench
 - Easement Stewardship – easement coordinator position.
 - Watershed, forestry retention, riparian buffers all very important to Chesapeake Bay – need to find a way to have someone leading this work.
- ◆ A very wet year for Virginia means a good year concerning not a lot forest fires. The rest of the country has had a challenging time this year. VDOF has been responding and supporting California, Oregon, Montana, Washington and Texas with their challenges.
- ◆ Number of timber harvests has continued to steadily decline over the past eight years. Nineteen percent decline over the last eight years.
- ◆ Number of BMP compliance actions, recommendations and failure-to-notify are steadily declining; headed in the right direction.
- ◆ Many discussions on Chesapeake Bay and Watershed plan going on. Lots of interest in forestry. VDOF present at meetings to ensure discussion's focus on forestland, the deepest secret to the health of the Bay. Trying to give the message that forestry is all a good story when it comes to the Bay.
- ◆ Good Neighbor Agreement with the USFS – In the process of working with the USFS in Southwest Virginia to get work done on their land that will generate funding that will help get work done on private land.
- ◆ Charlie Becker, Marketing and Utilization Coordinator, received three grants this year that will help VDOF's economic development work.
- ◆ Recognized Harvey Darden, director of agency lands, and the State Lands staff for getting SFI and Tree Farm certified.
- ◆ Rob signed his first easement as State Forester, which happened to be the largest easement for VDOF to date, Little Stony Point.
- ◆ Forest Conservation partnership got together, came up with a holistic mitigation response for the pipelines, and focused on forest fragmentation. They also came up with three mitigation tools; Afforestation, Land Conversation and Forest Enhancement.
- ◆ Discussed the plans for the mitigation money from the pipelines. Secretary Ring spoke on how she will be working closely with the money for the U.S. Endowment and Forest community and how it will be spent.

Informational Items:

Seedling Availability

VDOF Director of Agency Lands Harvey Darden briefed the Board on the impact the rain had on seedlings this year. There was a significant drop in production. Average rainfall per year is 26 inches; we had 41 inches so far this year.

Harvey also discussed the following:

- ◆ VDOF has begun testing for rust resistance in the seedling families.
- ◆ A containerized long leaf pine seedling project has begun and is going very well.

Strategic Plan

State Forester Rob Farrell briefly spoke on the strategic plan. VDOF is going to do what we do better and look for ways to be even better. The main topics are:

1. Protecting forests
2. Forest economy
3. Increasing the coverage of trees and health of trees in Virginia

4. Workforce
5. Continuous work process between the Agency
6. Outreach

Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)

Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer briefed the board that VDOF staff is engaged in all the WIP meeting and strongly advocating for forestry. Terry Lasher explained to the board the first round of meetings was focused on establishing the strategies and the next round of meetings will be on how to implement those strategies. William Snyder, Board of Forestry member is serving on the Advisory Board for the Chesapeake Bay.

Action Items:

Nomination/Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Chairperson Worrell discussed nominating and electing a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Chairperson Worrell and Vice-Chairperson Burke are willing to serve a second term if the board so chooses.

Ken Morgan made a motion to reappoint Chairperson Worrell and Vice-Chairperson Burke for a second term, Beth Flippo-Hutchins seconded. After discussion, Ken Morgan and Beth Flippo-Hutchins withdrew their motion.

Chairperson Worrell will appoint a nominating committee for election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at the next meeting.

Review of BOF Memo of Procedures

The Board discussed restructuring the BOF Memo of Procedures to add electronic meetings and have more regular and evenly spread out meetings. VDOF Chief of Administration Andy Alvarez will find appropriate language for electronic voting.

Frank Meyers and Don Bright agreed to assist State Forester Rob Farrell with composing a draft revision of the BOF Memo of Procedures for the next meeting. Beth Flippo-Hutchins offered her assistance as well.

Committee/Liaison Reports:

Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Committee

Greg Scheerer shared with the Board the discussion at the sub-committee meeting on August 15.

- ◆ Effectiveness of rates.
- ◆ New procedures applied to cost-share.
- ◆ Possibility of changing the deadline of the RT applications based on final inspection.

Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer briefed the Board on the progress of putting RT into the IFRIS system, which will create a lot of streamlining the RT process. A live product demo is scheduled for October 19. The Deputy State Forester also reviewed the RT FY 2018 Final Budget Report, Final Project Accomplishments, FY 2019 RT Interim Budget and Interim Project Accomplishments.

Don Bright asked the following questions:

- ◆ How many acres are in pine plantation in Virginia by region today?
- ◆ What is the trend over the last 30 years?
- ◆ What is the growth rate of that forest?
- ◆ How many acres does it take to meet current demand of industry today and in the future?

State Forester Rob Farrell suggested that a meeting be set aside to discuss questions like Don Bright's and that VDOF staff receive the questions before the meeting to ensure that the corresponding data and information is at the meeting.

Hardwood Management Sub-Committee

John Burke requested the hardwood management be first on the agenda at the next meeting to allow for more discussion. John shared with the Board that the hardwood initiative is critically important. The Hardwood Management Sub-committee is having a meeting September 18 with partners and various industries that are interested in supporting the hardwood initiative. This first meeting will be to discuss what kind of organization will make the hardwood Initiative possible and how to move forward.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Secretary Ring announced the reappointment of Ken Morgan and new Board appointments Heather Richards from The Conservation Fund and Mike Hincer from the Forestland Group.

Schedule of Next Meeting:

Chairperson Worrell postponed setting the next BOF meeting until the review of the Memo of Procedures subcommittee meets. VDOF Executive Assistant Mary Weaver will send out a doodle poll to schedule the next meeting.

Adjournment:

Chairman Worrell called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made to adjourn the August 24, 2018 meeting at 12:17 p.m. and seconded. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant