



Board of Forestry Meeting

November 10, 2021
James Garner Building
Charlottesville, VA

Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Chairperson Ken Morgan at the James Garner Building in Charlottesville, Virginia. Chairperson Morgan reminded the Board of the anti-trust policy legal requirements.

Roll Call:

Board of Forestry Members Present

Jamie Coleman, Jennifer Gagnon, Beth Flipppo Hutchins, Brian Irvine, Ken Morgan Jr., Carolyn Mulligan, Bill Osl, Heather Richards, Ralph Sampson Jr., Greg Scheerer, Michael Harold, and Mike Hinchey

Members Absent

Chad Shelton

Adoption of Agenda:

Chairperson Morgan requested to add discussion of the Hardwood Initiative to the agenda if time allows. Motion was made to approve the agenda with addition of Hardwood Initiative discussion; 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; Terry Lasher, Assistant State Forester; John Colligan, Chief of Administration, Michelle Stoll, Director of Public Information; Karl Didier, Forestland Conservation Program Manager; Dean Cumbia, Director of Forest Resource Management; Caitlin Verdu, Watershed Program Manager; Joe Rossetti, Hardwood Initiative Coordinator; Lauren Sumner, Finance Director; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Lesley Mosley, Virginia Forest Products Association; Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau; Corey Connors, Virginia Forestry Association

State Forester Farrell introduced VDOP's newest employees: Lauren Sumner, Finance Director; Joe Rossetti, Hardwood Initiative Coordinator, and Caitlin Verdu, Watershed Program Manager.

Hearing of Citizens:

None

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the September 30, 2021 minutes with one correction, Two Pine Pulpwood Industry representatives should say Two Pine Lumber Industry representatives ; seconded. All present were in favor.

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry (SAF) Update:

Secretary Bettina Ring was unable to attend.

State Forester's Report:

State Forester Rob Farrell gave some remarks on Secretary Ring's behalf.

- ◆ With the election results on November 2, Governor-elect Youngkin will be the incoming administration.
- ◆ On November 4, Governor Northam dedicated the 26th state forest, Charlotte State Forest, and signed a Shared Stewardship Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture that reopens a historically black recreation area in George Washington and Jefferson National Forests.

State Forester Farrell reviewed changes since the last Board meeting in September.

- ◆ All agencies were asked to submit transition documents for the incoming administration and identify five major issues.
 - Need for increased urban tree canopy to support livable communities.
 - Forest restoration would benefit from woody biomass as a renewable energy source.
 - Deforestation due to solar facilities.
 - Need for additional tree planting for riparian buffers.
 - Reduced VDOF agency presence across the state.
- ◆ Budget package proposals were submitted.
 - Wildfire and Disaster Response Package
 - Add regional first responder positions – three full-time, one for each region
 - Expand emergency response ability and readiness – full-time training and drone coordinator and drones
 - Replace Bendix local response radios
 - Urban and Community Forestry Program Expansion Package
 - Dedicated funding for increased tree planting in Virginia to support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIPIII)
 - Three full-time field positions and one statewide position to coordinate and administer grant funds
 - Information Technology Security and System Upgrade Package
 - IFRIS System Upgrade
 - Information security full-time position – ensure compliance with VITA information security requirements
 - Field office data connectivity upgrade
 - Re-establish New Kent Nursery and Replace Field Seedling Coolers Package
 - Nursery Manager position, required equipment, and additional staff positions
 - Intent is to be self-sustaining

- Enhance Recreational Opportunities on State Forests Package
- Develop Fire Tower Removal Plan Package
- ◆ Board inquired about writing a letter in support of State Forester Rob Farrell's reappointment.
- ◆ State Forester Farrell will send the Board a breakdown of the Governor's introduced budget when available.

Informational Items:

Discussion and Finalization of Solar Statement

Chairperson Morgan recommended to hold off presenting the solar statement and see what the new administration's goals are. The Board would like to have the statement ready to go.

- ◆ State Forester Farrell read the draft statement.
- ◆ The floor was open for discussion.
- ◆ Some of the corrections made were:
 - In bullet 4, replace clearing of forestland with deforestation.
 - "Development of solar facilities is causing significant clearing of forestland, (insert current no.) of acres already and (insert latest estimate) acres anticipated."
 - Add farmland acreage.
 - Consider adding smaller solar pieces. (???)
 - Be more specific about the deforestation number.
 - Remove bullet 5.
 - "Some of these large facilities are causing hundreds and even thousands of acres of forest and farmland to be cleared."
 - Rearrange bullet 6.
 - "The negative impacts from these projects include increased runoff and sedimentation, loss of habitats, decreased capacity of the forest to sequester carbon and produce oxygen, increased temperatures, and loss of forest and farm economic activity."
 - Bullet 9 – replace incentives with current market.
 - "The Board is concerned that the incentives available for solar development projects provide an artificial inducement to landowners to convert farm and forestland because no other rural land use can compete with the long-term income offered by solar development."
 - Reword bullet 10.
 - "Because the incentives provided for solar development constitute public policy, they should not act in conflict with established public policies to protect farm and forestland from conversion, and to maintain trees and forest cover to protect water quality."
 - State Forester Farrell will modify the statement per discussion and circulate back to the Board.
- ◆ Farming and forests can't compete with solar markets.
- ◆ Watts per acre should be considered when approving solar projects.
- ◆ Microclimate data is needed to back up statement.
- ◆ Board discussed how to address environmental justice concerns.

Action Items:

Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Committee Report

- ◆ Greg Scheerer shared with the Board the Hardwood Habitat Incentive Program Practice Summary and Rates that the RT committee discussed and reviewed.
- ◆ A motion was made to make these rates the initial cost-share rates for the Hardwood Habitat Incentive Cost-Share Program; seconded. All present were in favor.

Liberation Cut	\$85.00/acre
Crop Tree Release (CTR)	\$80.00/acre
Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)	\$85.00/acre
Prescribed Burning (including firebreak construction)	\$25.00/acre
Stand Marking	\$40.00/acre
Competing Vegetation Control (Invasive or native)	\$80.00/acre

Committee/Liaison Reports:

None

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Cumberland Land Use

Board member Bill Osl, former Board of Supervisors member for Cumberland County, informed the Board that Cumberland County voted to repeal the Cumberland Land Use tax.

- ◆ Mr. Dixon, a Cumberland County Board of Supervisor, voted for the repeal only so it could be reconsidered at a later time for further discussion.
- ◆ Need assistance on getting information together on the downside of not having a land use tax.
 - Ben Cole of Cole Timberland Management, LLC was mentioned as a helpful resource.
- ◆ Chairperson Morgan inquired if someone could collect all information available and put into a document statement.
- ◆ State Forester Farrell will send an email in regards to land use information.

Hardwood Initiative Committee

Chairperson Morgan appointed Jennifer Gagnon and Jamie Coleman to serve on the Hardwood Initiative Committee.

Schedule of Next Meeting:

A doodle poll will be sent out for March meeting dates.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Morgan called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made and seconded to adjourn the November 10, 2021 meeting at 3:00 p.m. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant