



Board of Forestry Meeting

May 20, 2022
Richmond Raceway
Richmond, VA

Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Chairperson Beth Flippo Hutchins at the Richmond Raceway in Richmond, Virginia. Chairperson Flippo Hutchins reminded the Board of the anti-trust policy legal requirements.

Roll Call:

Board of Forestry Members Present

Mike Harold, Beth Flippo Hutchins, Brian Irvine, Carolyn Mulligan, and Chad Shelton

Members Absent

Jamie Coleman, Jennifer Gagnon, Michael Hinchey, Ken Morgan Jr., Bill Osl, Heather Richards, Ralph Sampson Jr., and Greg Scheerer

Chairperson Flippo Hutchins informed the board that there was not a quorum. No voting on action items when a quorum is not present.

Adoption of Agenda:

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

Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) Present

Rob Farrell, State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Deputy State Forester; Terry Lasher, Assistant State Forester; John Colligan, Chief of Administration; Rachel Harris, Utilization and Marketing Specialist; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Matt Lohr, Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Beth Green, Deputy Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Corey Connors, Virginia Forestry Association; Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau; Kyle Shreve, Virginia Agribusiness Council

Hearing of Citizens:

None

Chairperson Flippo Hutchins recognized and thanked Mr. Ken Morgan for his service on the Board of Forestry and in the lumber industry. Mr. Morgan was unable to attend his last meeting as a Board of Forestry member. Hope to have him attend a future meeting as a guest to recognize him in person for his service.

Chairperson Flippo Hutchins thanked the Board of Forestry for giving her the opportunity to serve as chairperson.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the March 15, 2022 minutes as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

State Forester's Report:

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

- ◆ Chief of Administration John Colligan has resigned his position and is leaving the agency June 3.
- ◆ Took the new Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) Analyst for VDOF, Robert Greer, and the Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (VDACS), Emily Barksdale, on a tour to help them better understand what VDOF does to assist them in advocating for our budget requests. They toured:
 - New Kent Conference Center property and showed them seed trees, loblollies, VDOF fire equipment and facilities.
 - Evelyn Family Mills to see operation of crane and bridge mats, and discussed residuals.
 - Saw an almost complete timber harvest and discussed how clean it was.
- ◆ There is a new telework policy in place for Virginia state employees.
 - One third of staff will be eligible for teleworking.
 - More than half of the agency has remote offices.
- ◆ Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer spoke on the challenges of recruiting field positions.
 - Having difficulty getting individuals with an accredited forestry degree.
 - Hiring individuals with a minor in forestry and titling them "natural resource specialist."
 - The pools of applicants are getting smaller for both foresters and technicians.
 - Board discussed that other industries are having the same challenge and how do we encourage interest.
 - Consider a dual enrollment program in high school or a forestry certificate program.
 - Ed Zimmer will reach out to Paul D. Camp Community College about starting a two-year forestry program.

Martha Moore suggested inviting the new superintendent of education to a Board of Forestry meeting to discuss vocational technical needs for promoting forestry curriculum.

- ◆ Will have a new public information director very soon.
- ◆ New administration is doing appointments a little different. New Board of Forestry appointees should be announced very soon.
- ◆ Deputy Secretary Beth Green and Executive Assistant Rebecca Paramore attended the VDOF Service Awards at the Frontier Culture Museum.
- ◆ Secretary Matt Lohr and Deputy Secretary Beth Green toured Flippo Lumber.
- ◆ Looking at doing the Weldon Cooper Study in a different format.
- ◆ The new administration's focus is on "Best in Class." Asking every agency in the state for metrics to compare with other state agencies – Objectives and Key Results (OKR's)
- ◆ Economic development updates:
 - Working on getting a pine resource study done.
 - Carbon Symposium on June 1.

- Mass Timber Symposium on July 27 in Charlottesville.
- Lumber Grading Training at New Kent Forestry Center on June 13-16.
- Working with two groups on sustainable aviation fuel.
- ◆ Utilization and Marketing Specialist Rachel Harris spoke to the Board regarding the upcoming Lumber Grading Training.
 - This class is being held at the New Kent Conference Center. Hope to offer more throughout the state.
 - Flippo Lumber is providing lumber at the end of class to allow students to try out their newly-learned skills.
 - They will not be certified until they have job experience but they will receive a certificate of completion.
 - Working with Piedmont of Virginia Community College (PVCC) to offer a lumber grading program for the fall semester that will be on Saturdays. Some of the curriculum for this course will be:
 - Professional development
 - Portable mill with a tour of a large mill
 - Forklift certification training
 - Working on putting a hardwood grading program together.

Informational Items:

- ◆ None

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry (SAF) Update: *(Moved until his arrival)*

Secretary Matt Lohr and Deputy Secretary Beth Green arrived. Secretary Lohr reported on events since the last BOF meeting in March.

- ◆ Went to the Virginia Loggers Association (VLA) meeting and listened to the concerns and discussion.
- ◆ Spent a day at Virginia Tech with the Dean of Natural Resources and Environment Paul Winistorfer and learned about their program.
- ◆ Visited with Board members Heather Richards and Elizabeth Filppo Hutchins and discussed biomass and solar issues.
 - Understand that biomass and solar is very important to the forestry industry.
 - Plan to see what can be done about potential legislation and who we need to partner with.
- ◆ Attended the Forestry Summit in Blacksburg.
- ◆ Visited Tidewater Lumber, Flippo Lumber, Speyside, and Harrisonburg Urban Forestry.
- ◆ Still waiting for the budget to be approved, hopefully in a week or two.

Chairperson Flippo Hutchins gave some information about the Logging Expo:

- ◆ Typically, 5,000 – 6,000 industry and general public attend over the weekend from many different states.
- ◆ Logging Expo has been going on for more than 60 years.

Board member Chad Shelton discussed with the Board the challenges of maintaining profitability with the cost of fuel and equipment.

Action Items:

Reforestation of Timberlands Committee

- ◆ Chairperson Flippo Hutchins appointed Carolyn Mulligan to replace her on the Reforestation of Timberlands Committee.

Committee/Liaison Reports:

Hardwood Task Force

- ◆ State Forester Farrell gave an update on the progress of the Harwood Habitat Initiative.
 - Had first in-person meeting of the Hardwood Steering Committee.
 - State Forester Farrell, Director of Forest Resource Management Dean Cumbia, and Hardwood Initiative Coordinator Joe Rossetti spent a day with Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to see how they could help them do good forest management on their wildlife management areas using Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) mitigation forest enhancement funds and demonstration grant funds. Also encouraged DWR to invest in their lands also.
 - Training the third group of VDOF foresters on the Hardwood Initiative.
 - Consulting foresters meeting coming up and the focus will be Hardwood Initiative.

Unfinished Business:

Topics for Discussion at Future Meetings

- ◆ Board was asked at the last meeting to send in topics that they would like to discuss at future meetings.
 - Solar
 - There are some workgroups that are looking into solar and the effects on forests.
 - The Board should continue to work with associations to represent forestry's point of view.
 - Continue to educate landowners on working forests.
 - Carbon Sequestration and Carbon Credits
 - VDOF can help provide guidance to landowners.
 - Try to find law firms that are interested looking at carbon sequestration in the landowner's perspective.
 - Biomass
 - VDOF working on aviation fuel and opportunities to use biomass.
 - State energy policy is currently against using biomass.
 - The industry has asked legislators to include a budget amendment to help us provide some data and background on the benefits of biomass not only for the industry but for the Commonwealth to help them achieve their energy goals and policies.
 - Opportunity to invite someone to talk about energy policy.
 - Markets
 - That's a wide area, need to break it out and figure out what areas to discuss.
 - Land Use Taxation
 - VDOF has the Forest Sustainability Fund this year so VDOF will be focusing on land use taxation with that. Will keep BOF informed.
 - Logger Retention and Capacity
 - Need to figure out what the state, Board of Forestry, and VDOF can do to nail down what the issues are and how to help.
 - Field Forester Availability and Recruiting
 - Look into forestry programs, vocational programs, and opportunities.

New Business:

None

Schedule of Next Meeting:

The next Board of Forestry meeting will be held in conjunction with the State Fair. State Fair is September 25 – October 2. Would like to meet around the Future Farmers of America (FFA) competition. Will send a message when the date is confirmed.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Flippo Hutchins called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made and seconded to adjourn the May 20, 2022 meeting at 1:33 p.m. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Executive Assistant Mary Weaver.

APPROVED