

Virginia Council Trout Unlimited Officers and Delegates May 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes

1. Introductions

Tony Hill, Jeff Deering, Scott Allen, Eric Tichay, Richard Foust, Amy Orr, Jim Wilson, Doug Jessie

2. VCTU Spring Survey Results

Burr was unable to attend. See his PowerPoint presentation for information.

3. Priority Waters Work Group

Seth reported:

At this point we are in a holding pattern. I have submitted the map of the priority areas in VA along with answers to the communication teams questions up to our VP of Eastern Conservation. Once I have more direction, I will let you know.

Staff is developing a framework for federal policy and state advocacy opportunities around the priority waters at this time. There will be more outreach over the summer months to TU chapter leaders and TU partners in VA on the priority waters.

Development of strategic plans around the priorities will take place towards the end of this calendar year.

4. Officers - Open positions include TIC Resource Coordinator, and Advocacy Chair

Looking for volunteers, still. Need to bump the need for some folks to step up, please. Presidents, please mention at the chapter level.

5. Wildlife Corridor Action Plan/ Aquatic Organism Passage/Culvert Training

DWR and other state agencies prepared a draft Wildlife Corridor Action Plan without stakeholder involvement, which was disappointing for the various conservation organizations in the Commonwealth that were interested in being involved. In the meantime Wild Virginia is working on drafting our goals for the next General Assembly for the VCN Common Agenda Briefing Book. Trout Unlimited can be involved with this if desired.

Below are comments sent to DWR (Gray Anderson) on the draft plan.

Thank you for taking the time to meet yesterday to address our concerns about the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan. We thought it would be helpful to send out a summary of what we discussed and agreed on. Here are three main concerns and solutions:

1. Project list

a. A list of priority projects for the state will not be generated, rather areas on the map will be identified as hotspot areas. The criteria for these hotspot areas will include, at least, identification of the area as within a wildlife corridor, identification of the area as a problem

collision area, and potential existing opportunities (such as existing bridges or culverts).

This is envisioned to give government entities of varying size the ability to use this as leverage for support of their projects that occur in these "hotspot areas".

2. Public Participation

a. DWR will create an online portal that will allow for members of the public to submit comments and data they think are important for use in the WCAP. This portal will be opened in time for the public and interested parties to have their comments considered in the initial draft of writing sent for administrative review.

b. Wildlands Network and Wild Virginia would be willing to help sift through these comments if extra capacity to do so is needed.

3. Case Studies

a. The WCAP will include case studies. These are known opportunity areas to improve connectivity, specific places that have existing public support for mitigation efforts, and/or areas that have research completed or ongoing that speaks to the need for mitigation measures. These "low hanging fruit" case studies will describe in as much detail as possible the specific areas, the mitigation projects needed, and the project supporters. Opening a public participation process will help identify important case study areas like

this.

6. General Assembly 2022 Conservation Summary

Not much action. Funding might be the biggest obstacle going forward. The main unresolved issue is the state budget, which must be agreed to by July 1. Jim can provide emails and other contact info to anyone interested in monitoring legislation.

7. Chapter Reports

Winchester - Tri-State Fish Camp is being rebuilt for 2023.

Smith River - Kid's Fishing Saturday w/DWR, Blue Ridge Heritage Vets Fishing Day, Trash p/u, camping trip to Grayson Highlands area, group trip to South Holston

Massanutten - Feb Iron Fly, FT3 Film, After School Programs in April, TIC releases,

Beaver Ck Invitational for Vets (over 80 vets, guides, etc. attended!), chapter BBQ

Rapidan - Fly Fishing Show to return in 2023, 2 outfitter trips, fish w/a friend trips, trash p/u, chapter picnic, kids' day @ Graves Lodge w/wildlife exhibits, vets fly tying, family/kids

Fishing day, TIC releases, Kids w/cancer event coming up, Rapidan/NOVA? Orvis partnership event

Northern VA - Special beer release, Military kids' event, trash p/u, 4-5 kid's days, monthly fish w/a

member events, TIC releases, upcoming Stream Girls event

8. NLC Report

Check Eric's email. The National Meeting in Portland, ME looks to be a low attended affair.

9. Treasurer's Report

Missing info!

10. Strategic Planning

Check your chapter websites for copyrighted images! Don't get sued.

Need to coordinate w/chapters about working on Priority Waters areas.

Need to report council work hours to council, not chapters.

How to get Richmond area people involved? Film Fest, Bar Flies, etc.?

Skyline Chapter needs help. Reach out.

Conservation annual newsletter is needed. Volunteers needed!