

## VCTU Council Meeting Notes – May 13, 2023

Date: May 13, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Location: Bridgewater College, 402 E College St, Bridgewater, VA 22812

Meeting hosted by the Massanutten Chapter and via ZOOM

### Attendees:

In-Person: Jim Wilson (Chair/Northern Virginia), Burr Tupper (Vice Chair/Winchester), Bill Pierce (Treasurer/Massanutten), Scott Allen (Secretary/Northern Virginia), Eric Tichay (NLC Rep/Smith River), Deidra Stultz (Comm-Diversity)/Roanoke Valley), Mike Makufka (TIC/Winchester), Seth Coffman (TU), Gary Heschl (Massanutten) Tom Benzing (Conservation/Shenandoah), Jim Prussia (Massanutten), Red Bourdage (Rapidan)

Zoom: David Holladay (Roanoke), Amy Orr (At-Large, Rapidan), Arthur Wilson (Roanoke), Jason Collins (Smith River), Tony Hill (Northern Virginia)

Meeting Called to Order at 9:15 A.M.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:10 P.M.

- (Jim) Opening remarks and Agenda review

### 1. Minutes from last meeting

- Approved
- Amy Orr provided email update to Rapidan TIC information
- Post meeting, the minutes were updated by Scott

### 2. Priority Waters Status (Seth Coffman)

- a. Investigate Regional Vice Presidents to lead multi-chapter efforts
  - (Jim W) how to link chapters to 3 areas?
  - (Jim W) What do the chapters need?
  - Will look at engaging Chapters/Members with vested interest
  - Grayson Highlands – identify key players that participated in the Priority Waters selection committee to get ideas for projects
- Recap of actions to date:
  - In 2021, committee looked at locations with opportunities for TU to “move the needle”
  - Two (2) other areas were considered, but were dropped due to amount of national forest lands and private land within that area
  - Three areas selected:
    - Upper James – National wildlife headwaters of Chesapeake
    - Blue Ridge – extends outside of the national park extent
      - Strategic Plan:
        - includes coordination with park biologists (e.g., eDNA study)
        - will look at what is going on in streams based on VTSSS and other studies
        - will include policy advocacy
    - Grayson Highlands – includes North Fork of Holston and New River and the area is popular with tourists

## b. Operation Plans

- Strategic action plans are in draft
- Draft Plans [[Attachment 1](#)]
- No set goals in actions or time for each priority water – each state and each priority water is unique
- Next steps:
  - Need to drill down on specific actions that “move the needle”
  - Opportunities for increased state money (e.g., trout stamp)
  - DEQ regulations
  - Create pathways for chapter/local involvement – outside of usual partners
  - Focus on how to get from point A to point B
    - Example: Point A = Grayson Highlands has had no activity
    - Point B = Established activities within 5 years
  - Communicating at state events (i.e., festivals, meetings, etc....)
  - Identifying key legislative contacts to help influence advocacy efforts
  - All State Action Plans are on shared drives so all states have access (Eric)
- Open Discussion
  - Council looking to get access to GIS mapping tools
    - **ACTION: Seth to contact Matt and Scott to coordinate GIS options**
    - DWR has a mapping tool that may be incorporated
    - Provide dashboard to council and chapters
  - (Eric) Is there a master project list?
    - (Seth) National is looking at new database, but not on-line yet
  - **ACTION: Scott -- Add Cover letter (Seth) and Action Plans to website and link in newsletter**

## 3. Wildlife Action Plan (Tom Benzing)

- PDF [[Attachment 2](#)]
- Work on the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan is underway, and Tom is the TU VA Council representative. Catharine Tucker attended the first meeting in his absence.
  - Three (3) plans
    - VA 2015 Wildlife Action Plan / National driven / 10 year plan  
(Seth) recover American wildlife act – tied to state WAP
    - VA Wildlife Corridor Action Plan (2023) / State driven / Maps available / 4 year plan
    - VA Wild Trout Management Action Plan (2019) / State driven / Maps available / 10 year plan
    - Federal money for brook trout possibility?  
(Burr) how to incorporate wild trout vs native trout activities  
(Seth) Will not pass up on opportunity to maintain wild cold water

## 4. Wildlife Corridor Action Plan Update (Tom Benzing)

- Looks at opportunities to provide deer/bear road crossing
  - \$8B insurance payouts for deer collision annually
- Nexis areas defined as high road and wildlife intersections
- Does not include aquatic crossings
  - Opportunity: Take advantage of VDOT activities where wildlife crossings include streams (i.e., have the “tunnel” support both wildlife and at the same time help aquatic crossing
  - DWR has huge database of aquatic passages – need surveys – possible action
- (Deidra) What are the talking points with interaction with representatives?
  - (Tom) Best action is to thank legislators for passing this law and supporting the plans

#### 5. Buffalo Creek Stream Project (Jim Wilson)

- Joe Irby has asked for \$1K for stream work near Lexington's Buffalo Creek, a Special regulation area
- Joe may be working with Asa Donovan(?) from the Shenandoah chapter
- Joe has ties to the local 5 Rivers club
- (Burr) This is a good opportunity to use the new grant program
  - Need to have a Chapter sponsor the grant request
  - Good opportunity to engage the Skyline chapter members
- **ACTION: Jim Wilson to follow up with Joe and the Skyline Chapter, Jim Prussia will assist**

#### 6. Council By-Laws Review (Scott Allen)

- Reviewed the draft and took verbal edits to some text
- **ACTION: Scott will incorporate verbal edits and email the final copy for vote**

#### 7. Council Operations Plan Development (Scott Allen)

- Reviewed the draft
- **ACTION: Scott will edit the draft and send out for review and solicit volunteers to take on specific actions**

#### 8. Action Committee Action Items Update (Burr Tupper)

- PDF [[Attachment 3](#)]
- Committee renamed to "Community Development Committee"
- a. Council Communications – Newsletter
  - Address issues of cross communications between Chapters
  - Newsletter will be posted to website and emailed to all members with link
    - Distribution method still needs to be identified
- b. Engage Survey Respondents
  - Targeted email for specific activities
- c. Grant Funding for Chapters
  - Process sent out for comments

#### 9. NLC Report (Eric Tichay)

- Report [[Attachment 4](#)]
- (Jim) Is the Friday Newsletter the best way to keep in touch with activities?
  - (Eric) The Monthly "Lines to Leaders" is a good summary of all activities
- (Jim) Native Trout workgroup – Are Priority Waters a permanent discussion item at meetings?
  - (Eric) A new workgroup may be created specifically for Priority Waters
- There are 36 NLC reps
- You do not need to be an NLC rep to go to meetings (12 working groups)
- There is an ongoing discussion about having non-NLC members eligible to become an NLC working group chair
- FYI: TU National has hired a lot of new staff

#### 10. Treasurer's Report (Bill Pierce)

- Report [[Attachment 5](#)]
- Annual activity report filed
- Skyline Chapter has not submitted an AAR  
[Post meeting, Bill filed the Skyline AAR]

- Virginia Capital Chapter has not submitted an AAR
  - **ACTION: Jim Wilson will see if a report is required**
- We need a SAM registration if for government reporting and money
  - Bill tried to renew registration but had no luck. Any assistance is welcomed
- a. Restricted Funds
  - Dominion-South River activity still active talks (Tom Benzing)
    - Funds distributed
  - All other restricted funds allocated

#### 11. TIC Report (Mike Makufka)

- Notes [[Attachment 6](#)]
- With regards to the Rapidan request for funds, it was agreed to offer a TIC grant proposal to all chapters for 2023

#### 12. Chapter Reports

- a. At-Large zip code move to VA Capital Chapter status (Scott Allen)
  - Scott engaged with Maggie and is awaiting word on the move's effective date
- b. Chapter Annual Activity Reports (Scott Allen)
  - This was addressed in the Treasurer's section regarding AAR submissions
- c. Skyline de-charter status
  - (Jim Prussia) Asked the reason the Skyline chapter is going away. Membership engagement?
  - **ACTION: Both Jim Wilson and Jim Prussia to reach out to the Skyline chapter, specifically the Lexington area members**
- d. Lexington & Lynchburg restart status
  - This is tied to the results of the Skyline chapter discussions
- e. Identify non-attending chapters and status
  - The only discussion was about the need to reach out to Mountain Empire Chapter, specifically with regards to the Priority Waters Program

-end