

VCTU Executive Committee Meeting Notes – January 8, 2024

Attendees:

Jim Wilson, Burr Tupper, Scott Allen, Bill Pierce, Eric Tichay, Amy Orr, Mike Makufka, Stan Ikonen, Richard Foust, Jeff Deering, Deidra Stultz, Paul Kearney

Meeting Start: 7:04 p.m.

Meeting End: 8:30 p.m.

Agenda:

1. Minutes from the Oct 23, 2023, Ex-Comm Meeting -- APPROVED
Status of Actions:
 - Notify national of official decharter of Skyline chapter so NLC can vote (Bill)
 - **[Action] Eric to send info link to Scott for action that needs to be taken**
 - Generate talking points for the legislators for VA Capital Chapter to put some action plans behind them (Jim) [Note: upcoming meeting with DWR may provide input]
 - Jim continues to work on this
 - Jim and Scott plan to meet with Burr to discuss newsletter content (Scott) Completed
 - 2024 Calendar - Provide comments/conflicts and suggested new dates (All)] Completed
 - VA FF & Wine Festival: Contact Beverly and/or Jeff for swag (Scott)] Completed
 - Contact VA Capital for booth volunteers (Scott)] Completed
 - Council Trifold: Provide comments/suggested updates (All)] Completed
2. Virginia Fly Fishing and Wine Festival Final Plans (Scott)
 - Volunteers in place
 - **Proposal: Council pay for entrance for volunteers - APPROVED**
3. Priority Waters
 - Subcommittee meeting schedule (Jim)
 - Upper James/Shen call Jan 9
 - Blue Ridge call Jan 17
 - **[Action] Add Stan Ikonen and Paul Kearney (Scott)**
 - Call with PEC Tuesday at 10:30 am
 - Outreach to TJ, Rapidan, and Winchester chapters for representatives
 - Do we also contact DWR staff? (Brad Fink?)
 - Grayson Highlands—will reach out to local DWR staff (Jim)
4. Tri-State Camp Report (Paul)
 - Storage unit cleaned out and material has been distributed
 - Money distribution (~\$15K)
 - Restricted to Youth Education
 - Bank Account – needs to be closed and funds moved to Council account
 - **[Action] Generate a motion to address handling of funds (Eric)**
5. Community Development Report (Burr)
 - Newsletter performance good:

- Over 5K emails sent with an open rate of 56%; 635 bounced emails; 17 unsubscribed,
- no response from adds for Council positions
- Looking to put out 3 issues a year

6. Treasurer's Report (Bill)

Balance sheet - 12/31/2023			
Truist Bank			
	restricted	unrestricted	total
Checking		39,172.38	
Savings			
Garth Run Project	1,500.00		
Trout in the Classroom - Va	8,558.63		
Nat'l TU - travel for NLC rep	985.30		
Mtn. Empire-uncashed checks	512.70		
Skyline Chptr-chapter balance	7,325.85		
Totals	18,882.48	39,172.38	58,054.86

Transaction Report from 9/20/2023			
	49,261.32	= balance in register	10/22/23
11/23/2023	-574.29	ck 1169	eric tichay-reimburse for tu nat'l conference
12/9/2023	-295.05	ck 1171	michael makufka-reimb for vais conf-richmond
12/19/2023	-267.12	ck 1172	scott allen-reimburse for tri-fold brochures
12/22/2023	9,930.00		from tu national - chapter rebates
	58,054.86	= balance in register	12/31/2023

restricted funds reconciliation (after 8/15/23)								
date	garth run	tic-va	nlc rep travel	rebate escrow bill willis	uncashed cks mt. empire chptr	skyline chptr (until 9/10/25)	total	comments
8/15/2023	1500.00	8558.63	1559.59	395.18			12,013.40	
9/10/23				-395.18				bal to capital chptr
9/10/23						7325.85		from skyline chptr
9/10/23					512.70			
balance 9/11/23	1,500.00	8,558.63	1,559.59	0.00	512.70	7,325.85	19,456.77	
11/23/23			-574.29					to eric tichay
balance 12/31/23	1,500.00	8,558.63	985.30	0.00	512.70	7,325.85	18,882.48	

7. TIC Report (Mike)

- Attended Virginia Association of Schools conference
 - 330 school reps; 100- 125 stopped by booth; ~20 teachers interested in TIC
- Getting ready for upcoming Webinar with schools across the state
- Facebook page (private) - 49 members; working on education plans

- Submitted Newsletter article
- Working with Don Kirk, NFS, on forms and permits for fish release—trying to make the process easier for teachers

- Call with TC Energy
 - TC Energy is looking for environmental groups' projects to provide grant money
 - Grant period 1 Feb to Nov
 - Burr, Bill, and Paul to join Mike on call with TC Energy to investigate opportunities

8. NLC Report (Eric)

- The NLC held its first Zoom business meeting of the new year on January 4th. The following is a list of agenda items and key discussion points.

1. TU Calendar Updates – Beverly Smith, VP Volunteer Operations
 - Postponed the 2024 TU annual meeting CX3 (Coldwater, Conservation, Community) until sometime in 2025
 - TU will hold an NLC meeting in September 2024 to comply with TU Bylaws
2. 2024 Organizational Priorities – Chris Wood, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
 - Complimented the TU grassroots efforts in 2023 citing a Virginia project
 - Provided three focus areas where the NLC can contribute in 2024
 - 1) Engage members, partners and communities in our conservation work and citizen science
 - 2) Membership recruitment
 - 3) Membership retention
3. Embrace-A-Stream – Jeff Yates, Senior Director of Engagement and Ron Rhodes, EAS Committee Chair
 - NLC is responsible for electing EAS members
 - NLC nominated and voted for two new EAS members
 - 1) Southeast – Jeff Durniak, Cleveland GA; VA Tech graduate and fisheries biologist
 - 2) Southwest – William Finney, Reno, NV; Lt Colonel Army retiree, and career in healthcare management and community service
4. NLC Assessment Survey Results – John Bunker, Chair, NLC Grassroots Workgroup
 - The NLC Assessment Survey was distributed to TU leaders from November 7th and December 1st.
 - John briefed on the 2023 NLC survey data and comparison to the 2014 NLC Self-Assessment Survey. The survey will be analyzed with the help of the University of New Hampshire. Rich Thomas, Chair NLC, will update the TU Board of Trustees in February. The 2023 survey results final report will be distributed to TU staff, NLC, Councils and Chapters at a time to be determined. The NLC will prioritize recommendations and develop an action plan.

- NLC Calendar

- March 15-17, 2024: Southeast Regional in Nashville, TN
- May 3-5, 2024: Northeast Regional in Arlington, VT
- May 17-19, 2024: Western Regional in Idaho Falls, ID

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9. Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (Amy Orr)

As part of a \$350 million USDOT grant for a Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program, VDOT recently received around \$604,000 to begin work. The grant came about as the number of large animal and vehicle collisions are increasing, and Virginia recently had the 9th highest number reported annually to insurance companies in the US, affecting about 1 in 78 Virginians.

VDOT is working with DWR, DCR and the Department of Forestry across the state. Loudoun County was chosen by DWR as the first in Virginia to have a pilot program to study where the most animal road crossing fatalities occur, and to recommend projects. Jordan Green, VA DWR Resources District Biologist, is working with William and Mary students, after problem areas are identified, to then reach out to local organizations to do the weekly monitoring. The Loudoun year-long study began in November and is being performed by volunteers from Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and the local Virginia Master Naturalist chapter. Green hopes to start programs in other counties next year.

Monitors use an interactive ArcGIS application to pinpoint locations across Loudoun County on both Route 15 and Route 7 on a weekly basis. Data is uploaded within 5 minutes and information is collected on several animal species (deer, bear, raccoon, opossum, groundhog, fox, skunk, coyote, rabbit, squirrel, turtle, hawk/owl, vulture, others). Subspecies details may also be added. The link to the data collected to date is:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/18bbda7515554de3930bcfa26e05d79f>

10. Agenda for February Council meeting in Harrisonburg

- Saturday, February 24,
- In-person; Richard arranged for facility at JMU campus: 127 W Bruce Street, JMU Icehouse from 9a.m. – 1p.m.
 - Rock Town café is located across the street for lunch
- Speaker: Evan Childress if he has new information on eDNA study; otherwise, Mike Bednarski from DWR

11. Other Topics (Jim)

- Climate Change
 - Federal bills address carbon border adjustment mechanism and carbon tariffs; No action at this stage according to VCN
 - Virginia Legislature starts Wednesday—primary focus expected to be on budgets and taxes and Potomac Yards project-sports teams
 - VCN—what do we want our relationship with them to be? What are TU's key issues with the legislature?
- Buffalo Creek project
 - They are working on a written agreement with the landowners
 - Looking for legal assistance – Maybe DWR or Catherine Tucker (Paul)
- Regional Meetings-Who plans to attend?
 - March 15-17, 2024: Southeast Regional in Nashville, TN – Burr & Tony
 - May 3-5, 2024: Northeast Regional in Arlington, VT -- Scott
 - May 17-19, 2024: Western Regional in Idaho Falls, ID -- Jim

- Jim is sorting out which DWR Board meetings, in Richmond, to attend.
- Council still has open Positions—Communications and Membership Chairs
- Rapidan fishing show, scheduled for February 10th (Amy)

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