

Update for the Conservation Review Committee

Submitted by Scott Klopfer, Chair

Update items

1. Nelson Lafon, previous chair of the Conservation Review Committee (CRC), stepped down on 6/24/2016 because he has agreed to chair the Conservation Affairs Committee for the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society. He was asked to serve in this roll largely due to his great success as chair of this Virginia committee and he deserves both acknowledgement for his good work and congratulations for his new role with the Southeast Section.
2. We would like to request that the Executive Committee entertain a motion to change the name of our Conservation Review Committee to the Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC). This change would align that committee with the CACs at the Section and National level.
3. The CRC is tracking the recent Restoring America's Wildlife Act which was submitted in July 2016. This Act has bi-partisan support and would implement the suggestions of the recent Blue Ribbon Panel assembled by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This legislation would provide approximately \$1.3 billion dollars annually to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement the actions outlined in their State Wildlife Action Plan. In Virginia, this additional funding is estimated at around \$26 million per year (presently less than \$1 million). The CRC recommends creating a special committee (either a sub-committee of the CRC or a special committee created by the Executive Committee) to specifically address furthering this Bill within Virginia. Our immediate strategy would be to approach specific members with experience and knowledge of the politics of this area to serve on this committee. Then, we would look to build a coalition of groups within Virginia to sign on to a letter of support. These would be used to approach our legislatures and encourage them to either sign on as co-sponsors or provide letters of support. All the funding for this program would come from existing revenue generated from natural resource extractions on public lands and reallocated to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account which was established in the State Wildlife Grants program but never funded by Congress.
4. The CRC would also like to provide comment on the Virginia Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries Future Direction: Our Vision, Mission, and Goals document posted on the web at <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/about/future-direction/>. First, we would like to know if VATWS was represented at the stakeholder meetings (Lauren, Galon?) for this effort. Otherwise we will compile comments from the CRC and post by the September 30 deadline.

Respectfully submitted - SDK