Virginia's Natural Resources Newsletter

May 10, 2012 Number 8

Dear Team Natural Resources,

Over the past few months, the Commonwealth has had great news and I wanted to share that with you all, on behalf of the Governor. In March, we learned that new corporate facilities and expansions in Virginia increased by 44% in 2011. The following day, came word that the state's unemployment rate had fallen to 5.8%, the lowest rate in 3 years, and that agricultural exports reached a record high of $2.35 billion for the year. On March 14, the Secretary of Finance announced that state revenues had jumped by 17.2% for the month of February. March 19 we learned that Virginia was named as the top state in America to make a living, as reported by MoneyRates.com, up from fourth place last year. These positive announcements demonstrate that, together, we are improving the quality of life throughout the Commonwealth.

Additionally, the Governor was successful in passing 88% of his legislative package during the General Assembly. The Governor's legislative priorities were focused on the core functions of government, including investing in K-12 and higher education, jobs and economic development, reforming the retirement system, government reform, transportation, public safety, energy, and efforts to make Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in America. For Natural Resources, 90% of our bills passed and 100% of the Governor's Energy Bills passed.

The omnibus government reform bill (SB678/HB1291) included many reforms that touched the Natural Resources secretariat including the elimination of several boards including: the Virginia Council on Indians, the Boating Advisory Committee, the Foundation for Virginia's Natural Resources, the Virginia Scenic River Board (transferring the duties to the Board of Conservation and Recreation), and the Chippokes Farm Foundation (transferring the interests to the Department of Conservation and Recreation); the movement of programs to better align with agency missions, including the transfer of the environmental education programs from the Department of Environmental Quality to the Department of Conservation and Recreation and moving the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program from the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board to the State Water Control Board with a study of water quality programs in the Commonwealth. All of these changes will improve service to the taxpayers.

Several initiatives passed encouraging development of renewable thermal energy and including landfill gas in the definition of renewable energy, improving the approval process for 138kV transmission lines, increasing energy efficiency programs by requiring the State Corporation Commission to consider all four cost benefit tests, creating the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Conversion Fund to assist in the conversion of the state fleet, and encouraging research and development of renewable energy technologies.

As a Commonwealth, we have enjoyed a number of encouraging announcements relating to the economy and quality of life. Many of these great accomplishments are due in large part to your hard work and tireless service to Virginia. I would sincerely like to thank you all for everything that you do.

Agency Heads Meet at Wintergreen

At the end of April, all of the Natural Resources agency heads and the Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources met at Wintergreen for a day-long meeting to discuss a variety of issues and provide updates about their respective agencies.

Pictured from L to R: Kathleen Kilpatrick, DHR; Maureen Matsen, Deputy Secretary; Doug Domenech, Secretary; David Paylor, DEQ.

Governor Hosts Corporate Sustainability Roundtable

Governor McDonnell convened a roundtable on corporate sustainability with sustainability officers from Virginia companies, state employees who work with sustainability issues and representatives from Virginia universities and nonprofits. Invited guests included state officials, industry representatives and public high education representatives.

After the discussion concluded, Governor McDonnell ceremonially signed the High Performance Buildings Act, House Bill 1167 (Delegate Chris Jones) and Senate Bill 160 (Senator Chap Petersen). The bill promotes effective energy and environmental standards for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of executive branch agency buildings.

Pictured Above L to R: Jeff Novak, AOL Paid Services; Bob Blue, Dominion Resources; Jennifer Hunter, Altria Client Services; Governor Bob McDonnell; Dennis Treacy, Smithfield Foods; Phil Cavatoni, Alpha Natural Resources; Mark Watkins, MeadWestvaco.

Domenech and Kilpatrick Participate in Evergreen Cemetery Historic Marker Ceremony

Both Doug Domenech and Kathleen Kilpatrick participated in the dedication of the cemetery marker during a Sunday afternoon ceremony at Evergreen. Evergreen, established in 1891, was intended to be a burial ground every bit as glorious as Hollywood Cemetery for Richmond's black community, and Maggie Walker and other early 20th-century black leaders are buried there. The cemetery has fallen into disrepair, although with renewed community interest and the formation of an active cemetery friends group, it is hoped that restoration efforts will be furthered by the dedication of the new highway marker, which a student group at Maggie Walker Governor's School sponsored. Students and faculty advisors participated in the dedication, which was covered by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*; radio stations WRVA and WCVE also featured stories the following day.

http://www2.timesdispatch.com/news/2012/mar/26/historical-marker-dedicated-at-evergreen-cemetery-ar-1793364/)

Domenech Receives Virginia Tech Alumni Award

Doug Domenech, a 1978 forestry and wildlife management alumnus who has served as Virginia's secretary of natural resources since 2010, received the Alumni Award of Achievement from the College of Natural Resources and Environment. "We wanted to honor Doug for his leadership and many contributions in serving natural resources agencies and organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation over his career," said Dr. Winistorfer, Dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

Appalachian Trail Conference Memorandum of Understanding

Members of the Appalachian Trail Conference and the National Park Service met with the Secretary and Department of Conservation and Recreation Director David Johnson and Virginia Outdoors Foundation Executive Director Bob Lee to discuss the Appalachian Trail's Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth. Virginia has the longest section of the Appalachian Trail (544 miles) stretching from Washington County to Clarke County.

NBC News Visits with VIMS for a Ghost Pot Success Story

On March 21, Secretary Domenech joined Kirk Havens of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and watermen, to promote the success achieved in Virginia's Marine Debris Removal Program, more commonly known as the Ghost Pot Program. Along for the trip was a NBC News reporter. The story has just been completed and with any luck, it will air on Nightly News with Brian Williams in the near future.

Museum of the Confederacy Ribbon Cutting in Appomattox

Secretary Domenech and Deputy Secretary Maureen Matsen attended the ribbon cutting for the Museum of the Confederacy in Appomattox. Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling spoke at the event (picture left) which included both Union and Confederate re-enactors (pictured below).

Transfer of Command Ceremony for Norfolk District, Army Corps of Engineers

On March 16, Colonel Paul Olsen took command of the Norfolk Office for the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Colonel Olsen replaces Colonel Andrew Backus who is heading to Afghanistan. As the Norfolk District Commander, Olsen will manage the organization's dual military and civil works mission of engineering, construction and water resource management.

The Secretary and Deputy Secretary Anthony Moore attended the change of command ceremony.

Pictured Left: Colonel Olsen attends the Environment Virginia conference.

Department of the Interior Makes Energy Announcement

The Department of the Interior announced that it is taking steps to assess the conventional and renewable energy resource potential in the Mid and South Atlantic. The draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), released for public comment, will help inform future decisions about whether, and if so where, leasing would be appropriate in these areas. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar (shown right) speaks at a press conference with BOEM Director Tommy P. Beaudreau, Secretary of Natural Resources, Doug Domenech and Tom McNeilan from Fugro Atlantic watching.

Environment Virginia 2012

The 23rd Annual Environment Virginia Symposium was held April 10-12 at the Virginia Military Institute, was attended by over 760 people and included presentations from over 150 experts, affording all the opportunity to exchange information related to the future of Virginia's environment and address issues such as promoting sustainability.

The 2012 recipients of this year's Erchul Environmental Leadership Award were E. Cabell Brand and Timothy G. Hayes, Hunton & Williams.

This year's opening panel included former and current natural resources secretaries Preston Bryant, Becky Norton Dunlop, Tayloe Murphy, J.P. Woodley, and Doug Domenech. The discussion focused on the top environmental challenges faced during their tenure as Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth.

Governor McDonnell Signs Bills Advancing Virginia's Effort to Become the Energy Capital of the East Coast

Governor Bob McDonnell ceremonially signed 13 pieces of legislation that will advance Virginia as the "Energy Capital of the East Coast" in Richmond. The legislation continues Governor McDonnell's "all of the above" strategy for advancing development of Virginia's energy resources. The signing took place at the Science Museum of Virginia in front of the "Watt Wall," which displays in real time figures on Virginia and world energy consumption. A fifth grade class from Ellis Elementary School in Prince William County was also present and Governor McDonnell thanked them for joining and encouraged them to pursue interests in science and math.

"Virginia is the energy capital of the East Coast and we have a head start compared to other states. We have sustained winds off of the Atlantic coast, bountiful coalfields in southwestern Virginia, rich natural gas deposits along with some of the top scientists and research institutions in the world. We must work with industry and stakeholder groups to continue to aggressively work to harness these energy resources to provide affordable and reliable energy to our families and businesses. This year's legislative package strengthens and adds flexibility to the expansion of our energy infrastructure, which is a key component in attracting new economic development and jobs to the Commonwealth. It also supports the expansion of alternative energy resources and positions Virginia to lead in adoption and development of these important alternatives."

Pictured above, from L to R: Governor McDonnell, Delegate Jackson Miller, Senator Bill Stanley, Delegate Will Morefield, Senator Bill Carrico, Delegate Terry Kilgore, Delegate Israel O'Quinn, and Delegate Mike Watson.

Pictured L: Governor McDonnell signs Delegate Poindexter's legislation, HB1016, establishing the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Conversion Fund.

VIRGINIA COULD BE AN ENERGY POWER—IF WASHINGTON WOULD LET IT

Wall Sreet Journal - May 1, 2012

In 2010, my state was poised to become the first on the East Coast permitted to produce oil and natural gas offshore. Then politics intervened.

By BOB MCDONNELL

When President Obama endorsed an "all of the above" energy strategy in this year's State of the Union address, he gave the impression that he was finally adopting an aggressive policy. Unfortunately, the president's words are worlds apart from his actions—especially when it comes to developing our nation's abundant offshore oil and natural gas resources.

To see that disconnect in action, look at the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2010, Virginia was poised to become the first state on the East Coast permitted to produce oil and natural gas offshore. In 2007, the federal government had designated certain offshore areas as available for oil and gas leases, raising the prospect of thousands of new jobs and significant new revenues for the state and local governments.

However, our opportunity was extinguished and the lease sale canceled after November, when the Obama administration abruptly dropped Virginia from the government's latest leasing plan, with little explanation and even less regard for the strong bipartisan and public support for the offshore initiative. At a moment when we should be looking for every opportunity to safely produce more domestic energy, the Obama administration unilaterally declared a seven-year timeout.

Three months later, the president announced federal approval of leasing plans for wind-power development off the coast of Virginia. This was a welcome development; we are strong supporters of doing all we can to maximize our offshore wind opportunities in the Commonwealth. Taken together, however, the two decisions reflect a discordant approach to energy policy. There is no reason, other than political calculation, that we couldn't have been home to the East Coast's first offshore oil and natural gas development as well.

Virginia is not alone in playing witness to the president's apparent disdain for domestic oil and natural gas production. The administration's perpetual slow-walk approach is especially noticeable in the Gulf of Mexico and off Alaska's coast.

In the Gulf, delays in permitting have resulted in dramatically reduced investments. The Energy Information Administration projects that Gulf production will decrease by over 200,000 barrels per day in 2012 compared with levels before the president assumed office. Some studies, including one published last year by the energy research firm IHS CERA, have indicated that closing this gap could provide between 110,000 to 230,000 jobs across a multitude of sectors.

Meanwhile, in Alaska's Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, Shell, for instance, has been forced to spend $4 billion over five years on plan-development costs and other expenses of dealing with repeated permitting delays. These were not the result of deficiencies in proposed operational plans. They were caused by challenges and legal actions by environmental groups to delay or invalidate the proposed permits—actions that the current administration could review but did little to oppose.

It shouldn't take a herculean effort to approve a project that the host state strongly supports and that could generate 55,000 new jobs per year for 50 years, along with $145 billion in new payroll and $193 billion in additional government revenues over the same period.

If an "all of the above" energy strategy—one that includes offshore oil and natural gas development—is what the administration seeks, there is an organization willing to work with the president. The Outer Continental Shelf Governors Coalition is comprised of the governors of seven coastal states, including Virginia, Texas and Alaska.

In a letter to the president last month, the coalition outlined a number of steps that can be taken immediately to incorporate offshore energy production into a comprehensive national energy policy. They include increasing the speed and predictability of permitting and expanding access to new reserves. The president can implement all of these recommendations with the stroke of a pen. To date, he has not acknowledged our outreach.

During my term as governor, we have focused on making Virginia the energy capital of the East Coast. In just two years our state has taken aggressive actions to harness the power of offshore wind and promote greater utilization of solar energy. Had the president not stopped Virginia's offshore oil and gas efforts, a portion of the revenue from those efforts would have gone—under a law passed during my term of office—to renewable energy research.

We remain committed to developing Virginia's offshore oil and gas. Energy is the lifeblood of our nation's economic growth. More energy means more jobs and we need to use all of our domestic energy resources.

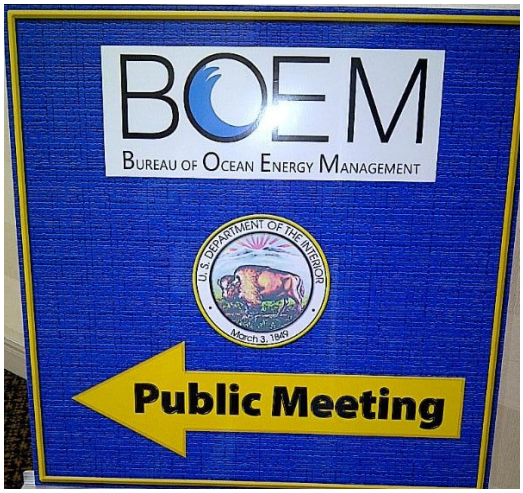
Mr. McDonnell is governor of Virginia and chairman of the Republican Governors Association.

Whales 100 miles from the Ocean?

Carmel Church is the signature project of the Research and Collections efforts of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The Museum has a goal to raise $4000 for field work in 60 days. Please spread the word about making contributions to a great cause. More information can be found at the link below:

http://www.petridish.org/projects/saving-fossil-whales-in-virginia

Domenech Testifies in Norfolk at BOEM Public Meeting



On April 24, Secretary Domenech traveled to Norfolk to provide testimony related to Virginia's position on the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for proposed geological and geophysical (G&G) activities in the Mid and South Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) .

The information obtained by G&G surveys would be used to make informed business decisions regarding oil and gas reserves, engineering decisions regarding the construction of renewable energy projects, and informed estimates regarding the composition and volume of marine mineral resources.

For more information, visit the BOEM website.

Secretary Presents Congressman Goodlatte with a Proclamation

Secretary Domenech participated in a Farm Bureau event in Keezletown, Virginia. As part of the event, the Secretary presented a Governor's proclamation honoring Congressman Bob Goodlatte for winning the American Farm Bureau Federation's "Golden Plow" Award.

More information on the award can be found here.

Governor and Secretary Domenech Plant Trees During Earth Week at Pocahontas State Park

Governor Bob McDonnell participated in an earth week tree planting and nature hike with elementary school students. On the nature hike, they identified trees including Red oak, birch, poplar, sweet gum and sassafras. The event took place at Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield.

Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield County is Virginia's largest state park at 7,950 acres. It was originally developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a federal recreation area and became Pocahontas State Park in the 1940s. The name was chosen through a naming contest among school children.

For more pictures, click here.

Jack Travelstead Sworn in as New Commissioner of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Jack Travelstead was sworn in on April 30 as the new Commissioner of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. He has served with the VMRC since March 1, 1981 and has been chief of the Fisheries Management Division since 1984, and deputy commissioner since 2006.

Travelstead was appointed Acting Commissioner by Governor McDonnell on March 22, 2012, when former Commissioner Steven G. Bowman retired from state service.

Pictured right: Jenni Aulgur, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth swears in Commissioner Jack Travelstead at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond.

Secretary Speaks at Christendom College in Front Royal

The Secretary discussed natural resources management issues with the students and presented an overview of the natural resources secretariat. Pictured to the left is Dr. Bernie Way, a professor at Christendom College.

State Parks Director wins National Award

Joe Elton, state parks director with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, was recently awarded a 2012 Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners. The award was presented at the NARRP annual meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Elton was recognized both for his work with the Virginia State Park system, as immediate past president of the National Association of State Park Directors and as a founder and the current president of the America's State Park Foundation.

The distinguished service award is presented annually to those who have made significant and lasting contributions to the outdoor recreation profession. The award recognized Elton's "lifetime of leadership and significant and lasting contributions to the outdoor recreation profession and America's State Parks."

Sara Benghauser Participates in the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute

Special Assistant for Policy and Legislation, Sara Benghauser (middle), participated in the fifth session of VNRLI which took place in Southwest Virginia. This most recent session focused on rural economics and challenges and opportunities related to mining, among other issues involving leadership.

Along with some of her classmates, she hiked to the top of Molly's Knob at Hungry Mother State Park, pictured left.

For more information about VNRLI, click here.

How well do you know your Agency Head/Secretary?

1. I built my own blacksmith shop from scratch.	A) Doug Domenech (SNR)
2. I used to race homing pigeons as a hobby.	B) Maureen Matsen (SNR)
3. I went to Albert H. Hill Middle School.	C) Anthony Moore (SNR)
4. I play a mean game of chess.	D) David Paylor (DEQ)
5. I own a Bassett Hound.	E) Jack Travelstead (MRC)
6. I was a deadhead.	F) David Johnson (DCR)
7. I fell into a crevasse.	G) Parker Gochenour (SNR)
8. I was born in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.	H) Joe Keiper (VMNH)
9. I played the harp for fourteen years.	I) I'man Robinson (SNR)
10. I got an alligator for Easter.	J) Bob Duncan (DGIF)
11. I met my spouse, and got married, in Nags Head.	K) Kathleen Kilpatrick (DHR)

Match the statement on the left with the agency head/secretariat staff listed on the right.

Answers: 1:H, 2:E, 3:C, 4:J, 5:G, 6:K, 7:A, 8:F, 9:I, 10:D, 11:B

Caption Contest

"I will say that as a former museum entomologist I'm a little embarrassed to be seen holding an animal contaminated by a backbone in this issue… "
VMNH Executive Director, Joe Keiper,
on his adoption of a dog, Chili, shown right.

"I said I wanted a "lobbyist," not a "slobbery wrist."
John McKie, DEQ

"Like the President, I too, find the taste irresistible."
Anonymous