



# *Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance*

## *Powhatan, Virginia*

### *October 3, 2008*

## **Houndsmen to March on DGIF**

### **October 23rd**

Everyone that values Hunting with Hounds needs to come to Richmond on October 23, 2008 to tell the DGIF Board that we will not stand still for their ANTI-HUNTING actions any longer! Their Hound “study” has been a thinly veiled POLITICAL ploy to divide Sportsmen while they chip away at all hunting! This is the same group that has overseen the attempt to pass a regulatory ban on tracking collars (2002), the African Safari and credit card scandals, and wanted to eliminate the use of live birds in retriever and bird dog field trails (2007).

We need to tell all of Virginia that DGIF is using our money against us for a radical animal rights political agenda and we simply will no longer stand for it! Get everyone to join us at 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, for the Board meeting that begins at 9:00 AM. If you don't take a day of vacation now, your week of hunting vacation will not matter later!

## **SAC Recommends Modifying the Right-to-Retrieve Law**

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee has completed its job of giving political cover to DGIF's effort to attack hunting with Hounds in Virginia. Don't be fooled that this is only a modest change. If the legislature were to take up a bill to modify the substance of the RTR it would open the entire law to change with no guarantee that it would provide any protection for your dogs or for landowners. This is Pandora's Box because it would allow the HSUS and P.E.T.A. to come out from behind DGIF and openly lobby for elimination or change of the RTR. Thousands of Sportsmen must come to Richmond in defense of this important law on October 23 when the DGIF Board meets and again during the early days of the legislature in January! **Make no mistake these recommendations are a serious threat to the traditions you love!**

Disregarding the input of thousands of Sportsmen at the seven public hearings Mr. Duncan's handpicked members of the committee voted 13 to 5 to amend the Right to Retrieve law (Sam Goodloe Law, §18.2-136)

(continued on Page 2 see: SAC Recommends)

## **SAC Recommends (continued from Page 1)**

- *Hunters would be required to make a reasonable attempt to contact landowner prior to retrieval of hounds from posted private property,*
- *Landowners would be required to thoroughly post their property with contact information, and*
- *Private property that is not properly posted would be presumed open to retrieval.*

*It may be necessary to make exceptions to these modifications for treeing hounds (i.e., raccoon, bear, and fox hounds) that are trained not to leave quarry unless called off by hunters.*

There were only two of the nine members of the committee that were supposed to represent hound hunters that voted against this measure. Those members are David Steger, representing bear hunters, Lyndell Price, representing coon hunters. We thank them for their courage and steadfast defense of our Heritage. Please note that all three Fox hunters, all three hound deer hunters and the rabbit hunter voted to modify the RTR despite overwhelming opposition by Virginia's hunting public. Deer Hunter John Rawls called for repeal of the entire law. Wilmer Stoneman of the Farm Bureau representing landowners spoke in favor of amending or abolishing the RTR!

Another serious concern to Virginia's Houndsmen is the Recommendation voted on 14-4 to change chase seasons with so many caveats or stipulations that this horse may come out looking like a cross between a camel and a giraffe. You can see the details of this recommendation on-line <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting/hounds/sac-final-recommendations.pdf>

Those hound hunting "representatives" that voted against this recommendation are David Steger, representing bear hunters, Lyndell Price, representing coon hunters and William Easter, representing non-mounted foxhunters .

A third recommendation voted on by Mr. Duncan's hand picked crew casts 15 votes for, 3 votes against, recommends *that the VDGIF Board address road hunting so that:*

- *Hunting of property where permission has not been granted would be curtailed;*
- *"LINING THE ROADS" (i.e., vehicles along roads) would be reduced or curtailed;*
- *This does not affect RTR*

*Specific changes to rules or laws should be established through the existing regulation development and/or general assembly protocol.*

Those members voting against this dangerous proposal are David Steger, representing bear hunters, Lyndell Price, representing coon hunters and John Payne representing Hound Deer hunters.

There are a total of eleven recommendations that can be found at: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting/hounds/sac-final-recommendations.pdf> A number of them will require legislative authorization (Do you really think this isn't POLITICAL?). The remaining items will, if acted upon; require the Board to advertise and hold public hearings, probably beginning in February, before enactment, becoming effective on July 1, 2009.

The DGIF Board has the next move. They will receive these recommendations in Richmond at their headquarters, 4010 West Broad Street on October 23 beginning at 9:00 AM. They will then decide if they wish to include any items, such as the RTR, in their legislative package to go to the General Assembly. Note that this is Gover-

## SAC Recommends (continued from Page 2)

nor Kaine's last year in office and therefore his last chance to sign or veto legislation. Since this study took place at his direction, we feel sure that they intend to go forward with their anti-hunting proposals if not as part of the administration package, then certainly with bills carried by other friends! WE WILL FACE THEM IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JANUARY!

## DGIF and the SAC Ignore Public Input

In the spirit of Bob Duncan's assertion in Bill Cochran's column last fall that "hunters had their chance", the anti-hunters have now had their chance... in the form of ready made for them public hearings.

The results: only two or three cared enough to speak up at each meeting, at best 15-20 statewide, vs. well over 200 who spoke in favor of hunting with dogs as practiced and against DGIF's using bogus complaint numbers, and generally biasing the facts to justify their "Study".

DGIF and the anti hunters had their chance at (expensive) open public hearings, and the results below showed how few they were and how little they cared. We have no doubt that the Virginia public and their state legislators will no longer be fooled, if they ever were, by assertions of significant opposition to hunting with dogs as presently practiced. While Virginia's Sportsmen were denied the opportunity to observe the SAC proceeding more that 2000 attended the hearings in support of hunting with hounds.

### Legend:

**First number:** Speakers advocating continuing with present practice, enforce present laws, criticize DGIF for multiple reasons

**Second number:** Against hound hunting as presently practiced, or criticize some aspect of hunters' behavior

**Third number:** Neutral or unable to tell where the speaker stood

Wytheville	20-0
Harrisonburg	17-3
Bowling Green	35-3
Appomattox	30-2-1
Suffolk	35-3-1
Warrenton	43-4-2
Gretna	33-1

# Lingamfelter and Burch to Co-Chair Virginia Sportsmen for McCain-Palin

Delegate L. Scott Lingamfelter of Woodbridge and Kirby Burch of Powhatan have agreed to serve as Honorary Co-Chairmen of Virginia Sportsmen for McCain-Palin. Delegate Lingamfelter is Chairman of the Joint Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus in the General Assembly; Kirby Burch is Chairman of the Commonwealth Sportsmen’s Alliance and a Vice-Chairman of the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance.

Mr. Burch says he believes that Sportsmen have a clear choice this year for the ticket with a record of support for Conservation and our Second Amendment Rights.

The Commonwealth Sportsmen’s Alliance and the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance are Virginia non-partisan political action groups that do not take part in Federal elections and as such do not take positions on Federal elections as organizations. The Boards of both groups consist of individuals from both parties and independents.

## Public Safety Has Been Ignored

The Stakeholder Advisory group set up by DGIF was supposed to include representatives of all groups having a stake in the outcome of DGIF’s Hunting with Hounds “Study”. In matter of fact, a group having one of the largest stakes in the outcome of this study was conspicuous only by its absence. That group is Virginia’s motoring public. It may come as a surprise that excepting homo sapiens, the most dangerous animal in North America is neither the alligator, the bear, nor the cougar. The most dangerous animal is the deer, which accounts for some 200 deaths annually on the nation’s highways alone. In 2006 in Virginia, Deer-Vehicle Crashes, DVC’s for short, resulted in the insurance industry paying off 44,000 claims at an average of \$2800 each, or a sum of ~\$125 million. The 44,000 claims, the \$125 million ultimately paid by the motoring public is clearly nowhere near the total cost to the public. To put this issue in perspective consider the additional following numbers which are but a small part of the data in Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance study to be released later this fall which will contain full source information:

<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Year</b>	
<b>44,000</b>	2006	Property damage claims paid by Va. Insurance Industry for non commercial vehicle deer-auto crashes <sup>1</sup>
<b>\$2800</b>	2006	Average claim payout <sup>2</sup>
<b>\$125 million</b>	2006	Property damage claims payout
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	2006	Va. rank nationally in number of Deer-Auto crashes
<b>~1000</b>	2006	Personal injury claims ,including paraplegia, from deer-auto crashes
<b>\$10,000</b>	2006	Average injury claim from auto insurance industry (excluding health insurance)

(continued on Page 5 see: Public Safety )

## Public Safety (continued from Page 4)

Numbers	Year	
\$10,000,000	2006	Total injury claims Paid by auto insurers
6	2006	Virginia motorists killed in deer related -auto accidents
~100,000	06	Conservatively estimated sum of insurance claimed crashes, insurance ineligible crashes, unreported crashes.

Hunted deer quickly become nocturnal, retreating to the thickets in the East of I-95 region, which explains why 70% of the deer hunter pool are dog partnered.

With the deer population at 1 million and capable of doubling every three years, the question the DGIF and opponents of dog based deer hunting need to answer, now, before this study is concluded is how many more highway injuries and deaths, how much more economic damage, are you willing to pile on Virginia's motoring public to end the "complaints" said to be the basis for this study?

The irony of the DGIF recommending and the SAC agreeing to a new hunting-near-the-road setback rule "in the name of public safety" when the incidence of deer related accidents and injuries is infinitely higher than hunter caused accidents and injuries, displays monumental disregard for public safety. It's daytime hunters who are out there driving down the nighttime deer crashes. Squeeze out deer hunting with dogs and public safety in Eastern Va. will take a monumental hit. In summary, if you really want to decrease the carnage on the nighttime roads, encourage and facilitate hunting, including with hounds, because Hunting Saves Lives. The life, injury, or money saved just might be your own.

<sup>1</sup> Calculated from State Farm Va. claims and State Farm market share in Virginia

<sup>2</sup> Published State Farm data

## Virginia's Attorney General Releases Opinion Standing-Up for the Second Amendment!

Attorney General Bob McDonnell released an opinion in response to a request by State Senator Ken Cuccinelli (R-37th District) on whether or not the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has the authority to regulate the open carrying of firearms in state parks.

In his official opinion, Attorney General McDonnell found that, "*no specific statutory authority granting the Department the authority to prohibit the open carrying of firearms in state parks. A person's right to carry a firearm openly is considered universal within the Commonwealth, subject to definite and limited restrictions upon certain locations and classifications of individuals.*" Please click to view the opinion:

<http://www.oag.state.va.us/OPINIONS/2008opns/08-043-Cuccinelli.pdf>

Copyright 2008, National Rifle Association of America, Institute for Legislative Action.

This may be reproduced. It may not be reproduced for commercial purposes

## **Voter Registration Deadline in October 6<sup>th</sup>**

All Sportsmen that care about their Sportsmen's Heritage must register so that their voice can be heard. If you are not registered to vote your representative will know that you don't care! Get your family and friends registered! Next year's election (November 2009) for the House of Delegates and Governor will be the most important election for Virginia hunters in the last 90 years! Voter registration is easy.

Register to Vote

Use this link to find information on how to register to vote, or you can

[http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Voter\\_Information/Registering\\_to\\_Vote/Index.html](http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/Voter_Information/Registering_to_Vote/Index.html)

download your voter registration application now.

[http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/documents/VoterRegistration/sbe\\_voter\\_app\\_DOJ-Printed.pdf](http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/cms/documents/VoterRegistration/sbe_voter_app_DOJ-Printed.pdf).

Or go to any DMV office or to your County voter registrar, please do wait do it now! Every hunt club should make voter registration a condition for membership.

## **SPORTSMEN FOR WARNER**

While we do not make endorsements in Federal elections it is interesting to note that the opening sentence of the press release announcing former Governor Mark Warner's Sportsmen's Committee touts the endorsement of ten of the eleven members of the DGIF Board. It is this Board, appointed by Governors Warner and Kaine, that brought us the attempt to pass a regulatory a ban on tracking collars, the African Safari and credit card purchases scandals, proposed to eliminate the use of live birds in retriever and bird dog field trails and now the Hound Study. This Board is first and foremost a political arm of the Governor. They have repeatedly used divide and conquer tactics to turn non-hound hunting Sportsmen against fellow hunters. The ten members that are part of this group do not include the representative for Eighth District, Randy Kozuch, who currently serves as the Director of State and Local Affairs for the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action, a position he has held since 1994. As Director, he is charged with managing the Association's legislative agenda and political activities in all fifty states.

## **DGIF Tries to Dance a Side-step**

A central question for hound hunters the public and even the legislature since DGIF's board authorized the study in July, 2007 has been what (and who) prompted this study. DGIF's justification (given by now Executive Director Bob Duncan at the July meeting) was a greatly increased level of complaints received from the public with reference to some other states and some large landowning corporations anti-dog hunting actions thrown in. VHDA quickly showed that Virginia law prohibited the kind of liability cited by the largest corporate landowner in restricting dog based hunting and that issue hasn't been heard from again.

Hunters immediately asked for the data supporting the complaints at the July 07 Richmond hearing and continued asking at every opportunity. Some months later DGIF responded with the number of complaints: some 950. After

## **Side-step (continued from Page 6)**

repeated requests for the raw data were ignored, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request from VHDA determined that DGIF records showed that only some 375 complaints over 2 ½ years could possibly be dog hunting related, and these were “unverified”. DGIF then changed strategy and had Dr. Steve McMullen leader of the SAC effort begin each of the 7 public hearings with an explanation of how the real reason for the study were actions taken in some other states which resulted in some areas being put off limits to dog hunting.

Now only a month later, (and some 15 months after the DGIF Board authorization) Executive Director Bob Duncan states in an editorial in the Oct. 08 issue of Va. Wildlife that the study “was not based on the number of complaints, but on the nature of the complaints received” i.e. some of the complainants were angry.

The easy manner in which DGIF leadership just shifted justifications for the core issue for hunters is similarly reflected in its handling of the public input to the SAC issue. Confident that its belief that widespread public resentment existed toward dog based hunting in the public at large, DGIF set up an unscientific push poll with questions designed to reflect the worst urban legends about dog based hunters. Not getting the desired results, little more was heard from the push poll. Public Hearings were however scheduled just before the last SAC meeting, giving anti-hunters another chance. At its last meeting prior to these hearings, the SAC had voted down recommending any changes to the Virginia Right to Retrieve law and any changes to chase seasons, voting only to recommend a uniform statewide road hunting setback law to replace those presently in effect in all Virginia Counties.

It should be noted that the DGIF/VT team barred the public from observing the SAC proceedings and constantly limited discussion of this very complex subject to force the Stakeholders to ignore any DGIF staff shortcomings.

The 7 public hearings (attended by some 2000 plus) were a disaster for DGIF’s assertions of widespread public resentment, as an average of only 2 to 3 speakers advocated change in current Va. law, whereas an average of some 30-35 advocated retention of existing law and criticized DGIF for lax enforcement of existing law, misspent sportsmen’s money, failure to publicize dog hunters huge economic impact and massive contribution to the public safety of Va.’s motoring public. (See DGI and SAC on page 3) These results could have been predicted had DGIF paid any attention to the fact that the governing boards of 24 Va. counties (23 unanimously) had adopted identical or very similar resolutions enumerating the many benefits of dog based hunting, expressing satisfaction with existing law, and calling for better enforcement of same.

The 7 public hearings were lightly attended by SAC and DGIF Board members, some SAC members (including some of those appointed to represent hound hunters) didn’t attend any meetings and no more than one of 11 Board members was present at any single hearing. Most Board members couldn’t be bothered to attend any meetings!

In spite of the overwhelming lack of public support demonstrated at the public hearings, the SAC reversed itself and voted to recommend changes to the Right to Retrieve law and to chase seasons. The latter are wholly or partly embedded in law, requiring legislative changes. Hunting dogs representatives on the SAC were unaware of or ignored that once a bill is introduced into the legislature, no one can guarantee how it will or won’t be changed, i.e. that the recommended course has worse odds than Russian roulette.

(continued on Page 8 see: Side-step)

## **Side-step (continued from Page 7)**

DGIF Executive Director Bob Duncan told twenty-five members of the General Assembly at a combined Joint Senate/House Retreat of the Agriculture/Conservation Committees of both bodies held at Bear Creek Lake State Park on October 1, that he did not believe that the DGIF Board would recommend including recommendations from the study in the Administration's legislative package this year (2009 session). It was very clear that most legislative members expect to see those recommendations submitted as as attempts to change the present law by "legislative friends" of the Administration.

# **All Sportsmen Must Become Ambassadors for Hunting**

The Hound study has elevated all hunting in the public mind. DGIF has branded you as criminals in the eyes of many. The Humane Society of the United States in the letter to the Hound Study said, "As the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) points out, the public is opposed to the use of hounds for chasing and hunting wildlife and at the very least supports restriction of this practice, but these sentiment were ignored by the SAC." This ultra-radical organization, that has been linked to and endorses the terrorist organizations the Environmental Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), is try to smear Virginia Hound Hunting.

We have proven that the Hound Hunting community is law-abiding. We also know that there are a few 'bad actors' in our midst. Every hunter must do three things:

### **1. Obey and Enforce the Law**

Every hunter must not only obey the game laws, but must report violators in their midst. We cannot tolerate lawlessness among our ranks. The law applies to all who hunt, **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Make sure that the people you hunt with have a copy and have read the entire game regulation summary! VHDA took a small ad in the publication to show our support for following the law. Report violators! This study has inflamed many people, watch for people stealing dogs, removing tracking collars and harassing hunters. You must politely demand that the law enforcement officers enforce the law!

The Code of Virginia allows you to retrieve your dog from private property that you are otherwise prohibited from entering. If you do so, get your dog(s) and get off the property as quickly and quietly as possible. After all the property does not belong to you. Leave no trash, close gates and if approached by a landowner, Be Polite! You have a right to retrieve your dog, but please ask permission first if you can. Often you are in a hurry to catch a dog before he gets into the road or away from you, please remember to stop at the house and tell the landowner why you were there and thank them for being understanding. Do not get into arguments, while the law is on your side you need all the friends you can get!

Meeting the landowners around the area you hunt before the season begins is the best "scouting time" you can spend. Get to know the neighbors! Landowner relations are extremely important! It costs nothing to be polite and respectful of everyone you meet. Treat others as you would be treated is part of the moral code of every one of the

(continued on Page 9 see: Ambassadors)

## **Ambassadors (continued from Page 8)**

worlds major religions. We, as hunters, must do a better job of respecting people that disagree with us.

### **2. Educate Your Fellow Hunters**

Make sure the folks you hunt with know the law and the rules, and have the correct attitude about exercising their rights! If you let those you hunt with know that you expect ethical behavior, they will either agree or hunt elsewhere. Conservation ethic has been passed down from father to son for centuries. Clubs and hunting groups need to be aware that we are the “original conservationists”, and they must teach the new guy and not just children, the right way (and why) of doing things. If we fail to do this our future in the outdoors we love may be bleak indeed. The VHDA will begin to talk more about ethical hunting practices, not to preach to anyone, but to develop a consensus Code of Ethics. Remember that while some groups of hunters are not standing with you now, we must be ready to welcome them back into the Sportsmen’s fold because we must be united against a well funded foe.

### **3. Talk about hunting to the non-hunting public**

Everyone who hunts must become an Ambassador for hunting and especially hunting with dogs. The non-hunting person that lives in an apartment or on a quarter acre in a sub-division has the same vote that you do on Election Day. The HSUS and P.E.T.A. are raising hundreds of millions of dollars by misleading folks to believe that they care about animal welfare, when they are radical vegans who want to end the domestication of animals and prevent you from eating meat. They don’t care that your animals are among the best treated and cared for animals in existence. They intentionally mislead the public into believing that what you do when you hunt or in the manner that you care for your dogs is cruel.

You are the best defense against their lies. Most of us love our dogs (my wife sometimes thinks too much) and our pride in them shows. Talk to non-hunters about the care of dogs, how much they love to run, tell them about the role that hunting plays in public safety. Most Virginians have either had an auto accident or know someone who has within the last year or two. Use the information about the economic impact of hunting with dogs on the Virginia economy. All thinking Americans are concerned about the economic well being of our nation.

Most Virginians who do not hunt, but have some knowledge of the controversy think it has to do with complaints. We have provided you with all the proof you need to dispel that. See our web site for the complaint number by county. Remember that DGIF has only obtained an average of 179 conviction per year for the last three years for trespassing statewide! Those convictions were not about hunting with dogs they were for All hunting, fishing and trapping. That is less than two per county per year! DGIF has tried to convince anybody who would listen that there are many un-recorded complaints or that local sheriff departments would not do their job and turn the complaint over to DGIF. The statewide conviction record speaks for it self.

With a THREE BILLION DOLLAR state budget shortfall they are asking for more wardens! The bureaucrats want more money, more authority. They grow like kudzu and consume everything. But they have forgotten that you the hunter and fisherman pay their salary! When they begin to remember who they are paid by, we will support them, but not before!

The early deer season in the Cities of Virginia Beach, Chesapeake and Suffolk opened on October 1, this year.

## **Ambassadors (continued from Page 9)**

VHDA Board member John Morse reports that while retrieving some dogs from a neighboring landowners property on opening day, the owner who was new to the area and a non-hunter, helped them retrieve their dogs and was very friendly. John did as many of you would do, later went back to thank the neighbor personally and to properly introduce himself.

It seems this gentleman boarded horses on his property. He asked John if he was involved with the group that had the big meeting a few months back in the area. He had heard that all the hunters were up in arms and were organizing. He said, "You know it occurred to me that the same folks that are after you, don't want me to keep horses either, I'm with you!"

## **Make a donation to the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance**

Membership in your Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance costs nothing. We the Board believe that there is strength in numbers and that by not having a membership fee the Alliance will grow faster and give a voice to more people. The generosity of our member clubs, organizations and individual members has enabled us to "Have a seat at the table" when your rights are being discussed. We have strived to be responsible stewards of your money. We believe that we will face a barrage of bills seeking to amend the Right-to-Retrieve and place other restrictions on hunting with dogs. Our opponents are extremely well funded.

In uncertain economic times we are asking all who can to contribute to the VHDA. Our victory fund will need to cover lobbying costs for the upcoming General Assembly and for supporting the re-election of our friends to the House of Delegates next year. We will help elect a Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General next year. If we don't help keep our friends in the legislature and get statewide office holders that support us we will face four more years of hard fights that may happen even with friends in office. We would not ask if there were not a need.

Please help make to the your Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance strong by sending your donation to:

**Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance  
P.O. Box 657  
Powhatan, Virginia 23139.**

Contributions are not deductible for tax purposes

*Stand up and be Counted  
March  
on  
Richmond*

*October 23rd !*

All VHDA Board members are real hunters who own dogs. The VHDA has no paid staff. We pay our own expenses because "We HAVE a dog in this fight!" If we sometimes sound angry, it is because we are! We would prefer to be hunting, teaching our children about the wonders that God has given us and training our dogs. We know that we must have a strong voice or we will lose to people, who not only disagree with you... but hate and revile you because you hunt.

*We pray for loving and forgiving hearts and that we will be ever mindful of the needs of others.*

Copyright August 2008, Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance, P.O. Box 657 Powhatan, Virginia 23139.

Permission is granted to copy and distribute this publication in its original form only. Copy and spread this Newsletter far and wide.

Authorized by the Commonwealth Sportsmen's Alliance