



# *Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance*

## *Powhatan, Virginia*

### *June 6, 2009*

## **BOB McDONNELL FOR GOVERNOR**



The eyes of the nation are on Virginia. America is waiting to see if we are destined to be a Socialist nation or if the pendulum will swing back this November. We believe that Virginians will reject the ultra liberal politics of the National Democrat party this year in favor of commonsense values. It must start this November in Virginia.

We proudly endorse former Attorney General Bob McDonnell to be the next Governor of Virginia. Bob has been a friend to Sportsmen during his time in the Legislature and as Attorney General and we believe that he is the best man to lead Virginia for the next four years.

Bob McDonnell is a strong supporter of sportsmen's rights and he believes in preserving these rights for future Virginians. When asked recently about his stand on hunting rights, he said, *"As Governor, I will continue to stand up for the rights of all hunters. I believe that we must vigilantly defend this tradition by upholding the rights of all law abiding citizens to own a firearm, hunt with dogs, and to leave to future generations pristine areas to hunt and fish. Hunters understand firsthand that these rights must be protected, and while I support animal welfare, I am opposed to animal rights and will remain committed to sportsmen's rights to hunt with dogs. I pledge to preserve the proud heritage of all Virginia's sportsmen and to ensure that we continue to pass on all of our hunting traditions."*

Visit his campaign website <http://www.bobmcdonnell.com/index.php/site/>. Help Bob McDonnell become the next "Sportsmen's Governor by proudly displaying a CSA PAC "Sportsmen for McDonnell" bumper sticker and by volunteering at <http://www.bobmcdonnell.com/index.php/site/action/> to help his campaign at a local event near your home. Vote for Bob McDonnell for Governor on November 3, 2009.

## **Pasquotank, N.C. Fight to Save Hunting with Hounds**

For several years, a very small group of landowners (basically 3 persons) in the Northeastern North Carolina County of Pasquotank have been involved in a series of complaints regarding the sport of deer-dog hunting within that county. As a result, the County Commissioners have recently indicated their collective desire to consider some sort of restriction and/or banning of the sport. While there has been some effort on the part of Pasquotank hound hunters to defend their heritage, these efforts were somewhat fragmented and did not appear to have much influence with the Commissioners. Due to the fact that I am a member of one of the largest deer dog clubs in Pasquotank, and that many of our members hunt/ and reside in NE North Carolina, I requested input from Kirby Burch and Reg Cook in late 2008 as to the appropriateness of VAHDA becoming involved in the ongoing debate. Their input indicated that our support to the hound hunters in that region would be appropriate.

As to background of the debate, many of the complaints made by the landowners mirrored those made by persons in Virginia during the VDGIF hound study in 2008. They basically centered on what these people considered to be trespassing by hunter's attempting to retrieve their dogs that had strayed out of hunt club leases. They also included direct accusations of dogs being intentionally cast on property on which hunters did not have permission to hunt. One person, who identified himself as a cattle farmer, indicated that deer dogs had on occasion chased his cattle and caused him general disruption. (At this point I must say that I have hunted around cattle directly for years, and have never seen bona fide deer hounds chase cattle.) At any rate, it is my understanding that these and other accusations were often vague and usually failed to identify the supposed offenders. Despite this, the situation continued to escalate, and the County Commissioners set a request for public input meeting to be held May 11, 2009. It is at this point that VAHDA became directly involved.

With considerable assistance from Reg, we produced information and posters to be presented at the meeting relating to the potential for increased car crashes with deer that would likely occur with the resultant increase in the deer population if deer dog hunting was restricted or banned. Further, we developed a strategy to provide input as to the positive economic influence deer dog hunting had for Pasquotank and NE North Carolina in general. As usual, Kirby provided us with strategy directives, which he felt would be beneficial.

The meeting was held as scheduled on May 11, and as was the case in the Virginia public input meetings, hound hunters were in attendance in large numbers. The Daily Advance, which covered the meeting, reported in its next day edition that hound hunting supporters outnumbered their detractors by 300 to 12! Both sides presented their input, and a follow up meeting has been proposed by the commissioners but not yet scheduled.

Were we successful? It is too early to tell. However, I am confident that we presented our case well and the commissioners received info they previously were unaware of. Personally, I feel the following is relevant after reflecting on this experience:

1. Most importantly, the situation in Pasquotank is a perfect illustration of what occurs when hunters are not involved in the political process at all levels. This is evidenced by apparent lack of support from a governing body in a county with a long and established hunting heritage such as Pasquotank. The need to continually assess the opinions of county commissioners and supervisors towards our sport in both N.C. and VA cannot be overstated.
2. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of grass roots organizing, regardless of the outcome. Simply getting people involved in the process who had previously never been involved politically is only one benefit of many attained from this effort.
3. Regardless of the outcome of this situation, it becomes increasingly obvious that the battle to defend our heritage is ongoing. We must be up to the challenge wherever it occurs.

Again, thanks to Reg and Kirby. Also to VAHDA members Wade Landers, Jay Council, Paul Garrett, Jeremy Council, James Hollingsworth and all others who helped in this effort and attended the meeting.

Submitted by John M. Morse, Jr.

The Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance is not trying to become established in North Carolina. To the contrary, the VHDA is focused on Virginia. We will not turn our back on brother hunters, nor will we ignore cross border threats. The HSUS is the enemy of every freedom loving, rational American. The bills that they are pushing this year in North Carolina, Tennessee and Missouri are the same basic bills that we faced in Virginia last year. There are a number of hunting dog groups in North Carolina that are fighting for their Heritage. We have heard that a group has formed a Statewide group called the North Carolina Hunting Dog Alliance. May God bless their efforts as he has blessed ours.

## **Mountain Lions in Virginia**

We have received over twenty reports of Mountain Lions, yes, as in Cougars, which our members have seen or treed since the first of the year. We have been provided several trail camera pictures and have watched a video.

A number of reports have come to us saying that DGIF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had released them in Southside Virginia. While we have seen the pictures and videos of what are clearly cougars, we are not going to speculate as to their source or number. That they are present in Virginia is clear. It has been suggested that they were released to keep the deer herd in check once hound hunting was eliminated, an interesting theory that is without proof at this point.

If you take a photo of a lion treed or find one on your trail camera, please send it to us!

Cougar picture was taken in Southside Virginia in May, 2009, with a trail camera.



## **Free NRA Membership**



The NRA is giving FREE 1-yr memberships to everyone who wants to join. They are trying to build up their membership to fight pending legislation that impacts our right to keep and bear arms. It is very important that anti-gun congressmen see how many people they will have to fight to get their legislation through.

<https://www.nrahq.org/nrabonus/accept-membership.asp>

**PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!!**

This can include spouses and children also. I would urge all of you to join the NRA if you are already not a member. Protect your 2nd Amendment rights. You might need them someday!

## **Dog Theft on the Increase**

What hunter hasn't lost a dog at sometime or other? With the advent of tracking collars most thought that it would be less likely to happen them. Sadly, it seems to be on the increase rather than the decline. Theft is the primary problem. Every Virginian who hunts with dogs needs to understand just how wide spread the problem has become.

Once a dog strays too far from its normal hunting grounds it becomes fair game for anyone who wants to steal a dog. Other hunters may keep (steal) a dog that strays on their property and hunt it until the end of the season only to turn it loose without regard for the law or the dog. Some landowners may pick up a dog that comes onto their property and carry it away to another county to release the dog or turn it into a pound. Still others may simply kill the dog. In all three of these cases the collars and identification have to be removed to prevent you from finding the dog. The tracking collar must then be turned off or destroyed and/or disposed of. The law has been broken several times at this point.

It is a class one misdemeanor in Virginia to remove a tracking collar (§ 18.2-97.1). The penalty may be up to a one thousand dollar fine and one year in prison. Obviously, there are other charges that may be filed related to the destruction or attempt to dispose of the collar. The theft of the dog (§ 18.2-97) or killing a dog (§ 18.2-144) are both class five felonies with prison time, fines and the loss of citizenship (loss of the right to keep and bear arms) as a consequence.

Everyone that hunts with a dog knows that there are thieves who steal dogs to sell and will of course try to sell the collars. If you buy dogs or collars from someone that has stolen them, whether or not you know it is stolen,

you can be charged with possession of stolen property (§ 18.2-108) and you will have to prove that you are an innocent victim rather than a willing accomplice. The deal that seems too good to be true usually is just that. Always get receipts and ask for identification!

The latest trend is organized theft by animal rights groups. Hunting dogs are picked up by individuals who have been encouraged to do so by a “humane organization” or local animal rights group. The collars are disposed of and the animal is taken to a pound or shelter in another county or simply released without collars far from home.

The reasons are varied, but the problem remains. A thief is a thief no matter what the reason. Too often when someone is caught they are charged with a lesser crime and the court gives them a slap on the wrist and they go off and do it again. Hunters are just glad to get the dog back and don’t want a “hassle” or think they need to hire an expensive lawyer. In a Southside County, this spring, a man was caught in the act of stealing a dog with a tracking collar on. The man was witnessed trying to destroy the collar with a hammer. The deputy sheriff only charged the man with destruction of private property, a lesser misdemeanor, when he could have been charged with theft of the dog, removing the tracking collar and several other crimes, in short... jail time for multiple offenses!

There are some things that you can do to protect your dogs and to help catch dog thieves:

- ❑ Take digital pictures of your dogs and record a careful description of the distinguishing feature of each individual. Something as simple as recording the variations in the color of a dog’s toes may be enough to prove your ownership in a court fight. If the dog has a single black toe on each of it’s front feet but not on it back feet and you have a written record of that you will prevail 99% of the time when ownership is an issue.
- ❑ Tattoo, freeze brand or implant microchips in your dogs. One well-known breeder and hunter of hounds is now freeze branding each of the ears of his dogs. He believes that this reduces the likelihood that casual thieves, who want to disrupt hunting, but are afraid of being caught, are less likely to pick up a dog so visibly marked because removing the collars is not enough to conceal ownership.
- ❑ If your dog is lost/missing and you can’t get a track on the dog, report the dog missing to the local animal control officer immediately.
- ❑ Put your dog on the VHDA web pages for missing dogs. We will send formal notice to every pound and shelter in Virginia on your behalf. But you must act fast, if the collar has been removed and the thief has dumped the dog and it is picked up and taken to a pound, the pound can kill that dog after five days as a stray! If they get our notice they must make every effort to contact you and they have to keep the dog an additional five days before they can kill your dog.
- ❑ If you have reason to suspect that the dog was stolen, FILE a police report immediately!
- ❑ If you know that someone in the neighborhood has the dog but will not immediately return it to you, file a police complaint immediately and INSIST that charges are brought against the individual. Do not try to forcibly take the dog back yourself. If the police will not file a felony complaint, go to the local magistrate and file charges yourself. You don’t need a lawyer to do any of that.
- ❑ If a thief is caught, go to the Commonwealth Attorney and ask that the charges be reviewed to insure that they are pressing the strongest charges possible. Ask that the charges be aggressively prosecuted. Get

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members of local hunt clubs or the county VHDA Chapter to call and ask that the laws be enforced. Dog theft is rampant in Virginia and aggressive prosecution and stiff penalties are needed to slow this plague.

If your local law enforcement or Commonwealth's Attorney don't think it is much of a problem, let us know and we will help you change their minds. Remember, if you let it happen and don't do anything you are part of the problem. Your Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance is committed to defense our Heritage against all threats. We have announced and hope you will tell people that we are offering a \$250.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone convicted of abandoning a hunting dog in Virginia. The website now has a missing dog site that is unique in that it alerts animal control and shelters across the Commonwealth of a dog that is missing. This site if widely used will also help us document dog theft.

## **Missing Dogs on the Internet Now**

Your Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance has completed the development of the missing dog web pages ([www.vahda.org](http://www.vahda.org)). You have heard the Animal Rights/Anti-Hunting groups' attack on hunting with dogs. Robin Star's Op-piece in the Richmond Times Dispatch on January 26 is typical of their unreasoned distortions. They say you abandon the dogs you hunt at the end of hunting season. They accuse you of starving and mistreating your dogs, despite numerous articles by Veterinarians stating that the overwhelming majority of hunters take better care of their dogs than most pet owners. The Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance is countering these distortions with fact. We don't care that we are confusing liberals with facts. We are providing average Virginians the truth.

Virginians who hunt with dogs put their money where their mouths are. We have put up a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone abandoning a dog in Virginia. These missing dog pages say that you care about your dogs and will aggressively seek to prosecute dog thieves. Take a minute or two and look at these pages <http://www.vahda.org/missingdogfacts.htm>. The dogs currently on there are samples and not actual lost dogs.

When you list a dog on this site you will be assured that every Pound and Shelter in Virginia is notified about your dog. You can post two digital pictures of your dog on the page and can print a poster that you can place in local stores advertising that you are looking for your dog. This service is paid for by your generous donations to the VHDA. This is your Alliance, let us help you!

## **North Carolina Legislature – HSUS**

In July 2008, newspaper stories said the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC, the NC equivalent of VDGIF) was going to ask the legislature for permission to "regulate dog based deer hunting and possibly fine hunters whose dogs trespass on private land". Subsequently when the legislature convened this winter, that bill and 3 others affecting hunters statewide were introduced.

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**NC Legislature: continued From Page 6**

The HSUS was openly responsible for the latter three. The first of these would have “eliminated the penning of wild animals”, i.e. outlawed all NC Fox Pens. Second was a bill which would have limited the tethering of dogs to a maximum of 3 hours/day statewide, conviction for which would result in a class 1 misdemeanor for which the penalty is up to one year in jail. Third was a bill which to regulate dog breeders. HSUS NC Director Amanda Arrington worked the Legislature tirelessly. The same lobbyist had during the spring convinced the cities of Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill to enact similar tethering laws.

At present the Fox Pen elimination and NC WRC legislation appear to be dead for this session. These didn't get out of the House WRC committee chaired by Rep. Arthur Williams from Washington, NC, in the heart of Eastern NC dog hunt country. The dog breeder bill is very much alive and the dog tethering bill is not dead, i.e. could be resurrected. Similar to S508 passed in 2008 in Virginia, the dog breeder bill would ensnare anyone who sells puppies and has over 15 breeding females. The bill tramples due process and would run mom and pop breeders out of business. This bill has in my judgment more than a 50% probability of passing. **In addition, several county “local option” bills have passed including at least one that makes intentional casting of dogs upon posted property a class 1 misdemeanor carrying jail time of up to one year.**

I was pleasantly surprised to find that Lobbyists working on behalf of dog owners have been much more capable than I was prepared to find. Joe McClees and wife Henri, a lawyer, work on behalf of hunters. Joe McClees knows and is well known by all legislative members, doesn't back off, and was instrumental in getting the tracking collar removed penalty and concealed carry bills passed in previous years. The NC Federation of Dog Clubs President, Stephen Wallis, and lobbyist Cindy Stansell have both lobbied tirelessly. The American Kennel Club (AKC) has its national HQ in the Research Triangle Park just West of Raleigh, and has been in the fight against the dog breeder bill.

North Carolina hunters **who use dogs** haven't been organized except in local regions, i.e. no statewide organization. The WRC and HSUS well organized attacks on dog hunters and dog owners rights have been a wake up call in North Carolina. Anyone who isn't aware has to have been asleep in “la la land”. There has been a lot of interest in how we organized in Virginia and whether it's possible to replicate same in NC. But the latter will have to wait until this legislative session is over as all energy needs to be focused on defeating the remaining bills.

## **ABC News 20/20 Documentary “Cruelty to Owners”**

Every dog owner and everyone that claims to love dogs whether they hunt or not needs to see these ABC News Documentaries! This is the real Animal Rights establishment at work. It is not only happening in Texas and Pennsylvania, but in Virginia too! **If you don't do anything else in the next 24 hours, watch these shows on Ytube!!!!**

### **Part 1**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyjfHjxGxm0>

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**Part 2**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWP\\_wXfkO78](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWP_wXfkO78)

Send this to everyone you know. Remember that Robin Star, Executive Director of the Richmond SPCA, wrote the anti-hound hunting Op-Ed piece in January 26 Richmond Times-Dispatch. We have been told that she has been to see DGIF officials asking for more restrictions on hunting with dogs. Ignore this at your peril!

### **HSUS Attacks Hunting with Dogs**

The following is the HSUS anti-hunting propaganda against hunting with dogs. It will make you angry, but you need to know what lies they are telling to be able to defend yourself and the Heritage you love.

[http://video.hsus.org/?fr\\_story=58b52a4...89c1&rf=bm](http://video.hsus.org/?fr_story=58b52a4...89c1&rf=bm)

**The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance**

### **Political Candidates for November 2009**

We have received more than a few inquiries concerning our endorsement for the fall elections when the Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General, as well as all of the 100 members of the House of Delegates will be elected. There may never be an election of more significance to the Sportsmen of Virginia.

We will carefully review the results of the June primaries and evaluate the House of Delegates candidates closely. Our next Newsletter will be about the elections and how you can defend your Heritage and make a real difference. All of America will be watching the outcome of our elections as a forecast of what may happen at the national level.

No matter the importance at the national level, Virginia Sportsmen know that our Right-to Retrieve law and the future of hunting with dogs in Virginia depend on the outcome of this election. Please become informed about the issues and talk to the candidates. Make sure all eligible members of your family and or friends are registered to vote.

### **Gloucester County Board of Supervisors Discusses Hunting Regulations**

As we are completing this issue, we have had a report that the Gloucester Board of Supervisors has had a public meeting to discuss "hunting issues." We are told that we large turn out of Sportsmen prevented any action by this Board. We believe that you will see more and more of these types of issues as HSUS and it Allies and fellow travelers continue their attacks. We will have more about this in our next Newsletter. Stay Vigilant!



## **DGIF Board Enacts 2009-2010 Hunting Regulations**

The DGIF Board met on June 2 to act on the seasons and bag limits for the up coming seasons which are effective as of July 1, 2009. Hunting regulations are again on a two-year cycle, with public meetings across the state. The major changes occurred with the deer and bear seasons. There was a great deal of discussion about the separate bear tag.

### **Deer**

The Board passed major increases in the number of doe days in all but a couple of Virginia counties. These increases are an effort to stabilize or reduce deer herds. It should be noted that we have been advised that the longer doe days are only likely to be in place for two years when they will be adjusted downward again if management (reduction) of the herd is successful.

### **Bear**

The separating the bear tag from the big-game license was not approved this year, but it is very likely that all three tags will be separated in the near future. The leadership of the Virginia Bear Hunters Association asked for a separate bear tag to cost \$25.00. The VBHA made no attempt to gain support from other hunters. DGIF staff said the hunter opinion ran 4 to 1 against the separate bear tag.

The DGIF Board was clearly sympathetic to the change but stated hunter opposition and the short time necessary to find the best way to carry out the change as reasons for denying the request. It appears likely that you will see a recommendation to separate all of the big-game tags during the next two-year regulatory cycle. Board members all but promised this change.

The proposals for extending the bear seasons for muzzleloader and archery as well as the opening of a six-week general firearm (with dogs) season in 39 counties around Richmond and extending to the Northern Neck and Northern Virginia were approved. Most bear hunters believe that these extensions are excessive and will hurt the bear population. DGIF has promised to monitor the kill closely this year and next.

A six-day season was created for general rifle, including dogs, for 20 Southside Counties. This season was recommended in the 2000 Bear management plan and just now adopted.

The bear management plan will be revised beginning next year and completed by 2011.

### **Turkey**

A one-day extension of the fall season was denied due to concerns about population declines in a number of areas.

**Regulations: continued From Page 9****Small game & Fur Bearers**

There were a number of changes to increase squirrel hunting opportunities and some technical changes related to tagging bobcats and the setting of traps.

We believe that the DGIF Board and staff were far more receptive to comment from the hunting public than they have been in the past several years. We believe that the separate big game tags will and should occur in the near future. We share the concerns of many bear hunters about the liberalization of the bear seasons and will watch developments closely.

The final issue to arise under the regulations part of the meeting was a discussion of abuse of the kill permits for bear and deer. The staff will be talking to Sportsmen to get input and changes to current procedures are likely. Wildlife Division Director Bob Ellis later announced a study of Elk in Virginia as a response to numerous calls for an elk season in Southwest Virginia.

## **HELP GIVE US A VOICE – DONATE TO THE VHDA TODAY**

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. Many of 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 this fall. We will help elect Bob McDonnell Governor, Bill Bolling Lt. Governor and Ken Cuccinelli Attorney General this November. 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 weren't 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

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.

*On the 65th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Europe at Normandy we ask you to pray for American servicemen and women who are in harms way in defense of our Liberty.*