



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

July 18, 2022

The Honorable Barry D. Knight
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Pocahontas Building, Room W1312
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

The Honorable Janet D. Howell
Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Pocahontas Building, Room E509
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

RE: Department of Conservation and Recreation Fiscal Year 2021 Lease of Lands Report

Dear Delegate Knight and Senator Howell:

This annual Lease of Lands and Other Properties report is being submitted to satisfy the relevant sections of the recently-revised requirements of § 10.1-109 of the Code of Virginia:

- A. The Director is authorized, subject to the written recommendation of the Department of General Services to the Governor and the written approval of the Governor, following review as to form and content by the Attorney General and the provisions of this article, to lease to any person for consideration, by appropriate instrument signed and executed by the Director, in the name of the Commonwealth: (i) any lands or other properties held for general recreational or other public purposes by the Department, for the Commonwealth, or (ii) any lands over which the Department has supervision and control, or any part of such lands where such lease is for the purposes of recreation, agriculture, or resource management and is consistent with the purposes and duties of the Department. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (ii), whenever land is acquired by purchase or otherwise for public recreation and conservation purposes under the administration of the Department, the Director is authorized to lease the land or any portion of it back to the owner from whom the land is acquired upon terms and conditions in the public interest. No lease granted under this section shall be for an initial term longer than ten years, but any such lease may contain provisions for lease renewals, either contingent or automatic at the discretion of the Director, for a like period upon the same terms and conditions as originally granted. If written notice of termination is received by the Director from the lessee or if use of the lease is in fact abandoned by the lessee at any time prior to the end of the initial term or any renewal, the Director may immediately terminate the lease.

D. The Department shall include information about leasing activities carried out pursuant to this section in an annual report to the General Assembly.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Natural Heritage currently has leased acreage for hunting and farming on three (3) Natural Area Preserves (NAPs) across the Commonwealth, totaling an annual revenue of \$10,865.00.

UNIT	LOCALITY	LESSEE/ CONTRACTOR	START DATE	END DATE	RENEWAL OPTIONS	LEASE/CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR	ACREAGE	ANNUAL RENT PER ACRE	ANNUAL RENT AMOUNT	RENT DUE DATE	USE
Deep Run Ponds NAP	Rockingham	Robert W. Morton	10/1/2019	Upon Lessee's Death	N/A	DNH Regional Steward	124.8	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	Free Hunting
Antioch Pines NAP	Isle of Wight	Michelle Hedgepeth Billips (formerly Terry Hedgepeth)	1/1/2022	12/31/2023	Three 1-year renewal options	Rick Myers (804-371-6204)	32.7	\$ 53.06	\$ 1,735.00	Dec. 15	Farming
Lyndhurst Ponds NAP	Augusta	Kenneth Troyer	8/1/2021	12/31/2024	1-year renewal option	Rick Myers (804-371-6204)	83	\$ 110.00	\$ 9,130.00	Biannual (June 15 & Dec. 15)	Farming

DCR accepted the leases associated with Deep Run Ponds Natural Area Preserve and Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve from the previous landowners as a part of the acquisition of those specific tracts for resiliency expansion of the aforementioned preserves. With the passage of the Code revision in 2021, DCR was able to take advantage of entering into a lease at Lyndhurst Ponds Natural Area Preserve for farm management.

Many tracts that DCR purchases for protection have historically been used for agriculture. In order to keep stewardship and maintenance costs down and to provide income to the division, it helps to have the ability to lease our lands for continued agricultural use. In the case of Lyndhurst Ponds, the continued management will bridge the gap until funding and materials are available for reforestation of the property.

The revisions to § 10.1-109 to permit the increased ability to lease lands are a welcomed option in our land management efforts. Leasing for recreation, agriculture, and resource management allows DCR to retain limited land management funds and provide some additional non-general fund operating revenues. DCR looks forward to continuing to utilize leases on agency owned natural areas and state parks when they are the most appropriate land management strategy.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew S. Wells
 Director

- cc: David Reynolds, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, House Appropriations Committee
 Jason Powell, Legislative Analyst, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
 Toni M. Walker, Associate Director, Department of Planning and Budget
 Frank N. Stovall, Deputy Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation
 Brian G. Fuller, Real Property Manager, Department of Conservation and Recreation