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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

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November 14, 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 Lease of Lands Report (Fiscal Year 2022)**

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 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.

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*State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning  
Natural Heritage • Dam Safety and Floodplain Management • Land Conservation*

- B. 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 leases acreage for hunting and farming on three (3) Natural Area Preserves (NAPs) across the Commonwealth, totaling an annual revenue of **\$10,865.00**. The Division of State Parks has three (3) additional leases for residential and property management purposes, and these leases collect no revenue.<sup>1</sup>

UNIT	LOCALITY	LESSEE/ CONTRACTOR	START DATE	END DATE	RENEWAL OPTIONS	LEASE/CONTRACT TERMINATION	ACREAGE	ANNUAL RENT/RENT	ANNUAL RENT DATE	RENT DATE	USE
Deed Run Ponds NAP	Rockingham	Robert W. Morton	10/1/2019	Upon Lessee's Death	N/A	Tyler Urgo, Shenandoah Valley Region Steward (540) 487-9939	124.80	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	Hunting
Antioch Pines NAP	Isle of Wight	Michelle Hedgepeth Billips	1/1/2022	12/31/2023	Three 1-year renewal options	Rick Myers, Natural Areas Stewardship Chief (804) 371-6204	32.70	\$ 53.06	\$ 1,735.00	Dec. 15	Agriculture
Lyndhurst Ponds NAP	Augusta	Kenneth Troyer	8/1/2021	12/31/2024	1-year renewal option	Rick Myers, Natural Areas Stewardship Chief (804) 371-6204	83.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 9,130.00	Biannual (June 15 & Dec 15)	Agriculture
Machicomoco SP	Gloucester	The Fairfield Foundation	9/24/2020	9/24/2069	N/A	Ann Zahn, District 1 Manager (804) 921-9028	3.88	\$ -	\$ 1.00	N/A	Historic Restoration & Interpretation
Falkland Farms Conservator Site (Staunton River SP)	Halifax	Annabelle Snead	11/1/2019	Upon Lessee's Vacation of Premises	N/A	Tim Vest, District 5 Manager (434) 572-2190	2.70	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	Residential
Sweet Run SP	Loudoun	Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES)	2/9/2022	2/8/2023	Two 2-year renewal options (4 years total)	Ken Benson, District 2 Manager (540) 940-7809	885.00	\$ -	\$ 1.00	Jan. 1	Agriculture & Residential

DCR reported on our three Natural Area Preserve leases for FY 2021, and they all carried over to FY 2022.

When DCR acquired Machicomoco State Park in Gloucester County as a gift from The Conservation Fund on October 9, 2020, State Parks assumed a lease with The Fairfield Foundation to manage a 3.88-acre portion of the property around the historic Timberneck Hall (Catlett House). The Fairfield Foundation is a local non-profit that is working to restore the home and surrounding grounds for historic and educational purposes, outdoor events, and overnight accommodations. The rent is \$1.00 per year, with site management in lieu of rent, and the agreement is written for 49 years to permit Fairfield to qualify for historic tax credits.

On January 14, 2022, DCR closed on the historic 7,369-acre acquisition of the "Falkland Farms" conservation site in Halifax County. The property is currently being managed with existing staff from Staunton River State Park. As a part of this transaction, DCR was assigned the residential lease of Annabelle Snead. Ms. Snead and her late husband were former employees and tenants of Falkland Farms, Inc. (a prior owner of the property), and they had entered into a "life lease" on a specific 2.70-acre parcel on the property. DCR assumed this lease and will allow Ms. Snead to remain there. It is a non-revenue generating lease.


On February 9, 2022, DCR/State Parks closed on a 281-acre tract from the Old Dominion Land Conservancy (ODLC) as an addition to the future Sweet Run State Park in Loudoun County. The transaction included the

<sup>1</sup> State Parks manage several agricultural contracts on multiple state parks. These are administered through our Procurement Division, and are not administered under § 10.1-109. These are procured and executed as service contracts, and therefore, are not considered leases. For FY22, State Parks earned a total of \$118,382.86 in revenue from 11 contracts encompassing 1,490.16 acres.

“Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship” (BRCES), along with various structures that had been managed by BRCES, including an interpretive barn and office, two (2) rental houses, and an organic farm. DCR entered into a “Master Lease and Operations Agreement” with BRCES to continue managing the property until DCR is able to hire staff and equipment. The Master Lease includes two (2) sub-leases for residential and agricultural uses by the farmer, who manages the property on behalf of BRCES. The rent is \$1.00 per year, with site management in lieu of rent, and the agreement will be terminated once the park site has DCR staffing and equipment, for which funding was recently appropriated by the General Assembly.

We continue to appreciate the ability to lease our lands to meet our land management objectives, and we thank the General Assembly for their support of our mission.

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