

# Report from the Conservation Committee

October 20, 2007

VHS Business Meeting

Committee Members:

Tim Christensen

Sarah Orlofske

Todd Fredericksen

1. The question as to whether committee reports should be included in the Newsletter or Catesbieana was addressed informally.
2. Task # 1. First major task was to develop a set of doctrinal tenets by which VHS can focus conservation efforts. The final draft of the tenets was submitted to the Executive Board via email.
3. Task # 2. Second task was to address the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus, which was completed and addressed at July 2007 meeting.
4. Task # 3. The third task is in progress and comprises the development of a standard presentation to be used for educating the public on the importance of conserving our herpetofaunal resources. Committee members agreed that the following guidelines should be considered:
  - a. The focus of the presentation is solely on conservation of reptiles and amphibians as it pertains to Virginia. The proposed title is "Conservation of Reptiles and Amphibians in Virginia".
  - b. The presentation will be made available for VHS members and Master Naturalist Chapters to educate the public.
  - c. Several audiences are intended, including Master Naturalist Chapters, school teachers (elementary through high school) and possibly students. Other potential audiences considered include 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, etc.
  - d. Several versions will likely become necessary because of the various audiences are expected.
  - e. The maximum duration should be 30 minutes with additional time made available for questions.
  - f. The final draft presentation(s) shall be submitted to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for consideration.
  - g. The use and audiences of the presentation will be documented. Feedback from the audience will also be solicited.
  - h. An initial draft for use by Master Naturalists and VHS members has been prepared and is being reviewed by the Committee. It will be presented to the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master

Naturalist Program on February 7, 2008 as a trial run. Feedback from this group will be solicited and used in improving the presentation in the future.

i. The committee considered posting the first draft on the website for the Executive Board to review by December 1, 2007.

5. Task # 4. Fourth task is to inform the membership about the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' WildlifeMapping Program and seek membership involvement. This program was addressed by guest speaker Dr. Lou Verner from VDGIF to the membership at the October 20, 2007 meeting. VHS members who become WildlifeMappers can greatly support the program by submitting herpetofaunal observations.

6. Task # 5. The Committee proposed partnering with other non-profit natural resources-focused groups. Initial coordination was made by the Committee with the Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society (VTWS). The VTWS is planning a "Virginia Fish and Wildlife Summit" conference in 2009 with the primary goal to centralize fish and wildlife professionals in Virginia in order to improve coordination, information sharing and professional development. This could be a good opportunity to develop conservation efforts. They indicated they would welcome VHS' participation in the conference. No other details have been provided, but Tim is serving as a VHS point of contact as plans progress.

7. Task # 6. The committee proposed designing charts/posters that illustrate threats to herpetofauna. The suggestion is to have separate materials for anurans or amphibians as one group and one for turtles & snakes or reptiles as another group. This could potentially be made available for sale through the VHS Store, provided to schools, etc. Proceeds could go towards specific conservation-related projects.

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