



www.virginiabearhunters.org

Dedicated to the preservation of hunting bear with dogs
and to sound wildlife management principles

MEETING NOTICE

The next membership meeting of the Virginia Bear Hunters Association will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 30, 2016 at the Thompson Valley Community Center in Tazewell.

Directions:

Turn off US 460 onto US 19-BR (near milepost 47). If you are traveling from the Bluefield area, you will turn left; if you are travelling from Interstate 81, you will turn right. Travel 1.9 miles then turn right on BF Buchanan Highway. Travel 1.7 miles to Thompson Valley Market. The Thompson Valley Community Center is behind the Thompson Valley Market (5171 B F Buchanan Hwy, Tazewell, VA 24651).

ANNUAL THOMPSON VALLEY PICNIC

We are looking forward to another wonderful meal hosted by the Thompson Valley Bear Hunters who will barbeque bear and pork. Plan to stay for this feast that will begin around 5 p.m. All we ask is that you bring a covered dish or dessert to accompany the meal.



7th ANNUAL JAMBOREE & AUCTION

Instead of our typical auction, this year we will have a Chinese auction of items donated mostly by Double U Hunting Supply. DU was so generous in sending us a large box of collars, leads, Garmin accessories, T-shirts, hoodies, and more for this fund-raiser. Before, during, and after the meeting and picnic, you can purchase tickets that you will put into a "can" to bid for that prize. The more tickets you put in, the greater your chance of winning that prize. Winning tickets will be drawn throughout the day. Any additional items that our members bring to donate will be added to the auction and will be appreciated.



If you didn't see it in action at our Spring Field Trial, you'll be able to see our new mechanical bear at this event. We'll also have a few contests to add fun to the day.

Message from David Steger, President

I hope many of you will come to our Tazewell meeting and picnic. As I've said many times before, this is the best picnic of the summer. Plan to make a day of it by attending the membership meeting, getting some bargains from our auction, and enjoying wonderful food and fellowship.

I know that our thoughts and prayers continue to be with those who suffered during the recent floods in Virginia and in West Virginia. Following such tragedy and loss, it has been uplifting to see the rush of ordinary citizens rallying to support these victims – with money, supplies, hands-on help. It is a tribute to rural America that we don't wait for government help; we help ourselves and each other. I know of various bear hunters who have been a part of the recovery efforts, not as bear hunters, but as church members, friends, neighbors. Let's continue to offer our assistance during this long recovery process.

I'm ready to turn the reins of the VBHA over, and I trust the competence of the Officers and Board being recommended. I won't be disappointed, though, if more names are nominated for the ballot. We need all the help we can get! Don't ever expect anyone else to go to bat for you. In the many VDGIF meetings we have attended, we have never witnessed anyone other than VBHA standing up or speaking on behalf of bear hound hunters! We can always use more members becoming actively involved. If you aren't ready to become an officer or director, we can use you on our extended leadership committee.

The VBHA looks much different than it did when I became President 6 years ago, and I am very proud of the accomplishments of the current leadership. Our Constitution and ByLaws have been completely re-written to ensure a transparent leadership. Decision-making moved from a leadership group of 4 or 5 people in small membership meetings to 15 officers and directors representing all members. Not one time has the Board failed to reach agreement on any issue. Members have been encouraged at every opportunity to communicate problems and desires to the directors in their regions so the entire Board is aware and can take necessary actions.

We have a healthy treasury even with increased expenses. Almost all our income comes directly from members and the hard work of our Board. We have been able to contribute to other worthy causes that are in line with our mission (Hunters for the Hungry, bear research and rehabilitation facilities, other states fighting to keep hound hunting). Our new mechanical bear complete with a new trailer and accessories, set us back some, but we think VBHA ought to have the best bear field trials! Our four newsletters each year cost several thousand dollars, but with a statewide organization it is not practical to expect that most members will get their news from quarterly meetings. Our improved website offers additional ways to post information and get new members. Our aim is to have our treasury directly benefit our membership even though other bear hound hunters gain as well.

This leadership has been able to initiate and get new and expanded hunting opportunities. We were finally able to get a youth bear day that included dogs, and then later got it separated from the youth deer day and moved into October. Because of this move, youth bear day with dogs was expanded making it almost statewide. Training season has been expanded in Southside and south of Interstate 81. Have we asked for more? Yes, in every regulation cycle. Have we had to compromise and accept small gains when our members wanted more? Always. You have to pick your battles and focus on winnable ones. The separate Bear License was promoted by VBHA with the long-term goal of elevating the status of Virginia's black bear from being an opportunistic target of deer hunters to a primary game animal. The first year sales of the bear license exceeded even my expectations. Our hope is that with new data on bear hunters, Virginia will soon have a stand-alone bear season, open to all who hunt bear, without favored treatment to opportunistic hunters.

The integrity and reputation of VBHA has prospered. We have an improved working relationship with VDGIF Board members and Staff and a better understanding of how the system works. I believe VDGIF has a better appreciation for our passions for bear hound hunting and our dogs, our traditions, and probably most surprising to them, our high regard for black bear. We're honored to be featured in the new Cabela's Short Pump store, and other hunting supply companies have made generous donations to our fund-raising events. We're proud of the growing community involvement by groups of our members. Picking up trash, sponsoring

Message from David Steger, President, continued

local events for kids, even a float in a patriotic parade – all do so much to improve the public’s perception of bear hound hunters.

Although we wear just one hat – dedicated to the preservation of hunting bear with dogs – we have been able to work with other groups to encourage common goals. VBHA had an active role in the Hound Study, the new Black Bear Management Plan, and establishment of rules for Wildlife Management Areas. VBHA was one of the pioneer groups to form the new Wildlife Habitat Coalition working to promote managed forests to benefit all wildlife. We have participated in several National Forest initiatives with many other users of the forests to give feedback and input on regional forest plans. Our attendance in these and other projects have added to our respectability while in no way diminishing our primary purpose and passion.

Please keep your membership up-to-date and try to bring at least one hunting partner into the Association. It would be great to say as we start this regulation cycle that our membership has doubled!

Training season will be upon us soon. Respect landowners, use the Right to Retrieve in the manner it was intended, and above all, just use good manners!

Happy Hunting, David

2016 VBHA Scholarship

As previously announced at our 2nd quarter meeting and on our website, the winner of the 2016 VBHA \$1,000 Scholarship is Allison Vass. Allison recently graduated from Craig County High School and will attend the 2-year nursing program at Virginia Western Community College. After VA Western, she would like to obtain her Bachelor’s degree in Nursing from a four-year university. Congratulations to Allison! We thank all those who applied for the scholarship, and wish all of you success in your continuing education.

VBHA would like to thank the members of the 2016 Scholarship Committee: Sheila Campbell (Lowesville), Forest Redd (Christiansburg), Freda Smith (Troutdale), Susan Steger (Catawba), and Hunter Thrasher (Buchanan).

Lost Members

We have lost touch with several of our members; their newsletters have been returned to sender and we haven’t been able to reach them by telephone. If you know any of these members, please ask them to contact our Secretary to update their address so we can get our newsletters and alerts to them.

- Jim Anders (Bristol)
- W. H. Burks (Coleman Falls)
- Bryan Carson (Madison Heights)
- Clyde Dean (Woodbridge)
- Todd Gray (Moneta)
- Thomas Thompson (Faber)

2016 VBHA Election

The VBHA Bylaws require elections to be held in even-numbered years and call for a Nominating Committee to construct a slate of officers to be presented to the membership in our 3rd quarter newsletter. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to make sure we have at least one candidate for each position, but **additional nominations will be taken from the floor at our 3rd quarter meeting in Tazewell.** David Steger and Wayne Ball have served as the 2016 Nominating Committee, and recommend the following slate of officers for the next two years.

Position	Nominee
President	Richard Sprinkle
Vice President	Steve Nicely
Secretary	Hunter Thrasher
Treasurer	Scott McGlothlin
Director, Region 1	Barney Bolter
Director, Region 2	Wayne Hensley
	Charles Montgomery
	Clint Steger
Director, Region 3	Steve Alley
	Henry Bishop
	Lacy Hale
Director, Region 4	Dennis Brinkley
	Andrew Gilliam
	Al Heil

The VBHA Bylaws state “There may be one Advisory Director to be the most recent past president of the association. Should the past president decline to serve, the position of Advisory Director shall remain vacant until another president leaves office.” David Steger, the current VBHA President has agreed to serve as the Advisory Director.

We can’t afford to lose the knowledge and dedication of the other out-going members of the VBHA Board, so they will become members of our Extended Leadership Committee. Many, many thanks for your previous service: Wayne Ball (Treasurer), Will Herndon (Director, Region 2), Steve Parcell (Director, Region 3).

VDGIF Regulation Change Cycle

Be sure to talk to your VBHA Officers and/or Directors in your region to let us know your wishes for the bi-annual hunting regulation changes. Your Board will begin the process by meeting with VDGIF biologists and staff in early Fall. This first meeting will let us throw out all ideas and get a hint at what other hunting groups are proposing. Eventually, the VBHA Board will decide: 1) what we think we can get, 2) what we should oppose, and 3) what we’ll have to fight to hold onto. Things change throughout the process, and we’ll alert the membership of decisions and opportunities for individuals to give input to VDGIF.

Message from Steve Nicely, Region 4 Director

If you are a bear hound hunter in Virginia, you should familiarize yourself with how our sport is perceived by other sportsmen and by the general public. DGIF and Virginia lawmakers have to listen to everyone's opinions when setting new regulations and laws, and we can best argue for our sport by knowing the "enemy." Some disappointing facts from the Black Bear Management Plan 2012-2021:

- VA citizens had the most support for bear hunting with firearms without the use of hounds (57%).
- Only 24% of Virginians supported firearms hunting with hounds or a hound training season.
- 54% of non-hound bear hunters did not favor a chase season.
- 74% of opportunistic bear hunters were opposed to hunting bears with hounds.
- Hunting with hounds for bears was banned by public ballot initiatives during the 1990s in Colorado, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington.
- Read these facts and more at <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/bear/blackbearmanagementplan.pdf>.

I asked myself why VDGIF thought it necessary to include this information in the BBMP. WE HAVE AN IMAGE PROBLEM that could end our sport. We have made some gains – can we keep them? Will your children have bear hound hunting? Who will save our sport if we don't? Who are our friends and who do we need to watch? Will we implode for lack of interest in the bear hunting community or can we save our sport? If you have ideas, please share them. Many are working hard; can we learn ways to work smart to stay in the woods?



BITS AND PIECES

Our thanks to Scott McGlothlin for completing the annual audit of our treasury as required by our ByLaws. Scott reported no concerns in the recordkeeping. The audit gave Scott a glimpse at the Treasurer's position and he later agreed to be on our 2016 ballot for that position.

Richard Sprinkle and Steve Nicely attended the most recent meeting of the VDGIF Board on June 16th. They reported that nothing was mentioned about bear during the meeting. Richard and Steve were able to chat with several VDGIF Board members and Staff before and after the meeting. It is important to our cause that we maintain a working relationship with VDGIF and are visible at important meetings.

VBHA'S 2016 RAFFLE

We are raffling a Garmin Alpha 100 with TT15 collar, to be drawn at our Fall Field Trial. Tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10 and may be purchased at any VBHA event or meeting, or from any officer or director.

50th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

We have acquired some really nice blowing horns to commemorate VBHA's 50th anniversary in 2017. The horns will first be available for purchase at the Tazewell meeting. Prices are \$30, \$35, or \$40, depending on size.

Message from Jaime Sajecki, Black Bear Project Leader, VDGIF

Hello Bear Hunters!

I guess this might be like preaching to the choir but David thought it might be helpful to let you know what kind of resources we (VDGIF) have for the public to help prevent common issues people have with bears. Increasing knowledge about bears and providing guidance on easy ways to prevent conflict goes a long ways towards raising tolerance for unarguably the most awesome animal in Virginia. We have a number of resources on our website <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/bear/> ranging from general bear information, the bear plan, how-to videos and information on trash can retrofitting and electric fencing, as well as tips for hunters and even recipes for bear meat provided by the members of the VBHA.

For the fourth year in a row, the bear project has gotten state money to fund bear-related projects in localities. The first and still ongoing project through Roanoke County sells commercial bear-resistant trash cans for a subsidized price or will pick up and put hardware on resident's cans to keep bears out for just the cost of the hardware. Roanoke County even invested in an extra truck that just picks up trash from the bear-resistant cans. Some other projects we have funded include food lockers for recreation areas, bear resistant cans at a number of towns, city parks, and dumpsters at county refuse sites. All of these have been cooperative projects where the locality provides a match with labor, time, education and/or other materials. If you have bear issues occurring at specific sites in your county or town you can contact the county or town administrators and tell them to talk to the local VDGIF biologist about such a cooperative project. All of these projects big and small have greatly reduced the occurrences of human-bear conflicts and have likely prevented a number of bears from being killed.

If you haven't seen the video about what we have done with orphan cubs in the past you can watch it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4SXkoF8mAI> .

I am terrible on film so just ignore the awkward bear biologist and focus on the bears. Now that we just made that video we actually changed the process. We are no longer bringing females to Virginia Tech but instead are trapping adult females at a few locations in Virginia (northeastern Shenandoah Valley and south central VA), fitting them with radio-collars and ear tags, and then letting them go on-site. We are tracking them daily and when they have cubs in the winter we will sneak in an extra cub or two depending on their condition and how many cubs they have of their own. We will also be looking at home ranges, den sites, den timing, and other cool things about bears we don't know as much about in certain parts of the state. We will have about half the collars on bears that had cubs this year and they will be surrogates for cubs in 2018. A press release will be sent out soon to make people aware of these bears because we really hope that none of these females are killed during the hunting season or otherwise, but if they are legal (i.e 100 pounds, no cubs), technically they can be harvested. The bear hunters (VBHA) were a huge help during the CABS study years ago (before my time) getting the word out about the research bears, among other things, so I wanted to say a very belated thank you for that and thanks in advance for spreading the word about our new research bears.

Thanks for being a voice for the bears and helping to spread your knowledge and appreciation for them. I hope you are all having a great summer, seems to be flying by for me.

Have fun and be safe out there!

KEEP BEARS WILD!

VBHA HALL OF FAME NOMINATION

I am writing this note to accompany my VBHA membership application. I would like to nominate a very dear friend of mine into the VBHA Hall of Fame. Timothy James Lewis (or as other bear hunters knew him, "Corona") passed away on October 29, 2015 after a brief battle with illness. Timmy was a well-known hunter as I am sure you could ask around the VBHA and someone would know him. Timmy was the best bear hunter I have ever known. He loved his walker/plott dogs and knew how to hunt them. It is really hard to put on paper just how passionate he was about bear hunting. From camping with friends and hunting the entire month of chase season, to taking trips to New Mexico and North Carolina, Timmy made a lot of memories with a lot of different people. I can honestly say that I would not be bear hunting today if it wasn't for this man. There are countless others that can say the same thing. Many mornings I can remember seeing countless people sitting in the passenger seat of his truck. Whether it was a neighbor's kid or a friend of a friend, he constantly took people bear hunting that had never been before. I am unaware if Timmy was a member of the VBHA, but I do know that there aren't many people that advocated for bear hunting like he did. Timmy meant a lot to the bear hunting community in the Amherst, Nelson, and Rockbridge areas. He was a hunter that a lot of other hunters looked up to. I myself could go on and on about the hunts and memories that I shared with him.

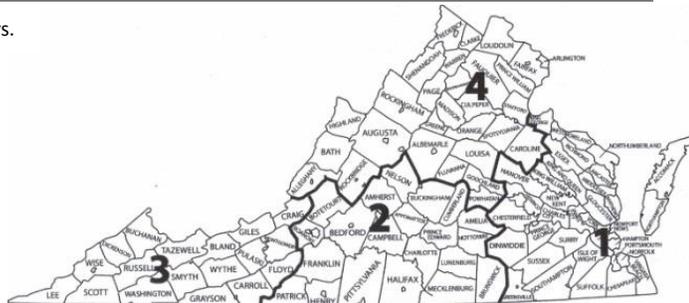
Jake Campbell
Amherst, VA

Timmy will be inducted into the VBHA Hall of Fame at the meeting on July 30th

VBHA Executive Board 2015-16

President	David Steger	Catawba	540-384-6506
Vice President	Richard Sprinkle	Buchanan	540-254-2578
Secretary	Hunter Thrasher	Buchanan	540-598-6169
Treasurer	Wayne Ball	Raven	276-964-5961
Advisory Director	Charles Montgomery	Buchanan	540-254-2048
Region 1 Director*	Barney Bolter	Kenbridge	434-247-9608
Region 2 Director	Wayne Hensley	Bedford	540-586-8242
Region 2 Director	Will Herndon	Brookneal	434-610-4895
Region 2 Director	Clint Steger	Catawba	540-392-2247
Region 3 Director	Steve Alley	New Castle	540-864-5891
Region 3 Director	Henry Bishop	Blacksburg	540-230-0190
Region 3 Director	Steve Parcell	Ripplemead	540-626-3801
Region 4 Director	Andrew Gilliam	Williamsville	540-925-2438
Region 4 Director	Al Heil	Culpeper	540-718-7781
Region 4 Director	Steve Nicely	Clifton Forge	540-862-5110

*Region 1 also includes out-of-state members.



VIRGINIA BEAR HUNTERS ASSOCIATION - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Individual – 1 Year - \$15
- Individual – 3 Years - \$40
- Family – 1 Year - \$20
- Family – 3 Years - \$50
- Lifetime (under age 50) - \$150
- Lifetime (age 50+) - \$100

Return to: Hunter Thrasher, VBHA Secretary
3826 Narrow Passage Rd, Buchanan, VA 24066
Make checks payable to VBHA

- Renewal
- New Member
- Update Information

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Individual and family membership years are measured from the date dues are paid or from current expiration date, if later.

