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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 29, 2017 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).

8th ANNUAL JAMBOREE & AUCTION

Again this year we will have a Chinese auction of items donated mostly by Double U Hunting Supply. DU once more was extremely 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, 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.

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.

VBHA 2017 Raffle

We will be having our annual raffle again this year. The tickets are on sale now and may be purchased from any director, officer, or at any VBHA event. The winning ticket will be drawn at our Fall Field Trial. **REMINGTON 700 SPS CAMO .30-06 22" BARREL MODEL 84186 MOSSY OAK BREAK-UP INFINIY CAMOUFLAGE FINISH**

Message from Richard Sprinkle, President

Hope all is well with everyone and you are having an enjoyable summer. I also hope our members are pleased with the gains we made in the last DGIF hunting regulation cycle. We got more training days to run our dogs for one thing, which is always good. Yes, August is hot, but it can be manageable if you go early or wait till late afternoon. One way to look at it is we hear " We need a year round season." Well, August would be just as hot in a year round season as it is with what we gained this year. Not everything we get is perfect, but as long as we are getting more and not losing anything, we are doing what we should be, gaining ground and not backing up.

We got an early three day season where all hunters can participate at the same time for a few days and it not be a select group constantly getting first chance for just themselves. This is a trial season and something totally new, so let's give it a chance and make it something positive for dog hunters. No one is making anyone harvest a bear if the circumstances make it unfavorable to do so. If a bear is not harvested it is still a chance to train your dogs and be in the woods. Depending on the way the calendar falls, and it will fall this way this year, this new 3 day season will be in October and it will be getting cooler. The way the season was presented was the way it was most likely to get passed and also gave the greatest leverage for the muzzle loaders in some areas to not be given another six or seven days for just them to harvest bears while we were sitting at home, and that is just what happened, the additional week for just muzzle loading was not passed.

The hunters in the Southside area also got their seasons to be made consistent with those in the Western areas of the state. This made the regulations more uniform and also gave them additional days to be afield.

I want to thank everyone that sent in their ballots to the DGIF. We had never tried this mass mailing approach before and didn't know if it would be effective or not. Well as it turned out, it was overwhelmingly effective, and I do not think we would have gained nearly as much without using it. You folks, our members, made the difference. Our proposals had about a 90% majority for approval. The mailing was expensive but that is what we have our field trials, raffles and events for, to promote dog hunting and benefit our members and communities.

This would not be complete if I didn't thank the members that attended the DGIF meeting in Richmond. Wayne Ball, Lacie Hale, and Scott McGlothlin got up at 1AM to start their six hour drive to Richmond and picked up David Steger in Roanoke. Steve Nicely attended and spoke for the organization. Janice Sprinkle was also in attendance and helped us show the DGIF board and staff that bear hunting was something enjoyed by families and not just men. DGIF board member H.S. Caudill was complimentary of the effort and conduct of our members present and this was appreciated as well.

In closing I just want to say "Thank you" to each person that has offered sound advice and support to me in the last year. We have had a good year in the face of some very challenging issues and have grown stronger regardless of the issues we faced. I ask everyone to keep their membership up to date and try to get a new member to join our ranks. If everyone gets one new member to join our size and strength doubles.

Training season will be here very soon. Respect the land you hunt on and respect the rights of landowners, and please use Right to Retrieve as it was intended. Good manners leave good impressions! Be safe, keep your dogs safe, and good hunting.

Message from Steve Nicely, Vice President

Why is hunting in decline? West of the Blue Ridge most public land has seen a serious decline in deer, turkeys, and other wildlife. Why is wildlife in decline on our National forest and other public land? Proper Habitat is in decline. Areas once full of deer and turkeys see very few hunters. It is hard to recruit youth in a sport where they never see any game.

In an effort to sustain some vision of a pristine old growth forest, Preservationist has eliminated our wildlife rich environments for nearly a generation by protesting and lawsuits to stop logging and other game management. The forest is many environments not just old growth forest land. Wildlife including the black bear needs diverse forest with soft mast, browse, clearings, and thickets. This type of environment is called young forest. Young forest 0 to 20 years is lacking in all of our public land west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Why are bears in our crop and neighborhoods in the warmer months when hard mast is scarce? Our forest is out of balance. Bears need an environment that will sustain their needs when acorns are not available. Many are calling for huge reductions in bear populations saying bears are over populating their environment. I say they are a victim of poor forest management and soon to join the deer and turkeys as scarce resources of a once diverse environment. We need to work close with our game managers to insure we sustain our bear populations. We are wiping out roughly 90% percentage of our male bear population before they reach maturity. Last year roughly 40% of our harvest was female bears. Some bear managers say these factors could signal over harvest. If we want more large males to hunt we as bear hunters need to let more small males walk.

I understand that farmers who raise corn are having problems with bears and many who will not secure their trash in proper containers are bothered by bears. Cows eat corn yet the farmers keep them out of corn fields. Corn costs around 500 an acre to plant yet few will try an electric fence to stop bear from getting to their corn. Some bear hunters farm and have come up with ways to slow down bears in corn fields. I hope we can come up with ways to prevent bear problems short of eliminating bears from our environment 75% of the bear damage is to corn. I recall the Sixties and Seventies when we had few bears and I do not want to return to those days. We have Ideas on slowing down bear damage we want to see better management of our forest for all wildlife. We ask to be made part of the solution we live hound hunting not just hunt when the season is open. We trust Jaime to help with a solution but we ask that science be used over hearsay and half truths to establish our seasons not bear are eating all the fawns when we know poor habitat and months of deer season is to blame for deer declines on public land.

We at VBHA have matured as an organization and learned to make our voice heard without disrespecting those who share different views. Our enemies are many including those misguided animal rights zealots who suffer from ignorance when it comes to managing our wildlife. Sportsmen save more wildlife and spend more money doing it than the animal rights groups. We heard attacks from these groups at the Richmond meeting and they will not go away, we must be ready to hold our lines if they

win hunting will disappear, all hunting not just dog hunting. Hunters must know all hunting is under attack not just hound hunting.

We will have an election this year we saw many bad laws entered against us as hunters last year. Many call for the sportsmen and women to go on offense. I say our best offense is to elect candidates who share our views and that will stand up for all of us. We must vote and we must get our non hunting friends to vote with us. We must join with others who share our sport and set aside our differences, no hunting group can go it alone. Our state is diverse and most of the population is east of the Blue Ridge. More people live in a few blocks of some of these large metropolitan areas than live in entire counties where we live. Every vote counts, the Attorney Generals election was won by Herring by roughly 1000 votes last time. My hope for our future is to grow our numbers, our influence, and our ability to raise money to continue our fight. Losing our bear or our hunting rights is not an option. Hunters of all types must learn we are STRONGER TOGETHER.

Message from Hunter Thrasher, Secretary

The 2017 VBHA Scholarship has been awarded as detailed a bit later in this newsletter. However, that accomplishment could not have been possible without the diligent efforts of the Scholarship Committee, consisting of Mrs. Freda Smith, Mr. Allen Pennington, and Mr. Forest Redd. It was my pleasure to serve as Chairman and I wish to thank the Committee members for their selfless service and professionalism throughout the entire process.

The VBHA is working for all Bear Hunters in Virginia and many are not members. The results are obvious; from the establishment of our Youth Day to opposition to unfavorable legislation, (such as SB1525 and HB1900) and extreme bear kill proposals, the results are there. We have been fortunate to overcome these issues for the time being because our efforts were logical, coordinated, and executed timely. Ultimately, all Bear Hunter's benefited.

Now we need you to get those non-members signed up. Numbers matter. Tear off the application at the end of this newsletter and stick it in your hunting truck for use in training season. Make copies or if you need several, contact me and I will mail you a handful.

I have erroneous contact information for the individuals listed below. If you know them, help me out a bit! They are Larry Angus (Bedford), Bryan Carson (Madison Heights), Arthur Cohen (Williamsburg), Clyde Dean (Woodbridge), and Thomas Thompson (Faber).

Message from David Steger, Advisory Director

As you know, hound hunters were threatened with more restrictions and penalties during the 2017 legislative session. VBHA informed the membership and the troops were rallied, sending emails, letters, phone calls, and even a busload to make our position known to our representatives. HB1900 was defeated. Then, we were faced with VDGIF regulation changes - drastic reductions of bear populations, another full week of muzzleloader season in front of hound hunters. Again, VBHA notified our members and asked for their participation in the public comment period. Members of the VBHA Board met with VDGIF staff and we spoke at their Board meetings, but without the individual comments reinforcing our position, we wouldn't have had the success we had. In the end, the bear

population goals were not changed, we gained a new early season for all bear hunters, the additional muzzleloader week was defeated, and time was added to training season. These were all wins for our sport. All bear hound hunters get to enjoy these successes, even those members who did not join the fight, and even those hunters who do not support our organization with their membership. Let's all try to enlist more members during our extended seasons this year.

I would like VBHA members to see how their efforts during the VDGIF public comment period mattered. (These tallies were actually about a week before the comment period ended.) Thanks to all who sent comments; it really meant a lot.

- Reduce bear population objectives: 74 in favor, 640 opposed
- Early open season for all bear hunters: 277 favor, 61 opposed
- Added week of muzzleloader season: 50 favor, 245 opposed
- Extended training season: 244 favor, 15 opposed

The image we project during our seasons is the image that is carried to Richmond, either by us or by our opponents. So, while you're out there enjoying the new opportunities remember to be respectful to landowners and other hunters and do what you can to help with problem bear. One reason we were granted more training season was to reduce crop damage and therefore reduce kill permits. Please make an effort to spend some of training season and the new early season running bear out of farm fields where bear damage is occurring. Have fun and be safe out there!

Message from Al Heil, Region 4 Director

With training season around the corner and a new pharmacist in the family, it's time to remember that most of our emergency supplies have an expiration date, yes even that fine peanut butter jar in your tool box. The only "rescue" medicine that lasts forever is honey. Check how long your rechargeable batteries will hold the charge after all this rest, you might need a couple new ones. Unflavored pediatric electrolyte works better than Gatorade against heat exhaustion symptoms. A spray bottle with water is the second best way to treat an over-heated dog, avoid that cold stream – it is dangerous. Getting in shape before the season will make the season more enjoyable. Don't hurt your back on opening day – do a few stretches before you lift that dog or heavy stuff. While most of us have the greatest respect of snakes I think that ticks are a lot more dangerous. There's a new tick-borne illness called Powassan, and this summer looks like it might be one of the worst on record for an increase in the tick population. Signs and symptoms of Powassan can include fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, seizures and memory loss. There's no vaccine to prevent Powassan. The best prevention is avoiding ticks, use of repellent and frequent checks. The best way to protect against snakes is beating the bushes and making noise. If you come across one anyway, freeze and then move very, very slowly away from it. Believe it or not, I didn't get a ticket from the Park rangers last season, and I plan to keep it that way. Never were the seasons, bear population and general perception of our Association more favorable than this year. Let's do great things this season! Let's make new friends, climb new mountains, train new dogs, but also see old friends, meet that big old bear again that always disappears at the end of training season. Let's call on those who are in for the ride without any participation in our efforts to preserve and expand bear hunting with hounds. Most of us know other bear hunters who are not a member yet or who have left us for whatever reason in the past. Let's talk to them and get stronger together. Happy Hunting!

2017 VBHA Scholarship Winner

The awardee is Savannah Blake Looney, a graduating senior at Craig County High School. The award was presented to Savannah at her graduation of May 26th. Savannah is the daughter of Larry and Stephanie Looney of New Castle, who are VBHA members. Savannah will attend Radford University and pursue a career in neonatal nursing. Best wishes and congratulations to Savannah! Her essay is posted on our website for your reading enjoyment.

2016 Youth and Big Bear Plaques

The youth plaques will be presented at the Tazewell meeting along with announcing the winner of the Big Bear Contest. I hope as many of the contestants as possible can be present to pick up their plaques. There were seven youth entries. Congratulations to each of these young hunters!

LANE BOLTER Kenbridge, VA
HALEY MUSICK Cleveland, VA

ZACHARY LEWIS Blacksburg, Va.
CONNER SCHULTZ Covington, VA
TESSA WALKE Wytheville, VA

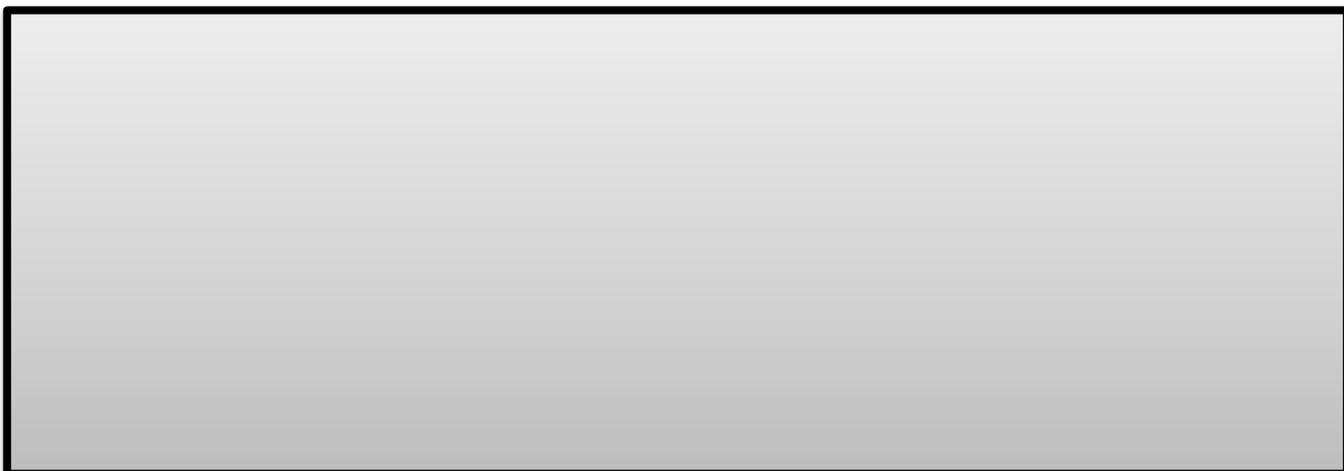
HUNTER MAYS Eagle Rock, VA
MEGAN TEMPLETON Bedford, VA

Donation to Wildlife Center of Virginia

The VBHA once again donated \$1000 to the Wildlife Center to help them with their wildlife rehabilitation work. The last count showed 11 cubs and one yearling at the Center. The Center and the VBHA seem like a strange partnership but the WCV was one of our biggest allies and supporters this year in our DGIF Regulation meetings. From day one there has been no stronger voice heard supporting what should be proper management of Virginia's bears than the Wildlife Center of Virginia. . It is money greatly appreciated and very well spent.

Please review your own VBHA membership information

Shown below is your information as we have it on VBHA records. Please renew your membership if it has or will soon expire. Corrections or additions to VBHA's information may be emailed to Hunter.Thrasher@gmail.com Also, **Email alerts** are something we are trying to use more to communicate with our members on urgent matters. Please review and/or provide your current email address; we will only use the email address for urgent VBHA correspondence and it will not be shared.



VBHA Executive Board 2017-18

President	Richard Sprinkle	Buchanan	540-254-2578
Vice President	Steve Nicely	Clifton Forge	540-862-5110
Secretary	Hunter Thrasher	Buchanan	540-598-6169
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 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

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 Renewal

Date paid or mailed _____

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.

