

Minutes of the Spring 2011 VHS Meeting  
Pocahontas State Park  
20 June 2011

The meeting was called to order by Kory Steele at 6:10 pm. He provided a quick update on some of the major recent events of note since the last meeting. The president reported that he and the secretary/treasurer attended an IRS workshop in October and learned a great deal about our new tax-exempt status. The web page was reported to have started a snake identification service, where people send in digital photos of snakes they have seen and have them identified. The web page is also posting a "Snakes of Concern" page. Steve Roble provided the last few missing Bulletins, so the web page now has a complete set. The VHS logo has been added to the "Year of the Turtle" web page. John White produced a "Snakes of the Shenandoah Park" poster. He also contacted the current owner of the VHS.com web site, unsuccessfully in an attempt to secure that site for the Virginia Herpetological Society. There was a major revision of the VHS website. A smartphone application has been produced to identify frog photos and calls. There is a hope to expand this to other groups of amphibians and reptiles as well. The VHS funded two research grants this year. Mike Clifford made several herp presentations available for Master Naturalist groups.

Committee Reports were given:

Newsletter – The last newsletter was sent electronically in February and the next one has begun. Please send any appropriate materials to Susan Watson.

Website – The traffic on the VHS website has greatly increased recently, with 13 hits/minute.

Catesbeiana – The last issue was just printed with 210 copies at \$320 and \$247 in postage. With new software, the journal can be produced in PDF format and sent electronically. In the future, it could be possible to mail it electronically to those desiring a digital copy.

Secretary/Treasurer – There is about \$6700 in the bank with 210 members, although there are 50 2010 members who have not yet renewed and will shortly be dropped from the membership list.

Conservation Committee – Robert Harris and Ryan Dumas were added as new members to the committee. The committee is working on a "Threats to Herps" poster. They also have a training session available for Master Naturalists presentations.

Research Committee – No report.

Education Committee – There were a number of Master Naturalists presentations made recently. Please report and presentations you make to Mike Clifford who is logging them. There are a lot of Herp photos coming in for identification on the website. This has led to several new county records, and is an excellent interaction with the public.

HerpBlitz – The Hungry Mother State Park survey is coming up June 24-26. Please RSVP to Jason Gibson if you plan to attend.

Web Store – The VHS received a check recently from Café Press for the profits from the Web Store. New graphic images are needed, please send any you have to Pattie Crane for use with items from the Store.

New Business:

Non-Profit status – The criteria for not-for-profit status is that the organization can be educational, scientific or charitable. The VHS qualified on several of these criteria. Donations are tax exempt but not membership dues. Tax-exempt organizations are required to provide the

exemption application to anyone upon request. Board members cannot benefit monetarily from the Society. Tax-exempt organizations cannot lobby in political elections.

A number of new county records are appearing from the online herp identification service recently added to the web site. Someone is needed to write up field notes from these identifications. Contact Kory if you are interested.

Frog Call Smartphone Application – Kory noticed the absence of such a service and had one produced. This is part of the VHS focus on education. It could be a fundraising project since there is a few dollars charge to all those downloading it. It could be updated to those species occurring in the southeastern states and have more utility.

Nominating Committee – The next set of VHS elections is due to be held this Fall. Jason Gibson was asked to hold up a nominating committee. He accepted.

Surveys for Next Year – Susan Watson suggested a new Wildlife Management Area in Carroll County. There was some discussion of having an earlier survey, perhaps in March to better catch the early-breeding amphibians. The problem of cold/snowy weather was brought up.

Location of the Fall 2011 Meeting – It was suggested that having the meeting at UVA or VT would help to attract more students to the meetings. No site was secured as of this meeting. If anyone has a good idea for a keynote speaker, send the idea to Kory.

Irene Frenz gave a presentation on Pocahontas State Park. Jason Gibson followed this with a slide presentation on the likely species to be encountered at the Park.