



Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance

Powhatan, Virginia

October 30, 2015

**VOTE THIS
TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 3**

**YOUR HERITAGE
DEPENDS ON IT!**

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On November 3, 2015 every one of the 140 members of the Virginia General Assembly is up for election. For too long Virginia's Sportsmen have let other people decide who will represent them. There are people who want to end all hunting and the private ownership of firearms. Many others have a personal agenda that is against one form of gun rights or hunting or another. On Tuesday, November 3rd, you can say "**I WILL BE HEARD**" by voting.

Virginia Senate

The Virginia Senate has 40 seats. The Lt. Governor has the tie breaking vote in most cases. Currently Republicans, most of whom side with Sportsmen, control the majority by 21 to 19. If the Democrats pick just one seat they will control the Committee Chairmanships and the agenda. The Governor, Democrat Terry McAuliffe, is anti-gun and probably will not support our hunting traditions either. McAuliffe and New York City Billionaire Michael Bloomberg are pumping big money into the Senate races with an unusually strong anti-gun message. *We are only listing those candidates who have challengers and we endorse. SEE PAGE TWO*

Senate of Virginia

	Endorsed	District Includes
District 1	Mark Matney	Williamsburg; Part of Hampton, James City, Newport News, York and Suffolk
District 3	Thomas K. Norment, Jr.	Gloucester, King & Queen, King William New Kent, Poquoson; Part of Isle of Wight, James City, York Hampton and Suffolk
District 6	Linwood Lewis	Accomac, Mathews, and Northampton; Part of Norfolk and VA Beach
District 7	Frank Wagner	Part of Norfolk & VA Beach
District 8	Bill Desteph, Jr.	Part of VA Beach
District 10	Glen Sturtevant, Jr.	Powhatan, Part of Chesterfield and the City of Richmond
District 11	Amanda F. Chase	Amelia, Colonial Heights and Part of Chesterfield
District 12	Siobhan S. Dunnivant	Part of Hanover and Henrico
District 13	Richard H. "Dick" Black	Part of Loudoun and Prince William
District 20	William M. Stanley, Jr.	Henry, Galax, Martinsville and Patrick; Part of Carroll, Danville, Franklin, Halifax and Pittsylvania
District 21	Nancy V. Dye	Giles and Roanoke City; Part of Montgomery and Roanoke County
District 26	Mark D. Obenshain	Harrisonburg, Page Rappahannock, Shenandoah and Warren; Part of Rockingham
District 29	Hal Parrish	Manassas and Manassas Park; Part of Prince William



Virginia House of Delegates

The picture in the House is quite different. With a solid majority in the House, Republicans will surely keep control and Willian “Bill” Howell will retain the Speakership, but some very good friends face challenges. Again we are only listing those candidates who we endorse and who are facing challengers.

	Endorsed	District Includes
District 13	Robert G. Marshall	Manassas Park; Part of Prince William
District 21	Ron A. Villanueva	Part of Chesapeake and VA Beach
District 24	Ben L. Cline	Bath, Buena Vista, Lexington and Rockbridge; Part of Amherst and Augusta
District 25	R. Steven Landes	Part of Albemarle, Augusta and Rockingham
District 27	Roxann L. Robinson	Part of Chesterfield
District 28	William J. Howell	Part of Stafford and Fredericksburg
District 32	Thomas A. Greason	Part of Loudoun
District 40	Tim Hugo	Part of Fairfax and Prince William
District 55	Buddy Fowler	Part of Hanover, Caroline and Spottsylvania
District 61	Thomas C. Wright, Jr.	Amelia, Cumberland, Mecklenburg and Nottoway; Part of Lunenburg
District 62	Riley E. Ingram	Part of Chesterfield, Henrico, Prince George and Hopewell
District 82	Jason S. Miyares	Part of VA Beach
District 94	David E. Yancey	Part of Newport News
District 100	Robert S. Bloxom, Jr.	Accomack and Northampton; Part of Norfolk

Call all of the members of your group or hunt club and ask them to please ask their friends, neighbors and family to vote this Tuesday.

HOUND HUNTING IS UNDER ATTACK IN VIRGINIA!

A little background; there is an organization which has been formed via Facebook, called the Virginia Landowners Association. This is a group of people that have a varying agenda.

Some of it's' members want to reform hound hunting within the Commonwealth, primarily “deer hound hunting”. They want to implement programs similar to what has been put in place in Florida & Georgia. This would require permits to be issued by DGIF to hunters with dogs, and has severe penalties for a dog entering another piece of property. Specifically this plan would call for a warning, a substantial fine, and then loss of hunting privileges. The Georgia plan has a requirement for 1000 contiguous acres upon which to hunt, and a permit plan as well. In these states, a severe reduction in hunters and hunt clubs resulted. In Georgia, there was an immediate loss of 40% of all hunt clubs. Florida incurred a significant decrease in hunting license sales. Either of these plans would severely restrict the opportunity of small land owners to be able to hunt their own property, and if an unhappy neighbor desires, with 3 phone calls to DGIF, can eliminate hunting for that individual.

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Another segment wants to end “RTR” the “Right to Retrieval Law”! Their desire is to make it illegal to enter any property to recover or retrieve ones dog. They want severe trespass penalties to be issued to anyone on their property at any time. Though landowner rights are to be respected by all, elimination of this law will impact most any type of dog hunter! The foxhunter, bear hunter, coon hunter, coyote & bobcat hunter, even the rabbit, squirrel, rabbit, turkey, and bird hunter, not just the deer dog hunter! Even your house pet will be affected! Part of this group wants to go so far as to issue “trespass tickets” to the dog....i.e....the dog’s owner! If you own any of the dogs mentioned, they are coming after you!

There is a radical portion of this group which wants to totally end “dog hunting” and ultimately all hunting!! Their guise is to end deer dog hunting, which is the first step toward elimination of fox hunting (which they don’t like either), coon hunting, etc.! Why, so that some can pursue their greedy desire to harvest the “big buck”, which they have fed, and baited! Others claim they want total privacy, “ some wonder what else they may be growing”!

An additional segment seeks to eliminate dog hunting in order to acquire leased lands on which to conduct “paid”, “guided hunts”. Something they cannot effectively do if there is a dog in the area causing “their deer” to potentially move from where they are set up! This has the potential to bring in large incomes for the select few pushing this agenda. To accomplish this, the group needs to have dog hunting eliminated, and baiting legalized! And there are some in this group who would like to have “high fence deer farms” approved, whereby they can then conduct expensive hunts to shoot their farm raised trophies! Added pressure would be made by the “big money” interests to DGIF or the Legislature to allow this type of hunting!

The impact of these actions would have a huge impact on the Commonwealth! DGIF is primarily funded through license sales, & taxation of the sale of the majority of hunting and fishing items, weapons etc. Reduction of these funds would then negatively impact the ability of DGIF to adequately function. Small business owners, in local communities, would be drastically affected by reduced revenues from the lack of hunters in their areas spending monies. Many other businesses, large & small, would be financially affected; pet stores, Vet’s, dog food manufacturers, any and all businesses that sell hunting or dog items, counties lose revenue of kennels licenses, and dog licenses, and the list goes on and on!

Landowners, especially those that own large tracts of land, stand to lose “leasing revenue”. A number of smaller landowners utilize the “lease” income to pay real estate taxes on their properties. A representative of one of the large timber/land holding companies stated that loss of “land lease revenue” would cause an annual income reduction of 20-25% of their income stream! A pretty substantial impact!

This organization has brought to bear pressure on DGIF by its’ launch of a huge complaint program, whether legitimate or not to try to prove that their “perceived problems” are substantial enough to warrant severe restriction or elimination of deer HOUND hunting”. Note the word “hound”, because some of them want to be able to continue to hunt “bird dogs”. Through this pressure and constant “hounding” (pun intended) of DGIF & the Board of Directors, there has been the issuance of a directive to DGIF staff, to study the issues, & put together a report with recommendations to the Board at the January 20th, 2016 Board meeting.

It is time to meet this threat “head-on” by notifying the Board members of DGIF, & Director Duncan that we do not support the radical agenda sought by this landowners group! Let them know that you as a hunter, business person,
(Continued on page 5)

& landowner, support “deer hound hunting” in Virginia! Let them know you do not support the proposed changes which would severely reduce, curtail, or eliminate deer hound hunting!

Let them know that there are sufficient laws & regulations, WHICH IF PROPERLY ENFORCED, address the purported problem. AB

DGIF Facts about Dog Complaints

The minute you hear someone complaining about hunters with dogs, you only have to listen for a minute or two to know what is really on their mind. They will begin with a litany alleged problems and offenses they say justify eliminating hunting with dogs in Virginia. It’s sad but true that most of these “problems” are a re-hash of some alleged slight or incident that a friend claims to have experienced.

Let’s be frank some of our folks are a problem, but the absolute truth that the real problem lies elsewhere. In 2007, a couple of landowners, who were claiming to have big problems because dogs occasionally crossed their property, pulled enough strings with Governor Tim Kaine to get the Hound study going. Those landowners were really trying to run local the competition out of the neighborhood, so they could have the game all to themselves. In 2014, a couple of folks who had the idea that if they could end hunting with dogs, they could have their own way with commercial hunting.

In both of these examples, some hunters bought the lie that their hunting would improve if dogs were no longer used. The truth about the impact of hunting with dogs was distorted by people who simply did not know what they didn’t know.

A very small group of folks continue to complain about Virginia’s tradition of hunting with hounds. They will tell you that trespassing and “turning dogs lose” on posted lands is a widespread problem. Our Code of Ethics makes it clear we do not tolerate lawless behavior. A very small number of opponents continue to raise a clamor simply because they want to legalize “Texas Style” hunting over bait! For commercial hunting to be economically feasible in Virginia, they needed to be able to hunt both days of the weekend, get dogs off the land so they can bait without having to fence the land, make hunting over bait legal and have the State recognize and regulate guides and outfitters. Why else would ten rich people try to raise \$100,000 to change the face of hunting in Virginia!

If they get their way, the average hunter, no matter whether dogs are used or not, will not be able to afford to lease land to hunt on!

Violations of law by people who hunt with dogs are not widespread nor are they more than isolated incidents! We support community policing by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as the solution to individual problems, and are using THEIR information to get the truth to you!

The facts speak for themselves! The reference to dogs includes violations involving waterfowlers, bird hunters, non-hunting dogs and hound hunters! (*Chart with the facts on the page 6*)

FOIA REQUEST FROM KIRBY BURCH: 1/9/2015 DUE DATE: ASAP					
Question #	Description	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15*
9	Total Number of Complaints Related to Hunting	4838	4920	5638	3416
10	Total Number of Summonses Issued for Violations	12993	9599	10687	5627
11	Total Number of Convictions	8151	6185	6940	2050
12	Total Number of Trespass Complaints	1998	1931	2025	1498
13	Total Number of Summonses Issued for Trespass Violations	963	651	703	439
14	Total Number of Convictions for Trespass Violations	520	369	370	101
15	Number of Complaints for Violation 18.2-136	16	21	30	28
15	Number of Summonses for Violation 18.2-136	11	5	6	9
15	Number of Convictions for Violation 18.2-136	4	3	3	0
16	Number of Trespassing Complaints Referencing "Dog"	130	104	174	182
16	**Number of Trespassing Summonses Referencing "Dog"	6	24	30	26
16	**Number of Trespassing Convictions Referencing "Dog"	1	15	7	1
17	Number of Complaints Referencing "Dog"	510	421	605	475
17	Number of Summonses Referencing "Dog"	49	151	173	119
17	Number of Convictions Referencing "Dog"	23	79	85	4

*NOTE: FY15 is from date range 7/1/2014 - 1/3/2015

Completed by Law Support Staff on 1/21/2015

**NOTE: Last year's FOIA response for Summons/Convictions Referencing "Dog" had a calculation error . All years have been corrected in this request.

Ethical hunting

There are some that do not follow the laws of the Commonwealth. Law violators should be prosecuted for violations by the laws currently in place! We as hunters and individual citizens must respect their fellow citizens of the Commonwealth, and be ethical in our endeavors, hunting or otherwise!

The group calling themselves the Virginia Landowners Association is calling for a massive increase in complaints about hunting with dogs across Virginia. They realize as does DGIF that the numbers of complaints, summonses issued and convictions are so small that it is difficult to believe that reasonable people would believe that there is a widespread problem. The clamor that is being raised by these claims is being heard. **This is very easy to deal with, simply obey the law and be courteous at all times.**

Police your fellow hunters; REPORT Wildlife Violators by calling (1-800-237-5712). If you are approached about a complaint, write down the facts these notes they will be important. If you are harassed be polite but report that. It is against the law to impede the hunt.

If you are harassed by a CPO, first ask yourself if any of your group is a problem. If your group has violators or rude individuals YOU ARE the problem and are hurting all of us. If you are obeying the law and are respecting your neighbors and still believe you are being treated unfairly or rudely then report that to your DGIF Board member and your legislator. The staff of DGIF is paid by Sportsmen's money, you are their employers!

Lack of Game Wardens

Outdoor writer Bill Cochran reports that Governor McAuliffe has blocked the hiring of CPO's (Game Wardens) due to lack of diversity in the force and the applicant pool. Bill reports that 147 Game Warden positions are currently filed. DGIF is authorized to employ approximately 192. It was also reported that moral is very low among the warden force.

The Vahda supported the hiring of additional wardens in the past. Among those vacancies are the three top positions immediately below Colonel Ron Henry, Chief of Law Enforcement Division. Those key supervisor positions have been vacant for nearly three years. With the Lt. Colonel and two major positions vacant it is no wonder that supervision and communication within the warden's ranks has been inconsistent at best.

New Chairman of House Agriculture Chosen

Danny Marshall (R-Danville) has been chosen to be Chairman of the very important House of Delegates Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee replacing former Chairman Ed Scott, who chose not to seek re-election. Delegate Marshall has been a true friend to Virginia's Sportsmen and we look forward to working with him.

Duncan initiates Study of Lead Ammo

DGIF Executive Director Bob Duncan announced at the Agency Advisory Committee meeting said he had tasked David Whitehurst to lead a study of the impact on Virginia's wildlife of the use of lead in ammunition. As you may know the banning of lead in ammunition in California has driven up the cost of ammunition dramatically. He mentioned Ed Clark, Wildlife Center of Virginia, in his remarks as being a major supporter of the reduction in the use of lead ammo by hunters. I don't know how muzzleloaders shoot with projectiles other than lead or what will replace lead for buckshot. We do know what it would do to the cost of ammunition if all copper or other remedies were required. Can you imagine all copper buckshot?



Foundation a Great Tax Deductible Charity

Now, as the holidays approach, is a great time to consider an individual or business contribution to the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance Foundation. The Foundation is a tax deductible educational (501c3) devoted to promoting ethical hunting and our Virginia traditions. The Foundation will educate the hunters and the public alike on the benefits of hunting to our natural resources. Funds raised will also be available for legal defense against precedent setting legal actions designed to circumvent the legislature.

VaHDA Sponsors Hunter Education

The Richmond County Chapter and Farnham Hunt Club teamed together on September 19, 2015 to sponsor a Hunters Education Course. Getting kids and apprentice hunters in the woods to carry on Our Hunting Traditions! What a fabulous day, Priceless!! Our Chapter and Farnham Hunt Club are planning to sponsor 2 each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. We hope other Chapters will consider doing the same in the near future. This is such an easy event to sponsor in your communities and speaks volumes in promoting hunting responsibly. If you need help in preparing, please email us at info@vahda.org.

Our Dogs and Other Partnership

Having mailed the last of late Virginia season Woodcock wings to U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the girls (German Shorthaired Pointers) and I turned to Ruffed Grouse until the end of February. We hunted Woodcock covers on DGIF's Wildlife Management Areas and had a hoot. Woodcock offer great hunting for bird-dogs and the people they let hunt with them. Reading the last VAHDA Newsletter and thinking about wrapping up Woodcock season reminded me of how important it is for people who are fortunate enough to hunt with dogs to adhere to the recommendations in the 31 December 2014 VAHDA Newsletter (ethical, considerate, responsible, accountable and therefore easily legal hunting). When first hearing about VAHDA several years ago, I thought only about deer hunting but quickly realized I "have a dog in that hunt", too; and, later learned that I share many concerns with VAHDA. With dogs as the first common link, other shared concerns and opportunities came to mind. These concerns relate to public policy directed toward key areas: (1) quality habitat, (2) access, (3) continued hunting with dogs and (4) partnerships.

No matter what we hunt, quality habitat and access are among the major controlling factors (dogs or not). Individuals, clubs and hunting conservation organizations at every level can partner to help assure quality habitat and access. As far as habitat, Young Forests and Old Field Succession produce the bedding, breeding, rearing and protective cover (high stem density) many game and non-game species must have to survive. Many hunt clubs target this type of forest/field mix. Many hunt clubs recruit/accept members who hunt game other than the main purpose of the hunt club; some may attract non-hunting wildlife enthusiasts (e.g., birders). One example is a

nearby bear hunt club that leases wisely managed tracts of mountain land. Bear, deer, turkey, woodcock and grouse hunters share thousands of acres to everyone's advantage (including the land owners).

Ethical practices, taking care of, and improving the land, go far in securing and maintaining access. So, as I hunt Virginia's public land mainly alone with two German Shorthair Pointers it occurs to me that my solitary hunt is not really solitary. Many other hunters and organizations have already helped provide me and my dogs with access and habitat. Here's to exploring further how to support current and create more partnerships across Virginia's dog hunting community. And, here's to applying those partnerships to increased access and improved habitat. [Insert suitable beverage toast here].

Our individual and collective voices can have an impact on land management policies and practices. Recently, hunting conservation organizations have increased their focus on active management of U.S. National Forests and other public lands. Governmental and non-governmental organizations stand ready to help private landowners effectively manage for wildlife that includes game and non-game species. In fact, a study of rural landowners in Upstate New York described in today's *Outdoor Wire* noted a strong link between wildlife recreation and conservation. This Cornell University study documented that both hunters and birders contributed 4-5 times more toward conservation efforts than those who do not participate in outdoor recreation. Those respondents who self-identified as both birders and hunters were eight times more likely to engage in conservation activities. Likely we have untapped partners out there who can help with access and habitat. Here's to new partners!

Wayne Thacker
Bumpass, Virginia

Virginia Wildlife Habitat Coalition

A new organization that supports healthy forest habitat, the Virginia Wildlife Habitat Coalition is seeking to improve wildlife habitat on public lands managed by the National Forest Service and DGIF. Wayne Thacker, author of the above article, is the driving force in this effort to increase the voice of Sportsmen in the management of our public lands in Virginia. The Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance has joined this coalition. The mission and objectives are found below.

Mission: The Virginia Wildlife Habitat Coalition actively supports through advocacy and education the stewardship and active management of our public forest resources, based on sound science for the benefit of all wildlife. The coalition works collaboratively to provide input and support for habitat projects for both game and nongame species in the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Wildlife Management Areas.

Objective: The VWHC seeks to increase early successional habitat, to a level which provides for a balanced mosaic and varied age-class stands in the forest ecosystems on GW/JEFF and DGIF WMAs. We will advocate and educate toward this end.

Know the Law

§ 18.2-132. Trespass by hunters and fishers.

Any person who goes on the lands, waters, ponds, boats or blinds of another to hunt, fish or trap without the consent of the landowner or his agent shall be deemed guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

§ 18.2-133. Refusal of person on land, etc., of another to identify himself.

Any person who goes on the lands, waters, ponds, boats or blinds of another to hunt, fish, or trap and willfully refuses to identify himself when requested by the landowner or his agent so to do shall be deemed guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.

§ 18.2-134. Trespass on posted property.

Any person who goes on the lands, waters, ponds, boats or blinds of another, which have been posted in accordance with the provisions of § [18.2-134.1](#), to hunt, fish or trap except with the written consent of or in the presence of the owner or his agent shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

§ 18.2-134.1. Method of posting lands.

A. The owner or lessee of property described in § [18.2-134](#) may post property by (i) placing signs prohibiting hunting, fishing or trapping where they may reasonably be seen; or (ii) placing identifying paint marks on trees or posts at each road entrance and adjacent to public roadways and public waterways adjoining the property. Each paint mark shall be a vertical line of at least two inches in width and at least eight inches in length and the center of the mark shall be no less than three feet nor more than six feet from the ground or normal water surface. Such paint marks shall be readily visible to any person approaching the property.

B. The type and color of the paint to be used for posting shall be prescribed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Submit an article

If you would like to submit an article for possible publishing in our newsletter, email us at info@vahda.org or mail it to P.O. Box 657 Powhatan, Virginia 23139.

All VHDA Board members are real hunters who own dogs. The VHDA has no paid staff. We pay our own expenses because "We HAVE a dog in this fight!" If we sometimes sound angry, it is because we are! We would prefer to be hunting, teaching our children about the wonders that God has given us and training our dogs. We know that we must have a strong voice or we will lose to people, who not only disagree with you, but hate and revile you because you hunt.

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