

**Black Bear Management Plan**  
**Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting (Region 3)**  
Tuesday, October 19, 2010, 10:00 am-4:00 pm  
VDGIF Regional Office, Verona, VA  
**Meeting Summary: Finalized Values and Draft Goals**

**Attendees**

Marshall Jones, Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection, Rappahannock County

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Buck Kline, Bow hunter / Virginia Department of Forestry, Madison County

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Bob Scott, Bear Smart, Nelson County

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David Shelor, Landowner, Roanoke County

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Richard Thompson, Stoneman Rep., Botetourt County

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Jeb Wofford, Shenandoah National Park, Page County

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**Feedback on Technical Draft**

There were no additional comments on the technical chapters of the draft plan. The draft technical chapters can be accessed at

[http://www.responsivemanagement.com/download/VABear/DRAFT\\_BearMgmtPlan\\_2011\\_2020\\_TechnicalPortion.pdf](http://www.responsivemanagement.com/download/VABear/DRAFT_BearMgmtPlan_2011_2020_TechnicalPortion.pdf). As you continue to review the technical draft of the 2011-2020 plan, please submit additional feedback and comments to [andrea@responsivemanagement.com](mailto:andrea@responsivemanagement.com).

**Key for Values**

✓ Final Identified and Accepted Value, including edits discussed at meeting

~~Strikethrough Font~~ = deleted value or deleted text based on edits discussed at meeting

Blue Font = added text based on edits discussed at meeting

Please note the listed values also include values originally identified by other regions that this group accepted.

Finalized values and draft goal statements begin on the following page.

## Bear Population

### Final Bear Population Values Identified by Region 3:

- ✓ Ensure the long-term viability of bear populations in all areas ~~except northern Virginia and northern Tidewater~~
  - Group Note: would like to see more specific or better defined term than “areas” used here
- ✓ Comprehensive research, monitoring, management, education, and protection programs
- ✓ Maintain bear populations at levels compatible with land use, property concerns, and recreational opportunities; i.e., at cultural carrying capacity (CCC)
- ✓ Even if CCC is exceeded, population viability is more important
- ✓ Bear population management should be local (site-specific)
- ✓ Bear populations are an important component of the ecosystem
- ✓ Managing for a balance in bear, deer, and other wildlife populations
- ~~➤ Population increases are especially important for Southside and Southwestern areas~~
- ✓ Black bear populations have economic implications
  - moved from Bear-Related Recreation values, edited, and accepted
- ~~➤ Population objectives should reflect habitat availability (rather than having to improve habitat to attain population objectives)~~
- ✓ Bear population levels / goals should adapt to changing CCC
- ~~➤ Maintain bear population in some areas at biological carrying capacity (BCC)~~
  - Group Note: good concept but not practical
- ✓ “Manage” CCC to meet current and projected bear population goals
  - Group Note: effort to make CCC = bear population

### Bear Population Goals Drafted by Region 3:

- Ensure the long-term viability of black bear populations in Virginia through a comprehensive research, monitoring, management, education, and protection program. Management should be site-specific and should balance needs of other wildlife populations.

- Maintain black bear populations throughout Virginia at levels compatible with land use, property concerns, and recreational opportunities while recognizing economic and ecological considerations.
- The goal of maintaining or achieving long-term population viability should be of higher priority even when CCC is exceeded. When necessary, both CCC and bear populations can be managed to meet objectives.

## Bear-Related Recreation Values

### Final Bear-Related Recreation Values Identified by Region 3:

- ✓ Provide a diversity of hunting opportunities
  - Group Note: diversity does not just refer to diversity of hunting methods but also of experiences, activities (e.g., a wilderness experience, etc.)
- ✓ Hunting is a **primary** management tool
- ✓ Hunting **is valued** as a recreational experience
- ✓ Discourage or prohibit activities that prevent attainment of population objectives
- ✓ Hunting methods (~~chase and take included~~) are fair and sportsmanlike
  - Group Notes:
    - this value is all-inclusive of hunting methods that are considered fair and sportsmanlike
    - this region DOES consider “chase and take” to be fair and sportsmanlike and to be included in this value
    - “chase and take included” was NOT deleted because it is not considered fair and sportsmanlike but because it seemed that by naming only that hunting method in the value it was being singled out as if indeed it may not be considered fair and sportsmanlike
- ✓ Hunting activities respect the rights of private property owners
- ✓ Hunting activities respect the rights of other Virginia citizens
- ✓ Provide opportunities for non-hunting recreation
- ~~➤ Non-hunting recreation should minimize negative human-bear interactions~~
- ~~➤ Non-hunting recreation should focus on information and education~~
- ~~➤ Hunting is THE management tool (would replace “hunting is a management tool”?)~~
- ~~➤ Black bear populations have social, economic, and recreational implications~~
  - edited and accepted but moved to Bear Population Values
- ✓ Promote educated and informed bear-related recreation
- ~~➤ Promote bear welfare in hunting seasons~~
- ✓ Hunting methods are **humane**, ethical, and legal

- ✓ Bear-related recreation should minimize negative human-bear interactions and promote keeping bears wild (i.e., preventing dependency on humans)
- ✓ Promote safe hunting practices
- ✓ Harvested bears should be utilized
  - Group Note: please explain in plan by including data on hunter use of bear meat, point out programs that take the meat
- ~~Increase hunting opportunities in appropriate areas~~

**Overall Region 3 Group Comment:**

- Values, especially from the 2001 values, should be expressed as values rather than as statements of fact, (i.e., using “should be” instead of “is”)

**Bear-Related Recreation Strategies Identified by Region 3:**

- The following was not kept as a final value but was considered to be a good strategy to include in the plan.
  - ~~Public~~ Large tracts of land (public or private) ~~is~~ are an important component of all bear-related recreation

**Bear-Related Recreation Goals Drafted by Region 3:**

- Hunting Seasons and Demands: Provide a diversity and parity of black bear hunting opportunities in Virginia as a primary management tool and valued recreational experience, while discouraging or prohibiting activities that prevent attainment of black bear population objectives.
- Ethics of Bear Hunting Methods: Ensure that black bear hunting methods in Virginia are safe, legal, humane, and ethical.
- Landowner and Citizen Conflicts With Bear Hunting: Ensure that bear hunting activities are consistent with and respect the rights of private property owners and other Virginia citizens.
- Bear-Related Recreation: Provide opportunities for recreation associated with black bears in Virginia with a focus on information and education to minimize negative human-bear interactions and promote keeping bears wild.

## **Bear Habitat**

### **Final Bear Habitat Values Identified by Region 3:**

- ✓ Conserve black bear large-scale habitats consistent with bear population objectives by providing incentives and assistance to landowners (TNC, etc.)
- ✓ Habitat **management** / conservation should emphasize areas of special significance and sanctuaries ~~in areas of decreasing populations (i.e., Southwest Virginia)~~ **to meet bear population objectives**
- ✓ Habitat management, **conservation**, planning, and acquisition should consider long-term needs, goals, potential habitat changes, and potential human-bear interactions
- ✓ Manage bear habitat for the benefit of multiple species (overall stewardship), including bear

### **Bear Habitat Strategies Identified by Region 3:**

- The following were not kept as final values but were considered to be good strategies to include in the plan.
  - Assist and promote the management of mast crop as it relates to black bear populations
  - Promote conservation methods by educating on the value of unconverted land, by creating a marketplace for preserved habitat, and through conservation easements
  - Conduct research to identify critical habitat areas and to assess need for corridors, culverts, and/or underpasses to improve habitat quality and overcome / reduce habitat fragmentation
  - Involve local landowners in stewardship efforts

### **Bear Habitat Goals Drafted by Region 3:**

- Conserve and manage black bear large-scale habitats consistent with bear population objectives by providing incentives and assistance to landowners.
- Habitat conservation and management should emphasize areas of special significance and sanctuaries to meet population objectives. Habitat conservation / management planning and acquisition should consider long-term needs, goals, potential habitat changes, and potential human-bear interactions.
- Manage and conserve bear habitat for the benefit of multiple species.

## Human-Bear Interactions

### Final Human-Bear Interaction Values Identified by Region 3:

- ✓ Promote human safety
- ✓ Reasonably protect personal income
- ✓ Reasonably protect personal property
- ✓ Should still attain population and recreation objectives while protecting people
- ✓ Keep bears wild
  - Group Note: “wild” refers to natural behavior, avoiding habituation; may want to reword
- ~~➤ Promote bear safety~~
- ✓ Proactive rather than reactive management
- ~~➤ Manipulate, manage CCC to better match bear populations~~
- ~~➤ Give priority to protecting livelihoods as it relates to bear populations~~
- ✓ Hunting is preferred over kill permits to manage problem bears
- ~~➤ “Mitigate” (rather than “Protect”) loss of income and property~~
  - Group Note: see above values to “reasonably protect”; rejected the term “mitigate”
- ✓ Shared agency / citizen responsibility for bear problems
- ✓ Response to bear issues should be coordinated and consistent

### Human-Bear Interaction Goal Drafted by Region 3 (Unfinished):

- When necessary, both CCC and bear populations can be managed to meet bear population objectives.