

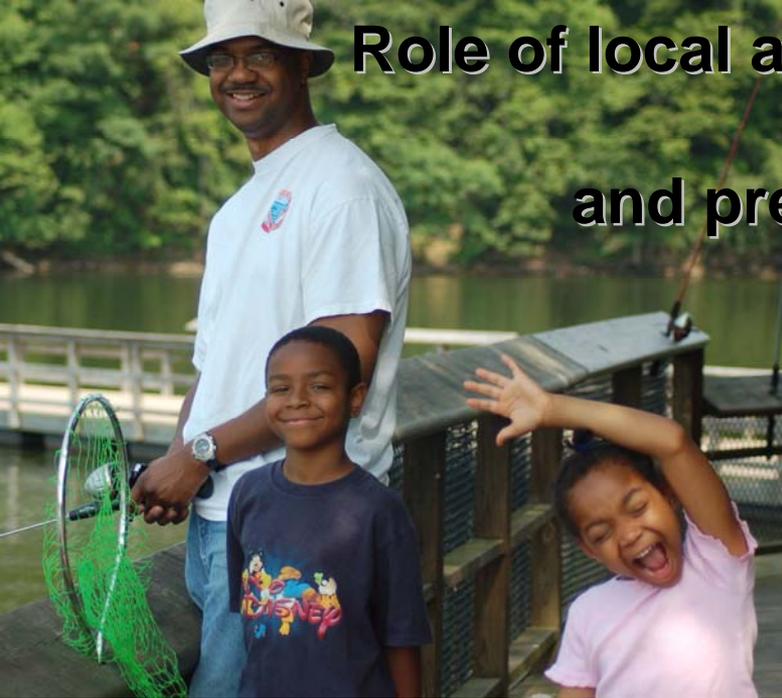
# **Presentation of William Dickinson,**

**Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, before the Joint Meeting of the Virginia Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources**

**October 1, 2008**

**Bear Creek Island State Park in  
Cumberland County, Virginia**

# Role of local and regional government in land conservation and preservation of open space



# Virginia's Open Space Challenge

***The face of Virginia is taking on a new character as it becomes urbanized and industrialized in its commitment to progress. The progress is manifested by population growth and concentration.....these forces are threatening the very resources that are basic – our brooks and woods, our farms, our shorelines. The problem is that the average person – and especially the city dweller – is having a harder and harder time finding the outdoors.***

***It is being marred or demolished***

***It is being walled off with “no trespassing signs”***

***It is being consumed by unplanned urban growth***

***...We do not have to choose between material progress and an agreeable environment. We must have both.***

# **Elements of the 1965 report that pertain most directly to regional and local open space**

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**Aid localities in resource conservation and development**

**Encourage greater use of Regional Commissions and Regional Park Authorities**

"When two or more localities have a common resource (such as a river or lake) or a common problem (such as metropolitan development)...they should establish a Regional Planning Commission and a Regional Park Authority...the state should offer planning and financial aid to local and regional agencies for land acquisition..."

**Encourage advance planning and land acquisition in areas of major water supply**

**Provide guidelines for planned communities and cluster development**

**Establish the Virginia Outdoors Foundation -- Provide for the acquisition of scenic and open space easements on private properties**

**Establish the Virginia Outdoors Fund to implement the Virginia Outdoors Plan (as of 1999, the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation)**

# Voters Value Natural Areas

- *96% of voters believe that Virginians owe it to future generations "to protect the land, water and wildlife for their use and enjoyment."*<sup>1</sup>
- 71% of Virginians favor purchase of land to be managed as natural areas or parks for public use.<sup>2</sup>



# Recommendation from the 2007 Virginia Outdoor Plan

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## **Specific needs identified in the Northern Virginia region are:**

- Water access for fishing, swimming and boating.
- Trails for fitness, bicycling, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding and off-road motorcycling.
- Multipurpose fields for soccer, football and other field sports.
- Natural areas for nature studies.
- Parks with camping and picnicking.
- Additional basketball, tennis and volleyball courts.



As our area becomes more urbanized,  
we need to do more to protect our  
drinking water supplies, flood plains,  
wetlands and wildlife areas.



# Top ideas that could help with parkland expansion

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- Senator Ticer's (SB 642) bill to provide a higher tax credit for the fee simple donation of parkland.
- Change VLCF legislation to create a category just for parkland.
- Include Green Infrastructure in the next state bond (2010).

**Thank You**

