



**Ann Jennings**  
*Secretary of Natural and Historic  
Resources*

**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Department of Wildlife Resources**

**Ryan J. Brown**  
*Executive Director*

December 2, 2021

Mr. Shannon Nesselrodt, President  
Virginia Bowhunters Association  
262 Fifth Street  
Broadway, VA 22815

Dear Mr. Nesselrodt,

I am writing to extend congratulations on behalf of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) as you celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Virginia Bowhunters Association (VBA).

The DWR has a long history of successful relationships with a variety of organizations. In fact, it is not a stretch to say that our interaction with groups composed of private citizens is a bedrock of our success. Our mission to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitat for all generations, connect people with Virginia's outdoors, and protect people and property by promoting safe outdoor experiences is buttressed by the cooperative assistance we gratefully receive from an impressive array of organizations focused on Virginia wildlife resources and wildlife-related recreation activities.

The Department's relationship with your organization, the VBA, is certainly one that we value highly. Your focus on bowhunting and the advancement and preservation of that sport in Virginia plays a significant role in fulfilling the Department's mission. The leadership you have provided in the bowhunting community and your cooperation with the DWR have resulted in truly impressive accomplishments that have benefited both organizations and the hunting community at large. A few examples include:

- **1952 Big Levels (Augusta County) Bowhunting** – A 5-day season was opened on the Big Levels refuge, which had previously been closed to all deer hunting.
- **1954 Bear and Deer Archery Seasons Established** – Prior to 1954 archery hunting for bear and deer was only allowed during the general firearms season
- **1981 Wild Turkey Archery Season Established** – Prior to 1981 archery hunting for wild turkeys was only allowed during the general firearms season
- **1985 Special Archery License Established** – This license allowed bowhunters to harvest two additional deer

- **1993 Statewide Deer Archery Season Extended** – An additional week was added to the beginning of the existing statewide deer archery season, moving the start date of the season to its current starting date on the first Saturday in October.
- **2002 Urban Archery Season Established** – This new season offered cities and towns the opportunity to expand archery season by ~4 months.
- **2010 – present** – The VBA supported the DWR plan to reintroduce elk to Virginia; sponsored state-wide charity shoots to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Hunters for the Hungry; helped revitalize the International Bowhunter Education Program in Virginia; supported a variety of DWR initiatives such as Sunday hunting on private land, combining archery and crossbow licenses, and improvements to the urban hunting program.

This partial list of successful interactions with the DWR is laudable and a record of which you can be justifiably proud. I had the pleasure to attend your 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet and based on the discussions at the event I am sure our continued partnership will result in significant accomplishments in the future.

Congratulations again on a successful 80 years and best wishes for continued leadership among the bowhunters in Virginia.

Sincerely,



Ryan Brown  
Executive Director