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OSIG NEWS

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OSIG FINDS OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

Natural Resources Law Enforcement (NRLE) within the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) lacks diversity that is representative of the population the Commonwealth of Virginia. That's the conclusion reached by the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General's (OSIG) performance audit of the three agencies. OSIG conducted the audit to evaluate the quality of diversity recruitment and hiring practices of law enforcement officers within the Natural Resources Secretariat.

"I requested this audit in 2018 because of the obvious lack of diversity in these law enforcement agencies. We can expect to build a more inclusive Commonwealth and broader support for conservation only when our most visible environmental stewards look much more like the people they serve," said Governor Ralph Northam. "I agree with the findings of this report, and my Secretary of Natural Resources and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer are already working with our agencies to implement the recommendations."

The audit found that the agencies do not strategically plan community engagement to generate new interest in natural resources services or outdoor activities, and that outreach events facilitated by the agencies are limited to existing customers and are not inclusive of community partners. The audit also found that two of the three agencies do not have diversity and inclusion strategic plans.

"OSIG recommends that each agency develop or improve their diversity and inclusion strategic plans," said State Inspector General Michael C. Westfall. "OSIG also recommends that each agency create a community engagement director position that can direct better use of existing resources and cultivating new resources and share a recruiter position that can step up recruiting efforts for a diverse and inclusive workforce in these agencies."

Management from all three agencies concurred or partially concurred with OSIG's recommendations and have started their corrective action plans. Read the full Natural Resources Law Enforcement Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Performance Audit [here](#).

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Established in 2012, the Virginia Office of the State Inspector General manages the State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline; conducts investigations and performance audits of state agencies; provides training and standards for the commonwealth's internal audit programs; and conducts inspections and reviews of Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services-run facilities and programs.