



ACTIONS

N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

January 12, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters
1751 Varsity Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina

Call to Order - *Commissioner* David Hoyle, Jr. called the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Conference Room, 5th floor. Doc Thurston and Nat Harris were absent. Commissioner Dell Murphy was present by telephone.

Invocation - *Commissioner* John Litton Clark gave the invocation.

Mandatory Ethics Inquiry - Chairman Hoyle read the ethics inquiry mandated in North Carolina General Statute 138A-15(e).

Welcome - Chairman Hoyle welcomed Commissioners and guests. He announced that the meeting audio was being streamed live on the WRC website. Hoyle announced that Ramon Bell of the N.C. Bowhunters Association is in the hospital and that former Commissioner Maughan Hull has cardiac health issues.

Minutes - the Commission approved the November 10, 2011 Wildlife Resources Commission minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**.

Special Meeting Minutes – the Commission approved the minutes of the special teleconference WRC meeting held on December 12, 2011, presented in **Exhibit B**.

Financial Status Report - the Commission received a financial status report on the Wildlife Operating Fund and the Wildlife Endowment Fund as of November 30, 2011, from Tommy Clark, *Budget Officer*, presented in **Exhibit C**. The Operating Fund balance was \$21,645,980.78. The Endowment Fund balance was \$86,762,117.54.

Special Recognition – Wildlife Enforcement Officer of the Year Award – Colonel Dale Caveny, *Enforcement Division Chief*, recognized Captain Jon Evans for receiving the Officer of the Year Award sponsored by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Shikar Safari International. Caveny announced that Evans has been promoted from Sergeant to Captain and is the Enforcement Training Director. Caveny called upon Jim Harrison of Shikar Safari International, who presented Captain Evans with the award.

Spotlight – Information and Technology Updates - Gayle Myers, *Webmaster*, presented an update on the new agency website, www.ncwildlife.org, which went live on October 11, 2011. Myers stated that in the past year there have been two million visits to the agency website. Future plans include mobile web applications, photo galleries, event calendars, audio webcast which went live with today's meeting, and interface with social media sites. Carolyn Rickard, *Information and Communications Specialist*, gave an overview of agency plans for increased usage of social media such as Twitter, YouTube, blogs, Google Plus and Facebook, to provide information and outreach about the Wildlife Resources Commission. Rickard stated that use of social media will recruit younger enthusiasts who are interested in wildlife sports and recreation.

Inland Fisheries Update – the Commission received an update on the activities of the Inland Fisheries Division from Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*. Curry mentioned fisheries management projects including increasing angler access opportunities across the state, the recent creel survey on Randleman Reservoir, a catfish angler survey, and striped bass production at the Watha Fish Hatchery. Curry stated that work has begun on the 2015 update of the Wildlife Action Plan. Curry announced a flyfishing show that will be held in Raleigh on February 11 – 12.

Property Acquisition Requests – the Commission approved the staff recommendation to coordinate with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for properties on five game lands: Alligator River Game Land, Tyrrell County; Holly Shelter Game Land, Pender County; Needmore Game Land, Macon County; Pisgah Game Land, Avery County; and Sandhills Game Land, Moore County. Dr. David Cobb, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented **Exhibit D** and informed the Commission that plan details about the tracts and funding sources will be presented to the Land Use and Access Committee prior to consideration by the entire Commission.

Adjacent Landowner Request, Sandhills Game Land, Richmond County – the Commission approved a request by Reaves Landscaping in Richmond County, presented in **Exhibit E**, for a temporary right of way to install an irrigation line across a portion of the Sandhills Game Land along the edge of the existing Department of Transportation right of way.

Wildlife Management Update – the Commission received an update about the activities of the Division of Wildlife Management from Dr. David Cobb. Cobb announced that CDs provided to each Commissioner contain documents and newsletters of interest, and he provided copies of the fall 2011 *Upland Gazette* that highlights the management challenges of the bobwhite quail in the South.

CURE Program Updates 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 – Dr. Cobb presented in **Exhibits F and G** an overview of the Cooperative Upland habitat Restoration and Enhancement Program (CURE) that has been approved and funded for ten years by the Wildlife Resources Commission. The program focused on habitat management and developing and strengthening early successional habitat, particularly to enhance bobwhite quail populations, in three focal areas and on four game lands. Cobb stated that the greatest improvement in quail populations occurred in the southern Coastal Plain. The CURE program has worked cooperatively with corporations, with NC State University, and with federal programs, and provided assistance to the Legislature for creation of the Wildlife Conservation Lands Program, where improvement of certain private lands for enhancement of high priority species will result in a reduction in state property tax.

Rule Revision Proposals to Take to Public Hearings - the Commission adopted Option 3, presented by Dr. Cobb in **Exhibit H**, the recommendation of the Big Game Committee at its meeting on January 11, 2012 to take to public hearings proposed amendments to 15A NCAC 10B .0219 - Coyote; and 15A NCAC 10B .0223 – Feral Swine. Option 3 reads, “Create seasons to allow the hunting of feral swine and coyotes at night with a light. Open these seasons year-round.” The Commission approved revisions to 15A NCAC 10B .0113 and 10B .0116, to remove remaining references to wild boar in Wildlife Resources Commission rules.

Fiscal Note Approval for Rulemaking Under 15A NCAC 10F .0330 – Carteret County – the Commission approved a fiscal note in **Exhibit I** presented by Norman Young, *Rulemaking Coordinator*. The fiscal note is part of an application from the Town of Morehead City in Carteret County to create a no wake zone at the Newport River Beach Access Boat Ramp. The approval of the fiscal note is a procedural requirement under the Administrative Procedure Act prior to publishing Notice of Text in the *North Carolina Register*. The proposed rule amendment may be considered by the WRC at its May 3, 2012 meeting.

Fiscal Note Review Approval for Rulemaking Under 15A NCAC 10F .0354 – Pitt County – the Commission approved **Exhibit J**, an addition to the agenda presented by Norman Young. The review of a fiscal note in Exhibit J and adoption by the WRC are required by the Office of State Budget and Management, pursuant to EO 70 and the Regulatory Reform Act, prior to publishing in the *North Carolina Register* a Notice of Intention to Repeal a portion of the no wake zone rule for Pitt County, on the Tar River near Seine Beach. The WRC may consider the repeal at its May 3, 2012 meeting.

Big Game Committee Meeting Report - Chairman John Litton Clark reported that the Big Game Committee met on January 11, 2012. Discussions included issues regarding hunting feral hogs and coyotes with the recommendation to the entire Commission to approve taking proposed amendments to public hearing (presented in **Exhibit H**.)

Habitat, Non-Game and Endangered Species (HNGES) Committee Meeting Report – Chairman Durwood Laughinghouse reported that the HNGES and Big Game Committees met jointly on January 11, 2012, followed by a meeting of the HNGES Committee. The Commission approved the recommendations from the HNGES Committee for changes to the procedures for the Thomas L. Quay Award to be presented at the July WRC meeting each year. Laughinghouse stated that discussion continues about a much needed endowment program to provide funding for conservation of non-game species.

Land Use and Access Committee Meeting Report – Chairman Doug Parsons reported that the Land Use and Access Committee met on January 11, 2012. The Committee received an update from the State Property Office and discussed changes in the process for consideration of land acquisitions. Discussion included projects for possible grant funding by the Natural Heritage Trust Fund to include the East Fork Headwaters Tract. Executive Director Gordon Myers will prioritize project rankings for possible grant funding. The Commission adopted a motion from the Land Use and Access Committee to dispose of structures on the Chowan Swamp Game Land because costs to upgrade the buildings would be excessive, and no beneficial use of the structures has been identified. Staff will work with the State Property Office for possible salvage of some of the materials in the structures. The Commission approved a motion from the Land Use and Access Committee to allow Mrs. Charlene White to install a memorial bench at Upper Barton Creek Fishing Access Area in memory of her husband who drowned there, at no cost to the WRC. Plans for the design and location of the bench will be approved by the WRC.

Joint Coastal Recreational Fishing License (CRFL) Committee Meeting Report – Chairman Ray White reported that the joint CRFL Committee, comprised of three members of the WRC (Mitch St. Clair, Ray White and Joe Barker) and three members of the Marine Fisheries Commission met on November 26, 2011. The joint CRFL Committee reviewed fourteen proposals for grant awards that met the criteria for saltwater projects that benefit people, habitats and fisheries and are funded by sales of Coastal Recreational Fishing Licenses. Of the \$1,990,000.00 allocation, 57 percent will be used to fund NCWRC projects, particularly those for enhanced public access areas and handicapped accessibility.

Comments by the Chairman – Chairman David W. Hoyle, Jr. reported that he has established a working group comprised of Ray White, Wes Seegars, and Mark Craig, who will meet with agency staff and license service agents on software modifications and enhanced technology, to benefit license service agents in their sales of hunting and fishing licenses for the agency. Hoyle reminded Commissioners of two-day committee meetings in early March, where updates, training and discussions of interest to the business of the WRC will be held. He encouraged Commissioners to plan to attend. Hoyle congratulated Jon Evans on receiving the Officer of the Year Award and thanked the staff for their efforts in planning the committee meetings and Commission meeting.

Comments by the Executive Director – Executive Director Gordon Myers announced that the agency organizational review is moving forward. The Division Chiefs will meet with field staff later this month for in-depth discussions about how to realign agency processes to better serve the agency's mission. Myers stated that the General Assembly has established a study committee to discuss naming red drum, spotted sea trout and striped bass as game fish. Discussion is being held as well about whether the Division of Marine Fisheries should be a part of the Wildlife Resources Commission. Legal and fiscal staff and directors of both agencies have provided updates to legislators. Myers will provide the Commissioners with copies of the presentations.

Adjournment - the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.