



Fisheries Committee Meeting Summary

March 4, 2015 10:00 am

Fisheries Committee Vice Chairman Joe Barker called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

Attendees

Committee Members

Joe Barker, Vice Chairman
Brian White
Tommy Fonville

Neal Hanks
Richard Edwards

Commissioners

Tom Berry

Ray Clifton

Staff

Gordon Myers
Bob Curry
Chris Wood
Amanda Bushon
Corey Oakley
Timothy Hardy
Jeremy Harrill
Russell Wong

Mallory Martin
Betsy Haywood
Kyle Briggs
Chad Thomas
Brian McRae
Donnie Barefoot
Erik Christofferson

Guests

Fred Harris – NC Wildlife Federation
Ned Jones – NC Trout Unlimited
Bill Holman – The Conservation Fund

Managing Aquatic Nuisance Species

Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, provided an overview of the ongoing work developing a statewide Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan. The plan is a collaborative effort across multiple state agencies and will be presented to the Governor for signature.

Lake James Alewife and Walleye

Chris Wood, *District 8 Fishery Biologist*, provided an update on the walleye fishery at Lake James after the introduction of invasive river herring. Staff will continue to evaluate stocking efforts to return the fishery to historic levels.

Lake Apalachia Blueback Herring and Trout

Amanda Bushon, *District 9 Fishery Biologist*, provided an update on the introduction of invasive blueback herring in Lake Apalachia and potential management options. Staff began stocking brown and rainbow trout into the system to take advantage of the blueback herring. Brown trout are doing exceptionally well. The project will be featured in *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine.

Lake Hyco Tilapia

Corey Oakley, *Piedmont Research Coordinator*, provided an update on the status of invasive tilapia in Lake Hyco. The Commission is working with NCSU on a research project to determine the extent of interactions between tilapia and other sport fish. Staff has identified the possibility to create a freshwater red drum fishery in the lake. Staff will continue to explore this option, including public meetings over the next year.

Coastal Region Fisheries Updates

Chad Thomas, *Regional Fishery Supervisor*, provided an update on Roanoke River striped bass management. Thomas reminded the committee that the Total Allowable Landings decreased to 68,750 pounds this year. Given the harvest trends over the last few years, there should be no impact to anglers, but the season could be shortened or extended by proclamation. Thomas also provided an overview of the river herring fishery on the coast which has collapsed. A complete harvest moratorium has been in effect since 2008. Staff will continue to monitor the status of river herring, but the populations are still unable to sustain harvest.

Mattamuskeet Management Team Update

Chief Deputy Director Mallory Martin provided an update on the Mattamuskeet Collaboration Team established by Director Myers and *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Region 4 Director* Cindy Dohner. The team met in Raleigh on February 10-12, 2015 and discussed management topics. Agency legal counsel will examine opportunities for lake level management. Director Myers updated Commissioners on an effort to secure additional funding to create a business plan for the Lake Mattamuskeet Lodge which will be included in future Mattamuskeet Collaboration Team meetings.

In the interest of time, the Overview of Angler Access Projects was postponed until a later Fisheries Committee meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business, *Vice Chairman* Joe Barker adjourned the meeting at 12:05 pm.