



**Committee of the Whole
Meeting Summary – May 20, 2015
Commission Room, Raleigh NC**

Commission Chairman Jim Cogdell called the meeting of the Committee of the Whole to order at 2:08 p.m.

Attendees

Commissioners

Jim Cogdell, Chair
Richard Edwards
David Hoyle, Jr.
Joe Barker
Tommy Fonville
Ray Clifton
Tim Spear
Garry Spence
Mark Craig

Joe Budd
Brian White
John Coley
Neal Hanks
Wes Seegars
John Litton Clark
Nat Harris
Tom Berry

Staff

Steve Chase
Mallory Martin
Betsy Haywood
Brad Howard
Christian Waters
Kerry Linehan
Steve Bullins
A.J. Evans
Jenny Harris
Margaret Martin
Lisa Hocutt
Scott Anderson
Todd Ewing
Kyle Briggs
Isaac Harrold

David Cobb
Gordon Myers
David Sawyer
Kate Pipkin
Merril Cook
Erica Garner
David O'Neal
Thomas Harvey
Carolina Medina
Geoff Cantrell
Allen Boynton
Mitch Kirkland
Erik Christofferson
Bob Curry

Guests

Tom Ray, D.V.M.
Joe McClees – McClees Consulting
Terry Morris – Eastern Carolina Houndsman Alliance
Fred Harris – NCWF
Henri McClees – McClees Consulting

Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan Discussion

Dr. David Cobb presented an overview of the revised Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan. He stated that the revised Plan is more adaptive and flexible in the event that North Carolina becomes positive for CWD. Cobb explained that if a bill is passed transferring farmed cervid management to the Department Agriculture, some parts of the plan will have to be revised.

Public Deer Management Forums

Dr. Cobb reported that state deer harvest data shows an 18.3 percent decrease in the deer harvest since 2013, which was a record harvest year. The WRC estimates that 60-65 percent of the harvest is reported. Cobb stated that Districts 3 and 4 had significant decreases in harvest due to outbreaks of hemorrhagic disease. State-wide, 2014 was an extremely productive year for the mast crop. State-wide deer management forums will be held in June to determine public opinions and desires for deer populations for purposes of managing seasons across the state.

Audit Plan Discussion

Executive Director Gordon Myers stated that the new agency Internal Auditor position is required by law. Steve Chase, *Internal Auditor*, conducts independent consulting activity to insure financial integrity and process improvement. An audit charter is being developed. Since the Auditor reports to Myers, audit findings will go to the Commission Chairman.

Legislative Update/House Budget

Myers gave a legislative update to the committee. He mentioned the Trapping Bill (SB 647) which is a compromise bill for types and placement of traps. The Outdoor Heritage Act, HB 640 has passed the House. The bill was amended to require a distance from a residence of at least 500 yards for hunting on Sunday. Counties could opt out of Sunday hunting by ordinance after two years. HB 736 would remove license requirements for American Indians to hunt and fish. The resulting recurring impact to the WRC would be 100 to 300 thousand dollars. Myers mentioned HB 760, the Regulatory Reform Act of 2015 and possible impacts relative to search and seizure and allowable inspections by law enforcement. Senate Bill 513, the NC Farm Act, would transfer cervid farm oversight to the Department of Agriculture. The bill will be sent to the House.

Myers reported on the House budget, noting that agency reliance on the General Fund has decreased 55 percent. Additionally, the agency anticipates a significant reduction in Pittman-Robertson funds in 2016. Myers stated that the agency will request that the Senate revise the proposed three million dollar cut in light of the reduction in other financial resources. Chairman Cogdell thanked Myers and staff for their work with the General Assembly.

Meeting Date Change

Chairman Cogdell announced that it is necessary to move the date of the July Commission meeting from July 9 to July 16. The Commission will consider approval of the date change at the meeting on May 21.

Reorganization Discussion and Introduction of New Employee

Gordon Myers announced that reorganization of the agency has been ongoing with the goal of creating a more effective organization. Mallory Martin, *Chief Deputy Director*, oversees the conservation programs and staff. Erik Christofferson, *Deputy Director of Operations*, oversees engineering, lands and water access, purchasing, IT, customer service support, and warehouse operations. Cecilia Edgar, *Deputy Director of Finances*, oversees financial services.

Mallory Martin announced that changes have been made in the organization and leadership of the Conservation Education Division, including a change in name to Wildlife Education Division. He introduced the new *Wildlife Education Division Chief* Kris Smith.

Kris Smith provided a vision for the Wildlife Education Division. Its purpose is to forge paths to connect people to wildlife. Smith gave as examples increasing opportunities through education such as hunter education, teaching shooting sports, communication through social media, fostering hunter heritage, and marketing wildlife education. The Hunter Education program has been brought into the Wildlife Education Division. A shooting sports program is being developed state-wide, with an initial focus at the Lentz Center.

Other Discussion

Dr. David Cobb has established a work team to evaluate possible selective permit hunts for alligators at Lake Waccamaw. Cobb will work with the Directors on this evaluation.

Chairman Cogdell adjourned the meeting at 3:35 pm.