



ACTIONS
N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

December 10, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.
NC Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters
1751 Varsity Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina

Call to Order – *Commission Chairman* John Litton Clark called the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Conference Room, 5th floor. He reminded everyone that the meeting audio is being streamed live and will be available on the Wildlife Resources Commission website. He requested that all in the room silence their electronic devices. Commissioner Garry Spence was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance – *Commissioner* Dean Proctor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation - *Commissioner* Tommy Fonville gave the invocation.

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

Welcome – Chairman Clark welcomed Commissioners and guests and recognized Commissioner Brian White’s wife Charlotte.

Swear in Commissioner Mark Craig –Commissioner Mark Craig, who was reappointed by the Senate as an at-Large Commissioner for a term ending June 30, 2017, was sworn in by Margo Minkler, *Notary Public – Enforcement Division*.

Approval of Minutes - the Commission approved the October 22, 2015 Wildlife Resources Commission minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**.

Financial Status Report - the Commission received a financial status report on the Wildlife Operating Fund and the Wildlife Endowment Fund as of October 31, 2015 from Lindsey Riddick, *Budget Analyst*, presented in **Exhibit B**. The Operating Fund balance was \$13,972,116.02. The Endowment Fund balance was \$114,333,306.93. Expendable interest was \$20,941,746.23.

Land Use and Access Committee Meeting Report – Tom Berry, *Chairman*, reported that the Land Use and Access Committee met in the Commission Room on December 9, 2015. The committee reviewed six Phase I properties and will recommend that the WRC approve staff working with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for the properties. The Committee then reviewed one Phase II land acquisition proposal. Proposed easements were discussed in the meeting. The committee will recommend that the Commission approve the Phase II property and the easement requests.

Boating Safety Committee Meeting Report – Ray Clifton, *Chairman*, reported that the Boating Safety Committee met briefly on December 9, 2015. The committee reviewed one Fiscal Note review and proposed Notice of Text for a no wake zone in Craven County. The committee will recommend approval by the Commission.

Big Game Committee Meeting Report – Neal Hanks, *Chairman*, reported that the Big Game Committee met on December 9, 2015. Dr. David Cobb reported that the early deer harvest report was emailed to Commissioners and that a final report will be made at the end of the season. David Sawyer provided an overview of the state-wide 2012-2022 Bear Management Plan. With more than half of North Carolina developed and with larger non-hunttable areas, an updated Bear Management Plan is needed. The goal is to use science to manage bear populations in balance with habitats and human expectations. Recommendations to be considered include revising bear season structure in some areas of the state, conserving bear habitat and reducing highway impacts, and developing continuing education programs and publications.

Agency Spotlight – Beyond Licensing – IT Initiatives for Customer Engagement and Staff Efficiency – the Commission received an update from CarolAnne Feehan, *IT Business Analyst*, about recent projects by IT staff to improve engagement with customers and to develop web-based applications that increase efficiencies in license sales, regulatory reporting, and education. Feehan mentioned PAWS, a web based program used by employees, external partners and the public for searches about maps, reports and documents. IVR, a vendor software is used for reporting about big game harvests and migratory birds. Recent applications include the Public Mountain Trout Waters Search, Fish Hatchery Production, and Human/Wildlife Interaction Reports. In development is an on-line form for turning in poachers (TIP). Also being developed are projects for on-line surveys, aquaculture, enforcement assets map, and permit reporting.

Fisheries Update – the Commission received an update about the activities of the Inland Fisheries Division from Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*. Curry stated that sampling of striped bass and hybrids in reservoirs is ongoing and data is being analyzed. Curry stated that recent testing of hatcheries in Tennessee showed no evidence of whirling disease and gill lice. Some testing will be conducted in Virginia, but one facility declined to have its stock tested. Curry stated that the Whirling Disease Action Plan will be posted on the agency website. Gordon Myers, *Executive Director*, announced that Bob Curry has accepted a position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, DC. The Wildlife Resources Commission wished Curry the best of luck and stated that he will be missed.

Wildlife Management Update – the Commission received an update about the activities of the Wildlife Management Division from Dr. David Cobb, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*. Cobb announced that North Carolina will host the SEAFWA Deer Study meeting February 15-17, 2016 near Charlotte. Cobb reported that preliminary data collected on the statewide deer harvest shows that there is an 11 percent harvest increase statewide. Research initiatives include restoration of forest habitat for Carolina northern flying squirrels and other species, improvements to early successional habitats, and research with NC State University on the Hutable Lands project. The Bird Banding Project participants have banded 1,200 wood ducks and 1,300 doves. The agency continues to be involved with the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Surveillance.

Phase I Potential Land Acquisitions – the Commission approved the presentation by Isaac Harrold, *Lands Program Manager*, authorizing staff to work with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for the following properties, presented in **Exhibits C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5 and C-6**:

- Collette Tract – Carteret County
- Lambb Lot 256 – Ashe County
- Little Macedonia Tract – Brunswick County
- Moorman Farms Tract – Washington County
- Pontiac Plywood Tracts – Warren County
- Tweed Tract – Buncombe County

Phase II Land Acquisition – the Commission gave final approval to proceed with the acquisition of the Caldwell Tract in Haywood County, presented in **Exhibit D**.

Easement Request, Scotland County – the Commission approved a request from the NC Department of Transportation, presented in **Exhibit E**, for easements across a portion of Sandhills Game Land in Scotland County to facilitate a bridge improvement project.

Easement Amendment Request, Polk County – the Commission approved a request to amend an existing utility easement across a portion of Green River Game Land in Polk County, presented in **Exhibit F**, for the purpose of specifically defining the easement width and location.

Water Safety Rulemaking – Notice of Text, City of Havelock, Craven County – the Commission approved the recommendation to publish Notice of Text in the NC Register for a proposed no wake zone under 15A NCAC 10F .0347 – Craven County, presented in **Exhibit G-1**.

Fiscal Note Approval – Craven County Proposed No Wake Zone – the Commission approved the fiscal note analysis for the proposal by the City of Havelock in Craven County to establish a no wake zone on Slocum Creek, presented in **Exhibit G-2**.

Comments by the Chairman – *Chairman* John Litton Clark thanked staff for their efforts in preparing for the WRC meeting. He reminded everyone that the Big Game Committee will meet at 11:00 to discuss the Bear Management Plan. It was announced that Commissioner Jim Cogdell has been added to the Land Use and Access Committee. Clark wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Comments by the Executive Director – Gordon Myers, *Executive Director*, provided an update about water level management at Lake Mattamuskeet. Myers has been in discussions with David Viker and Cindy Dohner of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Ms. Dohner will speak to the Commission at the February 10, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting. Myers will work on an agreement to delineate shared and collaborative responsibilities between the USFWS and NCWRC.

Myers received an award from the USFWS for his partnership in working with that agency collaboratively on recent complicated issues.

Myers reminded the Commission of the January statewide public hearings. Law Enforcement will hold their District meetings prior to the public hearings. He thanked everyone for efforts to present the Commissioner Orientation that was held on December 9.

Myers stated that staff is working with Johnston County on a BB shooting range agreement.

Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 am.