



MINUTES
April 20, 2023
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting
Raleigh, North Carolina

Chairman Monty Crump called the April 20, 2023 N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Room at the agency's headquarters in Raleigh. Crump reminded everyone that the meeting is being audio streamed live and will be available at www.newildlife.org.

Commissioner John Coley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner John Alexander gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. Hayden Rogers and Landon Zimmer were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Monty Crump	Wes Seegars	Jim Ruffin	John Stone	Mike Alford
Thomas Fonville	Mark Craig	Ray Clifton	John Alexander	
David Hoyle	Tom Berry	Kelly Davis	Tom Haislip	
John Coley	Brad Stanback	Steve Windham	JC Cole	

VISITORS

Shawn Horsley, NC Handicapped Sportsmen

Tim Gestwicki, NCWF

Manley Fuller, NCWF

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

Chairman Crump advised the Commission of the mandatory ethics inquiry as mandated in NCGS §138A-15.

MINUTES

On a motion by David Hoyle and second by John Coley, the Commission approved the Minutes of the following meetings:

FEBRUARY 23, 2023 MEETING – the Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the February 23, 2023 meeting was approved as presented in **EXHIBIT A**.

MARCH 30, 2023 MEETING – the Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the March 30, 2023 meeting was approved as presented in **EXHIBIT B**.

EXHIBITS A & B are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Jason Cottle, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented a status report in **EXHIBIT C** on the Wildlife Resources Commission General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and the Endowment Fund.

EXHIBIT C is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

ENDOWMENT FUND EXPENDABLE INCOME ALLOCATION – On a motion by Brad Stanback and second by Steve Windham, the Commission approved the Calendar Year 2022 Investment Income Allocation presented in **EXHIBIT D** by *Jason Cottle*

EXHIBIT D is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Migratory Birds & Waterfowl Committee Report – April 19, 2023 – *John Coley, Chair*, reported the Committee met on April 19, 2023 and received information from *Doug Howell, Migratory Game Bird Coordinator*, on the federal migratory bird hunting season frameworks and staff recommendations for migratory bird hunting seasons including the special falconry season. *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented the committee with staff recommendations regarding peregrine falcon take for use in falconry. *Doug Howell* and *Dr. Christina Watkins, Lead Social Scientist*, presented interesting information from the recent dove hunter survey which generated much discussion about dove populations and dove hunting. Commissioners discussed the decades long decline in the estimated dove population, and *Doug* shared that the Eastern Dove Management Unit of the Flyways have almost completed their new population model that should shine more light on the current trends in dove numbers. We look forward to seeing the results of the new model within the next year. Having no further business, the Committee was adjourned.

Education & Communication Committee Report – April 19, 2023 – Kelly Davis, Chair, reported the Education & Communication Committee met April 19, 2023. Staff presented an update on their work towards fishing and aquatic education goals and various angler Recruitment and Retention initiatives. As part of the realignment of the Wildlife Education Division, the Fishing and Aquatic Education team was established from feedback received by constituents and partners during the Wildlife Education Division’s Pathway to Wildlife Relevancy Project. The team offers recruitment, retention, and reactivation programming based on the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model to engage and maintain anglers in conservation with social support. The committee also received an update on two R3 partnerships raising fishing awareness and participation from the Wildlife Education Division’s Program Development and Operations team. The Tackle Loaner Program has received a rebranding over the last year, and several new partner sites have stepped forward to participate as a result. The Commission has also deployed a Mobile First Catch Center trailer fully stocked with tackle from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation to assist with engagement efforts in underserved communities.

Land Acquisitions & Property Committee Report – April 19, 2023 – Tom Berry, Chair, reported the Land Acquisitions Committee met on April 19, 2023. The Committee reviewed and endorsed eight Phase I proposals, eight Phase II proposals, as well as three Other Property Matters. In total, the Committee reviewed 16 land acquisition proposals and a total of 6,871 acres. Proposals ranged from new depot sites critical for future operations, public fishing and boating access areas, a waterfowl impoundment, as well as two potential new game lands in underserved areas. Adding new game land in underserved regions of the state has been a priority of the Committee for several years. An overview of recent land acquisition projects completed in the time frame of 2015-2022 was presented to provide a picture of WRC’s land acquisition successes over the years. A total of 132 land acquisitions were completed in that window of time, totaling just over 62,000 acres. A dashboard was also shared displaying a breakdown of lands managed by WRC. In total, WRC manages just over 2.1 million acres of game land. Of these 2.1 million acres, 547,700 acres are owned by WRC, and the remaining 1,552,300 acres are owned by federal agencies, local governments, and private entities. *Chairman Berry* concluded the meeting by mentioning an initiative to review current game lands for access needs. This will involve staff developing an approach to review and identify assess needs on game lands and reporting back to the Committee with findings at a later date.

Finance Committee Report – April 19, 2023 – Landon Zimmer, Chair, reported the Finance Committee met on April 19, 2023. *Jason Cottle, Chief Financial Officer,* presented a comparison of the current and prior fiscal years’ year to date activity in receipt and expenditure categories in the General and Capital Improvement Funds, and an explanation was offered for any variances in excess of one million dollars. The Committee also reviewed the balances and Asset Allocation of the Endowment Fund as of February 2023. Finally, the Committee recommended approving that no expendable income was earned in calendar year 2022 as presented in Exhibit D. *Steve Chase, Internal Auditor,* presented the following topics: WRC Internal Audit Charter, Bank of America Works Implementation project, Civil Rights Reviews, WRC Travel Review, and WRC Internal Audit Staffing.

Committee of the Whole Report – April 19, 2023 – Monty Crump, Chair, reported the Committee of the Whole met April 19, 2023. *Carrie Ruhlman, Rulemaking Coordinator,* presented various permanent rules, including no wake zone rules, for notice of text and adoption. She also presented a petition for rulemaking that would prohibit hunting deer with the use of dogs on a

portion of the Columbus County Game Lands. Staff recommended noticing text for the petition and letting it proceed to public hearing. Finally, *Carrie* provided an update on our CWD rules. Next, *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, provided an update on the Roanoke River Striped Bass harvest season. Our estimates after 4 days of fishing are that anglers have harvested 5,533 pounds out of the 12,804-pound quota, and we do not expect to exceed the quota with only 2 harvest days remaining in the season. Lastly, *Commissioner Hoyle* asked *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*, to provide an update on the latest CWD positive in Wilkes County. This positive was the first roadkill positive we have found and only the second doe. *Brad* reminded commissioners that we will have a meeting in Cumberland County on May 16th.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – LAW ENFORCEMENT – *Chad Arnold, Law Enforcement Division Lieutenant of Special Operations* gave a presentation titled “Reptile Trafficking Trends, International and Domestic.” The presentation highlighted how the Law Enforcement Division has been instrumental in the conservation of and combating illegal commercialization of native non-game reptile species found within North Carolina.

RULEMAKING

Notice of Text – Various 10A Rule Readoptions – On a motion by Wes Seegars and a second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and public hearing for proposed amendments to rules 10A .0401, .0402, .1101 and .1201. presented in **EXHIBIT E** by *Carrie Ruhlman, Rulemaking Coordinator*

EXHIBIT E is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10D .0235 Gull Rock Game Land – On a motion by John Alexander and a second by Wes Seegars, the Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT F-1** and adopted proposed changes to Gull Rock Game Land Rule presented in **EXHIBIT F-2** by *Carrie Ruhlman*

EXHIBITS F-1, F-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Petition for Rulemaking – On a motion by Steve Windham and a second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and public hearing for the petition received February 14 requesting rulemaking to prohibit the use of dogs when hunting deer on the portion of Columbus County Game Land south of NC 214 presented in (**EXHIBIT G**) by *Carrie Ruhlman*

EXHIBIT G is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING

On a motion by Mike Alford and second by David Hoyle, the Commission approved the following water safety rules presented in **EXHIBITS H-2, I-2, J-2, K-2, L-2** by *Carrie Ruhlman*:

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0308 Clay County – The Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT H-1** and adopted proposed changes to extend the no-wake zone at the Ho Hum Campground boat ramp; remove the no-wake zone in McCracken Cove; incorporate a marked Swim Area at the Clay County Recreational Park; and incorporate a Restricted Area denoting the existing Jack Rabbit swimming area and no-wake zone presented in **EXHIBIT H-2**.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0316 Forsyth, Rockingham, and Stokes Counties – The Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT I-1** and adopted proposed changes to establish no-wake zones at two locations at Humphrey’s Ridge Marina and Campground on Belews Lake in Stokesdale presented in **EXHIBIT I-2**.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0333 Lake Wylie Marine Commission, Mecklenburg County – The Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT J-1** and adopted proposed changes to establish a no-wake zone in the waters of Withers Cove on Lake Wylie presented in **EXHIBIT J-2**.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0355 Perquimans County – The Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT K-1** and adopted proposed changes to extend the existing no-wake zone in the Perquimans River presented in **EXHIBIT K-2**.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0379 City of Roxboro – The Commission reviewed public comments in **EXHIBIT L-1** and adopted proposed changes to establish a no-wake zone in Lake Roxboro presented in **EXHIBIT L-2**.

EXHIBITS H-1, H-2, I-1, I-2, J-1, J-2, K-1, K-2, L-1, L-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Temporary Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0305 Town of Sunset Beach, Brunswick County – On a motion by Steve Windham and second by Kelly Davis, The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and public hearing for proposed temporary Rule in the waters of South Jinks Creek for a dredging project in the creek navigation channel presented in **EXHIBIT M** by *Carrie Ruhlman*

EXHIBIT M is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

LAND ACQUISITION AND PROPERTY MATTERS

Phase II Land Acquisition – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by Steve Windham, the Commission approved to proceed with acquisition of the following properties presented in **EXHIBITS N-1, N-2, N-3, N-4, N-5, N-6, N-7, N-8** by *Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager*:

- Lakey Creek Farms Tract – Macon County (**N-1**)
- South Fork New River Access – Ashe County (**N-2**)

- Simp Gap Access Tract – Graham County (N-3)
- Simp Gap Main Tract – Graham County (N-4)
- Doll Tract – Caldwell County (N-5)
- Shecut Tract – Haywood County (N-6)
- Bay River Tract – Pamlico County (N-7)
- Sleepy Creek Farm Tract – Pender County (N-8)

EXHIBITS N-1, N-2, N-3, N-4, N-5, N-6, N-7, N-8 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Other Property Matters – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the following other property matters presented in **EXHIBITS O-1, O-2, O-3** by *Ben Solomon*:

- Holly Shelter Building Disposition – Request to dispose of an old office building at the Holly Shelter Depot (O-1)
- Ledford Chapel Disposition - Request to dispose of 0.054 acres at the Ledford Chapel Access Area (O-2)
- Request for Easement – NC DOT requests to purchase a Permanent Right of Way for a bridge re-routing project in Rowan County (O-3)

EXHIBITS O-1, O-2, O-3 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

On a motion by Wes Seegars and second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission approved the following staff recommendations presented in **EXHIBITS P-3, P-4, Q** by *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*:

2023-2024 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons – The Commission reviewed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service frameworks in **EXHIBIT P-1**, public comments in **EXHIBIT P-2**, and approved staff recommendations for the 2023-2024 season dates and bag limits for webless migratory birds, resident Canada geese, extended falconry, and waterfowl presented in **EXHIBITS P-3, P-4** by *Brad Howard*

2023 Migrant Peregrine Falconry – The Commission approved the staff recommendation to allow the take of up to five migrant peregrine falcons from the wild for use in falconry in 2023 presented in **EXHIBIT Q** by *Brad Howard*

EXHIBITS P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, Q are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN – Chairman Crump announced with a construction contract awarded staff will begin plans for a groundbreaking ceremony for Wildlife Law Enforcement Training Facility at Samarcand.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Executive Director Cameron Ingram shared that NCWRC and the N.C. Department of Transportation recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding demonstrating their commitment to work together to improve the infrastructure and safety for both wildlife and the traveling public on North Carolina roads, and he acknowledged the many partners, especially The Wildlife Federation, that assisted in this effort. Next, he shared his appreciation to staff in the western part of the state for their response efforts to the lighting storm that affected Setzer Fish Hatchery. Lastly, he expressed his appreciation to the board, staff, and partners for their commitment to wildlife conservation by supporting the agency’s legislative priorities.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.
All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.



Monty Crump, Chairman

07/13/2023

Date



Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

07/13/2023

Date