

**EXHIBIT A**  
**October 24, 2019**



**MINUTES**  
**August 29, 2019**  
**N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting**  
**Raleigh, North Carolina**

The August 29, 2019 N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting was called to order by *Commission Chairman* David Hoyle, Jr. at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Room at Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters in Raleigh. Hoyle reminded everyone that the meeting audio is being streamed live and will be available on the Wildlife Resources Commission website. He requested that everyone silence electronic devices. Commissioner Ray Clifton was absent.

Commissioner Tommy Fonville led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hayden Rogers gave the invocation.

**WELCOME AND MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY**

Chairman Hoyle welcomed the Commissioners and guests. Chairman Hoyle advised the Commission of the mandatory ethics inquiry as mandated in North Carolina General Statute §163A-159(e).

**COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE**

John Coley	Jim Cogdell
Wes Seegars	John Stone
Monty Crump	Joe Budd
David Hoyle, Jr.	Brad Stanback
Tom Berry	Tommy Fonville
Landon Zimmer	Mark Craig
Mike Johnson	Hayden Rogers
Richard Edwards	Kelly Davis
Nat Harris	Steve Windham

**VISITORS**

John Wallace

## **MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2019 MEETING**

On a motion by Monty Crump and second by John Coley the Commission approved the July 18, 2019 Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**. The Minutes are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

**Financial Status Report** - Melissa Earp, *Finance Office Chief*, presented a status report in **Exhibit B** on the Wildlife Operating Fund and the Wildlife Endowment Fund. As of June 30, 2019, the expenditures from the Wildlife Operating Fund are \$82,338,552.33 and the revenues are \$73,594,641.78. The Fund Balance as of July 1, 2019 is \$14,838,043.55. Balances in the Endowment Fund as of June 30, 2019 are \$104,422,052.47 in the Bond Index Fund and \$29,181,320.13 in the Equity Index Fund for a total of \$133,812,403.02. Expendable interest is \$31,451,754.16. Non-expendable interest is \$13,879,519.78. Expendable interest transferred to operations for the fiscal year is \$2,757,746.76. **Exhibit B** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Boating Safety Committee Report** – Mike Johnson, *Committee Chair*, reported that the Boating Safety Committee met on August 28, 2019. Three proposed water safety zone proposals were discussed for approval of Notice of Text – a Fiscal Note and a no-wake zone at Carolina Beach, a Fiscal Note and no-wake zone at Carova in Currituck County, and a marked swim area on Badin Lake in Montgomery County. The committee will recommend approval of the proposed water safety zones later in the meeting. Chairman Johnson reported that he has received reports of wake boats on inland waters and damages to shoreline and property. Staff will study the issue and report back to the Commission.

**Migratory Birds and Waterfowl Committee Report** – Wes Seegars, *Committee Vice Chair*, reported that the Migratory Birds and Waterfowl Committee met on August 28, 2019. Joe Fuller provided an overview of the zoning timeline for the 2021-2025 waterfowl seasons. An out-of-cycle Migratory Birds and Waterfowl Committee meeting is being planned. Sunday Hunting for migratory waterfowl may be discussed.

**Finance Committee Report** – Landon Zimmer, *Committee Chair*, reported that the Finance Committee met on August 28, 2019. Melissa Earp reviewed the Financial Status Report with Finance Committee members and explained what changes there have been to the amounts reported since reporting at the July meeting. Ms. Earp provided an overview of the Wildlife Endowment Fund for new committee members and discussed the return on investment for the Bond Index Fund and the Equity Index Fund investments of the Wildlife Endowment Fund over the period of June, 2018 to June 30, 2019. She reported a cumulative return on investment of 7.63% in bonds and 3.89% in equities for this period. Ms. Earp provided an update on the procurement process for the actuarial study the committee approved for completion at the April 2019 meeting. The purchase order was cut on August 7, 2019 and WRC IT has downloaded 10 years of license holder data and submitted it to the vendor this week. Chairman Zimmer requested that the Department of State Treasurer or Blackrock come to the next meeting to discuss the investments in the Wildlife Endowment Fund.

**Land Acquisitions and Property Committee Report** – Tom Berry, *Committee Chair*, reported that the Land Acquisitions and Property Committee met on August 28, 2019. The 2019-2020 Running Schedule for the J. Roger Gordon Sandhills Field Trial Area was discussed by Chris Jordan.

**Motion from the LAP Committee:** Tom Berry made a motion, seconded by Tommy Fonville, for the Executive Director to have the authority, beginning after today's meeting, to approve the Field Trial Schedule. The motion carried and is incorporated into the record of this meeting.

The Committee reviewed the spreadsheet of current land acquisition projects. Jessie Birckhead provided an update on a delay on funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the High Rock acquisition. The Committee endorsed staff's recommendation to utilize expendable interest from the Wildlife Endowment Fund as a stopgap to cover the delayed funds and allow us to proceed to closing.

**Fisheries Committee Report** – Tommy Fonville, *Committee Chair*, reported that the Fisheries Committee met on August 28, 2019. Doug Besler gave a presentation outlining existing managed trout fisheries and various considerations and options for providing year-round, catch and release stocked trout fisheries. Committee consensus was for staff to continue to evaluate potential opportunities for developing such fisheries and report back at a future Committee meeting. Christian Waters presented a high-level summary of the recent study conducted by Commission staff in collaboration with UNC- Wilmington to estimate the economic activity associated with inland recreational fishing. In 2017, inland fishing resulted in over four billion dollars of economic activity in North Carolina. Staff are working on developing a one-page report highlighting the report that can be shared. Gordon Myers and Jeremy McCargo provided an overview of the delineation of waters process. Jeremy then presented maps showing proposed boundary line changes between inland and coastal fishing waters developed using a salinity threshold of 2.6 parts per thousand. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to endorse the use of the maps as presented for a thorough review and assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed boundary line changes. The maps (**Exhibit E**) will be presented later in this meeting for consideration by the full Commission.

**Big Game Committee Report** - John Coley, *Committee Chair*, reported that the Big Game Committee met on August 28, 2019. Major Cameron Ingram provided an update on proposals for improvements to big game tagging and reporting. For deer harvest reporting, the committee supported Ingram's suggestion to notch the month and the day of the harvest tag, from noon to noon. The committee discussed future topics for committee meetings, including adding white-tail deer research, revised Plan for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and inviting other states to participate in the management discussion, and second bear tags, party tags, and depredation permits.

**Committee of the Whole Report** – David Hoyle, Jr., *Chair*, reported that the Committee of the Whole met on August 28, 2019. The Committee received reviews of proposed rules for the next regulatory cycle for Inland Fisheries, Lands Management, and Wildlife Management, to be considered by the Commission at the October meeting. Brad Howard reviewed Exhibit F, a request for Notice of Text for temporary rulemaking for land to qualify for present-use value taxation as wildlife conservation land. Michael Smallwood provide an overview of consideration of final adoptions of Game Bird Propagators and Furbearer Propagation rules (Exhibits G and H) and final adoption of amendments for reptiles and amphibians (Exhibit I). The COW reviewed for approval the proposed Archery Zone at Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land.

Jessie Birkhead, *Land Acquisition and Grants Manager* and Hilary Morris, *User Support and Communications, USFWS South Atlantic and Southeast Conservation Blueprints*, provided an overview of land use maps. The Committee of the Whole endorsed moving the October WRC meeting to October 24, 2019, in Wilmington.

### **AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – Back to the Woods, Back to the Water R3 Program (Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation)**

Chet Clark, *R3 Manager, Wildlife Education Division*, gave an update about the agency's R3 Program, that connects resources in the Wildlife Education Division to create a balanced and programmatically focused workforce to better serve the agency and constituents to recruit individuals for activities in the outdoors. The R3 program offers social support and incentives to connect people to wildlife resources and to mentors, to retain those who already participate, and to reactivate people who have stopped connecting to wildlife resources. Clark mentioned the additional employee resources that are being added to the program, including hunting and angling R3 specialists who assist persons with no prior experience, R3 skills development specialist, R3 shooting specialist, and the R3 watchable wildlife archery specialist who introduces interested persons to game land activities. The R3 Program philosophy is that discoveries of connections to wildlife resources are essential to wellbeing.

### **WILDLIFE EDUCATION DIVISION UPDATE**

Kris Smith, *Wildlife Education Division Chief*, provided an update on the activities of the Division. The Division assisted the Law Enforcement Division with the first Boater Education Class in Spanish in Charlotte. Fourteen participants took and passed the test. The advanced Hunter Education Instructor Workshop was held August 23-25, 2019 at Lake Logan Conference Center in Canton. Seventy volunteer instructors from across the state assisted in sessions designed to enhance knowledge and teaching skills for Hunter Education programming. Citizen science at the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education is ongoing, with 262 volunteers trained to monitor beaches from Nags Head to the Virginia state line for summer nesting and stranding activity. Fishing events at OBCWE have been held, including 26 Fishing the Sound classes with 497 participants and 25 Fish Sticks classes with 279 participants ages 2 to 6 years old. The Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education facilitate 20 fly fishing programs to 142 participants. Additionally, 20 Snorkeling in the Stream programs with 325 participants explored aquatic ecosystems while looking for game and nongame species of fish, as well as investigating water quality and river health. At the Pechmann Fishing Education Center, the first Boy Scouts of America Certified Angling Educator Workshop was held. Three staff members and seven volunteers attended the training to become the first CAIs in North Carolina and Virginia, and among the first in the nation. Four summer camps were held at the Pechmann Center with 39 participants, providing instruction in lure making, entomology, kayaking and fishing techniques for catching bass, bluegill, and Catfish. There were seventy participants in one beginner and three intermediate fly-tying programs.

## **LAND AND WATER ACCESS SECTION UPDATE**

Brian McRae, *Land and Water Access Section Chief*, gave an update on the activities of the Land and Water Access Section. The Texas Plantation site is completed with three renovated impoundments and four new impoundments that have been created. Working with Ducks Unlimited, two pumps were installed, and ditches were cleaned. Four public meetings have been held for discussions of disability access to game lands. Social Scientist Chris Bova structured the meetings. The common theme was communication and topics of interest included the width of access gates and appropriate roads.

## **PROPERTY MATTERS**

**Field Trial Schedule** – On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by John Coley, the Commission approved the 2019-2020 running schedule for the J. Robert Gordon Sandhills Field Trial Area, presented in **Exhibit C** by Chris Jordan, *Game Land and Forest Resource Manager*. **Exhibit C** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land** – On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Wes Seegars, the Commission approved **Exhibit D**, the proposed 72-acre Archery Zone at Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land. **Exhibit D** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

## **INLAND FISHERIES UPDATE**

Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, presented an update on the activities of the Inland Fisheries Division. Renovation, maintenance, and development of new Public Fishing Access Areas is ongoing, in collaboration with WRC Engineering and Land and Water Access Section and multiple external partners. Waters mentioned aquatic habitat enhancements, specifically at reservoirs. Native vegetation is being planted after development of the ability to cultivate and grow beneficial plant species at the Sykes Depot and McKinney Lake State Fish Hatchery. Artificial structures have been placed for habitat enhancement at Lake Gaston, Harris Reservoir, High Rock Lake, Lake Norman, and Lake Hickory. Waters reported that there have been fish kills in the Deep Reservoir connected to the introduction of Alewife and Blueback Herring. Lake Norman had a smaller kill, with twenty-plus Blue Catfish and three hybrid Striped Bass. An ongoing kill at Lake James is affecting Walleye populations. Waters explained that forage species migrate into deep cold water during the summer. Larger predator fish follow the forage and get trapped in a thin layer of oxygenated water. As oxygen levels naturally decline, fish die.

**Draft Inland and Coastal Waters Delineation Maps** – On a motion by John Stone and second by Monty Crump, the Commission approved the motion presented in **Exhibit E**, for the draft Inland and Coastal Waters Delineation maps showing proposed boundary line changes between Inland and Coastal fishing waters, based on salinity zones modeled using a salinity threshold of 2.6 ppt (parts per thousand), and the instruction for staff to examine potential impacts of such a delineation. **Exhibit E** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

## **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION UPDATE**

On behalf of Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, Dr. Sara Schweitzer presented a review of the activities of the Wildlife Management Division. Schweitzer announced that dove season and Canada good season will open on September 2, 2019. Surveys of hellbenders are ongoing. She announced that Commissioner Kelly Davis was one of 80 participants who attended the ForestHer workshop for women who are involved with forestry operations.

## **RULEMAKING**

**Temporary Rulemaking Notice of Text** – On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Landon Zimmer, the Commission approved **Exhibit F**, presented by Carrie Ruhlman, *Rulemaking Coordinator*, to publish Notice of Text for 15A NCAC 10L .0101, a temporary Rule addressing the activities required for land to qualify for present-use value taxation as wildlife conservation land that creates and is used as a reserve for hunting, fishing, shooting, wildlife observation or wildlife activities. **Exhibit F** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Final Readoption, Adoption - Game Bird Propagators 15A NCAC 10H .0900-** On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Joe Budd, the Commission readopted 15A NCAC 10H .0901, .0903, and .0904, and adopted amendments to .0905 - .0907 pertaining to game bird propagators, presented in **Exhibit G** by Michael Smallwood, JD, *Policy Analyst for Rules*. **Exhibit G** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Final Readoption, Adoption, and Repeal - Furbearer Propagation 15A NCAC 10H .1100** – On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Joe Budd, the Commission readopted 15A NCAC 10H .1106, adopted amendments to 10H .1101, .1104, and .1107, and repealed 10H .1102, .1103, .1105, and .1108, presented by Michael Smallwood in **Exhibit H**, which is incorporated into the record of this meeting.

**Final Adoption – Reptiles and Amphibians 15A NCAC 10H .1300** – On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Joe Budd, the Commission adopted amendments to 15A NCAC 10H .1301 and .1032 pertaining to reptiles and amphibians, presented in **Exhibit I**, which is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

## **WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING**

**Approval of Fiscal note and Notice of Text, Carova Beach, Currituck County** – On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Landon Zimmer, the Commission approved the Fiscal Note presented in **Exhibit J-1** and the request to publish Notice of Text in the *NC Register*, hold one public hearing, and open the public comment period, presented in **Exhibit J-2** by Betsy Haywood, *No-Wake Zone Coordinator*, for a proposed amendment to 15A NCAC 10F .0340, a no-wake zone within the canals at Wild Horse Estates Subdivision at Corova Beach. **Exhibits J-1 and J-2** are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Approval of Fiscal note and Notice of Text, Carolina Beach** – On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Landon Zimmer, the Commission approved the Fiscal Note presented in **Exhibit K-1** and the request to publish Notice of Text in the *NC Register*, hold one public hearing, and open the public comment period, presented in **Exhibit K-2** by Betsy Haywood, for a proposed amendment to 15A NCAC 10F .0306, for a no-wake zone within a portion of the Intracoastal Waterway in the vicinity of Oceana Marina and Carolina Beach Yacht Club and marina. Exhibits K-1 and K-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Approval to Publish Notice of Text, Badin Lake Swim Zone, Montgomery County** – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Mike Johnson, the Commission approved **Exhibit L**, the request to publish Notice of Text in the *NC Register*, hold one public hearing and open the public comment period for a restricted swimming area where vessel entry is prohibited, at Pinehaven Village on Badin Lake in New London. **Exhibit L** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **2020 STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE**

On a motion by John Coley and second by Nat Harris, the Commission approved the January 2020 Public Hearing schedule, presented in **Exhibit M** by Executive Director Gordon Myers. **Exhibit M** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **OCTOBER 2019 WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING DATES AND LOCATION CHANGE**

On a motion by John Coley and second by Nat Harris, the Commission voted to change the meeting dates and location of the October 2019 Commission meetings from Wednesday and Thursday, October 9 and 10, 2019 in Raleigh to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, October 22, 23, and 24, 2019 in Wilmington, NC.

### **COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Hoyle thanked Commissioners and staff for preparing for and attending meetings. He also noted appreciation for reworking committees and adding new ones, and thanked staff for working on projects for which they are being tasked by the Commission.

### **COMMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Executive Director Gordon Myers thanked Jeremy McCargo and Anna Stefanowicz for their outstanding work on the Coastal Waters Delineation Maps. He noted House Bill 597, a very important bill for fees and licenses that adds 3.5 million dollars in recurring revenue. Myers stated that thanks to efforts of many, including Tim Gestwicki of the NC Wildlife Federation, Representative Jay Adams, Legislative Liaison Ashton Godwin, and much bi-partisan support, HB 597 is law.