

**BIG GAME COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 7, 2012**

ATTENDEES

COMMISSIONERS

John Litton Clark – Chairman
Wes Seegars
Dell Murphy
Durwood Laughinghouse
John Coley
Thomas Berry
Steve Windham
David Hoyle

Joe Barker
Ray White
Mitch St. Clair
James Cogdell
Ray Clifton
Garry Spence
Berkley Skinner
Nat Harris

VISITORS

Tom Ray — NCDAS & CS
Gerald Smith
Diane Newton — NCBA
William Newton — NCBA
Russell R. Poole Jr. — NCBA
J.R. Stone — NCBA
Hal Atkinson — Camp-Younts Foundation
Bob Brown — NCWF

Dick Hamilton — NCWF
Jim Noles — NCBHA
Ed Frizzell — NCBHA
Drew Kennedy — NCBHA
Greg Culpepper — NCBHA
Joe McClees — N.C. Sporting Dog Association
Henri McClees — N.C. Sporting Dog Association

STAFF

Gordon Myers
Mallory Martin
Cecilia Edgar
Betsy Foard
Chris Dillon
Norman Young
Dale Caveny
David Cobb
Brad Howard
Daron Barnes

Carolyn Rickard
Russell Wong
Lisa Hocutt
David Butts
Jackie Bullock
Kate Pipkin
David Sawyer
Isaac Harrold
Colleen Olfenbuttel
Evin Stanford

SUMMARY

Discussion of rule change proposals pertaining to big game

H-1 — Move the portions of Avery and Yancey counties that are currently in the Introductory Either-Sex deer season (one day) into the Conservative Either-Sex deer season (six days) for all private lands. Keep game land Either-Sex as Introductory (one day).

There were 26 comments — 21 yes; 5 no

H-3 — Allow an adult to accompany more than one youth during the one-day Spring Youth Only Wild Turkey Season.

There were 118 comments — 82 yes; 36 no

H-4 — Create a one week Spring Youth Only Wild Turkey Season from the first Saturday in April through the following Friday. The bag limit for this entire week will be one bird.

There were 132 comments — 74 yes; 58 no

A motion was made to approve H-1, H-3 and H-4 as presented and move forward. The motion was seconded and carried.

Elk Management Update

Brad Howard gave an update on elk management. NCSU is developing a model to study elk habitat and will give a presentation to the Commission when the model is completed. Completion is expected January 1, 2013. Land ownership and land use will be incorporated into the model.

Elk management zones — It was noted that elk have been found to reside outside of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Staff is working with landowners to discuss property damage.

Project Plans

- Work with National Park Service.
- Translocate elk — radio collars have been ordered and elk will be moved as soon as collars arrive. It was suggested that a presentation be made to the Cherokee about paying for the collars.
- Focus on problem areas.

Gordon Myers suggested that Brad Howard have another town hall meeting in Maggie Valley and give the same presentation to update the community.

Commissioner Berry stated he is proud of the work the Commission is doing and that he has a keen interest in elk. Commissioner Cogdell noted that elk were placed in park by federal government and questioned how to get control of herd without the help of the federal government. Commissioner Hoyle stated that harvesting slows down the growth of herd.

Bear Management Issues

Chairman Clark said five issues would be addressed at the December 6 bear committee meeting. Gordon Myers said there was no new bear management plan to present today.

Peanut Products Used As Bait

Dr. Cobb gave a presentation on the use of peanut products to bait bears. Peanut products shelled or unshelled are considered raw products and can be placed in any area of the state where an open bear season is set. Products that have been cooked or blanched, including peanut butter, are considered processed and can't be used as bait.

There was some discussion about peanut butter not suitable for human consumption being sold by manufacturers to bear hunters. A question was asked about what levels of waste are harmful to bears and if quantity is an issue. The answer is unknown, as the product has not been analyzed.

Joe McClees, with the N.C. Sporting Dog Association, asked the commissioners for a one-week moratorium on placement of processed foods in order to get the word out to hunters that peanut products already placed in fields might be illegal. Gordon Myers said the statute is clear and accurate, and reinforcement will be given to wildlife enforcement officers to use good discretion and judgment. Chairman John Clark said there was no action on which to take a vote.

Commissioner St. Clair called on Counsel Norman Young to clarify the law. Norman stated the law is a state statute and must be followed. Colonel Dale Caveny stated that wildlife enforcement officers will take samples of peanut products confiscated from hunters and place the samples under investigation for analysis. Officers will make accurate decisions and not snap judgments.