



**Fisheries Committee
Meeting Summary
February 26, 2014
8:30 – 10:00 am
Centennial Campus, Raleigh**

MEETING ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Wes Seegars, Chair
Joe Barker
Tim Spear
Brian White

Commissioners

Joe Budd	Richard Edwards
Ray Clifton	David Hoyle, Jr.
Tommy Fonville	Tom Berry

Staff

Mallory Martin	Gordon Myers
Betsy Haywood	David Cobb
Bob Curry	Christian Waters
Brian McRae	Chad Thomas
Doug Besler	David Deaton
Kyle Briggs	Russell Wong
Kerry Linehan	Tamara Zmuda
Erica Garner	Erik Christofferson
Mark Hamlett	

Visitor

Fred Harris, NC Wildlife Federation

Wes Seegars, *Fisheries Committee Chair*, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Doug Besler, *Mountain Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on the Mountain Heritage Trout Waters Program.

- The program was implemented in July 1, 2008 at the direction of the North Carolina General Assembly. There are currently 11 towns recognized as Mountain Heritage Trout Cities. A formal request from the Town of Lansing to join the program has been received, and the Town of Sparta has requested additional information on the program.
- The 3-day (\$5) Mountain Heritage Trout Waters License is only valid at Mountain Heritage Trout Waters. Since the program's inception a total of 4,068 licenses have been sold.
- The committee discussed the cost of the program to the NCWRC and potential ways to offset the cost.

Action: Staff was asked to conduct an analysis of expenditures associated with program implementation, trends in license sales, and potential loss of revenue and present the results at the next committee meeting. In addition, a letter will be sent to the Town of Lansing explaining that its request is pending further evaluation of the program.

Chad Thomas, *Coastal Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on several key coastal fisheries issues.

Amendment 2 to the NC River Herring Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)

- The Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) on November 14, 2013 and WRC Fisheries Committee on November 6, 2013 approved the draft FMP to be released for public input. Input was collected through the MFC advisory committees.
- The MFC at its February 20, 2014 meeting reviewed the advisory committee recommendations, selected preferred management options, and voted to send the draft FMP to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations (JLCOG) for review.
- Exhibit H - provides an overview of the FMP process and a summary of the preferred management options that were approved by MFC.
- The committee discussed the WRC's role in the planning process.

Action: The WRC Fisheries Committee unanimously recommended taking Exhibit H to the full Commission for their consideration and approval.

Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock Assessment

- Season will open Saturday March 1, 2014 and close as scheduled by rule on April 30.
- Staff anticipates harvest will be dominated by age-4 fish from the relatively strong 2010 year class.
- Stock assessment evaluation with the Division of Marine Fisheries has been delayed, but will continue in 2014.
- The committee discussed management and stocking of Striped Bass in the Tar, Neuse, and Cape Fear rivers.

Lake Mattamuskeet Update

- Management issues including water levels and salinity were presented and discussed.
- Anglers at the lake continue to be actively engaged through formal and informal meetings.
- Staff will participate in the Refuge's technical work group. The group's first meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2014.
- Staff will continue spring and fall fisheries sampling, and will initiate an 8-month angler creel survey on March 1, 2014.
- It was recommended that the WRC waterfowl biologist participate in the technical work group and evaluate aquatic vegetation in the lake.

Action: A joint meeting of the WRC Waterfowl and WRC Fisheries committees was recommended to be held in May to discuss Lake Mattamuskeet.

David Deaton, *Fish Production Supervisor*, provided an overview of WRC fish hatcheries and current renovation projects.

Hatchery Operations and Renovations

- An overview of operations at the six WRC fish hatcheries was presented including description of the facility, species raised, staffing, and annual operating costs.
- Current hatchery renovations include: replacing the 15 existing inefficient raceways with 20 new serial reuse raceways and recirculation system at Armstrong; replacing old hatchery building and depot with a new building at Marion; constructing new hatchery building to increase capacity at Table Rock; replacing harvest kettles and water inlet boxes at McKinney Lake; and replacing three residences at Watha.
- Future needs include: new hatchery buildings at Bobby N. Setzer and McKinney Lake; raceway repairs at Bobby N. Setzer and Armstrong; and new production ponds at Table Rock and Watha.

In the interest of time, the Piedmont Fisheries Update was not presented.

No additional topics were discussed.

Chairman Seegars adjourned the meeting at 10:05 am.