



Fisheries Committee Summary

August 26, 2015

Fisheries Committee Chair Wes Seegars called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

Attendees

Committee Members

Wes Seegars, Chair	Joe Barker, Vice Chair
Tim Spear	Mark Craig
Tommy Fonville	Brian White

Commissioners

Garry Spence	John Litton Clark
Jim Cogdell	Tom Berry
Joe Budd	David Hoyle, Jr.

Staff

Gordon Myers	Mallory Martin
Wes Barger	Betsy Haywood
Andrew Helton	Mark Rich
Jodie Owen	Carolina Medina
Thomas Harvey	Kris Smith
Maria Palomar	David Cobb
Kyle Briggs	Tommy Hughes
Christian Waters	Mark Hamlett
Kerry Linehan	Susan Bunn
Bob Curry	Isaac Harrold
Doug Besler	Ashton Godwin

Visitors

Henri McClees – NC Sporting Dog Assn.	Ned Jones – NC Trout Unlimited
Joe McClees – NC Sporting Dog Assn.	Fred Harris – NCWF
Wilson Laney – USFWS	Lane Sauls – Ecological Engineering

Whirling Disease Update

Doug Besler, *Mountain Region Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on the recent discovery of whirling disease in the Watauga River. This is the first time that whirling disease has been found in the southern states. Besler provided an overview of the pathogen's life cycle.

An interdisciplinary team was formed to inform the public about whirling disease and identify measures the public can use to prevent the spread to other waters in the state. The team includes staff from the Wildlife Education, Information Technology and Inland Fisheries divisions and the agency veterinarian.

Staff prepared and implemented a communications plan which included developing a whirling disease webpage, preparing a series of news releases, and establishing a dedicated email for anglers to ask questions and report observations. Staff initiated a systematic sampling effort radiating outward from the original location to assess the prevalence of the disease within the Watauga River watershed. Staff immediately suspended trout stocking from our hatcheries until our hatchery fish could be tested for the disease.

Future actions include the stepwise sampling of other trout waters, continued coordination with NC Department of Agriculture, and additional public education efforts including adding stream signage. Besler explained that staff is concerned about the spread of the disease, especially to native Appalachian brook trout populations. Chairman Seegars requested an update in October. Director Myers acknowledged staff for the comprehensive response to this issue.

Lake Mattamuskeet Update

Bob Curry presented an update on management activities at Lake Mattamuskeet. A handout was provided summarizing the ongoing and future efforts by staff to address the topics identified by the Mattamuskeet Collaboration Team. The committee tasked staff to contact local news media/outlets on a regular basis (quarterly) to keep them informed of ongoing fisheries management activities.

Hatchery Renovations Update

This presentation was postponed until a future meeting in the interest of time.

Additional Topics of Interest/Discussion

No other topics were discussed.

Adjourn

Chairman Seegars adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.