

Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Committee



Meeting Summary

March 12, 2013, 2:00 pm

Centennial Campus, Raleigh

Meeting Attendees:

Commissioners:

Durwood Laughinghouse, Chair			Mark Craig, Vice-Chair
Dalton Ruffin	John Coley	Dell Murphy	Ray Clifton
Joe Barker	Tom Berry	David Hoyle	

Staff:

Gordon Myers	Mallory Martin	Bob Curry	Kerry Linehan
Perry Sumner	David Allen	Sara Schweitzer	Cindy Carr
Brad Howard	Dale Caveny	Kate Pipkin	Dain Palmer
Jodie Owen	Betsy Foard	Erik Christofferson	Melinda Huebner
Shannon Deaton	Todd Ewing		

Guests:

Ken Bridle – Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee (NWAC) chair
Wilson Laney – NWAC and US Fish and Wildlife Service
Fred Harris – NWAC and NC Wildlife Federation
Joe McClees – NC Sporting Dog
Henri McClees – NC Sporting Dog

Commissioner Durwood Laughinghouse called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

2013 Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award

Commissioner Laughinghouse asked each committee member to review the nominations and further requested that all ballots be submitted by Thursday before the Commission meeting. Staff distributed ballot sheets- nomination information is available on the Commission Intranet site and printouts were also available in two 3-ring binder notebooks.

Southern Wings Project – Piping Plover Conservation

Dr. Sara Schweitzer, WRC's Coastal Waterbird Biologist, provided information on the International Alliance Program and the Southern Wings Program. The Southern Wings Program was established in 2009 by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and allows state resource agencies to voluntarily participate in conservation actions or projects in international bird wintering areas. Dr. Schweitzer provided details regarding a piping plover breeding ground survey project. The piping

plover is listed as federally threatened in NC and this Southern Wings Program project could provide valuable information regarding piping plover populations and their nesting habits in NC.

Action Item: Motion by Dalton Ruffin for WRC to commit \$12,500 (\$3,500 the 1st year and \$4,500 for each of the two following years) to support the Southern Wings Program Piping Plover Project. Mark Craig, 2nd the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Conservation Plan Concept

Shannon Deaton provided an overview of statutory requirements for state listing updates, the steps currently used in this update process, and a concept to develop conservation plans. HNGES committee supported the proposed concept and proposed timeline and requested staff to proceed with developing a draft conservation plan based on the skeleton outlined and report back at a future HNGES committee meeting.

Fish Taxa Update

Todd Ewing, Aquatic Wildlife Diversity Supervisor, provided a detailed summary for each fish species proposed to be listed or have its listing status changed based on statutory requirements described in G.S. 113-334. Committee members requested additional information to be added for the fish taxa presentation and report back to the HNGES committee.

HNGES committee charged staff to:

- Provide written, detailed reports for each species proposed for listing that addresses the specific elements identified in G.S. 113-334 (c) that leads to the probable merit for the proposed change;
- Develop historical range maps for each species and delineate those areas (watersheds, river basins, etc.) that could be affected by a listing change for that species;
- Identify rules and regulations associated with other agencies that may implement rules and regulations based on listed species.

Update on the Habitat Suitability Analysis for Elk

Brad Howard, Private Lands Coordinator, distributed drafts of the Feasibility Study RFP and Landowner survey. Committee members were asked to send comments or recommendations to David Cobb, at david.cobb@ncwildlife.org by March 31, 2013. The DRAFT documents are available on SharePoint in the elk folder.

Wildlife Diversity Program Updates

- ***NC Wildlife Action Plan revision update***
 - Goal is to have draft ready for public review by the end of 2014;
 - Action Plan focus is on species and habitat;
 - Final report is due to USFWS by October 1, 2015.
- ***Teaming with Wildlife Annual Fly-in update***

Staff attended the annual event organized by AFWA on March 5-6, 2013 in Washington, DC. This event purpose is to talk to Congressional members about State Wildlife Grant funded projects and the Wildlife Action Plan. Staff plans to follow-up with Congressional offices around the end of March 2013 and discuss opportunities for a local site visit to a Wildlife Action Plan field project.

Committee meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.