

Wildlife Resources Commission

Land Use and Access Committee Meeting

March 13th, 2013

1:45-3:00PM

Attendees:

Jim Cogdell- NCWRC Commissioner

Dell Murphy- NCWRC Commissioner

Joe Barker- NCWRC Commissioner

Durwood Laughinghouse- NCWRC Commissioner

Tom Berry- NCWRC Commissioner

Ray Clifton- NCWRC Commissioner

John Coley- NCWRC Commissioner

Garry Spence- NCWRC Commissioner

Mitch St. Clair- NCWRC Commissioner

Richard Edwards- NCWRC Commissioner

Mark Hamlett- Staff

John Barbour- State Property Office

Lloyd Goode- Visitor

George Norris- Staff

Erik Christofferson- Chief, Engineering & Lands Management

Mallory Martin- Chief Deputy Director

Dale Caveny- Colonel, Enforcement Division

Geoff Cantrell- Staff

David Cobb- Chief, Wildlife Management

Bob Curry- Chief, Inland Fisheries

Gordon Myers- Executive Director

Meeting Called to Order at 1:52 PM by Jim Cogdell

Acquisitions: Isaac Harrold, Lands Program Manager

- Phase I Land Acquisitions: consider approval for staff to work with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans.
 - Harrison Heirs Tract- Martin County (Phase I initial investigation)**: 259 acres, estimated value 350,000 total. Potential funding: NHTF, CMWTF, and Federal Assistance. Contains significantly rare plants, and common species include deer, turkey, and wintering waterfowl (Exhibit D-1). Staff recommends phase one approval. Question in regards to where the funding is going to come from and how it will impact future projects. How will this affect the management plan for the Wildlife Resources Commission? Mr. Cogdell mentioned that it is important to consider where the funds come from, and how much money the WRC is going to have to spend of its own money. Chairman mentioned that buying land should be ranked according to proximity to game lands or water resources. Hope to bring back to the Commission as a Phase II in May of this year.
 - **Sherrill Tract- Ashe County (Phase I initial investigation)**: 205 acres, estimated value between 500,000-700,000. Potential funding is NHTF, CWMTF, and Private Donations (TNC). Access benefits: frontage on the Saddle Gap Road, Public road access to east side of game land which does not currently exist. This is one hundred percent wooded track, no structures on the property. We have access by the road but WRC would not own it, but the road is a state road. Question of how the presence of streams would affect the value of the property, and the relationship with other state agencies. Question about which tract the Heritage Trust Fund would be the most interested in, speculated that it would probably be Sherrill Tract. Heritage will make decisions on grants in September, so could begin Phase II in October if the WRC receives the money.
- Phase II Land Acquisitions: Isaac Harrold Lands Program Manager
 - Truth Temple Tract- Ashe County (Phase II final approval)**: 128 acres, there is no cost for the agency, offered as a donation from the Blue Ridge Conservancy. There will be some stewardship cost (estimated cost is 20,500\$), in terms of finding property line. There will be no revenue from this property over the first five years. The staff recommends that we accept this donation. There is a "temple church" structure in the center of the property. Chairman asks if we can obtain some type of written agreement with the owners. Reported that a church in Kannapolis owns the 10 acre property, and they use it on an as-needed basis. The Chairman mentioned first right of refusal, or the right of first offer. So if the owners ever decide to sell, then the WRC asks that they be notified so they could decide if they want to make an offer on the piece of property. Motion made that we ask for first right of refusal on this piece of property. Also mentioned that the WRC may have to change the classification of the property, meaning it could not be used for game land until they figure out how the 10 acre parcel is going to affect the land.

- **Louise Thomas Tract- Moore County (Phase II final approval):** 235 acres, total cost 1,180,000, stewardship cost is estimated to be 2,000\$ in the first five years. Revenue projection is an estimated 12,500\$ over first five years. It is the recommendation of the staff is to proceed with the acquisition of the property. There are no WRC funds in this purchase. There is a main road going through a part of the property. There are some gaps in the property; the WRC wants to acquire land that is next to it. Commissioner brought up the point that the property is very expensive, and if it was worth such a large amount of money for a smaller amount of land (has three independent appraisals).

- **Property Matters: Isaac Harrold**

- **Reallocation, Burke, Cleveland and Rutherford Counties:** Consider reallocation of properties to clarify the boundary between South Mountains Game Land and South Mountains State Park. The red line represents a boundary between the two different properties, crosses back and forth at least twenty times. WRC and State Parks and Rec. believe that they should just make the road the actual property line (with two minor exceptions). Meaning 85 acres would go to Parks and Rec and WRC would gain about 80 acres from Parks and Rec, all together the Wildlife Commission would only lose roughly 5 acres. There are one or two parcels along the road that do not belong to either agency, would have to clearly identify those with signs.

- **Easement Request, Currituck County:** Consider request from Dominion Power to expand an existing power transmission line easement on a portion of North River Game Land in Currituck County. They are asking for an additionally 60 feet, meaning an additional easement of around 2.21 acres. Compensation of \$2,500 offered. There is no significant cause to object to this.

- **Lease, Brunswick County:** Consider staff recommendations to lease property in Bolivia, NC as a work depot for lands management staff and equipment. The depot would house personnel for land management. Hoping to get personnel closer to field locations, to minimize travel time for staff as much as possible. Information regarding the proposed lot: .48 acres, fences yard, and can rent the facility for an annual cost of 15,600/year. Typical depot size is roughly 3,000-4,000 square feet, so this structure is within the average.

-Notification and Updates:

- Boating access area maintenance agreement renewals for areas historically under Progress Energy leases (renewed due to Duke/Progress Energy merger).

- **Interagency agreement:** Notification of interagency agreement with NCDOT to maintain boating access areas off US 74 Lumber River in Robeson County.

Game Land Management Plan (Erik Christofferson): what are the desired conditions of our game land for the future, and how is the WRC going to fiscally manage this? The management biologist is going to be in charge of a specific area of game lands. The management program will use NCWRC strategic plan, agency policy and applicable laws, Wildlife Action Plan. External input has public meetings so people can voice their thoughts and opinions. Estimated time of the first initiative is six months. Second half of the document is just the forms for how this will be handled, and it will most likely be updated and revisited every ten years.

- **Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:25PM**