



## ACTIONS

### **N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

March 14, 2013 at 9:00 a.m.

NC Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters  
1751 Varsity Drive  
Raleigh, North Carolina

**Call to Order** - *Commission* David Hoyle, Jr. called the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Conference Room, 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Hayden Rogers was absent.

**Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation** – *Commissioner* Durwood Laughinghouse led the Pledge of Allegiance. *Commissioner* John Litton Clark gave the invocation.

**Welcome** - Chairman Hoyle welcomed Commissioners and guests. Hoyle announced that the meeting audio was being streamed live on the WRC website.

**Mandatory Ethics Inquiry** - Chairman Hoyle read the ethics inquiry mandated in North Carolina General Statute 138A-15(e).

**Minutes** - the Commission approved the January 17, 2013 Wildlife Resources Commission minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**.

**State Ethics Commission Review of 2012 Statement of Economic Interest for Commissioner Richard Edwards** – Pursuant to NCGS 138A-15(c) Chairman Hoyle read into the Minutes relevant portions of the evaluation by the N.C. Ethics Commission of the 2012 Statement of Economic Interest for Richard Edwards.

**Financial Status Report** - the Commission received a financial status report on the Wildlife Operating Fund and the Wildlife Endowment Fund as of January 31, 2013, from Tommy Clark, *Budget Officer*, presented in **Exhibit B**. The Operating Fund balance was \$20,896,930.76. The Endowment Fund balance was \$95,795,784.62.

**Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Committee Meeting Report** – Durwood Laughinghouse, *Chair*, reported that the HNGES Committee met on Tuesday, March 12, 2013. The Committee discussed the Thomas Quay Award nominations. Laughinghouse asked that committee members submit their ballots for nominees on the Thursday before the May 17 WRC meeting. Sara Schweitzer, *Coastal Wildlife Diversity Biologist*, presented an update on the International Alliance Program and the Southern Wings Program, which 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 habitat survey project. The HNGES Committee recommended approval of a three-year commitment to support a partnership for full life-cycle conservation of the piping plover, to be considered for adoption later in the meeting. Shannon Deaton, *Fisheries Management Coordinator*, presented a conservation plan concept for state listings and updates. The HNGES Committee supported the proposed conservation plan concept and timeline and asked staff to develop a draft conservation plan for discussion at a future HNGES meeting. 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 reported to the HNGES committee. Brad Howard, *Private Lands Coordinator*, presented an update on the elk habitat feasibility study RFP and Landowner Survey. Committee members were asked to read the information and comment to Dr. David Cobb by March 31, 2013. Shannon Deaton and Perry Sumner, *Wildlife Management Section Manager*, updated the committee about the Teaming with Wildlife Annual Fly-In, when they briefed Congressional members about State Wildlife Funded Grants and the Wildlife Action Plan. Staff plans to follow up with Congressional offices by late March and discuss local opportunities for a site visit to a Wildlife Action Plan field project.

**Big Game Committee Meeting Report** – John Litton Clark, *Chair*, reported that the Big Game Committee met on Wednesday, March 13, 2013. Proposed legislation regarding bear management fees was discussed, including a \$10.00 electronic bear management stamp that must be purchased prior to taking any bear in North Carolina (excludes lifetime license holders) and an increase in the non-resident bear hunting license to \$225.00. Also included in the bear management legislation concept is for the NCWRC to be able to regulate still hunting in the vicinity of unprocessed food products. Discussion was held concerning the discovery of chronic wasting disease in free-ranging cervids in Pennsylvania.

**Education and Outreach - Youth Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Report** – Dell Murphy, *Chair*, reported that the Education and Outreach Subcommittee met on Wednesday, March 13, 2013. Deet James, Jenny Harris, and Travis Casper gave an overview of the Recruitment and Retention Adoption Model and Sample Results Chains that are under development as a result of the Strategic Recruitment and Retention Initiative (SRRI) that was held in October 2012. The subcommittee affirmed the SRRI committee work and review. The committee will proceed with development of policy infrastructure. Tommy Clark, *Budget Manager*, presented ten-year trends in license sales by age of license buyer. Clark will factor in lifetime license holders. He will assess whether a similar analysis may be prepared for vessel registration.

**Land Use and Access Committee Meeting Report** – Jim Cogdell, *Chair*, reported that the Land Use and Access Committee met on March 13, 2013. Isaac Harrold, *Public Lands Section Manager*, reviewed Phase I and Phase II proposed land acquisition plans for consideration by the entire WRC. Harrold reviewed a proposed reallocation of property to clarify the boundary between South Mountains Game Land and South Mountains State Park. Discussion was held regarding an easement request in Currituck County and a lease request in Brunswick County. The committee was updated on boating access area maintenance agreement renewals for areas historically under Progress Energy leases, renewed as a result of the Duke/Progress Energy merger. Harrold also notified the committee of an interagency agreement with NCDOT to maintain boating access areas on the Lumber River off of US 74 in Robeson County.

### **Property Matters**

**Adoption of Phase I Land Acquisitions** – upon a motion made out of the Land Use and Access Committee, the Commission voted to allow staff to work with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for Phase I projects Harrison Heirs Tract – Martin County (**Exhibit D-1**) and Sherrill Tract – Ashe County (**Exhibit D-2**).

**Adoption of Phase II Land Acquisitions** – upon a motion made out of the Land Use and Access Committee, the Commission voted to give final approval to proceed with the acquisitions of Phase II projects Truth Temple Tract – Ashe County, by donation (**Exhibit E-1**) and Louise Thomas Tract – Moore County (**Exhibit E-2**).

**Reallocation of Properties - Burke, Cleveland, and Rutherford Counties** – the Commission approved the reallocation of properties to clarify the boundary between South Mountain Game Land and South Mountains State Park in Burke, Cleveland, and Rutherford counties, presented in **Exhibit F**.

**Easement Request, Currituck County** – the Commission approved a request by Dominion Power, presented in **Exhibit G**, to expand an existing power transmission line easement on a portion of North River Game Land in Currituck County for development of a new transmission line.

**Lease, Brunswick County** - the Commission approved a staff recommendation presented in **Exhibit H** to lease property in Bolivia in Brunswick County as a work depot for lands management staff and equipment.

**Small Game Committee Meeting Report** – Mitch St. Clair, *Chair*, reported that the Small Game Committee met on Wednesday, March 13, 2013. The committee received an update from Dr. David Cobb about small game management. The committee discussed making revisions to the nomination procedure for the Lawrence Diedrick Small Game Award. Nominations this year will be received from March 1 to May 1, 2013.

**Agency Spotlight** - the Commission received a presentation about fisheries research projects conducted under cooperative agreements with universities from Corey Oakley, *Inland Fisheries Piedmont Research Coordinator*. Oakley stated that cooperative research with universities informs resource management decisions through directed research projects. The agency applies project results to develop specific management strategies. As an example Oakley mentioned a white bass project being conducted at Jordan Lake by NC State University and the NCWRC. Populations are declining. The project will provide estimates of the population size, fish habitat and movement of the populations. Growth and mortality rates will be studied and overlapping information will be obtained concerning white bass and white perch that live in Jordan Lake.

**Inland Fisheries Update** – the Commission received an update on the activities of the Inland Fisheries Division from Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*. Curry announced that the striped bass season on the Roanoke River is open until April 30. He addressed the CD at each Commissioner’s seat, stating that production summaries and Teaming with Wildlife documents were available on the CD.

**Wildlife Management Update** – the Commission received an update about the activities of the Division of Wildlife Management from Dr. David Cobb, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*. Cobb announced that CDs provided to each Commissioner contain documents and newsletters of interest including the 2010-2012 Biennial Report, the published report about the northern flying squirrel, information about feral cats, and the cervid breeding fact sheet. Cobb announced that nominations are open for the Diedrick Small Game Award. He announced that following today’s meeting the Chronic Wasting Disease team will meet concerning the CWD Response Plan.

**Southern Wings Project** – the Commission received an update from Dr. David Cobb in **Exhibit C** about the Southern Wings Project, a partnership among the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society, Canadian Wildlife Service, Bird Studies Canada, Bahamas National Trust and other groups for the full life-cycle conservation of piping plovers. The Commission approved a three-year financial commitment to the project to enhance and expand research, survey, and monitoring efforts in the Bahamas. In 2013 \$3500.00 will be committed; \$4500.00 in 2014; and \$4500.00 in 2015.

**Division of Law Enforcement Update** – the Commission received an update from Colonel Dale Caveny, *Law Enforcement Division Chief*, about recent and upcoming activities and programs of the Division of Law Enforcement. Caveny mentioned the annual Hunter Skills Tournaments, in which 240 teams participate at District tournaments. The State tournament will be held on April 27 at Camp Millstone. Officer education and training is ongoing. Law enforcement officers receive forty hours of mandated training each year, plus a two-day leadership class that is mandatory for supervisors. Caveny mentioned a cooperative effort among law enforcement agencies to promote the “On the Road, On the Water Don’t Drink and Drive” campaign. Also in recent news is the “Operation Somethin’ Bruin,” a multi-state, multi-agency operation that resulted in 26 individuals being charged with violations of North Carolina laws regarding take of black bears. More suspects have been identified and the investigation is ongoing. One hundred twenty-one law enforcement officers from multiple states have been involved in the operation.

**Fiscal Note, Rulemaking, Perquimans County – Town of Hertford** – the Commission approved a fiscal note analysis associated with a rule proposal to extend a no wake zone along the waterfront in the Town of Hertford. Executive Order 70 requires that fiscal note analysis be conducted by the Office of State Budget and Management with approval by the Wildlife Resources Commission prior to the Notice of Text being published in the *North Carolina Register*. **(Exhibit I)**

**Change in Rulemaking Cycle** – Executive Director Gordon Myers updated the Commission about proposed Senate Bill 10, and difficulties in continuing with the current deadlines and public hearing schedule associated with the rulemaking cycle if the Commission loses a majority of its current members on June 30, 2013. The current rulemaking cycle provides for the WRC to vote in July on rule proposals to take to public hearings in September, which would be extremely difficult with a new Commission sworn in at that same meeting in July. The Commission adopted the recommendation to change the rulemaking cycle so that the Commissioners can consider proposals in the fall of 2013. State-wide public hearings will be held in January of 2014 as presented in **Exhibit J:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
January 7, 2014	4	Dublin	Bladen Community College
January 8, 2014	5	Graham	Courthouse
January 9, 2014	6	Norwood	South Stanly High School
January 14, 2014	9	Murphy	Tri-County Community College
January 15, 2014	8	Morganton	Municipal Auditorium
January 16, 2014	7	Wilkesboro	The Walker Center, Wilkes Community College
January 21, 2014	1	Edenton	Swain Auditorium
January 22, 2014	2	New Bern	Courthouse
January 23, 2014	3	Rocky Mount	Nash Community College

**Resolution Supporting Senate Bill 224** – the Commission unanimously adopted a Resolution read by Chairman David W. Hoyle, Jr., supporting Senate Bill 224 of the 2013 Session of the General Assembly that would permit Sunday hunting with firearms on private lands. The Commission adopted a motion instructing the Executive Director to work with the General Assembly and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to find a solution for the potential loss of compensatory hunting days for those who hunt migratory waterfowl on public waters, should Senate Bill 224 become law.

**Comments by the Chairman** – Chairman David Hoyle thanked the Commissioners for their cooperation and participation in the committee meetings. He thanked staff for organizing the many meetings this week. He requested that the Commissioners remain after the meeting for a group photograph. Hoyle announced that the next meeting of the WRC will be held at Atlantic Beach on Friday, May 17, 2013.

**Comments by the Executive Director** – Executive Director Gordon Myers reported that the Legislative Day with the Sportsmen’s Caucus was a success. Staff and conservation partners had dozens of interactions with legislators who are very interested in the programs and mission of the Wildlife Resources Commission. Myers announced that the agency Biennial Report entitled “Conservation Pays Off” was produced in-house with the financial assistance of six partners. He expressed the agency’s gratitude for this assistance and noted that without the contributions of our conservation partners our shared goals for the effective management of our wildlife resources and habitats would be impossible to accomplish alone.

**Budget and Legislative Update** – Myers gave a brief overview of the Governor’s expected budget, stating there is an expectation of a two percent reduction in appropriated budgets for all agencies. He announced that a bill has been proposed to disapprove the night hunting bill, which would delay the permanent rule for hunting coyotes at night with the use of a light. Other bills of interest to the WRC include bills for the hunter apprentice license, captivity license permits, and a bill to increase penalties for poaching while removing court costs. Myers thanked staff for their efforts in preparing for the meetings this week.

**Comment by Chief Deputy Director** – *Chief Deputy Director Mallory Martin* told the Commission that he and Colonel Dale Caveny recently were invited by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to visit, where they gave an overview of this agency’s organizational review and strategic alignment project. Wisconsin is undergoing a similar review and expressed their appreciation for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission’s efforts and process sharing.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.