



MINUTES
July 25, 2024
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting
Raleigh, North Carolina

Chairman Monty Crump called the July 25, 2024 N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Room at the agency's headquarters in Raleigh. Crump reminded everyone that the meeting is being audio streamed live and will be available at www.ncwildlife.org.

Commissioner Monty Crump led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner John Alexander gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. Steve Windham and Joe Budd were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Monty Crump	Wes Seegars	Jim Ruffin	John Stone	JC Cole
Mark Craig	Thomas Fonville	Ray Clifton	Hayden Rogers	Mike Alford
David Hoyle	Tom Berry	Kelly Davis	John Alexander	Reid Smith
John Coley	Brad Stanback	Landon Zimmer	Tom Haislip	

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

Chairman Crump advised the Commission of the mandatory ethics inquiry as mandated in NCGS §138A-15.

RECEIVE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION REVIEW OF 2024 STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST FOR PROSPECTIVE COMMISSIONER HAYDEN ROGERS – Pursuant to NCGS §138A-15(c), Margo Minkler, Ethics Liaison, read into the Minutes relevant portions of the evaluations by the N.C. Ethics Commission of the 2024 Statement of Economic Interest for Hayden Rogers, Governor At Large Appointee

MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2024 MEETING

On a motion by David Hoyle and second by Landon Zimmer, the Minutes of the June 6, 2024 meeting was approved as presented in **EXHIBIT A**.

EXHIBIT A is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Jason Cottle, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented a status report in **EXHIBIT B** on the Wildlife Resources Commission General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and the Endowment Fund.

EXHIBIT B is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Ad Hoc Agency Supplemental Funding Model Committee – July 24, 2024 – *David Hoyle, Chair*, reported the Ad Hoc Committee to Assess the Agency Supplemental Funding Model met on July 24, 2024. After reviewing the Committee’s charge, staff provided an overview of their assessment process and presented the following supplemental funding proposals for the Committee’s consideration: A nonmotorized vessel permit for self-powered vessels on state waters. A Conservation Pass to be required for non-licensed individuals to access and use certain WRC game lands and shooting ranges. A Conservation Membership Program to provide a donation pathway for the public to support the Agency’s conservation mission. It was noted that these proposals address activities that the Wildlife Resources Commission currently supports. The assessment concluded that each proposal stands to increase both revenue and the Agency’s constituency base, in fulfillment of the Committee’s charge. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended that staff pursue the implementation of all three options. There being no further business the committee meeting was adjourned.

Boating Safety Committee – July 24, 2024 – *J.C. Cole, Chair*, reported the Boating Safety Committee met on July 24, 2024. *Betsy Haywood, No Wake Zone Coordinator*, walked the committee through a permanent rulemaking adoption for Pender County, permanent rulemaking notice of text for Brunswick, Carteret, Alexander, and Mecklenburg and Gaston counties; and emergency, temporary, and permanent rulemaking for Bladen County to address safety concerns at White Lake. *Major Mark Dutton* then provided a brief but impressive update on the Law Enforcement Division’s efforts for the July 4th Operation Dry Water efforts to reduce boating while impaired. There being no further business the committee adjourned.

Land Acquisition & Property Committee – July 24, 2024 – *Tom Berry, Chair*, reported the Executive Committee met on July 24, 2024. The Land Acquisition and Property Committee reviewed and approved three Phase I land acquisition proposals, and one phase II proposal. There being no further business the committee adjourned.

Small Game & Wild Turkey Committee – July 24, 2024 – *Jim Ruffin, Chair*, reported the Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee met on July 24, 2024. *Hannah Plumpton, Upland Game Bird Biologist*, presented a comprehensive review of the agency’s wild turkey data and management, focusing on harvest statistics and the various surveys used to monitor turkey populations. She outlined the next steps in turkey management, including a planned survey of turkey hunters. *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*, discussed plans to conduct wild turkey information forums early next year to inform and engage with hunters about turkey population status and future management strategies. *Chris Turner, Supervisor of the Game Bird and Wildlife Health Program*, provided an overview of the methods used to monitor small game populations in the state and the implications of survey results for these populations. Additionally, *Chris Kreh, Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief*, presented staff recommendations to revise the Wild Turkey Management Goal for the Commission to better address the status of our turkey management and potential future actions.

Motion from the Small Game & Wild Turkey Committee – On a motion by Jim Ruffin and a second by Mike Alford, the Commission approved a motion to adopt a new Wildlife Turkey Management Goal: To provide quality spring gobbler hunting opportunities by conserving North Carolina’s wild turkeys.

Fisheries Committee – July 24, 2024 – *John Stone, Chair*, reported the Fisheries Committee met on July 24, 2024. *Chairman Stone* presented the committee with information on potential trophy trout management. After substantial discussion, the committee passed a motion to direct fisheries staff to investigate options for implementing trophy trout management and to report back to the committee with a recommended approach. *Kevin Dockendorf, Coastal Fisheries Research Coordinator*, presented ongoing work to understand an often overlooked sunfish species, the Flier. He shared how the Flier is mainly distributed in swampy backwater areas of the coastal plain and that staff are learning more about this species throughout the state. The committee viewed a clip from a Carolina All Out episode on Fliers; the full show can be seen on the Commission’s website, www.ncwildlife.com. Topics of Municipal Lake Fishing: Hidden Gems for Largemouth Bass and Update on Ongoing Species Management Plans were postponed due to time constraints.

Committee of the Whole – July 24, 2024 – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Committee of the Whole met on July 24, 2024 and started with a brief presentation from the NC Wildlife Federation’s Manley Fuller, who talked about their initiative One Mission, One Commission. *Melva Bonner, Regulatory Analyst*, presented rulemaking notice of text for rules requiring action under the periodic review of rules. Next, she presented permanent rulemaking adoptions for Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species, Land and Water Access 2024-2025 deer season companion rules, Commercial Use Permitting, and temporary rules for the Needmore Game Land. *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, presented the public comments for temporary rulemaking to close flounder season for 2024. After consideration of those comments, a lot of good discussion, and review of the data recently presented to the Marine Fisheries Commission, the Committee determined closure of the flounder season for 2024 is an unbalanced allocation issue. If that data suggested that closing the season was necessary as a conservation issue, the MFC would also close the commercial season. The Committee therefore

recommended a 4-day season as recommended by staff. Lastly, The Committee reviewed the updated Agency Organizational Overview and Commissioner Orientation Package and reminded Commissioners of Executive Orders 34 and 75 and to sign the acknowledgement form outlining the requirements and expectations in their packets. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Executive Committee– July 24, 2024 – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Executive Committee met on July 24, 2024 and went into Closed Session pursuant to NC General Statute §143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with agency counsel to preserve attorney-client privilege on ongoing litigation and (a)(6) of the same statute to review Executive Director’s 2023/2024 performance evaluation. The Committee came out of closed session, and, having no further business, adjourned.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – Billions in Benefits: Valuing Fish and Wildlife Management – *Cristina Watkins, Lead Social Scientist*, gave a presentation titled “Billions in Benefit: Value Fish & Wildlife Management.” This presentation highlighted recent efforts by the WRC to conduct economic impact analysis research and discussed results from several projects assessing the economic impacts of wildlife and fisheries conservation and wildlife associated outdoor recreation.

LAND AND WATER ACCESS DIVISION

LAND ACQUISITION AND PROPERTY MATTERS

Phase II Land Acquisition – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission approved to proceed with acquisition of the following property presented in **(EXHIBIT C)** by *Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager*

- **Greens Thoroughfare – Craven County (C)**

EXHIBIT C is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING

Final Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0321 Pender County, Town of Surf City – On a motion by Tom Haislip and a second by Mike Alford, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT D-1)** and approved amendments to create two no wake zones along the Surf City waterfront in parts of Topsail Sound and Topsail Creek, north and south of the Intracoastal Waterway from east of the N.C. Highway 210 Surf City Bridge, and to incorporate into the NC Administrative Code (NCAC) four boating access areas (BAA’s) in Pender County presented in **(EXHIBIT D-2)** by *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*

EXHIBITS D-1, D-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Applications – 15A NCAC 10F .305 Brunswick County and Town of Sunset Beach; Adopt Fiscal Note for Two Locations in Town of Sunset Beach – On a motion by Mark Craig and a second by David Hoyle, the Commission denied the application for rulemaking by the Town of Sunset Beach for a no-wake zone in part of South Jinks Creek presented in **(EXHIBIT E-1)**, denied of the application for rulemaking by the Town of Sunset Beach for a no-wake zone in a portion of Fox Creek between 28th and 40th Street presented in **(EXHIBIT E-2)**, denied the Fiscal Note for the Town of Sunset Beach at South Jinks Creek and Fox Creek presented in **(EXHIBIT E-3)**, and approved technical corrections to the Brunswick County Rule 15A NCAC 10F .0305 presented in **(EXHIBIT E-4)** by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS E-1, E-2, E-3, E-4 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Applications – 15A NCAC 10F .0330 Carteret County – On a motion by Mark Craig and second by David Hoyle, the Commission denied of the application from Carteret County for rulemaking to create a no-wake zone at Raymond’s Gut in Peletier presented in **(EXHIBIT F-1)** and approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and public hearing to incorporate ten Carteret County Boating Access Areas into the NCAC presented in **(EXHIBIT F-2)** by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS F-1, F-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0332 Alexander County – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Wes Seegars, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for a restricted area at the request of Duke Energy LLC, at Wittenburg Access Area on Lake Hickory in Bethlehem in Alexander County presented in **(EXHIBIT G-1)**; and approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing to extend the no-wake zone on Lake Hickory in Taylorsville in Alexander County, beginning at the Rink Dam and extending southeast ending within 50 yards of the new docks at the Sand Bar Marina and Grill; and to incorporate into the NCAC the Dusty Ridge Boating Access Area in Taylorsville and Wittenburg Boating Access Area in Bethlehem presented in **(EXHIBIT G-2)** by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS G-1, G-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Applications – 15A NCAC 10F .0333 Lake Wylie Marine Commission - On a motion by Landon Zimmer and a second by Tom Haislip the Commission approved the application from the Lake Wylie Marine Commission 15A NCAC 10F .0333 to publish Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with open comment period and public hearing to create a no-wake zone within 50 yards of Joyner’s Marina adjacent to the no-wake zone east of Buster Boyd Bridge presented in **(EXHIBIT H-1)**; denied the application from the Lake Wylie Marine Commission to extend the no-wake zone around the west side of Sadler Island in Mecklenburg and Gaston counties presented in **(EXHIBIT H-2)**; denied the application from Lake Wylie Marine Commission for a no-wake zone in the waters north and east of Sunset Island presented in **(EXHIBIT H-3)**; and approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with open comment period and public hearing for technical corrections to the Rule to replace the South Carolina coordinate for the eastern side of the Buster Boyd Bridge no-wake zone with a point in North

Carolina; and to strike from the NCAC 10F .0333(a)(13) Other Facilities and 10F .0333(a)(14) Marked Swimming and Mooring areas presented in **(EXHIBIT H-4)** by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

RULEMAKING

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – Periodic Review Rules – On a motion by Hayden Rogers and a second by John Coley, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for 10G .0501, and 10J .0103 and .0104 presented in **(EXHIBIT I)** by *Melva Bonner, Regulatory Analyst*

EXHIBIT I is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10I Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species Rules – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT J-1)** and approved request to amend 10I .0102 through .0105 presented in **(EXHIBIT J-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS J-1, J-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – Land and Water Access Rules – On a motion by David Hoyle and second by John Coley, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT K-1)** and approved request to amend the 2024-2025 deer season companion rules presented in **(EXHIBIT K-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS K-1, K-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10H .1800 Commercial Use Permitting Rules – On a motion by Ray Clifton and second by David Hoyle, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT L-1)** and adopted 10H .1801 through .1803 presented in **(EXHIBIT L-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS L-1, L-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 10D .0252 Needmore Game Land – On a motion by Mike Alford and second by John Alexander, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT M-1)** and approved request to amend the Needmore Game Land rule to match the 2024-2025 western deer season framework presented in **(EXHIBIT M-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS M-1, M-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 10C .0307 Flounder – On a motion by Wes Seegars and a second by Mark Craig, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT N-1)** and approved request to amend the flounder rule presented in **(EXHIBIT N-2)** by *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*

EXHIBITS N-1, N-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING

Emergency Adoption and Temporary/Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 10F .0304 Bladen County – On a motion by Ray Clifton and second by John Alexander, the Commission approved the request to adopt an emergency amendment and notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for changes to the White Lake restricted area presented in (EXHIBIT O) by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBIT O is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN – Chairman Crump reported on recent events, including attending the 60th Law Enforcement Basic Graduation, where he commended the graduates for their dedication and commitment to wildlife conservation and enforcement. He also expressed appreciation for the hard work of the training staff and emphasized the importance of their role in the agency’s mission. He also discussed the Commissioner field trip to NCSU Yates Mill Aquatic Conservation Center, noting that the visit provided valuable insights into aquatic management and conservation efforts, and he expressed appreciation to the staff for their informative presentations.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m. All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.

Monty Crump, Chairman 10/03/2024
Date

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director 10/03/2024
Date