



MINUTES
April 14, 2022
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting
Raleigh, North Carolina

Chairman Monty Crump called the April 14, 2022, 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 Tom Haislip led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner John Alexander gave the invocation.

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

Chairman Crump advised the Commission of the mandatory ethics inquiry as mandated in NCGS §138A-15. Commissioner Landon Zimmer recused himself from discussion and action on Exhibits E-2 and E-3.

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. David Hoyle, John Coley, and Hayden Rogers were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Monty Crump	Tom Berry	Kelly Davis	John Alexander
Thomas Fonville	Brad Stanback	Steve Windham	Tom Haislip
Wes Seegars	Jim Ruffin	Landon Zimmer	J.C. Cole
Mark Craig	Ray Clifton	John Stone	Mike Alford

VISITORS

Lynn Quattro, Assistant Chief of Freshwater Fisheries, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2022 MEETING

On a motion by Tom Berry and second by Wes Seegars, the Minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting were approved as presented in **EXHIBIT A**.

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

ADMINISTRATION

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

ENDOWMENT FUND EXPENDABLE INCOME ALLOCATION – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Steve Windham, the Commission approved the Calendar Year 2021 Expendable Investment Income Allocation presented by Dr. DP Singla (**EXHIBIT C**)

Exhibit B and C are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

2020 Sport Fish Restoration Award – *Lynn Quattro, President-Elect, American Fisheries, Fisheries Administration Section*, presented the 2020 Sport Fish Restoration Award for Research and Surveys to the Inland Fisheries Division for the project “Characterization of the Population Genetics and Phylogeography of North Carolina’s Brook Trout.”

2021 Governor’s Award for Excellence – *Cameron Ingram, Executive Director*, presented the 2021 Governor’s Award of Excellence for Safety and Heroism to Anthony “Tony” Wait, Conservation Technician, Land and Water Access Division.

2021 Richard Caswell Award – *Cameron Ingram* presented Gary Dail, Coastal Region Construction Supervisor, Engineering Services Division, with the Richard Caswell Award for 45 years of public service to the State of North Carolina.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee Report – April 7, 2022 – *Jim Ruffin, Chair*, reported the Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee held a meeting on April 7th to continue discussions relative to the development of a small game focal area on an existing WRC game land. Piedmont

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Eco-Region Supervisor Chris Dawes gave a comprehensive and informative presentation focused on the ongoing management of the existing CURE areas on Caswell Game Land. This area presents an excellent opportunity to establish a small game focal area without significant impacts on other hunting constituencies. The early successional habitat maintained and developed will lead to benefits for both game and nongame species. After discussion, the committee unanimously endorsed moving forward with the plan to intensively manage this section of the Caswell Game Land to create early successional habitat and develop additional small game-focused hunting opportunities.

Motion from Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee – On a motion by Jim Ruffin and second by Steve Windham, the Commission charged Director Ingram to establish a Small Game Focal Area on Caswell Game Land and implement management plans necessary to create the high-quality, early successional habitat required for its success.

Committee of the Whole Report – April 7, 2022 – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Committee of the Whole met April 7, 2022 and received two presentations on why becoming CWD positive matters and how we test deer for CWD. Staff presented recommendations for implementing our CWD Response Plan, beginning with delineation of the Surveillance Zones, the restrictions that need to be put into place for those zones to slow the spread of the disease, and the regulatory process for setting those restrictions. The Committee endorsed staff recommendations and asked to have temporary rules prepared for the April 14th Commission meeting.

Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee Report – April 13, 2022 – *Landon Zimmer, Chair*, reported the Finance Committee met on April 13, 2022. Internal Auditor Steve Chase presented four topics: WRC Internal Audit Charter, a Risk Assessment update, the current status of the Civil Rights review, and the two current investigations. Chief Financial Officer Dr. DP Singla presented a comparison of current Fiscal Year 22 and previous fiscal year's FY21 for periods ending February, showcasing both revenues and expenditures for the General and Capital Improvement funds. The Committee also reviewed the balances and Asset Allocation of the Endowment Fund as of February 2022. Staff was tasked to review the endowment fund portfolio as the board inquired about other investment options, including recommendations for a ratio of equity compared to bonds, and would like a report out at the next committee meeting. Dr. Singla presented the License Fee increase proposal based on CPI-U for escalation (Consumer Price Index All Urban Consumers) and staff was directed to move forward with the rule-making process. Staff was tasked to explore a marketing campaign before the license fee increase is implemented to let constituents known about the forthcoming increase. The committee also tasked staff to evaluate where the NCWRC's licenses fees compare to surrounding states and see if some license fees are undervalued. This would be researched, and the information presented at a future Committee-of-the-Whole meeting. Finally, the committee recommended to Approve the Expendable Income earned by the Endowment Fund in Calendar Year 2021 as presented in Exhibit C.

Rules Committee Report – April 13, 2022 – *Wes Seegars, Chair*, reported the Rules Committee met on April 13, 2022, to review proposed changes to the Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species lists and review the proposed temporary rules for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Changes to the listed species will be presented for notice of text at the July Commission meeting. Proposed temporary rules for CWD were discussed in detail and covered the items addressed in the CWD Emergency Response Plan. Those five rules will be presented for a vote to notice text on April 14, 2022.

Land Acquisition and Property Committee Report – April 13, 2022 – Tom Berry, Chair, met on April 13, 2022. The Committee reviewed and endorsed four Phase I, three Phase II land acquisition projects, as well as four easement requests. Following the Land Acquisition and Property Committee meeting, the Tuckertown Partner Recognition Luncheon was held. At the luncheon, Chairman Berry shared the history of the Alcoa acquisitions, and highlighted the excellent work by staff and our conservation partners in successfully completing the High and Tuckertown Acquisitions. The event showcased and celebrated the excellent conservation partnerships the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has in North Carolina. Without this strong network of conservation-oriented organizations, land acquisitions such as Tuckertown would not be possible. Chairman Berry noted the direction provided by the Land Strategy Ad hoc Committee in addressing the need to look for parcels in underserved regions of the State.

Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Committee Report – April 13, 2022 – Wes Seegars, Vice Chair, reported the Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Committee met on April 13, 2022. Migratory bird coordinator Doug Howell presented the migratory game bird proposed season dates, public comments regarding the season proposals, and staff recommendations for the seasons. The Committee asked for a modification to the hooded merganser proposed bag limit and signified our desire to stay with the 5 total merganser bag limit but only two of which can be hooded mergansers. The Committee approved all other staff recommendations and are presented for a vote later in the meeting. Doug gave a very informative presentation about the ongoing multi-state woodcock research projects, and Brad Howard showed the Commission the final image of the 40th Anniversary Duck Stamp Print. Painted by Ron Louque, it will make a great final edition for our NC State Duck Stamp series.

Fisheries Committee Report – April 13, 2022 – John Stone, Chair, reported the Fisheries Committee met on April 13, 2022. Jeremy McCargo, *Anadromous Research Coordinator*, provided a thorough summary of the management options and staff recommendations for Amendment 2 to the NC Estuarine Striped Bass Fisheries Management Plan. The Fisheries Committee concurred with staff recommendations, and the preferred management options will be presented for full Commission consideration in Exhibit H. Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, reviewed the proposed rule text to prohibit fishing from March 1 – May 31 in three sloughs created for muskellunge spawning on the French Broad River and Mud Creek.

Committee of the Whole Report – April 13, 2022 – Monty Crump, Chair, reported the Committee of the Whole met April 13, 2022. Staff presented rules for adoption and notice of text on inland fishing regulations, wildlife control technicians, importation of wild animals and birds, replacement costs of wildlife, fisheries spawning areas, general inland fisheries and wildlife management rules, and water safety rules. The Committee also received informational exhibits on no-wake zone establishment on the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway, the Wildlife Action Plan

release of Addendum 2, plant species of greatest conservation need, for public comment April 20th - May 23rd, and an update on the CWD rule-making process, including a public meeting in Yadkinville scheduled for May 2nd.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – LAND AND WATER ACCESS – *Chris Jordan, WRC’s Game Land and Forest Resources Manager* presented a spotlight on NCWRC’s prescribed fire program which described the program at the agency’s inception, how effectiveness and acreage have increased, and current challenges. Afterward, *Brady Beck, WRC’s Southern Piedmont Management Biologist* presented a spotlight on NCWRC’s Red-cockaded Woodpecker management. Populations of this Federally Endangered species have increased on Sandhills, Holly Shelter, and Alligator River Game Lands over the last 20 years. Population increases can be attributed to use of artificial cavities and increased use of prescribed fire.

LAND ACQUISITION AND PROPERTY MATTERS

Phase II Land Acquisitions – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the acquisition of the following property presented by *Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager* (**EXHIBITS D-1, D-2, D-3**)

- Bridgewater Recreational Lands – Burke County (**EXHIBIT D-1**)
- TCI Timber Tract – Bladen Counties (**EXHIBIT D-2**)
- Crawford Tract – Gates County (**EXHIBIT D-3**)

Other Property Matters – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by John Alexander, the Commission approved the easement requests of the following presented by *Ben Solomon* (**EXHIBITS E-1, E-4**)

- Request for Right of Way Easement – Consider a request from the landowner for a prescriptive ROW easement at R.Wayne Bailey Game Land. In return, the landowners have granted NCWRC staff deeded administrative access across their parcel (**EXHIBIT E-1**)
- Request for Easements – Verizon Wireless requests an Access and Utility Easement at Sandhills Game Land (**EXHIBIT E-4**)

With Commissioner Landon Zimmer recused, and on a motion by Tom Berry and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the easement requests of the following presented by *Ben Solomon* (**EXHIBITS E-2, E-3**)

- Request for Easements – NC DOT requests a Permanent Right of Way Easement, Permanent Drainage Easement, and Temporary Construction Easement as part of a bridge replacement on Juniper Creek Game Land (**EXHIBIT E-2**)

- Request for Easements – NC DOT requests a Permanent Right of Way Easement, Permanent Utility Easement, and Temporary Construction Easement as part of a bridge replacement on the Falkland Boating Access Area (**EXHIBIT E-3**)

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

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

On a motion by Jim Ruffin and second by John Alexander, the Commission approved the following staff recommendations in (**EXHIBITS F-3b, F-4, G**)

Adoption of 2022-2023 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons – The Commission reviewed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service frameworks (**EXHIBIT F-1**), public comments (**EXHIBIT F-2**), and the Commission approved staff recommendations for the 2022-2023 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons (**EXHIBITS F-3b, F-4**) presented by *Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief*

Adoption of Season for Take of Migrant Peregrine Falcons for Use in Falconry – The Commission approved the staff recommendation to allow the take of up to five migrant peregrine falcons from the wild for use in falconry in 2022 presented by *Dr. Sara Schweitzer (EXHIBIT G)*

Exhibits F-1, F-2, F-3b, F-4, G are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

INLAND FISHERIES DIVISION

Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan – On a motion by John Stone and second by Steve Windham, the Commission approved preferred management options for Amendment 2 to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan presented by *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief (EXHIBIT H)*

RULEMAKING

Adoption – Inland Fishing Regulations– The Commission reviewed public comments (**EXHIBIT I-1**) and, on a motion by John Stone and second by Kelly Davis, the Commission adopted, readopted, and amended various 10C .0100, .0300, .0400, .0700, and .0800 rules for inland, joint, and coastal fishing waters to provide clarity on inland game fish regulations (**EXHIBIT I-2b**) presented by *Christian Waters*

Exhibits I-1, I-2b are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

On a motion by Wes Seegars and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text and Fiscal Notes in the following (**EXHIBITS J-1, J-2, K, L-1, L-2, M-1, M-2, N, O**)

Notice of Text – 10H .1510 Wildlife Control Technician Certification and Eligibility Requirements –The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an

open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to 10H .1510 and fiscal note for proposed rule (**EXHIBITS J-1, J-2**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul, Regulatory Analyst*

Notice of Text – 10B .0101 Importation of Wild Animals and Birds – The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to 10B .0101 (**EXHIBIT K**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul*

Notice of Text – 10A .1502 Replacement Costs of Wildlife– The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to 10A .1502 and fiscal note for proposed rule (**EXHIBITS L-1, L-2**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul*

Notice of Text – 10C .0208 Spawning Areas – The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to 10C .0208 and fiscal notes for proposed rule (**EXHIBITS M-1, M-2**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul*

Notice of Text – 10B Wildlife Management – The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed readoption of various 10B Wildlife Management rules (**EXHIBIT N**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul*

Notice of Text – 10C Inland Fishing – The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed readoption of various 10C Inland Fishing rules (**EXHIBIT O**) presented by *Ashley Pekrul*

Exhibits J-1, J-2, K, L-1, L-2, M-1, M-2, N, O are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

On a motion by Steve Windham and second by Landon Zimmer, the Commission approved the following water safety rules in (**EXHIBITS P-2, Q-1, Q-2**)

Adoption – Water Safety Rules – The Commission reviewed public comments (**EXHIBIT P-1**) and adopted proposed changes to 15A NCAC 10F .0312 Henderson County (repeal); 10F .0317 Stanly County; 10F .0318 Warren County (repeal); 10F .0323 Burke County; 10F .0327 Montgomery County; 10F .0333 Mecklenburg and Gaston counties; 10F .0336 Northampton and Warren counties; 10F .0354 Pitt County; 10F .0378 Halifax County (**EXHIBIT P-2**) presented by *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*

Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0310 Dare County – The Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for a proposed amendment to 15A NCAC 10F .0310 and fiscal notes for proposed rule changes (**EXHIBITS Q-1, Q-2**) presented by *Betsy Haywood*

Exhibits P-1, P-2, Q-1, Q-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Notice of Text 15A NCAC 10B .0500 Wildlife Disease Management – On a motion by Wes Seegars and a second by Kelly Davis, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed temporary rules to address Chronic Wasting Disease (**EXHIBIT R**) presented by *Carrie Ruhlman, Rulemaking Coordinator*

Exhibit R is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN – Chairman Crump expressed, on behalf of the Commission, their appreciation for the hard work and commitment staff has shown in response to detecting Chronic Wasting Disease in NC.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Executive Director Cameron Ingram explained, that although the detection of Chronic Wasting Disease is bad news, the NCWRC has been preparing for the possibility for decades. The agency will continue to follow the CWD Response Plan in collaboration with NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and the agency’s next steps will be shared with the public through multiple communication channels. In conclusion, he recognized staff who have work diligently in response to CWD detection and the board for their support and guidance during this process.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m. All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.



Monty Crump, Chairman

July 14, 2022

Date



Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

July 14, 2022

Date