



**MINUTES**  
**July 13, 2023**  
**N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting**  
**Raleigh, North Carolina**

Chairman Monty Crump called the July 13, 2023 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](http://www.ncwildlife.org).

Commissioner Tom Berry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Landon Zimmer gave the invocation.

**ROLL CALL**

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. John Coley, Mark Craig, and JC Cole were absent.

**COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE**

Monty Crump	Jim Ruffin	John Stone	Hayden Rogers
Thomas Fonville	Tom Berry	Kelly Davis	John Alexander
David Hoyle	Ray Clifton	Tom Haislip	Steve Windham
Brad Stanback	Landon Zimmer	Mike Alford	Wes Seegars

**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 Exhibit E-2.

## MINUTES

On a motion by David Hoyle and second by Mike Alford, the Commission approved the Minutes of the following meetings:

**APRIL 20, 2023 MEETING** – the Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting was approved as presented in **EXHIBIT A**.

**JUNE 6, 2023 MEETING** – the Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the June 6, 2023 meeting was approved as presented in **EXHIBIT B**.

**EXHIBITS A & B** are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

## ADMINISTRATION

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

**Exhibit C** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

## COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

**Executive Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Executive Committee met on July 12, 2023, and adjourned into a closed session after opening the meeting to review the Executive Director's 2022/2023 performance evaluation under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6). After returning to open session, the meeting was adjourned.

**Habitat, Nongame, Endangered Species (HNGES) Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *Kelly Davis, Committee member*, reported the Committee met on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. *Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Assistant Chief, Terrestrial Wildlife Diversity Program*, gave a summary of public comments received for the Bog Turtle and the Southern Hognose Snake conservation plans which will be presented in Exhibits M-1 and M-2. All comments were in support of the plans and no significant edits were suggested. *Dr. Schweitzer and Rachael Hoch, Assistant Chief, Aquatic Wildlife Diversity Program*, provided summaries on six birds and one freshwater mollusk, including results from Status Assessment Tool evaluations. Status changes were proposed for four bird species and one mussel species, and no change in listing status for two bird species. The HNGES Committee members reviewed and supported the staff's recommendations. The proposed status changes will be taken to the Rules Committee meeting in August 2023. *Rachael Hoch* presented technical corrections to the Protected Animals List including three corrections due to Federal Status changes and twenty corrections to update scientific and common names. HNGES Committee members supported taking the proposed Technical Corrections to the Rules Committee meeting in August 2023. *Shannon Deaton, Chief, Habitat Conservation Division*, presented information on the 2023 Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award. HNGES Committee members were asked to submit ballot votes for a nominee. The results will be shared with the HNGES

Committee Chair in preparation for a Commission recommendation at the August 2023 Committee of the Whole.

**Fisheries Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *John Stone, Chair*, reported the Committee met on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, presented fish rule proposals for the 2024-2025 regulatory cycle including proposals to reaffirm the authority of the WRC over species designated inland game fish in all public fishing waters and over all other fishes taken by hook and line in Joint Fishing Waters. David Deaton, *Fish Production Supervisor*, gave an overview of the seven state fish hatcheries including challenges for and future directions of the production program and showed videos of each facility that will be shared with the public on the WRC's website. Christian presented a request from the Town of Black Mountain to be designated as a Mountain Heritage Trout City and to classify a section of the Swannanoa River as Mountain Heritage Trout Waters which will be presented in Exhibit N for consideration. Christian provided an update on the management of Roanoke River Striped Bass including actions taken by the WRC to reduce overall mortality and improve recruitment. He also reported that Watha State Fish Hatchery Staff produced and stocked 1.4 million fry in May and 650,000 fingerlings in June. Corey Oakley, *Inland Fisheries Division Assistant Chief*, described a new stocking project where F1 Largemouth Bass are being stocked annually into Lake Norman, Lake Gaston, and Jordan Lake for 5 years and will be evaluated for persistence in the population and growth potential. Corey shared how staff participated in Major League Fishing's Bass Pro Tour Redcrest 2023 Expo at Lake Norman which included interacting with 50,000-100,000 constituents, conducting fisheries seminars, and recording podcasts. Corey shared that the podcast which began in April of last year now has almost 60,000 individuals listens and is averaging 4,000-5,000 downloads per episode. He emphasized the importance of the podcast in connecting with constituents through emails and comments that are being shared with staff across the state.

**Land Acquisitions & Property Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *Tom Berry, Chair*, reported the Committee met on July 12, 2023. The Committee reviewed nine Land and Water Access rule proposals for the 2024-2025 cycle. The Committee also reviewed and endorsed three Phase I land acquisition proposals, five Phase II proposals, as well as two Other Property Matters. In total, the Committee reviewed eight land acquisition proposals and a total of 3,607 acres. Acquisitions ranged from game land additions, establishment of a new game land in Forsyth County, and the addition of a waterfowl impoundment in Hyde County.

**Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *Jim Ruffin, Chair*, reported the Committee met on July 12, 2023. Chris Dawes, *Piedmont Eco Region Supervisor*, gave a very informative update on the small game focal area on Caswell Game Lands. Hannah Plumpton, *Upland Game Bird Biologist*, shared an update on the 2023 wild turkey harvest, which was a record harvest. She also provided some insight into some of the finer points of the turkey harvest and shared some very interesting data related to harvest timing and hunter effort. Chris Kreh, *Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief*, shared some exciting information about past and future wild turkey research. Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, gave an update to the Committee on rule proposals that are under consideration for the upcoming rule cycle. The proposals are focused on an ongoing effort to simplify our rules associated with Controlled Hunting Preserves, Field Trials, and Dog Training. These suggested changes should help clarify several confusing issues related to these activities and hopefully be beneficial for our constituents. Finally, the Committee received and approved the staff's recommendation for the recipients of this year's Lawrence G. Deidrick Small Game Award.

Mr. Richard Broadwell was presented as staff's recommendations for the Individual award. Mr. Broadwell manages extensive property in Bladen County adjacent to Suggs Mill Gamelands. His efforts and dedication to small game management are extensive. He burns his property annually, last year alone he burned over 450 acres. He manages and protects the largest stand of Atlantic white cedar known to exist in North Carolina. He is a member of the local prescribed fire council and routinely shares his expertise and enthusiasm with other local landowners. All told Mr. Broadwell appears a well deserving nominee for the Diedrick Individual award. Staff recommended Dillon Epp and Dr. Theron Terhum of Orton Plantation as our Group award recipient for this year. Dillon and Theron and Orton Plantation are leaders in early successional management in southeast North Carolina and continue to foster outstanding habitat work on the plantation as well as conducting and promoting ongoing research on the property on quail and quail management as well as other wildlife species. Orton serves as a premier example of what quail habitat and quail management can look like in the sandy soils of southeastern North Carolina. Few of the successes of the property would have been realized without these two individuals.

**Motion from the Small Game and Wild Turkey Committee** –On a motion by Chair Jim Ruffin and a second by John Alexander, the Commission approved a motion to approve Richard Broadwell as the Individual recipient and Dillan Epp and Dr. Theron Terhune of Orton Plantation as the group recipient for the Lawrence G. Diedrick Small Game Award for 2023.

**Big Game Committee Report – July 12, 2023** – *David Hoyle, Chair*, reported the Committee met on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, shared several rule proposals for discussion this cycle. One is related to the legality of selling shed antlers. Several deer proposals were associated with efforts to adjust the western deer season to conform better with the biological objectives of deer management while matching the desires of our western deer hunters. In addition, there was a proposal to adjust either sex seasons in the far western counties. This is good news as our deer populations continue to improve on private lands in those areas and for the first time in decades there will be a “doe day” in the firearms season in these counties. Another proposal addresses bear seasons in the mountain bear management unit, the concept proposed at present would shift the season earlier to allow for more biologically appropriate bear hunting season, it would shift some timing around and minimize overlap with deer season. Staff is planning to host several bear hunting forums next week to continue conversations with bear hunters about these options. Brad then gave a brief update about the Univ. of Tennessee Elk study which is now complete. He talked about a few interesting pieces of information and when staff returns at our October meeting, they promise a deeper dive into the results of the study. Finally, Chris Kreh, *Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief*, gave a brief CWD update, noting that both Florida and Oklahoma are now positive for CWD. Having no further business, the Committee adjourned.

**Committee of the Whole Report – July 12, 2023** – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Committee met Wednesday, July 12, 2023. The meeting began with permanent rulemaking notice of text and temporary, permanent rulemaking adoptions, and proposed rulemaking for 10A rules for 2024-2025. Jason Cottle, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented on the Short-Term Interest Fund as an investment for the Wildlife Endowment Fund. Staff were charged to work with the Finance Committee chairman and vice chairman to bring an asset allocation recommendation back for discussion at the August meeting. Brian Daniels, *Customer Service Section Chief*, and Bobby Dunn, *Information Technology Director*, provided an update on the transition of the licensing system to Go Outdoors NC that went live July 1st. It has been a very successful launch, but as

expected, there have been some challenges. Staff is working diligently to ensure the change keeps moving forward as smoothly as possible. Executive Director Ingram recognized all the staff that have worked so hard to make the transition successful, but he especially recognized Brian Daniels and Bobby Dunn for their role leading the change. Next, the Committee discussed nominations of officers. Lastly, Executive Director Ingram introduced Anna Gurney, the agency's new Public Relations Manager.

### **AGENCY SPOTLIGHT**

**AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – WISe, Partnerships, and other Notable Engineering Projects –** *Michael Leggett, Lead Engineer with the Engineering Division*, gave a presentation titled “WISe, Partnerships, and other Notable Engineering Projects.” The presentation highlighted the WISe partnership between the NC Department of Public Safety and WRC, as well as the role that partnerships with local, state, and federal entities play in creating boating and fishing access sites across the state.

### **LAND ACQUISITION AND PROPERTY MATTERS**

**Phase II Land Acquisition** – On a motion by Ray Clifton and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the acquisition of the following properties presented in **(EXHIBITS D-1, D-2, D3, D-4, D-5)** by Ben Solomon, *Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager*

- Kelly Cove Tract – Macon County **(EXHIBIT D-1)**
- Griffin Tract – Buncombe County **(EXHIBIT D-2)**
- Richardson Tract – Ashe County **(EXHIBIT D-3)**
- Spencer Bay Tracts – Hyde County **(EXHIBIT D-4)**
- Paynes Branch Tract – Forsyth County **(EXHIBIT D-5)**

**EXHIBITS D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, D-5** are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

**Other Property Matters** – On a motion by John Alexander and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission approved staff recommendations for other property matters presented in **(EXHIBIT E-1)** by *Ben Solomon*

- Request for Easement – Request to grant a conservation easement on the North Bend Boating Access Area in Burke County **(EXHIBIT E-1)**

With Commissioner Landon Zimmer recused, and on a motion by Brad Stanback and second by Mike Alford, the Commission approved the easement requests of the following presented in **(EXHIBIT E-2)** by *Ben Solomon*

- Request for Easement – NC DOT requests to purchase a permanent right of way easement, drainage easement, utility easement and temporary construction easement for a bridge project in Henderson County **(EXHIBIT E-2)**

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

## **RULEMAKING**

On a motion by David Hoyle and a second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission approved the following rulemaking items presented in **(EXHIBITS F-2, G-2)**

**Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10B .0113 Big Game Harvest Reports** –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT F-1)** and adopted proposed changes to Big Game Harvest reporting presented in **(EXHIBIT F-2)** by *Melva Bonner, Regulatory Analyst*

**Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10F .0100 Motorboat Registration** –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT G-1)** and adopted proposed changes to 10F .0102, .0104, and .0109 update vessel data collection and certificate of number requirements to comply with USCG regulations presented in **(EXHIBITS G-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

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

**Notice of Text – CWD Rules** – On a motion by Wes Seegars and a second by David Hoyle, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed rules 10B .0501 and .0503. presented in **(EXHIBIT H-1)** and approved fiscal notes for proposed rules presented in **(EXHIBIT H-2)** by *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*

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

## **WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING**

On a motion by Steve Windham and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the following water safety rules presented in **EXHIBITS I-2 & J-2** by *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*

**Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0310 Dare County** –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT I-1)** and adopted proposed amendments to establish a no-wake zone in the waters of Motts Creek 3 at the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Marina and Oregon Inlet U.S. Coast Guard Station at Cape Hatteras National Seashore; and to add names and addresses of the boating access areas in Dare County. **(EXHIBIT I-2)**

**Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0374 Cube Hydro Carolinas** –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT J-1)** and adopted proposed amendments changes to change the name of Cube Yadkin Generation to Cube Hydro Carolinas; to establish safety zones and restricted areas on the Yadkin River in Rowan, Davidson, Stanly and Montgomery counties at High Rock Hydroelectric Station, Tuckertown Hydroelectric Station, Narrows Hydroelectric Station, and Falls Hydroelectric Station; to prohibit swimming at restricted areas; and to prohibit discharge of a firearm in restricted areas. **(EXHIBIT J-2)**

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

**Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0305 Brunswick County** – On a motion by Steve Windham and a second by Mike Alford, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT K-1)** and adopted proposed changes of a temporary amendments to establish a no-wake zone in South Jinks Creek at the Town of Sunset Beach, beginning at a line north of the feeder channel and including waters south and west for the duration of a dredging project in the navigation channels presented in **(EXHIBIT K-2)** by *Betsy Haywood*

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

**Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0333 Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties** – On a motion by Tom Berry and a second by John Alexander, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing, to establish a restricted area with swim beach at the South Point Access Area on Lake Wylie, located at 199 Boat Launch Road in Belmont in Gaston County, north of a rope in a cove east of the access area; and to codify in the North Carolina Administrative Code the address of the no-wake zone within 50 yards of the South Point Access Area boat ramps presented in **(EXHIBIT L)** by *Betsy Haywood*

**EXHIBIT L** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

**Conservation Plans** – On a motion by Hayden Rogers and a second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved staff recommendations for final adoption of Bog Turtle **(EXHIBIT M-1)** and Southern Hognose Snake **(EXHIBIT M-2)** Species Conservation Plans presented by *Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator*

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

### **INLAND FISHERIES DIVISION**

**Town of Black Mountain – Mountain Heritage Trout City Request** – On a motion by Hayden Rogers and a second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved designating the Town of Black Mountain as a Mountain Heritage Trout City and recognize the Public Mountain Trout Waters within Black Mountain as Mountain Heritage Trout Waters presented in **(EXHIBIT N)** by *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*

**EXHIBIT N** is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

#### **Vote for Vice Chairman**

On a motion by Steve Windham and a second by John Alexander, the Commission elected Commissioner Mark Craig as Vice Chairman for a term of two years or until their successors are elected and qualified pursuant to NCGS §143-243.

#### **Vote for Chairman**

On a motion by Tommy Fonville and a second by Steve Windham, the Commission elected Commissioner Monty Crump as Chairman for a term of two years or until their successors are elected and qualified pursuant to NCGS §143-243.

**COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN** – Chairman Crump opened his comments by stating it has been a great honor to serve alongside Commissioner Tommy Fonville as the Vice Chairman for the past two years. Next, he shared his appreciation to the board for being re-elected as Chairman, and stated he looks forward to working with Mark Craig as the newly elected Vice Chairman. Next, he requested if board members want to share their input on their committee assignments to reach out to him as soon as possible because they will be reviewing the Committee assignments in the next couple weeks. In closing, he thanked the General Assembly for their support of the agency bill.

**COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** – Executive Director Ingram opened his comments by thanking Commissioner Tommy Fonville for serving as the Vice Chair for the past two years. Next, he thanked everyone for their commitment as he reflected on the agency’s past accomplishments and priorities for the future. Lastly, he congratulated newly re-elected Chairman Crump and newly elected Vice Chairman Craig and stated he is looking forward to working with them both.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m. All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.

  
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Monty Crump, Chairman 08/24/2023  
Date

  
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Cameron Ingram, Executive Director 08/24/2023  
Date