



ACTIONS

N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

February 27, 2014 at 9:00 am

NC Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters

1751 Varsity Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina

Call to Order –*Commission Chairman Jim Cogdell called the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Conference Room, 5th floor. He announced that the meeting was being recorded as a public record, with live audio streaming at www.ncwildlife.org . He requested that cell phones be turned off. Commissioners Dell Murphy, John Coley, and Albert Sneed were absent.*

Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation - *Commissioner Wes Seegars led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner John Litton Clark gave the invocation.*

Welcome and Mandatory Ethics Inquiry – Chairman Cogdell welcomed the guests present. He read the ethics inquiry mandated in North Carolina General Statute 138A-15(e).

Minutes - the Commission approved the November 7, 2013 Wildlife Resources Commission minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**.

Notice of Commission Appointments – the Commission received from Governor Pat Mc Crory Notices of Appointment of *Brian White, District 1*, for a term ending June 30, 2019; *Joseph Budd, District 7*, for a term ending June 30, 2019; and *Albert L. Sneed, Jr., District 9*, for a term ending April 27, 2017. (**Exhibits B-1, B-2, B-3**)

State Ethics Commission Review of 2013 Statements of Economic Interest – the Commission was read relevant portions of the evaluations by the N.C. Ethics Commission of the 2013 Statements of Economic Interest for Brian White, Joseph Budd, and Albert Sneed. The evaluations in their entirety are incorporated by reference into the minutes of the meeting.

Financial Status Report - the Commission received a financial status report on the Wildlife Operating Fund and the Wildlife Endowment Fund as December 31, 2013 from Tommy Clark, *Budget Director*, presented in **Exhibit C**. The Operating Fund balance is \$20,264,865.77. The Endowment Fund balance is \$100,542,476.03.

Fisheries Committee Report – Wes Seegars, *Fisheries Committee Chair*, reported that the Fisheries Committee met on February 26, 2014 at 8:30 am. Doug Besler, *Mountain Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on the Mountain Heritage Trout Waters Program. Since the program's inception a total of 4,068 licenses have been sold. The committee discussed the cost of the program to the NCWRC and potential ways to offset the cost.

Chad Thomas, *Coastal Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on several key coastal fisheries issues. The committee received an update on Amendment 2 to the NC River Herring Fisheries Management Plan and unanimously recommended taking amendment 2 to the full Commission for their consideration and approval at today's meeting. Thomas provided a Roanoke River striped bass stock assessment. The season will open on March 1 and close on April 30, 2014. Thomas gave an update on management issues at Lake Mattamuskeet including salinity and water levels. The committee recommends a joint meeting of the WRC Waterfowl and WRC Fisheries committees in May to further discuss Lake Mattamuskeet issues.

David Deaton, *Fish Production Supervisor*, provided an overview of WRC fish hatcheries and current renovation projects. An overview of operations at the six WRC fish hatcheries was presented including description of the facilities, species raised, staffing, and annual operating costs.

Land Use and Access Committee Report – Tom Berry, *Land Use and Access Committee Chair*, reported that the LUAC met at 10:10 am on February 26, 2014. Isaac Harrold, *Lands Program Manager*, presented four Phase I properties for consideration by the committee. The LUAC will recommend approval by the entire Commission for staff to work with State Property and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for:

- Browns Island Tract 1, Carteret County (I-1) - donation
- Silvers Tract, Haywood County (I-2) – of interest for elk management
- Sassafras Tract, Scotland County (I-3) – Army Compatible Use Buffer Program; of interest for red-cockaded woodpecker
- Mitchell River Olinger Tract, Surry County (I-4) – delayed harvest trout waters; would permanently preserve public access

Harrold then presented three Phase II properties. The LUAC will recommend that the Commission give final approval for the acquisitions of these properties.

- Sherrill Tract, Ashe County (J-1)
- Birkhead Tract, Randolph County (J-2)
- Harrison Tract, Martin County (J-3)

The committee received an update about an easement request by a private landowner adjacent to the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland County for purposes of providing access to private property.

Isaac Harrold provided a status update for Game Land Management Plans being developed for seven game lands. More than 300 stakeholders have attended meetings to provide input about management and uses of individual game lands. A complete draft is being prepared for presentation to the Commission. Harrold said that staff has initiated Round 2, gathering information for additional game lands.

Discussion was held about a rule proposal for a portion of Bladen Lakes Game Land that was tabled for further research by the Commission at the November 7, 2013 WRC meeting. John Litton Clark provided an update about the safety issues and property rights issues associated with a portion of the Bladen Lakes Game Land that is close to a school, with an inadequate safety zone that is being ignored by some hunters. As a result of further investigation and input from enforcement, the committee recommends designating approximately 1500 acres of the game land as a still hunting zone, which would prohibit the use of dogs for taking deer and bear. Executive Director Gordon Myers explained that since the original rule proposal was tabled in November, it did not go to public hearings. Therefore, Myers recommended adding consideration of temporary rulemaking for the Bladen Lakes Game Land, with a local public hearing, to the agenda at the February 27, 2014 meeting (**Exhibit Q**). He further recommended that the general regulations regarding use be amended to allow the Wildlife Resources Commission to establish still hunting by signage. The temporary rule could be adopted at the May meeting. The Land Use and Access Committee voted to endorse adding the exhibit for the Bladen Lakes Game Land and will recommend adoption by the entire Commission.

Big Game Committee Report – David Hoyle, Jr., *Big Game Committee Chairman*, reported that the Big Game Committee met on February 26, 2014 at 2:10 pm. Brad Howard, *Private Lands Coordinator*, provided the committee with deer harvest data pertaining to youth hunters less than 16 years of age. Of the 250,000 deer hunters in NC, 18,000 are youth under age 16. Howard reported that the number one youth hunting day is the Friday after Thanksgiving. Sixty-seven percent of the youth harvest falls on Saturdays or holidays. Discussion was held about adding a special Youth Day to provide additional opportunity for young people to be able to hunt. Staff will come back to the Big Game Committee in May with some options for Youth Hunting days.

Howard then provided the committee with an update on the relocation of 38 deer from Morrow Mountain State Park to the tribal lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The cooperative effort was among staff from the Wildlife Resources Commission, State Parks, and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Six bucks and 32 does were moved. Thirty-five survived and are being monitored in their new habitat. Howard praised the cooperation among agencies and the success of the operation.

The committee received an update on Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance activities. Brad Howard reported that 3625 samples of cervid tissue have been collected for sampling for CWD. He estimates that it will take six to eight month for the testing to be completed.

Brad Howard updated the committee on the efforts to put tracking collars on elk. He reported that two bulls and two cows have been collared so far and they hope to collar two more cows. One collared bull broke his jaw and had to be put down, and one cow was hit by a car. Kerry Linehan, *Human Dimensions Biologist*, has done a landowner survey about elk outside the Smoky Mountains National Park. Linehan will present the results of that landowner survey at the May Big Game Committee meeting.

Committee of the Whole Report – Jim Cogdell, *Chairman*, reported that the open meeting of the Committee of the Whole met on February 26, 2014 at 3:00 pm. Dr. David Cobb, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, gave the history, timeline, and public participation that led to the development of black bear rules and use of non-processed food as bait. Cobb described the process that began in 2007 with a statute revision that was made to address issues related by houndsmen concerning bait piles and to eliminate the use of processed foods to “take” bears. Cobb related that since 2007 still hunters have raised equity issues associated with houndsmen being allowed to hunt in the vicinity of bait. Also since 2007 the bear population has increased, creating potential opportunities for the take of more bears. Thirty-seven meetings have been held across the state, reaching out to a wide variety of stakeholders before working to address the equity and bear population issues. In 2013 with the passage of HB 296, the WRC is authorized to create rules for still hunting in the vicinity of unprocessed foods. The bill maintains the current law that allows the release of bear hunting dogs in the vicinity of bait.

Agency staff reviewed rules proposals for consideration by the entire Commission at the Commission meeting. Included were water safety rules, wildlife management rules, fisheries rules, game land management rules and other administrative rules.

The Committee of the Whole then moved into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) for the purpose of receiving legal advice from Counsel on claims and lawsuits: Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of the Red Wolf Coalition, Defenders of Wildlife, and Animal Welfare Institute v. NC Wildlife Resources Commission; and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Inc. v. NC Wildlife Resources Commission; and pursuant to NCGS 143-381.11(a)(7) to plan, conduct, or hear reports concerning investigations of alleged criminal misconduct; and pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, or conditions of appointment.

Agency Spotlight – Tanya Poole, *Mountain Region Education Specialist*, gave a spotlight about partnerships and wildlife conservation education initiatives that twenty-two wildlife educators employ to achieve goals in the agency strategic plan. Poole stated that the program focuses on participation, expanding the constituent base, and marketing and education. The WRC works with seventeen agencies and several youth groups, reaching 250,000 visitors through the four Wildlife Education Centers. Poole stated that future efforts will focus on reaching out to new constituencies with additional wildlife recreation opportunities through work with sportsmen’s groups, the military, youth hunts, and conservation field days.

Agency Spotlight – Ann May, *Outreach Biologist*, presented highlights of a survey that was conducted among Animal Control offices. The survey was used to directly engage with the public about negative wildlife interactions. May stated that while animal control offices work with domestic pet issues, they also are the first contact concerning interactions between humans and wildlife animals. The survey was used with a goal of creating a cost effective program to support animal control offices and their needs pertaining to wildlife services, rules, and training. Results of the survey showed that most contacts with animal control offices concern negative interactions with raccoons, bats, opossums, foxes, and coyotes. Animal control office staffs are interested in obtaining more information to provide to the public regarding these wild animals. They are interested in having a certified wildlife damage control agent to call upon for assistance. Regional training workshops have been scheduled in Districts 2 and 5. A semi-annual newsletter “Wildlife Notes for Animal Control” and bulletins about co-existing with wildlife will be produced.

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*. Dr. Cobb directed Commissioners to a CD that contains reports and articles of interest. Dr. Cobb will post documents on Share Point.

Adoption of 2014-2015 Wildlife Management Regulation Proposals – Dr. Cobb presented **Exhibit D**, a summary of public comments concerning the proposed changes to wildlife management regulations received from state-wide public hearings held in January 2014 and from the WRC internet portal and correspondence.

As a result of discussion held during the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 26, the Commission adopted proposed changes presented in a revision of **Exhibit E**, subject to approval by the Rules Review Commission and codification in the North Carolina Administrative Code. Revisions are underlined or struck through:

- H1) Change the gun deer season in Polk County from opening on the Monday of Thanksgiving week and closing the *third* Saturday after Thanksgiving (the current season) to opening on the Monday of Thanksgiving week and closing the *fifth* Saturday after Thanksgiving (the same season as Cleveland and Rutherford counties).
Adopt amendments to the following rule:
15A NCAC 10B .0203 Deer (White-tailed)
- H2) Change the opening day of the Western Deer Archery Season from the *Monday* on or nearest to September 10 to the *Saturday* on or nearest to September 10.
Adopt amendments to the following rule:
15A NCAC 10B .0203 Deer (White-tailed)
- H3) Change the closing day of the first segment of the Western Deer Archery Season from a Saturday to a Sunday. Open and close the second segment of the Western Deer Archery Season on Sundays.
Adopt amendments to the following rule:
15A NCAC 10B .0203 Deer (White-tailed)
- H4) Change the name of the muzzle-loading firearms and bow and arrow deer season to the blackpowder firearms and bow and arrow deer season. Define a blackpowder firearm as “Any firearm — including any firearm with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system — manufactured in or before 1898; and any replica of this type of firearm if such replica is not designed or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition; and any muzzle-loading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, or muzzle-loading pistol, which is designed to use black powder, black powder substitute, or any other propellant loaded through the muzzle and which cannot use fixed ammunition.”
Adopt amendments to the following rule:
15A NCAC 10B .0203 Deer (White-tailed)

- H5) Open bear hunting seasons in the following counties in the Piedmont Bear Management Unit (PBMU) to run concurrent with the gun deer season in each of the following counties:
- Eastern Gun Deer Season: Franklin, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, and Wake;
 - Central Gun Deer Season: Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union; and
 - Northwestern Gun Deer Season: Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, and Lincoln.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

- H6) Change the bear hunting seasons in the following Piedmont counties to run concurrent with the gun deer season in each of the following counties:
- Eastern Gun Deer Season: Harnett, Johnston, Vance, and Warren; and
 - Northwestern Gun Deer Season: Alexander, Catawba, Iredell, Stokes, and Yadkin.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

- H7) Open a bear hunting season in Robeson County on the first Monday in December and close it on the third Saturday thereafter.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

- H8) Prohibit the use of dogs to hunt bears or to strike bears from unprocessed food products in the following counties and parts of counties: Alamance south of Interstate 85, ~~Alexander~~, Anson west of N.C. Hwy 742, Cabarrus, ~~Catawba~~, Chatham, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, ~~Iredell~~, Lee, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange south of Interstate 85, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, ~~Stokes~~, Union, Wake south of N.C. Hwy 98, and ~~Yadkin~~.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

- H9) Allow bears to be taken with the aid or use of unprocessed foods, but not while actually consuming the unprocessed foods, on private lands from the *first open Monday of the bear hunting season to the following Saturday only* in these counties:

- Coastal Bear Management Unit: Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Cumberland, Currituck, Craven, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Onslow, Robeson, Sampson, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson; and
- Mountain Bear Management Unit: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Clay, Cherokee, Cleveland, Jackson, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey, Watauga, and Wilkes.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

- H10) Allow bears to be taken with the aid or use of unprocessed foods, but not while actually consuming the unprocessed foods, on private lands during *all open days of each bear hunting season* in these counties of the Piedmont Bear Management Unit (PBMU):
- Eastern Gun Deer Season: Franklin, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Warren, and Wake;
 - Central Gun Deer Season: Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union; and
 - Northwestern Gun Deer Season: Alexander, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stokes, and Yadkin.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0202 Bear

Proposal H11 was removed from consideration and referred to the Small Game Committee for additional consideration and discussion with raccoon hunters and other interested stakeholders.

- ~~H11) Remove the restriction on hunting raccoons during daylight hours west of U.S. 1.~~

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0111 Restrictions on Raccoon and Opossum Hunting

- H12) Reduce the minimum draw weight for crossbows from 150 to 100 pounds.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0116 Permitted Archery Equipment

- H13) Amend the handgun rule to allow take of deer and bears with any type of handgun and ammunition, ~~except that body armor piercing projectiles would be prohibited unless otherwise prohibited in law.~~

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0120 Taking Big Game with Handguns

- H14) Allow the public to obtain a permit to sell mounted wild animals, or their parts that are stuffed or otherwise permanently preserved, except permits will not be issued to sell any part of a black bear or wild turkey (prohibited by state law) or migratory game birds (prohibited by federal law).

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10B .0118 Sale of Wildlife

The Commission voted to authorize the Executive Director to pursue temporary rulemaking to accomplish the purposes of the rules presented in **Exhibit E** in the event any of them are subject to delayed effective date pursuant to General Statute 150B-21.3.

Inland Fisheries and Outreach Update – the Commission received an update on the inland fisheries and outreach activities from Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*. Curry provided the Commissioners with fisheries updates. He announced that four turkey hunting seminars are being held at the Centennial Campus for Wildlife Education in partnership with the Wild Turkey Federation. A joint meeting of the Fisheries and Migratory Birds/Waterfowl committees will be set up in early May. Signs have been placed regarding new regulations for river herring at the Boating Access Areas and information about the prohibition will be posted on the website and on social media.

Adoption of 2014-2015 Fishing Regulation Proposals – the Commission received in **Exhibit F** a summary of comments concerning the proposed changes to inland fishing regulations received from state-wide public hearings held in January 2014 and from the WRC internet portal and correspondence.

As a result of discussion held during the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 26, the Commission adopted proposed changes presented in a revision of **Exhibit G**, pending approval by the Rules Review Commission and codification in the NC Administrative Code. Revisions are underlined or struck through:

- F1) Clarify that the entire reach of the North Fork Mills River in Henderson County from the Hendersonville watershed dam to the lower game land boundary is designated as Public Mountain Trout Waters and further classified as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F2) Designate 0.5 mile of the West Fork Pigeon River in Haywood County below Lake Logan as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as ~~Catch-and-Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters~~ Wild Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rules:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

15A NCAC 10D .0104 Fishing on Game Lands

- F3) Reclassify 0.5 mile of Skitty Creek in Macon County from Hatchery Supported Trout Waters to Wild Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F4) Designate 1.0 mile of the Watauga River in Watauga County from the SR 1103 bridge to the confluence with Laurel Creek as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F5) Remove the 1.8-mile section of Watauga River adjacent to NC 105 in Watauga County from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F6) Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Big Hungry River in Henderson County, removing 8.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F7) Remove Clear Creek Reservoir located on South Mountain State Park in Burke County from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters

- F8) Establish a minimum size limit of 16 inches from June 1 through September 30 for striped bass and hybrid striped bass in Lake Norman. The daily creel limit will remain four striped bass or hybrid striped bass in combination.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0314 Striped Bass

The Commission voted to remove Proposal F9 from consideration.

- ~~F9) Prohibit the taking of American and hickory shad with dip nets and bow nets.~~

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0302 Manner of Taking Inland Game Fishes

- F10) Allow the take of white perch captured by anglers using a cast net to collect nongame fishes for bait or personal consumption in all impounded waters west of Interstate 95 and in Tar River Reservoir (Nash County).

Adopt amendments to the following rules:

15A NCAC 10C .0302 Manner of Taking Inland Game Fishes

15A NCAC 10C .0402 Taking Nongame Fishes for Bait or Personal Consumption

- F11) Add John H. Kerr Reservoir to the list of reservoirs where possession of grass carp is prohibited except for those legally taken with archery equipment.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0401 Manner of Taking Nongame Fishes: Purchase and Sale

- F12) Clarify in the N.C. Administrative Code that the daily possession limit for freshwater mussels taken from impounded waters is 200 in aggregate and remove the daily creel limit for Asiatic clam (*Corbicula fluminea*).

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0401Manner of Taking Nongame Fishes: Purchase and Sale

- F13) Increase the minimum length limit for American eel from six inches to nine inches and decrease the daily creel limit from 50 to 25 eels.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0401Manner of Taking Nongame Fishes: Purchase and Sale

15A NCAC 10C .0402 Taking Nongame Fishes for Bait or Personal Consumption

- F14) Reduce the minimum mesh size for eel pots from one inch by one-half inch to one-half inch by one-half inch.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0404 Special Device Fishing

- F15) Add spear guns, gigs, traps (up to three), and eel pots (up to two) to the list of equipment that can be used to take nongame fish for bait or personal consumption in inland fishing waters with an inland fishing license.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0402 Taking Nongame Fishes for Bait or Personal Consumption

The Commission voted to remove Proposal F16 from consideration.

- ~~F16) Prohibit the use of bow nets in inland fishing waters.~~

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0407 Permitted Special Devices and Open Seasons

F17) Define in the N.C. Administrative Code “Public Access for Fishing Only” and clarify the activities allowed where angler access to inland fishing waters is provided through private property under an agreement with the landowner. These access locations will be clearly marked through signage indicating “Public Access for Fishing Only.”

Adopt the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0217 Public Access for Anglers Only

F18) Modify the boundary for the North Carolina/Virginia reciprocal license agreement on the Dan River by moving the boundary upstream from the Brantly Steam Plant Dam to the Union Street Dam in Danville, Virginia and on the Staunton River by moving the boundary downstream from the Route 360 bridge crossing to the mouth of Difficult Creek.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0203 Reciprocal License Agreements

F19) Provide anglers the option to label trotlines, set hooks, and jug hooks with their name and address or with their WRC customer number.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10C .0206 Trotlines and Set-hooks

Amendment 2 – River Herring Fishery Management Plan – Upon a motion made from the Fisheries Committee, the Commission approved preferred management options that have been approved by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission, and approved submission of draft Amendment 2 of the River Herring Fishery Management Plan to NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations for review.

Phase I Land Acquisitions – the Commission approved requests for agency staff to begin working with the State Property Office and funding partners to develop acquisition plans for the following properties:

- Browns Island Tract 1 – Carteret County (**EXHIBIT I-1**)
- Silvers Tract – Haywood County (**EXHIBIT I-2**)
- Sassafras Tract – Scotland County (**EXHIBIT I-3**)
- Mitchell River Olinger Tract – Surry County (**EXHIBIT I-4**)

Phase II Land Acquisitions – the Commission gave final approval to proceed with acquisition of the following properties:

- Sherrill Tract – Ashe County (**EXHIBIT J-1**)
- Birkhead Tract – Randolph County (**EXHIBIT J-2**)
- Harrison Tract – Martin County (**EXHIBIT J-3**)

Easement Request, Scotland County – the Commission approved an easement request from the owner of property adjacent to Sandhills Game Land in Scotland County, for purposes of providing access to the private property. (**EXHIBIT K**)

Summary of Public Comments Pertaining to Proposed Changes in Game Land Regulations – the Commission received a summary of public comments received from statewide district public hearings held in January 2014 and from the WRC internet and correspondence, pertaining to proposed changes to game land regulations. (**EXHIBIT L**)

2014-2015 Game Land Regulation Proposals - As a result of discussion held during the Committee of the Whole meeting on February 26, the Commission adopted proposed changes in game land management regulations presented in a revision of **Exhibit M**. Revisions are underlined or struck through. Regulations adopted are subject to approval by the Rules Review Commission and codification in the NC Administrative Code.

- G1) Designate open hours and days for shooting ranges by posting signs at each shooting range and apply range restrictions to ranges that occur on game lands which are not state-owned.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0102 General regulations regarding use

- G2) Make the Lick Creek tract of Alcoa Game Land in Davidson County an archery-only area for deer and bear hunting.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 Hunting on game lands

The Commission adopted a motion that in the event that the Rules Review Commission determines that the inclusion of bear hunting is a substantial change to the original noticed text, staff is authorized to pursue temporary rulemaking to accomplish the purposes of the proposal.

- G3) Allow overnight primitive camping year-round in a designated camping area along the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) on the Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land in Durham County.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 Hunting on game lands

The Commission voted not to approve Proposal G4:

- G4) ~~Designate Holly Shelter Game Land as a six day per week game land and allow dog hunting for deer and bear on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays only, and as otherwise authorized by permit on the Bear Garden Tract.~~

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 Hunting on game lands

- G5) Relax access restrictions on the Parker Farm Tract of the Goose Creek Game Land in Beaufort and Pamlico counties by eliminating permit requirements after January 1, except for turkey.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 Hunting on game lands

- G6) Allow hunting deer with dogs on Stones Creek Game Land in Onslow County on Tuesdays, Thursdays and ~~Fridays~~ Saturdays only.

Adopt amendments to the following rule:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 Hunting on game lands

Temporary Rulemaking - Proposed Changes in Regulations Regarding Use of Game Lands -- at the WRC meeting on November 7, 2013, a proposal was tabled for further consideration regarding prohibiting the use of dogs for taking deer and bear on a portion of Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land in Bladen County. The original proposal impacted approximately 5,500 acres and was intended to address trespass and safety concerns associated with multiple adjoining landowners and one adjoining primary school. Since the proposal was tabled it was not sent to statewide public hearings nor published in the *North Carolina Register*. The proposal was revised and reduced in scope to impact 1,600 acres. In order to implement the restrictions necessary to address original safety and trespass concerns and to ensure rules are effective and published in the 2014-2015 Regulations Digest, the Commission voted to adopt a temporary rule pursuant to NCGS 150B-21.1. (**EXHIBIT Q**)

Water Safety Rulemaking – the Commission adopted technical changes and amendments to the following water safety rules pending approval by the Rules Review Commission and codification into the NC Administrative Code:

- **Northampton and Warren Counties** – amendment proposed by agency to provide accurate and updated descriptions and coordinates of locations of no wake zones in Northampton and Warren counties. A public hearing was held in District 3. No comments were received. (**EXHIBIT N-1**)
- **Pamlico County** – amendment proposed by agency to remove from NCAC a no wake zone that lies in the Intracoastal Waterway in Pamlico County, and is not enforceable and not marked. A public hearing was held in District 2. No comments were received. (**EXHIBIT N-2**)
- **Pitt County** – technical correction to clarify the description of a no wake zone in a portion of Tranters Creek in Pitt County, making it consistent with the description of the portion of Tranters Creek that lies in Beaufort County. Also a proposal by agency to remove a no wake zone on the Tar River near Seine Beach. The boating safety criteria no longer exist for the presence of the no wake zone there. A public hearing was held in District 2 with seven comments received, five supporting removing the no wake zone and two opposing the removal. In addition, the Pitt County Board of Commissioners submitted a resolution opposing the removal of the no wake zone. (**EXHIBIT N-3**)

Summary of Public Comments Pertaining to Proposed Changes to Administrative Regulations for 2014-2015 - the Commission received a summary of public comments received from public hearings held in January 2014 and from the WRC internet and correspondence, pertaining to proposed changes to administrative regulations for 2014-2015. (**EXHIBIT O**)

Adoption of New Administrative Rules and Administrative Rule Amendments – the Commission adopted the following administrative rules and rule amendments subject to approval by the Rules Review Commission and codification into the NC Administrative Code:

- **Vessel Registration Amendments** - approved amendments to some vessel registration rules to make them consistent with legislation passed in the 2013 Session of the General Assembly – *15A NCAC 10F .0102, 10F .0103, 10F .0106, and 10F .0107 (EXHIBIT P-1)*
- **Poacher Reward Fund and Fiscal Note** – approved three proposed rules to establish a Poacher Reward Fund under *15A NCAC 10A .1301, 10A .1302, and 10A .1303 (EXHIBIT P-2)*
- **Disabled License Eligibility Rule** – adopted a rule that is necessary to comply with legislation passed in the 2013 Session of the General Assembly, which authorizes the Wildlife Resources Commission to establish rules defining documentation acceptable for determining eligibility of totally and permanently disabled residents for the purpose of obtaining a discounted lifetime license – *15A NCAC 10G .0601 (EXHIBIT P-3)*
- **Hunter Education Course Mandatory Time Requirement Rule** – adopted an amendment to remove the mandatory 10 hours of instruction required for the completion of the Hunter Education Course – *15A NCAC 10K .0101 (EXHIBIT P-4)*

Special Presentation – 2014 Shikar-Safari International Officer of the Year Award – General Walter Boomer, *USMC-Retired*, presented the 2014 Shikar-Safari International Officer of the Year Award to Officer Chad Arnold. General Boomer stated that Officer Arnold, in his undercover work with Operation Something Bruin, exhibited bravery and professionalism and many personal and family sacrifices to help bring game poachers to justice.

Special Presentation from U.S. Forest Service – Russ Arthur, *Special Agent in Charge, Southern Region, U.S. Forest Service*, presented a special honor to Colonel Dale Caveny, *Enforcement Division Chief*. Arthur worked closely with Colonel Caveny on Operation Something Bruin, a multi-state, multi-agency law enforcement operation. He applauded Colonel Caveny and Officer Arnold for the success of the operation. He thanked Caveny for his professionalism, effective planning, and cooperation in the operation.

Comments by the Chairman – *Chairman Jim Cogdell* thanked agency staff for their dedication. He again thanked guests for attending the meeting.

Comments by the Executive Director - *Executive Director Gordon Myers* thanked agency staff for their efforts in making the Commissioner Orientation successful. He thanked the Commissioners for taking time to attend the orientation. He thanked Dale Caveny for his years as Enforcement Division Chief, noting that Caveny gave issues thoughtful consideration and that he approached his position with pride and without negativity.

Adjournment - the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.