

WRC Meeting Actions February 10, 2010



ACTIONS

N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

February 10, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters
Raleigh, North Carolina

Meeting - *Commission Chairman* Steve Windham called the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Room at Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters, Raleigh, NC.

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

Minutes - the Commission approved the December 2, 2009 Wildlife Resources Commission minutes as presented in **Exhibit A**.

Financial Status Report - the Commission received a financial status report as of December 31, 2009 on the Wildlife Operating Fund, which has a balance of \$24,491,239.85, and the Wildlife Endowment Fund, which has a balance of \$72,649,660.94, from Tommy Clark, *Budget Officer*, in **Exhibit B**.

Special Presentation – Chairman Steve Windham presented a framed wildlife print that was donated anonymously to former Chairman Wes Seegars in appreciation of Seegars’ service as Chair for three years. Windham noted the dedication and positive changes Seegars made in the business processes of the Commission.

Spotlight: Hunting Matters! “Hats-On” Mentoring Campaign – the Commission received an update from Walter “Deet” James, *Wildlife Management Division*, about the Hats-On Mentoring Campaign to encourage hunter recruitment and retention. The campaign is part of a wider effort included in the WRC Strategic Plan to encourage active participation by hunters in becoming hunting mentors. The campaign kickoff will be March 5, 2010 at the Dixie Deer Classic in Raleigh.

Chairman Windham announced that future spotlight presentations at Commission meetings will be centered on Division activities and presented by agency staff. Windham noted the importance of conservation partners using the committee structure and committee meetings, rather than business meeting spotlights, to discuss their organizational activities and wildlife issues of interest to them.

Property Acquisitions - the Commission approved the staff recommendation presented in **Exhibit C** by Dr. David Cobb, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, to seek funding for the purchase of the following properties for inclusion into the Game Land and Wildlife Conservation Area programs:

- Fontaine and Goad Tracts, Granville County
- Selma Ray Tract, Wilkes County
- City of Hamlet Tract, Richmond County
- DOA Dredge Islands, Brunswick County

Right of Way Request – the Commission approved a request by the NC Department of Transportation, presented by Dr. Cobb in **Exhibit D**, for a right of way across a portion of Mitchell River Game Land in Surry County.

Land Acquisition Update - the Commission received a report on the status of land acquisition projects in **Exhibit E** from Dr. Cobb.

Public Comment Summary – Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program - the Commission received in **Exhibit F** a summary of public comments from three public hearings held in the east, piedmont, and mountains regarding the proposed Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program. Dr. Cobb noted that there was no absolute opposition at any public hearing to the certification program.

Rules Adoption – Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program – the Commission adopted the staff recommendation and motion by the Big Game Committee, presented in **Exhibit G**, for rulemaking to implement a Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program. Dr. Cobb stated that the agency worked closely with the NC Department of Agriculture to understand the issues and to make changes consistent with balancing risks for cervid farmers. Dr. David Marshall, State Veterinarian, and Howard Isley, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture expressed their appreciation for coordinating with the WRC in this effort.

Public Comment Summary – District Wide Public Hearings for Hunting and Trapping – the Commission received from Dr. Cobb in **Exhibit H** a summary of nearly 2400 comments from District-wide public hearings, correspondence, and WRC internet portal, regarding proposed changes in hunting and trapping rules for the 2010-2011 seasons.

Inland Fisheries Update - the Commission received an update about the activities of the Inland Fisheries Division from Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*. Curry provided Commissioners with recent news releases and a listing of waters to be stocked with trout in 2010.

Public Comment Summary – District Wide Public Hearings for Inland Fishing – the Commission received from Bob Curry in **Exhibit I** a summary of 533 comments from District-wide public hearings, correspondence, and WRC internet portal regarding proposed changes in inland fishing rules for the 2010-2011 seasons.

Boating Access Area Expansion, City of Wilmington – the Commission approved staff recommendation, presented in **Exhibit J** by Erik Christofferson, *Engineering Services Division Chief*, to partner with the City of Wilmington to improve the Castle Street Boat Ramp on the Cape Fear River and to expend approximately \$100,000 for parking facilities at the boat ramp.

Big Game Committee Report – David Hoyle, Jr., *Chairman*, reported that the Big Game Committee discussed Chronic Wasting Disease and the Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program at its meeting on February 9, 2010.

Habitat, Nongame, and Endangered Species Committee Report – Chuck Bennett, *Chairman*, thanked WRC staff for the interesting presentation at the February 9, 2010 meeting, about white-nosed syndrome in bats. Bennett announced that staff is preparing more information about the white-nosed syndrome response for presentation at the March 3, 2010 WRC meeting.

Education, Marketing and Outreach Committee Report – Dell Murphy, *Chairman*, announced that the committee will meet with agency staff today, following the Commission meeting, for an orientation about the Conservation Education Division.

Committee of the Whole Meeting Report – Steve Windham, *Chairman*, reported on the issues discussed by the Committee of the Whole at its meeting on March 2.

The Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan was discussed. In light of the deer in Virginia testing positive for the disease Windham stated the importance of proactive outreach about necessary changes in hunting, taxidermy, and transport of deer carcasses between states. He asked the Commissioners to read the CWD Response Plan and to expect more discussions and revisions to the Plan.

The Committee of the Whole reviewed and discussed comments and issues concerning rule proposals. Windham reminded the Commissioners that they will vote in March on these rule proposals that were vetted at District-wide public hearings in January 2010.

Windham asked Executive Director Gordon Myers to comment on the history of the rulemaking calendar, rulemaking cycle, and the 10-letter rule under the Administrative Procedure Act. Receipt by the Rules Review Commission of ten letters of objection to a rule proposal requires legislative review of that rule. Myers reviewed proposed changes in the rulemaking cycle that will allow legislative review, if necessary, within the same calendar year the rule is proposed. Myers stated that the change to the rulemaking calendar is designed to be more efficient and less confusing to constituents. The Commission unanimously adopted the motion to revise the rulemaking calendar so that it coincides with each subsequent session of the General Assembly.

Comments by Executive Director - Executive Director Myers announced that the Director's Executive Staff held six "Town Hall" meetings for employees across the state. Attendance was voluntary. Of the 650 employees state-wide, 550 attended the meeting with presentations by Myers, Chief Deputy Director Mallory Martin, and Deputy Director Cecilia Edgar about issues of interest to employees. Suggestions from staff are welcome. Employees may make comments and suggestions anonymously, on-line. Myers closed by noting his appreciation for Chairman Windham's attendance at all nine public hearings.

Comments by Chairman - Chairman Windham asked Commissioners to please see Commissioner Mitch St. Clair if they are interested in going rabbit hunting on February 11. He reminded Commissioners that a group photograph would be taken in the auditorium, immediately following the meeting.

Adjournment - the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Windham at 10:10 a.m.