



MINUTES
October 20, 2022
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting
Cherokee Convention Center, Hickory Room
Cherokee, North Carolina

Chairman Monty Crump called the October 20, 2022, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Hickory Room at the Cherokee Convention Center. Crump reminded everyone that the meeting is being audio streamed live and will be available at www.ncwildlife.org.

Commissioner Brad Stanback led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hayden Rogers gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. John Coley, Tom Berry, Mark Craig, and Mike Alford were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Monty Crump	Jim Ruffin	John Stone	Ray Clifton
Thomas Fonville	Wes Seegars	Kelly Davis	Landon Zimmer
David Hoyle	Hayden Rogers	Tom Haislip	J.C. Cole
Brad Stanback	Steve Windham	John Alexander	

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

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

MINUTES

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

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 11, 2022 MEETING MINUTES –The August 11, 2022 Wildlife Resources Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented in **(EXHIBIT A)**

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 18, 2022 MEETING MINUTES –The August 18, 2022 Wildlife Resources Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented in **(EXHIBIT B)**

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 MEETING MINUTES –The September 13, 2022 Wildlife Resources Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented in **(EXHIBIT C)**

Exhibits A, B, and C are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

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

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

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Rules Committee Report – September 13, 2022 – *Wes Seegars, Chair*, reported the Rules Committee held an out of cycle meeting on September 13, 2022, to review rule proposals for the 2023-2024 annual rulemaking cycle. First, Daron Barnes, *Land and Water Access Division Chief*, introduced 12 proposed changes to game land management rules, and after discussion, the committee recommended moving forward with 11 proposals. Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, followed up with the proposed rules for inland fisheries. Nine proposals were presented, and all are recommended to move forward. Lastly, Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, introduced the proposed wildlife management rule changes, and the committee recommends moving forward with all eight proposed changes. The final rule proposals for the 2023-2024 annual cycle will be presented at the meeting today for vote to notice text and open the public comment period.

Migratory Birds and Waterfowl Committee Report – October 19, 2022 – *Wes Seegars, Vice-Chair*, reported the Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Committee met on October 19, 2022, and received several interesting updates and reports from Doug Howell, *Migratory Game Bird Coordinator*. Doug presented a brief update on the Dove Hunter opinion survey that just closed. Next, Doug shared information with us about the black-bellied whistling ducks range expansion and the documentation of breeding in North Carolina. Finally, Doug gave a very good report on the recent American black duck study and all the interesting information learned about North Carolina's breeding black duck population. Having no further business, the Committee adjourned.

Fisheries Committee Report – October 19, 2022 – *John Stone, Chair*, reported that the Committee met on October 19, 2022. Powell Wheeler, *District 9 Fisheries Biologist*, provided a new stocking effort to maintain Smallmouth Bass in Fontana Lake and Lake James that began in spring of this year, and over the next few years, staff will continue stocking and monitoring the population to evaluate the efficacy of this effort. Jake Rash, *Mountain Region Coldwater Fisheries Research Coordinator*, presented an update on how other state, federal, and tribal agencies across the southeast manage catch and release stocked trout fisheries. Chris Wood, *District 8 Fisheries Biologist*, provided an overview of Walleye management throughout reservoirs in Western North Carolina where invasive species introductions, especially river herring, have created challenges for Walleye recruitment. Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, provided an update on plans under development which include reservoir Striped Bass and Bodie Bass, Black Bass, Trout, and Walleye. Christian shared that trout will be available this year for the Winter Trout Small Impoundment Stocking program which provides trout for small impoundments as far east as Tarboro. Christian also explained that estuarine Striped Bass management is scheduled to be discussed at the November Marine Fisheries Commission meeting. An additional update will likely be provided at the December Commission meeting.

Finance, Audit and Compliance Committee Report – October 19, 2022 – *Landon Zimmer, Chair*, reported that the Finance Committee met yesterday, Oct 19, 2022. Dr. DP Singla, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented a comparison of the current fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2022 for periods ending in August, showcasing both revenues and expenditures for the General and Capital Improvement funds. Explanations were provided for any variances of more than one million dollars. In addition to explaining earning details in the Bond Index Fund and Equity Index Fund, the Committee also reviewed the balances and Asset Allocation of the Endowment Fund as of August 2022. Then, Gary Gardner, *Engineering Division Chief*, presented a 4-year forecast of Capital Improvement projects where Endowment Funds will be needed. This 4-year forecast equals almost \$47 million, with the Samarcand facility being about \$10 million and the Setzer Hatchery being about \$35 million. Gary's presentation was then followed up by Dr. DP Singla who discussed the Bond Index Fund and Equity Index Fund ratios for further direction to the WRC staff. Finally, the Finance Committee agreed to continue the transfer of funds from Bond Index Fund to Equity Index Fund in the amount of \$2,000,000 each month for 12 months starting in the month of November 2022 and will assess again next year in October 2023.

Motion from the Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee – On a motion by Brad Stanback, and second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission approved a motion to move \$2 million per month from the Endowment Fund's Bond Index Fund to the Equity Index Fund for a period of twelve months beginning November 2022.

Big Game Committee Report – October 19, 2022 – *David Hoyle, Chair*, reported the Big Game Committee met yesterday, October 19th. The Committee received a presentation from Dr. Christina Watkins, *Lead Social Scientist*, on the recently completed elk landowner survey. James Tomberlin, *WMD Mountain Regional Operations Supervisor*, then updated the Committee on the current ongoing efforts of CWD work both statewide and most specifically in the surveillance area. Finally, we received an update from Jessica Braunstein, a doctoral student with the University of Tennessee, who gave us an overview and update of the current elk population estimation and modeling work. All the field sampling work has been completed, and the final report should be finished by next spring. Having no further business, the Committee adjourned.

Committee of the Whole Report – August 17, 2022 – Monty Crump, Chair, The Committee of the Whole met yesterday at 2:00. The meeting began with the presentation of the 2023-2024 annual cycle rules for notice of text and the proposed adoption of temporary rules for the surveillance areas. Next, we received incredibly valuable updates from our partners at the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians by Natural Resources Director Mike Lavoie, the United States Forest Service by the National Forests in North Carolina Forest Supervisor James Melonas, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park by Wildlife Technician Ryan Williamson. Next, the Committee received a very informative update from Hannah Plumpton on Ruffed Grouse and an update on rabbit hemorrhagic disease from Brad Howard. In other business, Daron Barnes gave a brief update on agency activities for the Caswell small game, game land. Finally, after a few housekeeping items, and there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

2022 THOMAS L. QUAY WILDLIFE DIVERSITY AWARD PRESENTATION – Executive Director Cameron Ingram presented the 2022 Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award to Jean Beasley for her exemplary leadership for the conservation of sea turtles in North Carolina.

Director Ingram read a Resolution, unanimously adopted by the Commission, in honor of Jean Beasley and presented her with a canvas print.

2022 SPORT FISH RESTORATION AWARD – Lynn Quattro, the President-Elect of the American Fisheries Society’s Fisheries Administration Section, presented the 2022 Sport Fish Restoration Award for Research and Surveys to the Inland Fisheries Division for the project “Exotic-Invasive Trout Pathogens in North Carolina.” –

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS: LOOKING BACK AT 75 YEARS OF TROUT MANAGEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA– Jacob Rash, *Coldwater Research Coordinator*, gave the 75th anniversary spotlight where he focused on the Commission’s history of trout management in the mountains of North Carolina.

RULEMAKING

Notice of Text – 2023-2024 Annual Cycle Rules – Inland Fisheries – On a motion by Hayden Rogers and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to inland fisheries rules (**Exhibit E-1**) and approved fiscal notes for proposed rule (**Exhibit E-2**) presented by Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*

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

Notice of Text – 2023-2024 Annual Cycle Rules – Land and Water Access – On a motion by David Hoyle 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 proposed changes to land and water access rules (**Exhibit F-1**) and approved fiscal notes for proposed rule (**Exhibit F-2**) presented by Daron Barnes, *Land and Water Access Division Chief*.

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

Notice of Text – 2023-2024 Annual Cycle Rules – Wildlife Management – On a motion by David Hoyle and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with an open comment period and a public hearing for proposed changes to wildlife management rules (**Exhibit G-1**) and approved fiscal notes for proposed rule (**Exhibit G-2**) presented by Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*.

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

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10D .0503 Surveillance Areas – On a motion by Steve Windham and second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission reviewed public comments (**Exhibit H-1**) and adopted proposed temporary changes to temporary surveillance areas regarding deer excretions (**EXHIBIT H-2**) presented by Brad Howard.

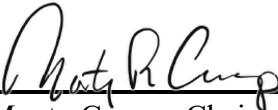
EXHIBIT H-2 is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN – Chairman Crump provided information on the upcoming meeting to discuss the Mattamuskeet Lodge with NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and he thanked Commissioner Seegars and Commissioner Davis for all their work to prepare for the meeting. In closing, he shared his appreciation for the many conservation partnerships in mountain region of North Carolina. With a special thanks to the local legislators, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, United States Forest Service, and United States National Park Service for hosting events, attending meetings, and their informative presentations to the board.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Executive Director Cameron Ingram shared his appreciation to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Commissioner Rogers, and Commissioner Stanback for hosting events. Additionally, he acknowledged staff for their efforts to plan and prepare for the meeting in Cherokee.

ADJOURNMENT


There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.
All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.



Monty Crump, Chairman

12/08/2022

Date



Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

12/08/2022

Date