

Committee of the Whole



Meeting Summary

July 10, 2013

4:00 p.m.

Commission Room, Raleigh

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Chairman David Hoyle, Jr. at 4:00 pm.

Legislative Update

Gordon Myers, *Executive Director*, updated the committee about the passage of House Bill 296. He thanked all for the teamwork involved in educating the members of the General Assembly about the real importance of bear management and fiscal fees necessary for operations. Myers stated that the last major changes in license fees were made in 1997. The agency has not been keeping up with inflation. In the future, fee increases can be made by the WRC through rulemaking, with a cap not beyond the 5-year Consumer Price Index. The agency will move to a flat transaction fee of \$2.00 on license sales.

Black Bear Management Issues

The WRC has been given authority to sell a ten dollar electronic bear stamp to identify state bear hunters. The WRC was given authority to promulgate rules for still hunters in the vicinity of unprocessed foods, which will provide equity with dog hunters. The statute prohibits scents and sprays as attractants.

Currently the statewide bear harvest is 17 percent. Bear harvest should be increased to 24-27 percent of the huntable bear population to provide best management of the bear population.

Statewide meetings will be scheduled to hear from constituents and counties about their desires for hunting bears. Tools will be developed to manage bear populations across the state. Chairman Hoyle encouraged all Commissioners to come to these public hearings. It was suggested that talking points be provided to provide correct information and to put the talking points on the WRC website. It was emphasized that there will be no change for dog hunters.

Other Discussion

Commissioners were reminded that the agency is returning to January 2014 public hearings to receive comments about proposed rule changes.

Among other legislative issues being considered are the bill on wildlife penalties, which is moving, a Poaching Reward Fund bill which, if passed, will require rulemaking for administration, and coyote trapping with the use of a Conabear trap.

The full Commission will vote to elect Chair and Vice Chair at the meeting on July 11, 2013.

There being no further business Chairman Hoyle adjourned the meeting.