



*Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Committee Meeting Summary
April 24, 2014, 10:00 am
NCWRC, 5th Floor Commission Room*

Meeting Attendees

• **Committee Members:**

Mark Craig, Chair
John Coley – by telephone

• **Commissioner:**

Dell Murphy – by telephone

• **Staff:**

Cindy Carr	Todd Ewing
Mallory Martin	Gordon Myers
Bob Curry	Shannon Deaton
Betsy Haywood	Chris Dillon
Jodie Owen	

• **Visitors – Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee**

Fred Harris	Wilson Laney
Ken Bridle	John Connors
Karen Beck	Ann Somers
Alvin Braswell	Neil Medlin

Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Chairman Mark Craig called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. He welcomed the members of the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee. NWAC members and staff introduced themselves.

History of Wildlife Diversity Program and Nongame Wildlife Diversity Committee

Bob Curry, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, gave a Power Point presentation about the history of the Wildlife Diversity Program, beginning with the 1973 Federal Endangered Species Act. In 1986 the Wildlife Resources Commission adopted a resolution to establish a Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee to assist agency staff with issues pertaining to nongame species.

In 1987 The NWAC was officially established by statute. The statute defines the core functions of the NWAC, to advise the WRC on conservation matters, create protected animal lists, develop conservation programs for endangered species, and use scientific councils whose members hold expertise in matters pertaining to endangered and special concern species. The NWAC reports to the Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Committee of the WRC.

Discussion

The tasks assigned to the NWAC in the original resolution by the Commission may have changed since 1986. It was noted that better communication between the NWAC and Commission is needed. Recommendations and frequent status should be communicated to assist the WRC, especially because of the turnover in commission appointees. Ken Bridle noted that the NWAC worked better when the chairman of the HNGES committee attended NWAC meetings. He remarked that the NWAC misses quarterly reports discussing what the nongame staff is doing so that efforts are not duplicated. Director Gordon Myers suggested a board liaison to work with the committees and with the NWAC. Fred Harris suggested frequent discussion among diversity staff and NWAC committee members to share ideas and combine efforts. John Conners would like to see more staff presentations similar to the spotlight about the gopher frog. He would like a part of the WNC magazine to be dedicated to nongame issues and to highlight accomplishments of the Wildlife Diversity Program.

Advisory Functions

Ann Somers stated that membership on a scientific council is a tremendous commitment. She suggested calling on experts inside and outside the agency to assist with listings. There is a need to recognize the nongame constituency state-wide. It was suggested that the HNGES Committee receive NWAC reports at their meetings to enhance communication between the groups.

Discussion included who directs what type of advising is helpful from the NWAC as a resource. Currently there is no agency point person. There are quarterly reports available on line but they do not contain the amount of data that the NWAC received in former quarterly reports.

The Wildlife Action Plan prioritizes species. Staff is working on species that were identified in the 2005 Wildlife Action Plan.

Gordon Myers suggested an opportunity for NWAC and HNGES to interact with the Land Use and Access Committee, saying that everyone should focus and is focused on improving habitat for all species.

Wilson Laney's remarks included that the focus should be on keeping common species common and keeping species off the federal listing. County open space committees can deliver conservation efforts locally, along with land trusts. Counties welcome input from the Wildlife Resources Commission as to where to put their dollars. Laney mentioned the conservation tool developed by the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and stated that it can be used by the Land Use and Access Committee. He stated that the NWAC can provide independent peer reviews for staff and Commissioners.

Action: Ask Ken McDermond to give a spotlight at a WRC meeting about the SALCC.

Organization and Membership Discussion

It was suggested that an organization chart be provided to identify relationships to and from the NCWRC and NWAC committee. Another suggestion was to identify a coordinator to put problem and challenge resolution where the need is.

Ken Bridle noted that the NCAC is short six members. They are stalled on the makeup of the committee. The NWAC has found that they have dedicated seats on the committee. He requested again that Gordon Myers and HNGES Chair Mark Craig address the suggestions provided in 2012 by the NWAC about policies and procedures. The NWAC members feel that it would be helpful to have agency and industry members engaged in nongame conservation.

Gordon Myers stated that the NCWRC should define the membership of the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee. He suggested follow-up meetings to amend the 1986 resolution to define membership.

Ann Somers requested information about how many people contribute to the Nongame Endowment Fund, what is matched, and how much money comes in from the public that is dedicated to the Nongame Fund.

Action: the agency will compile the contribution information.

Coordination of Meetings

Coordination of meetings involving the Habitat, Nongame and Endangered Species Committee and the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee was discussed. Ken Bridle said that academic schedules of some of the Scientific Council members make Thursday a better time to meet. He suggested meeting jointly with the Wildlife Resources Commission on Thursdays, and to have representatives from both groups at NWAC and HNGES meetings.

State Wildlife Action Plan Update – Cindy Carr

Cindy Carr gave a report about the update to the State Wildlife Action Plan currently underway. The Plan update involves work in four areas – species, habitats, problems, and conservation measures. For species the peer review process has started. Staff and partners will give species-specific recommendations. Carr stated that about half the species listed in 2005 are being removed from the Action Plan and half are new. Habitat vulnerability is being assessed as to threats, climate change, and disease vectors. Challenges being addressed include finding places that need to be acquired for protection of species; obtaining complete GIS data, determining how to incorporate the Nature Conservancy aquatic system sensitivity analysis, and how to integrate the Natural Resources Management Plan Revision at Camp Lejeune. A grant has been submitted with South Carolina to do an acoustic bat regional survey. Carr stated that there are eleven targeted threats to habitats.

Thomas L. Quay Award Update – Shannon Deaton

Shannon Deaton announced that nominations for the Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award close on April 30. Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee recommendations will be submitted by May 31. The Habitat, Nongame, and Endangered Species Committee will vote by email on June 10. The award will be presented at the July 10 Wildlife Resources Commission meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.