



## *Fisheries Committee Summary*

**August 26, 2015**

*Fisheries Committee Chair* Wes Seegars called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

### **Attendees**

#### **Committee Members**

Wes Seegars, Chair  
Tim Spear  
Tommy Fonville

Joe Barker, Vice Chair  
Mark Craig  
Brian White

#### **Commissioners**

Garry Spence  
Jim Cogdell  
Joe Budd

John Litton Clark  
Tom Berry  
David Hoyle, Jr.

#### **Staff**

Gordon Myers  
Wes Barger  
Andrew Helton  
Jodie Owen  
Thomas Harvey  
Maria Palomar  
Kyle Briggs  
Christian Waters  
Kerry Linehan  
Bob Curry  
Doug Besler

Mallory Martin  
Betsy Haywood  
Mark Rich  
Carolina Medina  
Kris Smith  
David Cobb  
Tommy Hughes  
Mark Hamlett  
Susan Bunn  
Isaac Harrold  
Ashton Godwin

#### **Visitors**

Henri McClees – NC Sporting Dog Assn.  
Joe McClees – NC Sporting Dog Assn.  
Wilson Laney – USFWS

Ned Jones – NC Trout Unlimited  
Fred Harris – NCWF  
Lane Sauls – Ecological Engineering

### ***Whirling Disease Update***

Doug Besler, *Mountain Region Fisheries Supervisor*, provided an update on the recent discovery of whirling disease in the Watauga River. This is the first time that whirling disease has been found in the southern states. Besler provided an overview of the pathogen's life cycle.

An interdisciplinary team was formed to inform the public about whirling disease and identify measures the public can use to prevent the spread to other waters in the state. The team includes staff from the Wildlife Education, Information Technology and Inland Fisheries divisions and the agency veterinarian.

Staff prepared and implemented a communications plan which included developing a whirling disease webpage, preparing a series of news releases, and establishing a dedicated email for anglers to ask questions and report observations. Staff initiated a systematic sampling effort radiating outward from the original location to assess the prevalence of the disease within the Watauga River watershed. Staff immediately suspended trout stocking from our hatcheries until our hatchery fish could be tested for the disease.

Future actions include the stepwise sampling of other trout waters, continued coordination with NC Department of Agriculture, and additional public education efforts including adding stream signage. Besler explained that staff is concerned about the spread of the disease, especially to native Appalachian brook trout populations. Chairman Seegars requested an update in October. Director Myers acknowledged staff for the comprehensive response to this issue.

### ***Lake Mattamuskeet Update***

Bob Curry presented an update on management activities at Lake Mattamuskeet. A handout was provided summarizing the ongoing and future efforts by staff to address the topics identified by the Mattamuskeet Collaboration Team. The committee tasked staff to contact local news media/outlets on a regular basis (quarterly) to keep them informed of ongoing fisheries management activities.

### ***Hatchery Renovations Update***

This presentation was postponed until a future meeting in the interest of time.

### ***Additional Topics of Interest/Discussion***

No other topics were discussed.

### ***Adjourn***

Chairman Seegars adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.