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                Joe Barker, Vice Chair
Tim Spear                        Mark Craig
Tommy Fonville                   Brian White

Commissioners
Garry Spence                     John Litton Clark
Jim Cogdell                      Tom Berry
Joe Budd                         David Hoyle, Jr.

Staff
Gordon Myers                     Mallory Martin
Wes Barger                       Betsy Haywood
Andrew Helton                    Mark Rich
Jodie Owen                       Carolina Medina
Thomas Harvey                    Kris Smith
Maria Palomar                    David Cobb
Kyle Briggs                      Tommy Hughes
Christian Waters                 Mark Hamlett
Kerry Linehan                    Susan Bunn
Bob Curry                        Isaac Harrold
Doug Besler                      Ashton Godwin

Visitors
Joe McClees – NC Sporting Dog Assn.   Fred Harris – NCWF
Wilson Laney – USFWS               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.