

EXHIBIT A

June 9, 2021



MINUTES

April 22, 2021

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Webinar Meeting Raleigh, North Carolina

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) §166A-19.20 (Public Bodies/Remote Meetings During Declared Emergencies), the April 22, 2021 N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) webinar meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman David Hoyle, Jr. at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Hoyle announced that the webinar meeting audio is being streamed live and will be available on the NCWRC's website. He reminded Commissioners to speak their names before making motions or comments and to mute their devices when not speaking. Chairman Hoyle also announced that by the statutory requirement, the roll will be called for attendance and for each vote.

Commissioner Tommy Fonville led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Mike Johnson gave the invocation.

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

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

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, *Commission Liaison*, called the roll. Mark Criag, Steve Windham, and Hayden Rogers were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

David Hoyle, Jr.
Mike Johnson
Monty Crump
Brad Stanback

Kelly Davis
John Coley
John Stone
Nat Harris

Tom Berry
Jim Cogdell
Richard Edwards

Tommy Fonville
Wes Seegars
Jim Ruffin

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2021 MEETING

By acclamation, the Minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting were approved as presented in **Exhibit A**.

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

2020 THOMAS L. QUAY WILDLIFE DIVERSITY AWARD PRESENTATION

Executive Director Cameron Ingram presented the 2020 Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award to Allen Boynton of Troutdale, Virginia recognizing his 40-year career in wildlife conservation, including 18 years in Virginia and 20 years in North Carolina. Boynton retired from the Wildlife Commission in 2018.

Director Ingram read a Resolution, unanimously adopted by the Commission, in honor of Allen Boynton and presented him an original watercolor painting from Kenneth Bridle, Ph.D., a former Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee Chairman.

A short break was taken for photographs.

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. DP Singla, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented a status report in **Exhibit B** on the Wildlife Operating Fund and Capital Improvement Fund.

Wildlife Operating and Capital Improvement Funds - As of February 28, 2021, the revenues in the General Fund were \$65,561,646.70, with Capital Improvement (CI) revenues \$2,650,424.12. Expenditures in the General Fund were \$64,763,551.22. Expenditures in the CI Fund were \$3,679,015.78. The excess of revenues and other sources over expenditures and other uses in the General Fund was \$798,095.48, with -\$651,511.51 in CI. The General Fund Balance as of February 28, 2021 was \$17,242,138.71. The CI Fund balance as of February 28, 2021 was \$2,663,658.91.

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

2020 Expendable Investment Income and June 2020 Endowment Fund Balances— On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved the Calendar Year 2020 Expendable Investment Income and June 2020 Endowment Fund Balances. (**Exhibits C-1, C-2**)

Exhibits C-1 and C-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Ad hoc Land Strategy Committee Report– March 15, 2021 – Tommy Fonville, *Chair*, reported that The Ad hoc Land Strategy Committee Report met on March 15, 2021. The Committee discussed its goals and objectives and reviewed the agency’s current land acquisition project review process. The Committee spent time discussing possible desired characteristics and potential uses of potential acquisitions. The Committee also began discussions of the kinds of data that might be useful in evaluation land projects. The Committee plans to meet again on April 28th to continue their work.

Fisheries Committee Report – April 20, 2021 – Tommy Fonville, *Chair*, reported the Fisheries Committee met on April 20, 2021. Kyle Briggs, *Chief Deputy Director*, reported agency staff are meeting with U.S. Forest Service staff to discuss the Setzer State Fish Hatchery renovation project, and we are on track to have the Forest Service permit well in advance of construction. Chad Thomas, *Coastal Region Supervisor*, reported that Striped Bass harvest in the lower Roanoke River zone, April 10-16, was higher than expected with the preliminary harvest estimate at 13,100 lbs. With the harvest season in the upper river zone scheduled to continue for April 24-30, the Roanoke River Management Area will likely exceed the allocated quota by a substantial amount. If the quota for all fisheries is exceeded by 10% in 2021, the resulting overage will be addressed by reducing 2022 harvest quota, which could result in the harvest season in the Roanoke River being altered, reduced, or eliminated in 2022. A contingency stocking plan developed by staff in conjunction with the NC Division of Marine Fisheries, identifies the opportunity to use a minimum of 100,000 surplus hatchery-reared Roanoke River Striped Bass fingerlings during years when river flows exceed established thresholds. Casey Grieshaber, *District 6 Fisheries Biologist*, presented an evaluation of the stocking of trout during the winter into Community Fishing Program’s small impoundments. In 2020, over 66,000 trout were stocked into 38 small impoundments across 25 counties as far east as Edgecombe County. Staff analyzed angler use data from Indian Camp Lake in Richmond County and Frank Liske Park in Cabarrus County. This analysis showed that angler utilization increased substantially in both lakes after the winter trout stockings. Corey Oakley, *Piedmont Region Supervisor*, reported on the Major League Fishing, Heavy Hitters Tournament, held April 9-14 at Falls Lake, Jordan Lake, and Harris Reservoir. Resulting exposure and messaging were very beneficial to the Agency, especially the spotlight on problems related to Alabama Bass. Cam Ingram, *Executive Director*, reported that Agency staff met with Department of Environmental Quality and Division of Marine Fisheries staff on April 8, 2021 to restart discussions specifically on the readoption of joint rules and delineation of waters. Efforts are underway to keep the lines of communication open with follow-up discussions planned.

Boating Safety Committee Report – April 21, 2021– Mike Johnson, *Chair*, reported the Boating Safety Committee met on April 21, 2021. Betsy Haywood, *No-Wake Zone Coordinator*, presented three requests to publish Notice of Text and the committee recommends approval by the Commission. Major Ben Meyer, *Boating Safety Law Administrator*, provided an update on Abandoned and Derelict Vessels.

Land Acquisition and Property (LAP) Committee Meeting Report – April 21, 2021 - Tom Berry, *Chair*, reported the Committee met on April 21, 2021. The Committee reviewed and endorsed four Phase II land acquisitions and three other property matters. The Committee briefly discussed the process for considering easement requests from private landowners.

Education, Shooting and Archery Committee Report– April 21, 2021 – Kelly Davis, *Chair*, reported the Education, Shooting and Archery Committee met on April 21, 2021. Staff presented a R3 Marketing plan that states clear measurable marketing goals and objectives to move the agency forward while the R3 team works to develop a strategic plan. As a follow up to the committee’s recent charge to evaluate the division, staff presented both short-term and long-term improvement plans for the Wildlife Education Division. Staff is already implementing many of the short-term objectives. While working on the short-term objectives, staff will also begin long-term evaluation, assessment, and planning efforts to ensure the Division is meeting the needs and desires of our constituents and public. Lastly, staff presented an overview of the *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine marketing plan.

Finance Committee Report – April 21, 2021 – Landon Zimmer, *Chair*, reported that the Finance Committee met on April 21, 2021 and adjourned into a closed session after opening the meeting to discuss information that is privileged or confidential under NCGS 132-1.2 (1). Upon returning to open session, Dr. DP Singla, *Chief Financial Officer*, presented a comparison of the current and previous fiscal years, showcasing revenues and expenditures for the general and capital improvement funds. The detailed explanations were provided for variances more than one million dollars. The Committee reviewed the Bank Of New York (BNY) Mellon Investment rollforward summary and the WRC staff was tasked to compare bond vs equity returns if no funds had been transferred to EIF. Lastly, the Committee endorsed the “Allocation of CY2020 Expendable Investment Income” that included the Realized and Unrealized gains/losses and the “June 2020 Endowment Fund Balances” presented by Dr. Singla. Due to the length of the meeting, the presentation by Internal Auditor Steve Chase was postponed to the next Committee meeting.

Migratory Birds/Waterfowl Committee Report – April 21, 2021 – Wes Seegars, *Vice Chair*, reported that the Migratory Birds/Waterfowl Committee met on April 21, 2021. The Committee was briefed by staff on several topics related to migratory birds. Doug Howell, *Migratory Bird Coordinator*, presented the proposed frameworks for the upcoming migratory bird hunting seasons, along with public comments received regarding staff recommendations for the 2021/22 migratory bird hunting seasons, and the extended falconry hunting migratory bird hunting seasons. Doug then presented staff recommendations for those seasons and bag limits. The committee endorsed staff recommendations. Next, Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented the staff recommendation for North Carolina’s peregrine falcon method of take under falconry rules. The Atlantic Flyway allocated 5 falcons for North Carolina; the Committee endorsed this recommendation.

Committee of the Whole Report – April 21, 2021– David Hoyle, Jr., *Chair*, reported the Committee met on April 21, 2021. The Committee of the Whole began by reviewing requests to notice text for fisheries rules that are required to be re-adopted due to the periodic review of rules, temporary rules for hunting on game lands and changing the name of Alcoa Game Land to Yadkin River Game Land, and changes to state listed species. Erik Christofferson, *Deputy Director*, shared an update on the status of the transfer of the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education to Currituck County and a request to lease the Commission’s Currituck Beach Lighthouse Reservation to the County as part of the agreement. Carrie Ruhlman, *Rulemaking Coordinator*, presented the controlled fox hunting preserve petition rule and public comments. Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented an update on elk. On a motion by Tommy Fonville and a second by Mike Johnson, the Committee of the Whole voted unanimously to send a letter to the legislature stating their opposition to House Bill 460, Elk

Conservation License Auction/Raffle. Finally, the committee adjourned to closed session to consult with counsel on pending litigation. After returning to open session, the meeting was adjourned.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – Alabama Bass Invasions in North Carolina – The Changing Landscape of Black Bass Fisheries in Our State

Lawrence Dorsey, *Piedmont Fisheries Research Coordinator*, gave a spotlight on the Alabama Bass invasion in North Carolina. Since the unauthorized introduction of Alabama Bass, fisheries biologists have monitored the expansion of the Alabama Bass population and the effects of the introduction on Largemouth Bass. Alabama Bass, a native to Georgia and Alabama, have been shown to outcompete Largemouth Bass, hybridize with Smallmouth Bass, and pose a great threat to North Carolina's renowned bass fishery. Our biologists perform routine surveys of populations and monitor population trends throughout the state. Alabama Bass have been confirmed in Belews, Chatuge, Fontana, Hiwassee, James, Moss, Mountain Island, Norman, Santeetlah, and W. Kerr Scott. They are suspected in Dan River, Gaston, Hickory, John H. Kerr, Nanthahala, Rhodhiss, Roanoke River, Tillery, and Wylie. Regulations are already in place to prohibit the movement of fish in public waters. Size and creel limits for Alabama Bass have been eliminated to encourage harvest. Staff are utilizing educational outreach to prevent further invasions to the remaining unaffected waterbodies and posting signage at boating and fishing access areas to encourage harvest of Alabama Bass.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

On a motion by Wes Seegars and second by Mike Johnson, the Commission adopted the staff recommendations presented in **Exhibits D-3, D-4, and E** by Brad Howard, *Wildlife Management Division Chief*

Adoption of 2021-2022 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons– the Commission approved staff recommendations for the 2021-2022 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons. (**Exhibits D-3, D-4**)

Adoption of Season for Take of Migrant Peregrine Falcons for Use in Falconry – the Commission approved the staff recommendation to allow the take of up to five migrant peregrine falcons from the wild for use in falconry in 2021. (**Exhibit E**)

Exhibits D-3, D-4, and E are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

INLAND FISHERIES DIVISION

On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Wes Seegars, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text presented in **Exhibit F** by Christian Waters, *Inland Fisheries Division Chief*.

Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10C – Game Fish, Primary Nursery Areas, and Anadromous Fishing Spawning Areas– the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register for proposed technical changes and readoption of rules for Game Fish, Primary Nursery Areas, and Anadromous Fishing Spawning Areas. (**Exhibit F**)

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

LAND AND WATER ACCESS DIVISION

On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text as presented in **Exhibit G** by Brian McRae, *Land and Water Access Division Chief*.

Temporary Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15 A NCAC 10D .0103 – Hunting on Game Lands – the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register for a temporary rule amendment on game land rules. (**Exhibit G**)

Exhibit G is incorporated into the official record of this meeting:

Land Acquisitions and Property Matters

Phase II Land Acquisitions – on a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved the acquisition of four properties, presented by Jessie Birckhead, *Land Acquisition and Grants Manager* (**Exhibits H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4**)

- Leonard Tract – Bertie County (**H-1**)
- Geneva Bigelow Tracts – Caswell County (**H-2**)
- Queen Tract – Wilkes County (**H-3**)
- Pontiac Plywood Tracts – Warren County (**H-4**)

Exhibits H-1, H-2, H-3, and H-4 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Other Property Matters – on a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved staff recommendations for other property matters – Jessie Birckhead (**Exhibits I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4**)

- Request for Demolition – Consider a request from staff to demolish an old well house at the Armstrong Fish Hatchery in McDowell County (**I-1**)
- Request for Right of Way Easement and Temporary Construction Easement – Consider a request from the NC Department of Transportation for a Right of Way and Temporary Construction Easement at R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Lands in Caswell County (**I-2**)
- Request for Permanent Utility Easement – Consider a request from Duke Energy Progress for a Permanent Utility Easement at Sandhills Game Land in Richmond County (**I-3**)
- Request for Lease – Consider a lease of WRC administered property to Currituck County (**I4**)

Exhibits I-1, I-2, I-3, and I-4 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING

On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Ray Clifton, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text presented in **Exhibits J, K, and L** as presented by Betsy Haywood, *No-Wake Zone Coordinator*:

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0329 Rowan County, High Rock Lake – approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with a public hearing and open comment period for an amendment to extend the no-wake zone currently within 50 yards of the shoreline at Tamarac Shores Marina, northeast to a point in the water, within 50 yards of the shoreline, and including the cove northwest of the marina - *Betsy Haywood (Exhibit J)*

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0327 Montgomery County, Badin Lake – approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with a public hearing and open comment period, for a no-wake zone on Badin Lake in Montgomery County at the Old North State Marina fuel dock. The no-wake zone is marked. The WRC requests rulemaking to codify in the NCAC's so that the no-wake zone is enforceable – *Betsy Haywood (Exhibit K)*

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10F .0317 Stanly County, Badin Lake – approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with a public hearing and open comment period for a no-wake zone on Badin Lake in Stanly County within 50 yards of both sides of the Badin Lake railroad trestle bridge near the Stanly/Montgomery County line – *Betsy Haywood (Exhibit L)*

Exhibits J, K, and L are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

OTHER RULEMAKING

Rulemaking Notice of Text – 15A NCAC 10I – Endangered and Threatened Species – On a motion by Mike Johnson and second by Tom Berry, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the NC Register with an open comment period and virtual public hearing for proposed changes to the rules for state listed species. (**Exhibit M-1, M-2**)

Controlled Fox Hunting Preserve Petition – On a motion by Monty Crump and second by Mike Johnson, the Commission voted not to approve the proposed permanent amendments to rules 15A NCAC 10H .1201, .1202, .1203 and .1204 regulating controlled fox hunting preserves from the petition for rulemaking. (**Exhibit N-2**)

Exhibits M-1, M-2 and N-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Hoyle thanked Commissioners and Staff for their attendance and planning for committee meetings. With some of the COVID-19 restrictions lifted, he shared his hopes to have the July Commission Meeting open so the public can attend in person. He thanked Representative Adams for his support of the agency's bill.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Ingram noted his appreciation for Commissioner and staff attendance at the meetings. He thanked Commissioners for their support, guidance, and for reviewing documents that

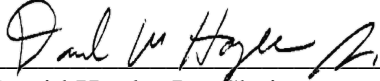
pertain to the agency's mission. He also shared that on a day as fitting as Earth Day it is anticipated the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) will be reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives today. Finally, he thanked Lawrence Dorsey for the very informative spotlight on Alabama Bass.

COMMENTS FROM REPRESENTATIVE ADAMS

Representative Jay Adams shared a legislative update and expressed his appreciation for the support of the board and agency.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.
All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.



David Hoyle, Jr., Chairman

June 9, 2021

Date



Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

June 9, 2021

Date