

NCPARC

Education and Outreach Working Group Meeting

January 31, 2007
11:00-3:00 San-Lee Park

Jeff Hall- Chair, NCWRC
Kimberly Burge- NCWRC
Brian Bockhahn- NC State Parks and Recreation
Colleen Bockhahn-Wake County Parks and Recreation
Janet Braddy- NC State Parks and Recreation
Kendrick Weeks- NCWRC
Grover Barfield- Civilian Independent Researcher and Educator
Mike Campbell- NCWRC
Jess Bridges- Lee County Parks
Kristin Sasser- Lee County Parks
Rhonda Washington- UNCG

Meeting called to order

Jeff gave update on NCWRC including his new position as Coastal Plain Wildlife Diversity Biologist, two other new Wildlife Diversity Biologist positions, Gabrielle Graeter and Jeff Humphries, the loss of the Commission Herpetologist/NCPARC Coordinator, Sarah Cross, and the assumption of her duties by Wildlife Technician Kendrick Weeks.

Introductions

Jeff: Thanks to Kristin and Jessie for hosting the meeting. I will pass around the action items from the last meeting. I wanted to reiterate the goals of this working group:

1. Voice of NCPARC- bring understanding of activities of other working groups to the public
2. Multiply our chorus to protect herps
3. Promote initiatives of NCPARC and PARC nationally
4. Facilitate herp education

First thing I wanted to talk about it is current initiatives of NCPARC. And the first thing I have is the Calling Amphibian Survey Program. Most are probably familiar with this...

Kendrick: Out of 64 routes, 59 are filled.

Jeff: At our November meeting only 30 or so routes were filled. So, you had a press release and how was that publicized?

Kendrick: The response was amazing, I sent a little write-up to the Conservation Education Division and they shored it up and released it two weeks ago yesterday.

Jeff: Does that mean they sent it out to major newspapers?

Kendrick: Yeah, I guess it goes to something like an Associated Press or something.

Mike: They have a database of targeted outdoor writers that they send it out to.

Kendrick: Those reporters jumped on it and started calling me left and right. Before I knew it, I was on NPR. And, now we have more volunteers than routes and a lot of volunteers are concentrated in metro areas and routes are fairly evenly distributed across the state. But, we are adding another 60 some routes within the next couple of weeks. And, hopefully some of the volunteers will help out with groundtruthing so we can get them surveyed for at least part of this years sampling.

Jeff: We basically decided to add routes because we had so many volunteers...

Kendrick: And, national was willing to create new routes for us. The United State Geological Survey (USGS) administer the North American Amphibian Survey Program (NAAMP) and they create the random routes by coordinate blocks. It is like a grid laid across the state that they randomly pick points, zoom in to pick the road and then give us the route and say, "place 10 stops at wetlands along this road".

Jeff: How many of the new volunteers have taken the quiz? The quiz is very hard.

Kendrick: Yes, I have a real fear that some of this initial enthusiasm is going to wane after taking the quiz. Most of the really interested folks have taken it and passed or are retaking it now. The general public volunteers have not attempted up to this date. Hopefully, people will not get discouraged.

Collen: I think that might be why we have not gone ahead with the Lake Crabtree route. Chuck tried it and said it was really hard.

Jeff: They do have the public quiz. I recommend just working oon those species that you have trouble with in the frog call lookup part of the frog call quiz web page. Also, you are penalized more for hearing a frog that is not there than you are for not hearing a frog that is. So, if you are sure, leave it out.

Mike: Sometimes you can hear species that shouldn't occur together being played together. That can be confusing.

Jeff: It seems that they did a pretty good job of separating winter species with summer species. And there is no time limit so you can keep doing it.

Janet: And it is "open book" too.

Jeff: So, it was a great response. As far as the CASP workshops go, Merchants Mill Pond is full plus; I have ten people on the waiting list. Jones Lake is close to full. I think we have 11 to 12

and I may max it at 20. That's cool that there are a lot of people interested. Steve Price is doing one at Davidson College and he has about eight participants signed up, but he was expecting more students to sign up. Now that we are getting new routes, we may want to have more workshops. Also, folks that might bomb out on the quiz could take a workshop that will help them get up and running. I talked to Lori Williams and we are going to try to hold one in the mountains. And we talked about doing one at Falls Lake State Park, are you (Brian) still interested in doing that? (Brian nods). Pick at time. If you want help, we can help you. If you want to do it yourself, then that is fine.

Brian: State Parks is reviewing the CASP workshop to see if it will qualify for one our certificate workshops.

Jeff: OK. Both Martha and Marie had asked me for an agenda and they were going to look into that. My only concern is that they were looking to post it on the State Parks website and that is fine except that I don't know who is registered.

Brian: They are sure it will pass because it may not bring in new CASP volunteers.

Jeff: Well, we do have people coming for Form Bs and I don't mind that. The goal is to bring people onto CASP, but to educate people about frogs and frog calls. You have to know you are going to get that mix.

Kendrick: And, to just get people interested is great.

Jeff: And that might be a different kind of workshop. Maybe not a CASP workshop, but a frog call workshop.

Brian: I'll educate anybody, anytime.

Jeff: And on that note, Rhonda Washington has joined us. Let us know a little bit about you.

Rhonda: I have been wanting to come to these meetings for a while. I am currently a graduate student at UNCG in Science Education and Catherine Matthews is my advisor. I am a member of the PRT working group for that past year. I am interested in the frog call workshops and general NCPARC activities.

Jeff: We had talked about doing a workshop at Lake Waccamaw, but wasn't sure of their facilities.

Mike: They have the facilities but they don't have the ephemeral wetlands.

Grover: Chris Helms offered to host anything we would like to do.

Jeff: I will read it, "Please let NCPARC folks know that we would be glad to host any type of meeting or calling program they would like to have down here". Great. Next I have on the agenda is the Frogs and Toads of North Carolina book and CD, where is that right now?

Kendrick: I talked with WS today about that and she said that the CD has been produced but the book is still in the bidding process due to concerns about quality control. They really want to have it come out to exact specifications so that it is a really good product. She estimated that it will be ready for sale by the end of April.

Jeff: Is there any chance that we could get a hold of those CDs?

Kendrick: No, it's a package deal and the CDs will come in a sleeve on the back cover.

Jeff: That's too bad because I am sure some people could use those.

Kendrick: It could be good so that those unmotivated volunteers will not take the book and run.

Jeff: That is a good reminder to everyone that each volunteer with a route will receive a free book once it is produced. One book per route. The habitat form is something I wanted to bring up which is new and an optional form that I would encourage folks to look at and fill out for each of their stops. This came out of the RIMM working group that wanted to be able to say something about habitat quality or anything like that. Will don't know how many of those we will be able to use, but as Joe Mitchell always said, "If you don't take the data, you can never use it". There may be a lot on that form, but it can be very useful. Is there something you wanted to say about it?

Kendrick: Yeah, the general habitat information that you can glean from satellite/aerial photos or landcover data would not be adequate to have on this form so it includes a lot of stuff to be able to conduct more extensive analyses.

Brian: The mini-breeding bird surveys do a habitat form that is very general, but really shows the decline in birds associated with development and the general habitat associations of each species heard.

Jeff: Anything else about CASP? Ok, Habitat Management Guidelines are now available on the PARC website. These are great and the Commission has purchased some to get out to land managers and I would like everyone to think about who should have these.

Kendrick: I have been thinking that independent consulting foresters would be great recipients because there is information in there that may be incidental to how a contractor harvests a piece of property.

Jeff: That is a great idea and I know a lot of these guys and they always say that customers ask for ways to help manage for wildlife. That may be a great target audience for an HMG workshop. That is a good source. It would be interesting to design a course and to keep their registration, they have to have so many CFE (Continuing Forestry Education). So, that might be a way to get the word out. Is anyone interested in conducting an HMG workshop?

Brian: Sure.

Jeff: I can always sign you up.

Brian: I have a lot of contacts in the area that know what I am doing with birds and manage their own lands.

Jeff: Do you think it would be for park rangers? I guess it would be more for superintendants but they probably wouldn't have time.

Brian: We have a resource management person and other parks have people in which that is their collateral duty. I think that would be great.

Jeff: Another initiative is the PRT. Kendrick, what is the deadline coming up?

Kendrick: The inherently dangerous animal bill has been introduced to the legislature to ban private keeping of any "inherently dangerous animal". Dave Davenport is on the Study Committee that includes representatives from NCPARC, NCARK, NCZOO, and Animal Rights. NCPARC has already come up with a whole suite of guidelines for regulating giant constrictors, crocodylians, and venomous reptiles. There is a PRT meeting next week, the 7th I think.

Rhonda: It is Thursday the 8th.

Kendrick: Right at UNCG in the Eberhart building. I think that there is another study bill meeting on the 6th.

Rhonda: Lorraine is writing up the recommendations from the study bill committee and sending it around to all committee members for them to sign. They had their last vote on January 23. So, it is up in the air whether they will take NCPARC's recommendations because no agency wants to be responsible for regulating these species. Dr. Jones left it as this is something that can be considered and let mammal people come together to try and do the same thing, but it is not known if that can occur fast enough.

Jeff: So this committee is going to make recommendations to the legislature? I thought the thing was that it was just going to die.

Grover: There is no sponsor.

Jeff: So there is a study committee but no sponsor.

Kendrick: The study committee is all about a law that bans private keepers. It is either a ban or no ban as far as this bill is concerned. If it is a ban, then separate herps. If not, it will be a fight with the keepers. If there is no ban, then it is to get regulation in place before it comes up again. And like Rhonda was saying, no agency wants to regulate. It is a touchy issue because there are exotics involved so WRC doesn't want it and NC Agriculture doesn't want it.

Grover: Local county governments are enacting their own legislation banning keeping because there is nothing at the state level.

Jeff: And, this affects us because we sometimes use these animals in our programs. Grover has some animals or allegedly has some venomous animals...

Kendrick: But Grover is completely legal. The county regs state that you can have venomous if you are a licensed rehabilitator, which Grover is.

Grover: Or research institution.

Jeff: Right, right. Ok. Well, this information, the results of the PRT committee, is something we will need to communicate to the public. A really good way to do this is through Reptile and Exotic Animal Show. Grover has done a great job of attending these shows and educating people. And, we can have handouts that explain the new regulations and husbandry information.

Grover: There is a Study Bill committee member representing animal control officers and mentioned to me that he would be interested in having our working group do programs for county animal control folks once thing fleshes out because those are going to be the ones dealing with it..

There was discussion about workshops that could be held for animal control officers and rehabilitators.

Jeff: Well, we will probably need to tap into the PRT committee because I don't know about husbandry techniques of some of these species and I think we might need some kind of guidebook produced indicating what is what.

Kendrick: Actually, that was discussed and will be produced by John Groves.

Grover: I think that is going to mainly be an identification guide but we should probably have husbandry information in there as well.

Jeff: Yeah, so if any of you have other ideas, please send them to me or Kendrick. The herp society was also thinking of creating a relocation service.

Also there was a short discussion of holding workshops for animal damage control agents.

Break For Lunch

Jeff: Looking at the agenda of our upcoming annual meeting, you will see that we have more workshops that are shorter. We are lucky enough to have Whit Gibbons as the keynote speaker. I think that is going to be a big draw. The theme of inventory and monitoring includes sampling techniques, data management, habitat management, and teaching.

Discussion about registration and other logistics relating to the annual meeting.

Also discussed remaining action items and updated them.

Action Item	Persons Involved	Status
1. Obtain frog call PPT from Steven Price for use in PARC workshops, programs, etc.	Jeff Hall; working group members	Completed; Jeff has updated to embed sound files, but it is a very large file. Any suggestions?
2. Purchase frog call CD/booklets for CASP route volunteers	Kendrick Weeks	Pending completion of CD/booklet; already budgeted; book expected at end of April
3. Formulate and host frog call ID workshop to draw in volunteers for CASP route – first route in coastal plain (would potentially draw on AI #1)	Jeff Hall, Mike Campbell, Ed Corey, Brian Bockhahn, Kendrick Weeks	Jones Lake and Merchant Millpond Workshops; Brian will help arrange one for Raleigh area.
4. Talk to Jamie Sasser at Howell Woods about using BBS testing grounds reconfigured for CASP (for future projects); Training	Jeff Hall	Pending
5. Press release to go out at some point about CASP (potentially just before or during first calling window of 2007).	Jodie Owen, Kendrick Weeks, Mike Campbell (has contact – Mike Marsh)	Went out in January; Excellent response and adding another group of random routes; developing feature article for Wildlife in NC magazine (see action item 12).
6. Formulate NCPARC annual meeting committee and plan annual meeting	Jeff Hall, Ed Corey, Mike Dorcas, Kendrick Weeks	On going; Developed agenda and sampling methods theme; Brown Summit, March 21-22;
7. Promote HMGs	All	Completed; will call on folks to give workshops
8. Develop Backyard HMGs	Jeff Hall, Chris Moorman	Pending; northeast section of PARC has flyer
9. Convert outreach program registry to similar program used by RIMM – perhaps one form could be used to generate lists for both RIMM and E&O?	Jeff Hall, Mike Dorcas, Sarah Cross	Pending; On hold until technical assistance acquired.

10. Evaluate potential PPT presentations to be available from NCPARC website	All	On-going;
11. Evaluate potential curriculum pieces to be available from NCPARC website	Mike Dorcas' students present, All participate	On-going; Were found to be a great resource for educators
12. Feature length article in NC Wildlife on CASP and upcoming frog call CD	Kendrick Weeks	Pending; possibly as part of Wildlife Action Plan series.
13. CASP brochures and others (Don't Turn It Loose, etc.)	Kendrick Weeks	Completed; will print and make available for printing for future events.
14. Participation at herp shows	All – Grover Barfield coordinating	Sept 2-3, 2006 by Grover and Kendrick; May 5-6, 2007 by ?
15. Potential for NCPARC Participation in "Dixie Deer Classic" – contacting NCSU Leopold Club to get more details; Reptile and Amphibian Day NCPARC	Peyton Hale; Jeff Hall	Pending; NCPARC will have its own booth at Reptile and Amphibian Day. Kendrick will be calling on members to help during the day.
16. Add links to NCWRC wildlife profiles from NCPARC page	Jeff Hall, Mike Dorcas, Kendrick Weeks	Nearing completion – profiles will be stored on NCPARC site and will be reviewed soon by all to evaluate need for updating
17. Review curriculum pieces for herp related information	Project SAVE – all, WILD and Aquatic WILD – Mike Campbell, PLT – Jeff Hall, WET and Let's Hear it for Herps – Sandy Durso, WOW – Kendrick Weeks, Hands On Herpetology – Terry Tomasek and Kathy Matthews?	Pending – discussion at next E&O meeting; Added bibliography for education resources: Kristen Sasser will be spearheading.
