

NCPARC

Education and Outreach Working Group Meeting

May 22, 2008

1:00 – 4:00 Falls Lake State Recreation Area

In attendance:

Jeff Hall – NCWRC

Kimberly Burge – NCWRC

Brian Bockhahn – NC State Parks and Recreation

Colleen Bockhahn – Wake County Parks and Recreation

Ed Corey – NC State Parks and Recreation

Veronica Barnes – NC DOT

Jeff Beane – NC State Museum of Natural Sciences

Deborah Robertson – Wake County Parks and Recreation

Jodie Owen – NCWRC

Meeting called to order

Hall gave an update on festivals and events that had occurred since the last E&O meeting on 1/24/08. These included: NCPARC Annual Meeting, Ft. Fisher “Scales & Tails” event, Dixie Deer Classic, Reptile & Amphibian Day at the State Museum of Natural Sciences, Frog Fest at Crowder Park, Reptile Day at Davidson College, Turtle Fest at Bass Lake Park, Earth Day event at Vance Community College, and Carolina Reptile and Exotic Animal Show in Raleigh. The group spent some time discussing these various venues and noted that a lot of time and energy was going into NCPARC booths for these events. After some discussion (and prior emails with Grover Barfield), the group decided that volunteers would no longer staff an NCPARC booth at the Carolina Reptile and Exotic Animal Show. Jess Bridges had previously agreed to help coordinate an NCPARC/NCHS booth at this event and Hall agreed to contact her and/or Kristin Sasser to let them know she would not need to coordinate an NCPARC booth. In emails with Grover, he suggested that perhaps NCHS would continue to have a booth without an NCPARC presence.

A brief discussion also ensued about the 2009 NCPARC Annual Meeting which will be held jointly with SEPARC at Montreat Center Feb. 19-22, 2009. Hall requested that anyone with suggestions for topics, talks, etc. email him. Corey suggested that NCPARC perhaps have a meeting of just its members within that larger group, essentially this could be sessions specifically designed for NCPARC members. B. Bockhahn agreed noting that NCPARC will likely have some business to discuss.

Hall summarized the 6 CASP workshops for 2008 and noted they were quite successful. The workshops were well attended, were helpful to current CASP volunteers, and lead to the addition of many new CASP volunteers. Along with other collaborators, Hall hopes to hold 4-6 workshops again in 2009.

The group held a brief discussion about a reptile and amphibian resource list being worked on by Kristin Sasser. Hall agreed to look into posting the current list on the NCPARC website.

Hall brought up an email from Jeff Marcus again from last meeting regarding the killing of snakes at Hinson Lake near Rockingham. Hall agreed to collect more details from Marcus: 1) what are the current “rules” at Hinson Lake?; 2) has there been any enforcement of those rules?; 3) can additional rules be added to existing ones? Robertson agreed to look into Wake County Parks rules and pass on information to Hall. Signage could help in this area and could be targeted towards water snakes, but that could potentially allow for continued persecution of cottonmouths. Perhaps a sign discussing the general benefits of snakes might be beneficial. C. Bockhahn, Owen, and Hall agreed to continue work on a snake sign. It was pointed out that some signage exists currently at Hinson Lake, but no one was sure of the content. Other suggestions included increased enforcement of littering along with talks about not killing animals on site, increased checking of fishing licenses along with same talk, and that multiple approaches are probably needed to help the situation. Hall agreed to get back in touch with Marcus and discuss various options presented by the group.

The group discussed a suggestion by Chris McGrath that a flyer be put together to support the distribution of frog books and snake books. Suggestions of how to increase exposure to the books included: announcement on EE listserv (Hall will check with Marty Wiggins about this), information to EENC somehow, and WRC staff to talk with administrative services about highlighting the frog book. Robertson agreed to work on a draft flyer about where to obtain these resources. Several folks noted that the flyer needs to have both NCPARC and NCWRC information on it.

The final lengthy discussion centered around an email sent by B. Bockhahn which suggested that it might be worthwhile to discuss aspects of an NCPARC booth and how effective the booth is at getting a conservation message across. The group discussed various ideas that are needed for the successful booth. 1) Live animals are key to “draw” folks, but don’t need so many as to distract viewers away from a specific message being delivered. 2) A specific activity or activities would help focus attention at booths – example is the “copperhead game”. Perhaps other games or activities similar to this could be developed and in line with whatever the theme of the festival might be (e.g. frog-themed activity for Frog Fest, turtle-themed activity for Turtle Day, etc.). 3) Perhaps a more focused theme for each event could help, but would represent more work for each volunteer group. 4) Could have “habitat boxes” potentially with matching items – again something similar to the “copperhead game” idea. 5) If brochures are used, they probably need to be smaller with more important text. Likely most brochures picked up are just thrown away later. A business card-type hand-out might give enough information (NCPARC, web address, volunteering info., and a phrase or two) and be more useful – perhaps as a magnet? Whatever brochures are produced/used, it would be good to have them as PDF files so that any volunteers working booths could print their own if needed. A post card might work well with captivating image on one side – Hall will check with Owen to get printing sources. Hall showed post cards created by national PARC (box turtle, horned lizard) – everyone seemed to like these. 6) Buttons, rulers, temporary tattoos and other do-dads are likely better hand-outs and would last longer once given out (rather than being thrown in the trash that day or the next). Owen agreed to look into pricing for these type of hand-outs.

The group discussed having the next meeting in August, but did not set a date. Robertson offered Blue Jay Point as a location for the next meeting. Hall agreed to get with E&O Chair Terry Tomasek (who was unable to attend the meeting due to a conference) and work on potential dates in August to meet.

Meeting adjourned.