

NCPARC Education and Outreach Working Group Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2007, 1-4PM

Lake Crabtree County Park, 1400 Aviation Parkway, Morrisville, NC 27560, Office 919-460-2723

Site Contact: Colleen Bockhahn, Colleen.Bockhahn@co.wake.nc.us

In attendance:

Michael Robinson- NC State

Grover Barfield- Civilian Independent Researcher and Educator

Dave Woodward- retired NC State

Peyton Hale- NCSU Herpetology Club

Brian Bockhahn- NC State Parks and Recreation

Colleen Bockhahn- Wake County Parks and Recreation

Jeff Beane- NC Museum of Natural Sciences

Jess Bridges- Lee County Parks

Kendrick Weeks- NCWRC

Kristin Sasser- Lee County Parks

Jackie Trickel-Crowder Park

Jeff Hall- NCPARC

Terry Tomasek- Chair, Elon University

Meeting called to order

Terry welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Appreciation was extended to Colleen Bockhahn for hosting the meeting at Lake Crabtree County Park.

CASP Update from Jeff Hall

There are 139 routes statewide. We had 61 original routes and added 74 in February 2007. 103 of these routes were assigned to observers. Less than 50 percent of the routes were actually run. As of today, we have data from 55 of those routes. Most of the missing data is from people that ended up not running routes. Only 59 could pass the online quiz (11 did not pass, 35 just did not take the test). The test is not easy but it is similar to what you might hear during a frog calling event. This is actually a big improvement from 2006 when we only had 23 routes run. 84 routes were not run at all. 13 of the 55 routes were only run 1 time, 6 were only run twice. This past year weather did not cooperate so it was not a good frog calling season for the parameters of our data collection. Some new routes were not ground-truthed yet. Kendrick Weeks is going to ground-truth the coastal plain routes. There is a priority to get the coastal plain routes filled.

There are no trainings currently planned for the coastal plain (hopefully some will be scheduled within the next couple of months). The sampling windows are set up to be flexible. We need more volunteers, specifically more educated volunteers, so we need TRAINING. We need training for existing volunteers as well as new volunteers. Maybe do one at Falls Lake? Do we need a facilitator training? Would we have developed power point presentations to use? Steve Price created the original powerpoint materials. Make sure to credit Steve for this when you use it. Jeff and Kendrick used this resource, they used different sections of the power point at the workshops that they did: general natural history (ecology and calls), CASP protocols, as well as a field session where participants actually went out and listen for live frog calls. Some participants felt very overwhelmed by the end of the session. If they have never listened for frog calls before it can be very challenging. Sometimes the facilitator might consider

having some hands-on time with live frogs. The publication, *Frogs and Toads of NC*, is given free to those who run a CASP route (had to pass quiz or actually do a route). It is best if you have two computers when you lead a training session: one for running the powerpoint and one for running the frog call CD. The training workshop works better with two people acting as facilitators. The calls of frogs and toads of Georgia is a good website for practice (<http://wwknapp.home.mindspring.com/GAFrog.Toad.html>) Walter Knapp is the author. You can download sounds. All the NC species are on his website.

4 interesting species that were recorded during the 2007 CASP season: mountain chorus frog, pine barrens treefrog (bear creek site), southern chorus frog (mecklenburg county), and the barking tree frog (Caswell game lands). Most of these were likely erroneous as they are outside the range of the species.

Jeff Hall can provide a sample agenda for workshops, and the Steve Price powerpoint burned onto a CD (however, the sound files will not be embedded). There is a link from the NCPARC website to indicate if you are interested in running a CASP workshop. There is nothing planned right now. After the new year, Jeff Hall is going to set up three workshops, one in each region. He will post these on the CASP website as well as send the announcement out over various listservs. Jeff Hall might try to do one during a week in December. Possibly of a workshop at Falls Lake in February. Brian Bockhahn will do training at other state parks. One problem encountered is that there might not be a route close to where the workshops are being held. The facilitator should find out what routes are not being run to try to get new people to run these.

Will continue to promote CASP at things like Reptile and Amphibian Day and the Exotic Animal Show. We have gotten a few volunteers from these. Can we target a nature center in the areas that routes are not being run to try to get volunteers to run these? Yes, would need to identify areas and look at map. What about universities? Students leaving the area when they finish school is the problem with this idea. May still be some value in doing this though. Could a club or department take a route? The dept would need to make sure that observers are trained.

Updating wildlife species profiles (Jeff Hall)

All reptile and amphibian profiles ones have been accounted for (there is a person's name by each one). Someone is going to read over the ones that have been done before sending them on. The new version is three pages and will be posted online as PDF files. We are just doing them for education purposes. We are updating range maps but they are still not real accurate because we did not check with the museum. There are some new sections and it is more colorful. Kim Burge (conservation education group) is working on these as well. Contact Jeff Hall if you want to look at these.

Habitat Management Guidelines

Jeff Hall attended a workshop on the Southeast HMG. He reports that it was good. He would like to see something similar in NC to get land managers involved. Jeff suggests that we select a site where we could reach a really wide range of habitats, so that participants could visit them during the workshop. The workshop would be over 2-3 days so that most sites could be reached. Workshops seem to work better if people have to pay for them. This seems to be the case anyway among land managers, resource professionals, etc. Could we offer this program in conjunction with NCState? What would be a good site for this? Around the sandhills? Jeff to plan this for next year. April/May is a potential time. We would just have one workshop in 2008. Jeff has the agenda for this workshop and would share if anyone is interested.

We also need to distill the larger book into a backyard management guide or brochure like the one from Northeast PARC. Their's might be a little too distilled. The series that NC state has done could be a model for ours. Jill Anderson is looking for a master's project, maybe she could produce a product like this for her project. Ours needs a more regional version, the larger guide has information that would not be related to NC. The format needs to be more user friendly for the general public.

NCPARC newsletter

Jeff Hall is going to try to do this bimonthly (every other month). He will be sending them out electronically. The next one will go out in November. He is happy to have information about events that are coming up. The purpose is not to print big long articles, but mostly for events/announcements. It is on the website as well.

PR & T group (Jeff Beane and Grover Barfield reporting)

The most current item of business has been the Inherently Dangerous Animal bill. We think it is going to die. We are continuing to work on other avenues such as modifications to General Statute #55 that might cover us. We are 'dodging the bullet' from the Animal Protection Institute (API). This group is interested in banning people from keeping reptiles and amphibians (all animals actually). The bill was originally introduced because of lions and tigers that people had. API got involved and tried to stick things in that would keep people from keeping animals. PRT came up with ideas for regulations of inherently dangerous reptiles. We thought it would go up through the chain of the wildlife resources commission; however, they are not likely to be interested in non-game issues. There is the potential to modify the general statute about handling venomous reptiles and adding language about keeping venomous reptiles, constrictors and crocodiles. Our role would be to educate the public about these types of things. Jeff Hall is starting to put together a power point about current herp regulations. He would like for someone to take on the project of putting this information into a brochure. NC administrative code is where all of these regulations are located. The Commission has a link to this on their website. PRT thinking about gathering this information and putting it on NCPARC website.

Snapping turtles. There is a 2003 law protecting two families of turtles from over collection. You can't get a collection license for these two families (Emydidae and Trionychidae). Currently you can for snappers so a recommendation from the nongame group of WRC was for 50 per year. The commissioners decided on 100 per year from the families Chelydridae (snappers) and Kinosternidae (mud and musk turtles). However, this must still go to public comment. Public hearings are coming up. Minimal discussion centered around the Asian food market in Cary, Dave Lee, and bullfrogs sold there as well as softshell turtles (mostly nonnative).

Mike Dorcas has a protocol for amphibian work.

RIMM (Grover Barfield reporting)

Chytridiomycosis is caused by the amphibian chytrid fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. This is a highly virulent fungal pathogen of amphibians capable at the minimum of causing sporadic deaths in some populations, and 100% mortality in other populations. Surviving individuals are believed to be carriers. The inoculating dose is low, 100 zoospores able to cause clinical chytridiomycosis within 4 weeks. Some species appear highly susceptible to developing the disease, progressing to death, while other species appear less susceptible to disease manifestations. From:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/ktp/frog-fungus.html>

There is a National move for more awareness of this fungus in NA. The first International Congress will be held in Arizona- Jeff Hall is going to attend. He will be making recommendations to wildlife resource commission. Science may or may not tell us one way or the other. We are not sure if chytrid in the wild causes frog death, there is a difference of opinion. What are the research needs here? What can we do to learn more about it in NC? There might be 3 current projects in NC. The presence of the fungus has been documented in NC. We just don't know how prevalent and what it means if it is here. We currently have more questions than answers. Some international studies seem to have strong evidence. Maybe recommendations about not spreading fungus from habitat to habitat (e.g. boots).

NCPARC Annual Meeting

March 6-7, Trinity Center near Emerald Isle. Maybe we can make Brown Summit the site for the meeting every other year. The Trinity Center does have a variety of habitats around it to support different kinds of workshops.

Theme for meeting: Habitat for Herps and Humanity

Talk ideas

Some talks will be regarding coastal species but we want the theme of the meeting to include other regions of state. Ideas that were discussed for various types of talks:

- Sea turtle conservation and issues surrounding this topic: whole group or workshop presentation?
- Eastern Diamondback rattle snakes-people from Camp Lejeune?
- Diamondback terrapins
- Problem with By-catch from blue crab fisheries, ghost crab pots, etc. – division of marine fisheries
- By-catch reduction devices-mike Dorcas students?
- Road crossings- someone from DOT?
- Dennis Herman?-maybe same elements as what he did at SE PARC
- Coastal development-green-regular and its impacts, mitigation? Examples of good and bad development?
- Specific habitats and HMG.
- Update from SE PARC.
- Update on all working groups.
- Carolina coastal federation? Dealing with development issues/habitat/imperiled species?
- Coastal land trust?
- Bog turtles?
- Dave Stephan session on backyard herps?
- Repeat from last year? Overview of sampling techniques-backyard classroom ideas-Brian Bockhahn.
- Citizen science: box turtles?
- Informal herp education- what about some of our own sharing their good ideas-Colleen, Kristin, Jackie?
- Joe McDonald-wildlife habitat realty (name from Jeff Beane-he said he would find contact info for you)
- Sandhills area land trust. Different levels of conservation/ preservation- totally green to mitigation-spectrum-what are the different things you can do along this whole spectrum.
- Someone from the nature conservancy-recent projects or acquisitions.
- Candice Williams-Fayetteville.

- Discussion groups? Topic of conservations at dinner tables, need a facilitator at each table.

Other suggestions from the group? Things people want to see there? Maybe we don't need a theme? Imperiled species as a theme? This works across the state.

Format for the meeting

Arrive at lunch on Thursday and stay till lunch on Friday. Thursday evening more of a presentation style.

Friday morning more field oriented activities that are related to specific projects conservation-wise.

Afternoons would be warmer though.

- Roosevelt Natural Area - development pressures?
- Croatan National Forest – management issues?
- Fort Macon State Park
- Hammocks Beach State Park

34 rooms available (doubles) potential of 68 people. \$20 charge for unused rooms. [some discussion about single and double rooms] room rate is \$92 includes 4 meals (Thursday lunch to Friday lunch) single would be \$112. We may offer both options. Publicity materials to go out in December?

General Agenda ideas

- 12:00 lunch
- 1:00 general session
- 2 sessions the first day (presentation style)
- Poster session – after dinner
- Evening session/bonfire/social time
- second day one field session with at least three different sites

Kick-off speaker ideas (Keynote)

Whit Gibbons spoke last year on survey and sampling methods.

- Parnell (Kendrick's suggestion)
- Current faculty member down that way, ECU?
- Someone working with turtles (Mac Godfrey?-conservation issues)
- Jean give a talk on turtle hospital?
- Dave Webster?
- Gill Grant – work with terrapins, teaches at community college in Sneads Ferry.
- Onslow community college? Guy that does telemetry on sea turtles? Larry Crowder? Is he a fish person?
- Phil Spivey in Georgia now?
- Kristin Hart? Would make sense to have something on terrapins.

Jeff Hall would like more suggestions about talks. We need to submit ideas to him.

Other Upcoming Events

Dixie Dear Classic, The first weekend in March (March 1st and 2nd) Dave Woodward checking to see about the possibilities of a NCPARC booth at this event.

Reptile and amphibian day at the museum, March 15th

FrogFest, Crowder Park, **need date**

For the next meeting

NC Museum of Science, Jeff Beane contact person, 12:30 tour of the wet lab, 1-4 meeting

Discuss about participation in festivals and shows, specifically, what resources do we have to share/make available for presenters.

Action Items for Follow-up

CASP training sessions in all areas of the state

- Falls Lake training session? Feb?
- Facilitator training session?
- Target a nature center in the areas that routes are not being run to try to get volunteers to run these
- Training in December, Jeff Hall?
- Brian Bockhahn, training in state parks?

HMG

- HMG training session in conjunction with NCState? In the sandhills? April/May?
- Backyard management guide (distilled version of HMG) Jill Anderson is looking for a master's project

Herp regulations

- Jeff Hall creating power point about current herp regulations
- Need someone to take on the project of putting this information into a brochure.

NCPARC Annual Meeting

Continued planning