

Minutes from NCPARC PRT Working Group Meeting December 17, 2007

1-4 PM, Science building, UNC-G

Dave Davenport opened the meeting. Introductions. Those attending included:

Dave Davenport
Keith Farmer
Dave LaPlante
Kendrick Weeks
Ann Somers
Grover Barfield
Phil Bradley
Jeff Hall
Andrew Wyatt

Davenport opened discussion around trying to find a minute-taker for the PRT group. There will still no takers, so Hall agreed to continue in the interim. A discussion then ensued regarding low attendance at recent PRT meetings (lower than at some of the meetings in the past). Davenport announced that he would send out a reminder to all PRT members of the importance of this working group and that many of the issues we have worked on have not gone away and probably are not going away any time soon.

The first item of business centered around updates on the Article 55 rewrite by Andrew Wyatt (see past minutes for copy of this). To begin this discussion, Hall and Davenport gave a summary of meeting with the state vet, Carl Williams. They were trying to determine if there was any willingness on the part of the Department of Health and Human Services to take some of these “inherently dangerous animals” issues on. The answer was basically “no.” DHSS likes the recommendations from PRT, but like other agencies before them, is not willing to take on the responsibility to oversee such an endeavor. Hall relayed that several positive things did come out of the meeting, however, such as facilitation of communication with DHSS and a willingness to include PRT in future discussions regarding public health issues. This will be important in the future as DHSS plans to update or change the existing laws regarding the sale of turtles and salmonella issues. Williams did make it clear that DHSS wants the turtle law prohibiting sales of turtles to continue, but expressed an interest in working with PRT to craft any future changes to that law.

So what are the next steps to be taken? Several PRT members made comments that WRC still seems to be the place that makes the most sense to house a position such as that detailed in the PRT recommendations. Davenport mentioned that the PRT group could recommend that the NCPARC Steering Committee take this request beyond WRC. Specifics of this action were not mentioned. Another option is to move forward with Wyatt’s rewrite of Article 55 and continue to work on/with WRC for the future.

Who are “designated agents” within the NC Museum of Natural Sciences (NCMNS) as detailed in the current Article 55 and how do we rewrite an updated version? Phil Bradley mentioned that he was still working on this with the NCMNS lawyer. Bradley also mentioned that working within the NCMNS ladder of command, he was told: WRC (e.g. NCPARC?) could potentially be an “agent.” It would need to be clear in such a document that WRC does not control NCPARC nor should it be held liable for NCPARC. Members of WRC and NCMNS feel that moving forward with the Wyatt rewrite should not impede potential future progress of PRT recommendations. Davenport added that more legal analysis of the Wyatt rewrite are needed: is there danger to opening the law? Should we use “inherently dangerous” language in the document? Wyatt concluded along with input from Somers et al. that he would rewrite Article 55 again this time changing language and removing “dangerous.” He will then send to Hall and Davenport to send out for review by PRT members prior to our next meeting.

Wyatt then mentioned that a new study committee has been commissioned to look at public safety and venomous species. This new committee is scheduled to meet for the first time at the end of January. Wyatt agreed to look into this more and provide more details at the next PRT meeting.

Hall lead discussion about upcoming WRC Public Hearings and detailed the proposed changes to the snapping, mud, and musk turtle language within the wildlife collection license. Somers lead a discussion about talking points to use when passing out this information to folks within the herpetological community. Somers and Bradley agreed to send out emails to NCPARC and NCHS memberships regarding dates and times for the Public Hearings along with a copy of the talking points.

The topic of Asian markets was discussed briefly. Ted Williams had agreed to pursue this topic at the last meeting and though unable to attend this meeting, gave word to Hall that he intended to continue researching this topic. All in attendance agreed to look into their local areas and determine whether Asian markets were present, and whether they sold herps as part of their “menu.” Hall agreed to contact Carl Williams again and find out what regulations apply to Asian markets and then send those on to PRT membership. Discussion centered around possibility to use data sheet to standardize collection of “what’s there” at the markets. For now, all participants agreed to look into their own counties and find out what they could. Somers mentioned that Asian markets would be a priority agenda item at the next Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee meeting.

Next meeting set for January 24, 2008 from 9-12 at the NCMNS Research Lab on Reedy Creek Road in Raleigh.

Action Items:

- Continue search for PRT secretary to take minutes
- Davenport (and Wyatt) craft and send email to PRT members detailing importance of the working group (Wyatt will add blurb regarding value)

- Davenport will craft additional email to voting PRT members to determine who is still “active”
- Hall will send Mike Dorcas final PRT recommendations to be added to NCPARC website
- Wyatt – rewrite Article 55 again changing language (deleting “dangerous” references)
- Bradley (NCMNS) and Somers (UNC-G) will continue to consult respective lawyers regarding Wyatt rewrite of Article 55
- Wyatt – look more into the new study committee and report back to PRT group
- Somers and Bradley – send out emails to NCPARC and NCHS regarding WRC Public Hearings
- Hall – contact Carl Williams re: Asian market regs with Public Health
- All participant and Williams – continue calling local health departments and learn more about regulation of Asian food markets