

NCPARC RIMM Meeting  
UNC-Greensboro  
January 16, 2008

Chair

Mike Dorcas (Davidson College)

Attendees

Jeff Hall (NCWRC), Kendrick Weeks (NCWRC), Gabrielle Graeter (NCWRC), Jeff Humphries (NCWRC), Lori Williams (NCWRC), Dave Allen (NCWRC), Jeff Marcus (NCWRC), Ray Kuhn (Wake Forest University), Tom Poorten (Wake Forest University), Grover Barfield (Civilian), Rusty Gaul (East Carolina University), Jonathan Micancin (UNC-Chapel Hill), Jeff Beane (NC Museum of Natural Sciences), Kimberly Burge (NCWRC), Susannah Thompson (NCWRC), Ann Somers (UNC-Greensboro), John Groves (NC Zoo), Brian Ball (Ft. Bragg),

The meeting began at 1:10 pm.

Agenda

- ☒ Report on meetings of herps and road crossing (Lori Williams – WRC)
- ☒ Continued discussion of chytrid fungus research in North Carolina – discussion of what's needed and how to proceed
- ☒ Status of state-wide Box Turtle Conservation program (Ann Somers)
- ☒ CASP 2008 (Jeff Hall)
- ☒ Recommendations by WRC to local (county, town) governments concerning critical upland habitat for wetlands

Mike opened the meeting with introductions

Lori Williams gave presentation on herps and road crossings. There have been no specific herp crossing projects in NC yet. Case studies from peer reviewed literature and the Federal Highway Administration were presented and demonstrated how effective these measures can be to reducing road mortality. Major needs for research include predator effects of herp crossings. There was some discussion of how to be effective at influencing NCDOT projects. In particular, there was interest in the Salamander Crossing Brigade as a tool to get people involved and provide visibility to the issue of herp breeding migrations and their significance in sustaining populations. In addition, Lori emphasized that observations of turtles entered into the Carolina Herp Atlas ([www.carolinaherpatlas.org](http://www.carolinaherpatlas.org)) will be used to locate important locations for wildlife crossings.

Jeff Hall gave presentation on *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd) Chytridiomycosis in amphibians incorporating information he learned at the national conference in Arizona ([http://www.parcplace.org/Bd\\_conference.html](http://www.parcplace.org/Bd_conference.html)). Amphibians are the only known host although other animals may serve as vectors. Peer reviewed research on movements and outbreaks was included. A particularly valuable website that maps Bd detections worldwide is at [www.spatialepidemiology.net](http://www.spatialepidemiology.net). Dr. Kuhn has documented Bd in the western piedmont of North Carolina. Bd has been known from the Southeast U.S. for 30 years. Dr. Dorcas is interested in

documenting Bd infections from different species in North Carolina and encouraged everyone to take the time to sample for it during normal fieldwork. There is a video and pdf of sampling protocols on the NCPARC website ([www.ncparc.org](http://www.ncparc.org)). Although samples may not be run immediately, samples can be sent to Dr. Dorcas for freezer storage.

Ann Somers gave an update on the Box Turtle Collaborative that is initiating long term research on populations of box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*) in North Carolina. Many State Park superintendants, four universities, and two divisions of NCWRC are enthusiastic and willing to participate. Fifteen sites have been chosen for this research and there will be a training session for interested parties April 3, 2008 at Haw River State Park.

Jeff Hall gave a summary of the Calling Amphibian Survey Program (CASP) 2008. There are currently 139 routes statewide, 58 of which still need to be groundtruthed. There are currently 130 volunteers, with 104 of those active. All but 35 routes are assigned an observer. Six CASP workshops are planned for this season across the state and are listed on the NCPARC website (<http://www.ncparc.org/casp/casp-wrkshps.htm>).

There is a need for recommendations to local governments concerning critical upland habitat for wetlands in relation to the semi-aquatic species that inhabit them. Current recommendations by the NCWRC on wetland buffers (i.e. 50 feet) are inadequate for semi-aquatic species based upon published scientific research

([http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07\\_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7c3\\_impacts.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg07_WildlifeSpeciesCon/pg7c3_impacts.pdf)). Jeff Marcus explained the justification as mainly developed for water quality. He also informed everyone that NCWRC Urban Biologist Jaquelyn Presley is working on a tool box for local planners to provide science-based recommendations for development. Dr. Dorcas suggested getting the other NCPARC working groups involved to formulate NCPARC recommendations based on sound science.

Mike brought up the idea of developing an all encompassing database for all North Carolina herp observations from as many sources as possible including out-of-state museums and universities. Everyone thought this was a great idea. Kendrick had concerns about the scope of the effort and particularly the fact that many databases are not computerized or incomplete.

Finally, Ann brought up the February 1, 2008 deadline for public comments to NCWRC regulation changes regarding the collection of snapping, mud, and musk turtles. Please see her notice on NCPARC website (<http://www.ncparc.org/WG-PTR/TurtleTalkingPoints.pdf>) and attend public hearing ([http://www.ncwildlife.org/news\\_stories/pg00\\_NewsRelease/2008\\_09\\_public\\_hearing\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/news_stories/pg00_NewsRelease/2008_09_public_hearing_booklet.pdf)) or submit comments online (<http://www.ncwildlife.org/index.htm>).

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Kendrick Weeks