



3-27-21 NCNWTF Board Meeting

Chatham County Wildlife Club

Bear Creek, NC

Board Meeting Time: 3:48 pm

Board Attendees: Henry Smith, Robert Smith, Ken Moore, Tim Draughon, Perry Bryant, Bonni Stephenson, Richard Plattenberger, Roger Reynolds, Brent Phillips, Luke Gibson, Jessi Sackett

Guests: Ryan Stanley, Bobby Phibbs, Cully McCurdy, Bryan Perry, Trey Oliver

Robert Smith started the meeting at 3:48 pm with opening remarks and welcomed all visitors.

Ken Moore gave the invocation.

The January 27, 2021 meeting minutes were not available at the meeting. Tim Draughon was asked to email the meeting minutes to the Board for review and approval. The Minutes were emailed after the meeting. Richard Plattenberger made a motion to approve the minutes the motion received a 2nd by Luke Gibson. The meeting minutes were approved.

Henry Smith presented the Treasurers Report. Henry made a correction to the report for the checking account balance we have \$74,041.85 and the seed account balance of \$7,371.93 for a total account balance of \$81,413.78. Outstanding currently is part of the gun raffle invoices at approximately \$25,000.00. We have paid Edgefield the first \$15,000.00 of our \$30,000.00 pledge. We had \$5,000.00 dedicated for kids from the NC Habitat Foundation we used a little over \$5,000.00 to pay for calls for the Dixie Deer Classic so we have those for next year. Ken Moore made a motion to approve the report the motion received a 2nd by Brent Phillips. Bryan Perry had a question regarding the \$25,000.00 outstanding invoices and whether that was for last year or this year. Henry stated it is for this current year. The treasurers report was approved.

Henry Smith open the discussion on the gun raffle for this year. The calendar is printed, and the list is ready. All but 2 prizes are guns this year, we have one four-wheeler, and one \$500 prize. Tickets are going out and being sold, Bonni has it on the raffle creator as well. Also, for this year as the Board decided went up to 18,000 base ticket sales on the first 100 prizes and add an additional prize for every 500 tickets sold. Henry has had several phone calls on the new structure and he has told people it was a decision based on the current pandemic. Robert Smith stated a lot of early interest in the raffle which is a good sign and that the Executive Committee agreed to offer one free raffle ticket on the National website for the membership drive with a link to the State website to purchase more tickets if desired.

Robert Smith introduced our new District Biologist-Cully McCurdy.

Cully McCurdy presented the District Biologist Report.

- Cully started with a brief introduction regarding his background. He is looking forward to working with everyone in NC.

- Currently we have 4 people on staff in NC. Chris Coxen is back on staff as a project biologist working on a project he started prior to his layoff and after. Joint Chief which refers to the Chief of the Forestry Service and the NRCS. This initiative allows for collaboration between public and private land and have a common goal. Program will benefit the Uwharrie National Forest, the Sandhills area and Fort Bragg. First proposal was denied but they have received positive feedback and will be resubmitting the 2nd week of June. The proposal with all the partners is worth \$1.4M over a time span of 5 years. It should make a significant impact in that part of the state and there are other funds earmarked for the other national forests in NC. Chris will be back on until early May and then going back to school.
- Cully discussed the work of Laura Prevet, NFI Forester and Matt Martire are funded as NWTF employees through a \$5M agreement with the NRCS and are very specific to assisting private landowners using Farm Bill funding. Efforts include prescribe fire and forest thinning. Laura will be working in the Pender County area and Matt will be stationed around the Raleigh area. Cully did reach out to Laura and she stated since the first of the year she has made over 40 landowners visits that totals about 2,500 acres. If everything gets funded it will be about 1,400 acres planted and an additional 1,100 acres burned for private lands and some adjacent to public lands. Laura has also worked with several landowners to get certified to conduct burns on their own land which is very beneficial.
- Cully brought up an update email that Kris Kreh sent to the Board on the Gobbler Chronology Study. Please read it, it has a lot of great information in it. Has a lot of good information about how our turkey season is structured and this information supports the season structure.
- Roger Reynolds asked about getting the Gobbler Chronology on the state website. Should be able to get it on there easily and possibly Facebook.
- Richard Plattenberger asked if we had an update on the Nantahala- Pisgah Project. Cully has read the report and they are just finishing up the comment period.

Trey Oliver and Bobby Phibbs presented the RD Update.

- As of April 5, Trey Oliver will be back officially employed by the NWTF. He will be replacing Ryan Stanley who has announced his resignation from the NWTF.
- Bobby discussed the preferred vendor program and his utilization of Reed Distributors they have been performing well at this point.
- Bobby went through the different level banners showing the various prizes-Royal Slam-\$600, Grand Slam-\$300, he has been utilizing the Osceola Package-\$350, and the Merriam Package-\$500 for card games. All costs include shipping. Banners are utilized at the banquets and attendees can pick their prize that night and the prizes don't have to be ordered ahead of the banquet. It also gives some variety on the prizes they can choose from.
- Bobby discussed the issues we are still having with the preferred vendor program. Post dated checks are getting cashed ahead of product arriving, some products are back ordered but should be received within 90-150 days hopefully. Please be patient they are working to correct the issues the goal is to have a simple experience when ordering.

- Bobby discussed chapter coverage with him and Trey in talking with Scott Martin they are going to leave everything as it currently is for the fiscal year. There may be a little shift based on where Trey lives and geography but nothing major. Please be patient in the transition and if shifts make sense they can reevaluate with Scott's approval.
- Bobby provided an update on the banquets in his area-Stanley County and Southfork which are both going to be well over 50% net-gross, both sold out events and a great crowd. Stanley County grossed approximately \$80K, Southfork is going to be grossing around \$35K. These banquets just occurred so the numbers are still to be finalized.
- Bobby has 6 chapters that he as reached out to but no contact back, Bobby has asked for assistance in contacting several chapters if anyone has any information.
- Bobby mention Cold Mountain has a core package from their cancelled banquet. They have taken that merchandise and tried to turn as much money as they could. That money has been collected and the remainder is at the gun dealer who is trying to liquidate the guns. We have cash in 2 places the gun dealer and the chapter account. Bobby continues to reach out to get the money collected but continues to have issues catching up with JoEtta Holder due to her being out of town. Richard Plattenberger suggested reaching out to the gun dealer maybe he could assist with a chapter contact. Troy on the committee has been calling Edgefield trying to get last year's memberships turned in, money was collected. Richard suggested possibly seizing the money, Bryan Perry and Robert Smith have discussed options to resolve this issue. We also have no way to know what's been sold or not currently. Bobby will take any assistance he can get on this matter.
- Bobby will be the lead RD currently until Trey gets up to speed then Trey will assume the role.
- Please make sure all events get registered through the NWTF to be official. Several upcoming events were discussed and everyone was asked to confirm their events had been registered.

Chris Kreh was not present to present the NCWRC Turkey Project Leader update.

Howard Rumfelt was not present to present the Seed Program Update.

- Robert Smith stated the seed program is wide open.
- Corn is in route to Lexington and should be delivered next week.
- Henry Smith stated we did receive the outstanding balance from last year's program, so all money is collected.

Bonni Stephenson provided an update on the Youth Photo Contest and WITO.

- Bonni had sent out a flyer for review to make sure it covered changes form last year to this year.
- Hopefully this will clear up any confusion only major change is having people email their entry.
- The prize is in hand currently-Stevens 301 .410 GA. and it is at the Neuse Sports Shop in Kinston, NC.
- Bonni stated regarding the WITO not really a lot to update. She has been attending the coordinators meeting but not a lot going on, there are a few events starting to show up.

Robert Smith discussed the Call Makers Update for Ted White who was not feeling well today.

- Calls are in Surry County with Ricky Higgins and he is going to out those on Facebook Live. Scott Martin and Ricky are sorting out how they want to carry it out. Sale will be one night. Seems to be a lot of interest in the calls and when it will be happening.
- Ricky is a past competition caller and knows how to run the calls and market them. This should be a good profitable event.
- Once the date is established it will be delivered to the Board. We will get the date out on Facebook and all the chapters and members please share the information. Will probably be into turkey season before the sale happens.

Brent Phillips provided an update on the Save the Habitat-Save the Hunt Program.

- Currently they are holding zoom meetings monthly
- If someone has any events where we have new hunters, please send pictures
- Please make sure the events are signed up correctly-it is a must
- Roger Reynolds asked a question regarding individuals taking hunters. Brent clarified he was talking about events not mentors.
- Bobby brought up the forms are located on the national website.

Brent Phillips provided an update on the museum.

- Brent has had conversations with his contact. She is back but they are still closed.
- She has gone to their Board and we can establish a date for us to go work.
- They will unlock the building and let us go in and work, more than likely after turkey season.

Robert Smith opened discussions on new business

- The Surry Longspurs Chapter has reached out about the possibility of purchasing an RD trailer that is currently not being used. Perry Bryant discussed the background on the request. Perry has been looking for trailers, a lot of people looking, and Perry mentioned to Scott Martin and Scott brought up that there is a trailer that is not being used and no current plans to hire another RD. The trailer belongs to the State Chapter and it may be good to see if they would like to sell. It is currently sitting there going downhill. Perry stated we need a trailer for the handicap events and kids' event and that's what it would be used for.
 - o If the State Chapter would like to sale the Surry Longspurs would like to buy. Perry asked Henry Smith what the cost is, and he stated about \$2,000 new. There is some equipment in the trailer currently and we would need to find a place to store it. Bobby and Trey would like to know what is in the trailer if its banquet supplies keep in one spot. Henry Smith brought up a few concerns-storage being one and the other in having it for an extra event possibly. Robert Smith brought up who would store it and how are we going to get it throughout the state.
 - o Ryan Stanley provided an inventory of what is in the trailer currently. The RD's could split the inventory. Richard Plattenberger asked for an offer on the trailer. Ken Moore made a motion to sell the trailer the motion received a 2nd by Richard Plattenberger. Motion was approved. Robert asked for an offer and

Perry started at \$1,250.00. Board approved the amount and trailer is sold. Henry had a few requests first the trailer needs to be unloaded and he needs a copy of license plate and ID number off the tongue or registration card, he can then find the title and provide.

- Bryan Perry took a few minutes for any questions.
 - o Henry asked what the status of the Superfund is and when will we find out what percentage if any we will be getting back. Bryan stated it is currently shut down and it will probably be 6 months before it starts back. Bryan stated there will be some recommendations coming out from the volunteer committee, he can't say what they will be currently. Bryan stated he wouldn't be surprised if there was money to be spent in September.
 - o Bryan stressed first it is not your money it is NWTF money. The Superfund has never been in its own account the IRS does not let the NWTF differentiate. The major issue is the money is not getting spent so what started happening the Superfund is a liability on the books. States spend \$4M per year in Superfund and when things got locked down there was almost \$8M in the Superfund. Another area that is being looked at everybody believes state and local chapters should have money to do things with some chapters had a huge amount of money in their local accounts there is also another \$6M - \$7.5M sitting out there.
 - o Folks have got to start spending money. Its like folks are saving for a rainy day but we are not putting it in the ground. Balances just keep accumulating and it's an issue. We are in the best cash position we have ever been in. We do not have to pay for all the merchandise which is roughly \$12M and not paying out on the Superfund. Typically, we spend the most money we spend in December, January and February, then we made 85% of our money back in January, February, March and the first of April so we went in debt and made all your money back.
 - o When COVID hit it was at the most critical time, we had spent all this money, and nothing came back in. So short story the Superfund will start back it is the cornerstone of our organization, but please be patient. The events that we are having it is crazy a lot of momentum, but it will be coming back.
 - o Bobby Phibbs asked about land acquisitions account Bryan stated a lot of misunderstanding about this. If you read the Superfund manuals it states that money is not intended for long term holdings. Bottom line there will still be a mechanism to buy land. Everybody needs to be preaching it is not our money, its NWTF money that the state has input on where it is spent in our state.
 - o If everyone is mad because we froze the Superfund it could have been worse than what it was as far as cut goes. Bryan asked for any other question Henry asked if we are going to get any money back to help our stakeholders we have committed money to in the past.
 - o Bryan stated the conservation staff in Edgefield was supposed to work with stakeholders to figure out if the money was needed or could be pushed out if that hasn't happened then we need to work with Cully to make sure it does. There is process in place to handle issues like this if you must pay or not it should be a way to work through it.
 - o Bryan also brought up the communication between staff and the local chapters. COVID caused people to do a lot of stuff different, preferred vendor is one

thing. The NWTF is behind in time on computerized systems, outdated we did not invest in ourselves. We have a 1984 system and we struggle. We should have invested so when COVID happened it hurt us. So please keep in mind it is not smooth the preferred vendor has not been smooth, and supply and demand has hurt. So COVID will make us change and hopefully improve moving forward. Staff level should increase as we move forward.

- o Richard Plattenberger asked about more PPP money Bryan stated yes and it will help but only once. The key to our survival in the future is generating revenue through the current revenue stream and diversify banquets and keeping them out of just 3 months a year, development helping development grow they have the ability to grow the most with the organization and bring in big donors.
 - o Bryan asked if anyone knew how many members we have, we usually carry about 180K members we have pushed 200K currently we are pushing 100K memberships were tied solely to the banquets, so we extended then they dropped. Our membership turns over 50% every year. So, what that tells us if people don't attend a banquet, they don't renew their membership and we must get past this.
 - o Currently we are looking at options to generate membership it needs to be opened up outside the banquet system. We are living feast and famine currently. We need to get all the members we can, and we need to retain them. Currently there is a membership drive online and VA is leading with only 60-65 members.
 - o Roger Reynolds brought up members at their banquet last year and there is no record of it. Their chapter did a super raffle and sold 250 tickets every ticket got a membership so do these count? Robert stated the online membership drive is separate from an event or fundraiser. Robert Smith stated you are no longer required to have a banquet. So what you could have done went online and purchased membership.
 - o Bryan stated we need to think about how we can generate memberships and getting the folks back into the system is critical. We need to come up with other ways to generate memberships. Bottom line all ideas are on the table currently, the more we do this the better off the NWTF will be in the future. We were doing a bad job in the past and we need to do better.
- Roger Reynolds discussed local vendors Triple C Pottery and what they developed for their chapter. They have made mugs, jugs, coasters and they can do other things. If anyone is interested Roger can provide the contact information. They go good at banquets and they are inexpensive. The guy is good to work with and he is local. Robert asked about the possibility to adding him into the chapter packages like in years past.
 - Richard Plattenberger provided details on the June Board Meeting to be held on June 26 and 27. You can arrive anytime after 12:00pm. He has 5 cabins and most all of us can stay there. He has offered to feed us dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday morning. There will be no charge. Richard has purchased a turkey statue to present to him. Richard will be sending an email regarding the headcount for meals and lodging. The location is Anson County-Buchanan Shoals Sportsman's Preserve.
 - Ryan Stanley gave his farewells to the Board and attendees. Ryan is leaving to pursue other opportunities.

Robert Smith asked if there was any further business.

Henry Smith made a motion to adjourn the motion received a 2nd from Ken Moore.

Meeting adjourned at 6:02 pm.