

Cheoah Fund Board  
Conference Call  
January 5, 2009

Board Members: Chris Goudreau, Chair (NCWRC), Mark Cantrell (USFWS), Steve Reed (NCDWR), Jason Farmer (USFS), Mike Bolt (EBCI)  
Advisors: Jody Johns (Longview), Dick Eyestone (Friends of Lake Santeetlah)

Chairman Goudreau opened the call and listed two items for action – approval of the 2008 Fiduciary Report and review of the four grant proposals for 2009.

The 2008 Fiduciary Report prepared by DENR was reviewed. Cantrell moved to approve the report and Bolt seconded. The report was approved by consensus (Attachment A). Cantrell stated his appreciation to Reed and DENR for handling the financial aspects of the Fund Board.

Prior to reviewing the 2009 grant proposals, Goudreau provided an analysis of the funds available to the Board for allocation after considering funds already earmarked to existing projects and known future expenses, such as the gravel addition in 2010. Reed reminded everyone of another project that was funded in 2008. See Attachment B.

The first proposal reviewed was from the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee for \$10,000 to control exotic invasive plants on the tract of land they recently purchased in the Yellow Creek area. Questions were raised concerning how this proposal was related or coordinated with the USFS as an adjacent landowner and also with the Spiraea study being conducted by Hargraves for the USFS and USFWS along the Cheoah River. It was mentioned that LTLT has an overall management plan for the parcel, which includes some large-scale activities, such as controlled burns. Cantrell said he would provide the LTLT management plan to the Board members.

Questions were also raised about the need for ongoing exotic control (thus funding) and the magnitude (acres) of the effort. It was unclear if the exotic plants in the Yellow Creek area were actually contributing to problems in the Cheoah River corridor. Reed mentioned that he is going to meet with USFS and USFWS to discuss the Spiraea study on January 9. After further discussion it was decided to review the other proposals and then return to each for a decision.

The Board then reviewed the proposal from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission for \$10,000 to collect, culture and release Spottfin chubs, Wavy-rayed lampmussels and Rainbow mussel into the Cheoah River; and to continue experimental propagation of Appalachian Elktoe and develop propagation and culture techniques for production of releasable size animals for release in the Cheoah River. The proposal received favorable review in that it fulfills the goals of the Cheoah Fund and would directly affect the ecology of the Cheoah River. It was agreed that this would be a high priority for funding.

The third proposal reviewed was from American Whitewater for \$20,000 to remove vegetation from the Cheoah River for boater safety and biological restoration. There was discussion on whether this proposal was mainly for the benefit of recreation or ecological function. Concerns were raised about funding this project before the Environmental Assessment being conducted by the USFS was completed (projected to be in spring 2009) and the lack of specificity in the

proposal regarding the location and amount of vegetation to be removed. Several members expressed substantial concern that the proposal only marginally addressed the goals of the Cheoah Fund charter. A question was raised whether this project could be conducted without Cheoah Fund money. Several members suggested that if it were done with non-Fund money, then the process would be one controlled solely by various agency regulations and procedures.

The final proposal reviewed was from Brian Carson for \$8,000 to design and maintain a website to house documents for the Cheoah and Tallassee Fund Boards. Eyestone, who had professional experience in this arena, stated that he talked to several people to solicit input. He disclosed that Carson is his son-in-law. Eyestone explained the proposal in some detail and said that the product is very basic in nature. The website will not provide any analysis capabilities, just online storage and retrieval. The proposal includes additional maintenance fees to convert non-digital documents and for an annual archive of the site. There would also be fees to an outside web-hosting company. Since the proposal is designed to cover both the Cheoah and Tallassee Funds, discussion ensued on what might be an equitable dollar amount for each Fund to pay. It was recommended that the ratio be the same as the annual payment from APGI to each Fund. This would be 20% from the Cheoah Fund and 80% from the Tallassee Fund.

Returning to the LTLT proposal, it was decided that the questions raised by the Board would be submitted to LTLT for a response before making a final determination. Also, Reed will report to the Board on the outcome of his meeting with the USFS and USFWS concerning the relationship between the LTLT proposal and the Spiraea study currently underway. Upon hearing from Reed, Goudreau will prepare a letter to LTLT listing the Board's questions.

The WRC proposal was approved by consensus. Goudreau will send a letter to Steve Fraley notifying him that the grant was approved.

After further discussion, the Board decided not to fund the American Whitewater proposal. Goudreau will send a letter to Bob Hathcock outlining the concerns of the Board.

The Board decided to postpone a decision on the website proposal until Cantrell brought it to the Tallassee Fund Board for consideration.

There being no further business, the conference call was ended.