

Cheoah River Resource Management and Enhancement Fund

Annual Meeting – October 18, 2016

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Office
160 Zillicoa St
Asheville, NC 28801

Attendance:

Jason Farmer – USFS, 2016 Chair; Bryan Thompkins – USFWS; Fred Tarver – NCDEQ-Water Resources; Michael Bolt – EBCI; Myra Hair – Brookfield; Marshall Olson – Brookfield; Steve Fraley - NCWRC

Meeting Agenda

Introductions/Review of Agenda

Jason opened the meeting and noted that all decisions would be tentative pending concurrence from Chris Goudreau, NCWRC.

Update of Finances

A number of questions came up regarding the finances. We received clarification from Darren England regarding the finances. The \$1,701.28 deposit from DENR was an allocation from FERC. The \$30,000-line item for NCWRC was for fish and mussel propagation. A \$6,000-line item for the gravel placement was not included in the original financial statement because the contract was not signed until October (the financial statement was produced on September 30, 2016).

Updates of Funded Projects

1. Propagation of Olive Darters (CFI)

No updates had been received from CFI.

Steve Fraley provided some information. CFI has approximately 5 Olive Darters (all males). Their plan was to go to the Oconaluftee River the week of Oct 24 to collect more brood stock.

Bryan suggested getting a report (interim) to document their efforts. Myra suggested that Missy Petty be contacted at CFI in addition to Pat Rakes.

2. Gravel Augmentation (NCWRC)

Chris sent a preliminary report to Myra which she forwarded to the Board. Myra requested that each agency provide letters of support for the gravel augmentation work that has occurred.

Steve noted that the mussels are responding well to gravel additions. Next addition would occur in 2 years. There was some discussion about potential gravel sources. No sources were identified.

3. Captive culture and reintroduction of fishes and mussels (NCWRC)

Steve was going to re-send his interim report. He provided the following update:

NCWRC has the capacity to provide the target number of Appalachian elktoe now using Banded Sculpin as the host. Wavy-rayed lampmussel and Rainbow productions going well. Established a mussel grow-out facility on Santeetlah Lake. Plan to move all mussels to Santeetlah if current mussels are doing well. Have not reared any Spotfin Chubs at Marion in several years. CFI will release approximately 300 this year. Spotfin Chub monitoring has shown that the population is exceeding expectations – higher densities than the Little Tennessee River population. Will begin more intensive surveys. They are well established in the Yellow Creek to Dam reach. Lower reach of the river will be the focal point of future releases.

More mussels will be released next summer and additional surveys will be completed.

The Slippershell mussel was salvaged from the Little Tennessee River. These mussels are being held in the hatchery. They were spawned and some mussels released into the Cheoah River. A total of approximately 1,000 mussels released into the Cheoah River this year.

Steve is working on a 3-year report for all of the reintroductions.

Review Fund Proposals for 2016

Steve provided a proposal to extend the ongoing reintroduction work by 3 years. He noted that Spotfin Chub stocking may be completed within 3 years. He is now proposing to reintroduce 3 additional species. The project would require \$5,000/year for 3 years.

CFI provided a proposal for continued propagation of Spotfin Chubs. The board had a number of questions about the proposal (cost of project, need for the work considering ongoing work by NCWRC). Jason would follow up with CFI to get clarification on this proposal.

Ryan McManamay submitted a proposal for last year but the Board did not approve of the funding. His proposal was discussed again but not approved.

Cheoah River Monitoring Discussion

Steve stated that we need to look at a list of species for restoration.

Bryan will schedule a meeting in the first part of 2017 to discuss restoration goals/objectives and next steps.

Other Fund Board Business

Select Chair for 2017

Fred Tarver was selected as the chair for 2017.

Review Action Items

Jason will get interim report from CFI on ongoing work. Check with Chris Goudreau on his vote for/against NCWRC's proposal. Contact CFT about their current proposal. Follow up with Chris on Ryan McManamay's proposal.

Bryan will schedule a restoration/monitoring meeting
