

Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors of the Carolina Wetlands Association

March 18, 2019

Location: Restoration Systems, 1101 Haynes Street, Suite 211, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

Board members in attendance:

In person: Rick Savage, Kim Matthews, Kristie Gianopulos, George Howard, Heather Clarkson, Curt Richardson

On phone: Tara Allden, Kristine Cherry, Geoff Gisler, Chad Guthrie

Non-board members in attendance:

In person: Virginia Baker Daniel, Sue Ellen Johnson, Norton Webster, Mark Selinger, Alvin Braswell

On phone: Robert Truesdale

6:40 Meeting Called to Order

Adoption of the Agenda and Minutes: Heather C. motioned, George H. seconded, all in favor

Mark Selinger – Swamp School

Mr. Selinger introduced himself to the board. He runs the Swamp School, which provides training to delineators, K-12, and consultants, about 1000 students per year. They are headquartered in NC and just created a training classroom in Angier. He has several staff and has trained in several countries (Asia area mentioned). Mr. Selinger said that his experience has been that NC is the “worst market for a wetland consultant” (he struggles to get students). He has been here in NC for 20 years and he thinks it’s the lack of enforcement causing this problem.

WOTUS Update – Geoff Gisler

Geoff reported that the Corps and EPA denied their request to extend the comment period beyond April 15th. He is requesting that we make a comment; he can start an outline and flesh out some questions he needs answers to for their own comment. He said the more science, the letter, especially that focused on flooding as an ecosystem service. He is looking for information on wetland storage capacity and how that relates to economic damage in particular, so if anyone has stats on this, please send them to Geoff soon. He recommended that we put in a comment, and also write a shorter letter especially on flooding sent to NCDEQ’s Secretary Regan and the governor’s office. These are what’s important about wetlands and what we need to do to protect them. We also need to issue something to our supporters separately with talking points. To summarize, we need to:

1. Comments to the EPA by April 15, 2019
2. Letter to NCDEQ and SCDHEC Secretaries and state governor’s offices
3. Public newsletter supporters request to comment with talking points

Carbon Farming – Curt Richardson

Curt R. gave a presentation about a project he is leading creating a carbon farm in eastern NC, adjacent to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. He did a podcast with The Green Guy, available online (<https://greenguymedia.com/03-17-2019-curt-richardson-duke-university/>). Curt’s the project is focused on restoring drained peatlands and storing carbon in former agriculture wetlands in coastal NC. He had to create credits according to the American Carbon Registry Plan (ACR). To verify, they are comparing reference to restored (10 year old) to drained pocosin in terms of above and below ground carbon. Credits are assessed based on the difference of what’s coming off the drained sites and the restored sites (to show how much benefit you can get from restoration by rewetting).

7:10 Board Retreat – Rick and Kim

- April 6 at Dix Conference Center on Mid Pines Road in South Raleigh – going to be 10:00am to 3:00pm with lunch provided
- Strategy/Business Plan work – we will be working to finalize our Business Plan
- Making the Core Competencies Happen – we will be coming up with ideas for how to implement our Core Competencies.

7:20 Committee Reports

- Program Committee
 - Wetland Treasures – have been chosen, tour dates are mostly final. These will be announced the beginning of April with a press release and website page.
 - Reptile and Amphibians Day (Alvin and Kim attended; 7,000 people attended; Alvin had animals to show people) and Cary Arbor Day (Ginny, Eesha D. and Chelsey Trent, a new volunteer attended)
 - Future Wetlands Matter Events (tabled for this meeting)
- Science Committee - Ginny/Robert
 - State of the Wetlands Report – The report is up on the website now. They are still working on a paper form.
 - RAMSAR – We have about half of the online application filled out. George has delegated his sections to an employee (Matthew Harwell) to help more.
- Executive Committee - Rick
 - Biannual Report was distributed to board members present and will be posted soon to the website.
 - Committee signed on to SELC's request for comment period extension.
 - Meetings with partners/others – Natural and Working Lands Workgroups (Governor Cooper's initiative), Cary Environmental Advisory Board suggested that the town be carbon neutral by 2045 and this is going to be adopted.
- Development Committee - Kim
 - Survey of Wetland Research in the Carolinas – to be reported at the WRRRI conference Mar 22nd. Survey sent to 70 researchers and only 11 or 12 responded so far.
 - Track It Forward – Board members and some committee members should look for an email invitation to join and track your volunteer hours for CarWA. This will help us when we apply for grants to show our volunteer contributions but also then later to track match.
 - Report an Event – There is a page on our website for people to let CarWA know about an event going on so it can go on the calendar.
 - Social Media/Newsletter update – We have 669 Facebook followers now and 641 newsletter subscribers.
- Financial Report - Chad
 - Balance – Our balance in the bank and Paypal totals \$6,278.87.
 - Quickbooks – We purchased this through TechSoup, which sells software for nonprofits at a discounted rate, along with training. Chad G. is planning to donate this cost back to CarWA.
 - Change of banks – we are now banking with First Citizens (free for nonprofits). Chad reported that donations have tapered off since the beginning of the year.

WRRRI Conference Update – Rick

We will be sponsors, exhibitors, and presenters at the NC WRRRI conference Mar 21 and 22, 2019. We are moderating 2 wetlands sessions; one has 4 speakers and one is a panel discussion focused on WOTUS changes and how they are impacting wetlands in NC. Panel members are expected to be Geoff Gisler, John Dorney, and Norton Webster.

8:18pm Adjourn – Kim M. motioned and George H. seconded, all in favor