

Meeting Minutes for Board of the Carolina Wetlands Association meeting - July 15, 2019

Location: Restoration Systems 1101 Haynes St, Raleigh, NC 27604

Board members in attendance:

In person: Rick Savage, Kim Matthews, Kristie Gianopulos, George Howard, George Matthis

On phone: Kristine Cherry, Geoff Gisler, Chad Guthrie, Heather Clarkson

Non-board members in attendance:

On phone (non in person): Robert Truesdale, Norton Webster, Rachel Massa

Meeting Called to order – 6:32pm

Kim M. made a motion to move two agenda items to a later meeting, Kristie G. seconded, all in favor (items at end of meeting minutes)

It was announced that starting Monday, July 15, **Alvin Braswell** would be the NC Museum of Natural Sciences full-time Interim Director (6-8 Months).

Open board position (anticipated):

- Need someone with fund raising or nonprofit experience or education experience.
- Minority or coastal person a plus. It was suggested that someone from the Coastal Land Trust may be a good choice. Kristie G. suggested trying to get SC person.
- Send recommendations to nominations committee

Strategy Plan – Next steps

- Need to review and approve plan. Attendees spent good deal of time on the strategy plan, reviewing the goals and the objectives. Some things were reworded, some objectives were combined, some dropped, resulting in a final draft Strategy Plan approved by the end of the discussion. Kim M. made a motion to approve the draft Strategy Plan, George H. seconded, all in favor. The plan is meant to address the next three years, understanding that some of the objectives will carry into the years after that. Measures of success and methods of implementation are assigned to committees by the Executive Committee. They are not in the plan now, but a workplan will be developed with these.
- Kim M. plans to publicize the Strategy Plan on social media and asked board members to support and share it once she does.

Update on fund raising efforts with business community –

- George H. gave an update on this effort. He and Norton are working together on a list of companies to approach with requests for funding, generally around \$500. They have developed letter to send out and will begin calling and meeting with them soon. George H. said he would try to check off one per week. They will also ask them to make their employees aware of Carolina Wetlands. The expectation is that initial contributions would open the door for us to get sponsorships and maybe larger donations in the future.
- We should tell donors what we need the money for – bookkeeper, insurance, matching funds for grants.
- There was some discussion about what someone would get as a thank you for a \$500 or more donation – an annual report sent to them, other recognition like major supporters mentioned on website.

Fundraising/volunteers:

- Need all board members to assist
- Need volunteers to help committees and ask people to help committees
- We would like to hold a small meet and greet/volunteer appreciation event with sponsor-provided food. Kim M. was asking for ideas as to who could sponsor that.
- Remember to track your volunteer hours in the app or website "Track it Forward". Kim can give you the password (Carolina Wetlands email to log in) if you need it.

Training/workshop to educate Local decision-maker/officials and landowners (Rick, Kim, Norton):

- NC Coastal Conference in November – Rick and Kim talked with Anna Martin and John Fear about doing a trial run of the training session at the conference. Carolina Wetlands has been given a 1.5 hr session for the decision-maker workshop pilot, and we may submit abstracts for shorter talks too, on things like Wetland Treasures program, etc. This will have a broad audience in attendance.
- Develop a committee/team to focus on this effort – Rick has already begun to talk to people to gauge their interest (see Implementation Team below).

Events for the Fall

- Meeting of Bill Mitsch and his interest in support of Carolina Wetlands; he is interested in helping with an event or something else.
- Tours – perhaps an older Wetland Treasure site or a constructed/restored wetland site

Conferences attended

- Asheville AEES Conference (Read summary below)
- Coastal Summit at Havelock (Read summary below)

EEG (Environmental Enhancement Grant) from the NC Attorney General – Kristine Cherry offered to help with this grant proposal. This is a reimbursement grant, but we could use it for a research or education project. Letter of interest is due soon, with proposal to follow if they choose to ask for one.

EPA Grant – Revisit concerns about the grant application and update status of steps to be more organizational stable to accept grant funding.

- **Requirements to enter into a subaward agreement**
 - Bookkeeper, maybe a CPA (imperative)
 - Board insurance (imperative)
 - Error and omission insurance
 - Officers and director's insurance
 - 40-50K in bank (maybe 20K)

Finance Report

- Since the last board meeting, we have not had much in expenses or donations. Total funds are \$5,463.58 (Paypal + bank). Donations have been \$181.13 and expenses \$832.09.

RAMSAR application report

- Curt Richardson needs to finish a few sections; George H talking on Friday to him about that.

Motion to adjourn was made by Rick S, Kim M. seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

Agenda item moved to next meeting:

- Issues with current committees having the volunteers to support efforts
 - Volunteer retainment and recruitment
 - Need to identify specific subcommittees?
- Issues with advertising for unpaid interns/volunteers
 - How will they be managed?
 - Who do we advertise to?

Science Committee Status Report

- Last meeting: May 15, 2019; next meeting : August 28, 2019

Activities Since May -

- outreach to potential new members
- updates to subcommittees
 - state of the wetlands (SOTW) - Robert and Ginny to meet in July
 - reminders out on other wetland science fact sheets (e.g., pocosins, carbon, water quality)

Supporting Material

Implementation Team (to help with Workshop and Volunteer Monitoring)

1. Norton Webster
2. Rachel Massa
3. Eric Smits
4. Aissa Feldman
5. Grayson Hughes
6. Kelley Robbins-Thompson
7. Luma Kennedy
8. Lizzy Stokes-Cawley
9. April O'Leary
10. Emily Barrett
11. Greg Couch
12. Chelsea Trant
13. Linda Wendling
14. David Shouse
15. Sue Ellen Johnson?

Events

- **American Ecological Engineering Society Meeting – Asheville, June 4-6, 2019**

Rick attended the entire 3 days, Kim and Norton attended the first day. There were 210 attendees from university researchers and engineering companies. We talked up the fact that we intend to provide workshops in the Coastal Plain about the value of wetlands, wetland restoration/enhancement, wetland creation, and nature-based solution. We pointed out that if we could change this mind set, then this would open doors to potential work for them. (It is important to note that we will not favor any one but they would just be on the list of potential contractors. We will need to refine this position to make sure we are clear.)

They all were interested and wanted to jump on being a partner. We pointed out that we would need help in pulling this off (financial implied, sometimes specifically mentioned, expertise is another possibility). The organization contacted were:

1. Jake Farber -- South Wings; jake@southwings.org
2. Hunter Freeman -- WithersRavenel; hfreedman@withersravenel.com, Raleigh NC
3. Bob Taylor; btaylor@withersravenel.com
4. Christopher A. Tomsic -- Water & Land Solutions; tomsic@waterlandsolutions.com
5. Tucker S. Creed -- Palmetto Creek Partners, LLC
6. Jake Byers -- Ecosystem Planning & Restoration; jbyers@eprusa.net
7. Anthony Brais -- RES; abrais@res.us
8. Debbie Stringer -- Stalite Environmental; dstringer@stalite.com
9. Holland Youngman -- Michael Baker International; holland.youngman@mbakerintl.com
10. Kathleen M. McKeithan; katie.mckeithan@mbakerintl.com Cary NC

11. Jason York; jason.york@mbakerintl.com
12. Brandon Spaugh -- North State Environmental; bspaugh@nsenv.com
13. Jeffery Mihalik -- Copperhead Consulting; jmihalik@copperheadconsulting.com
14. Spencer -- Baker Grading & Landscaping; spencer@bakerlandscaping.com
15. Nicole Macaluso Millns -- Wildlands Engineering; nmillns@wildlandseng.com
16. Michael Orcino -- MSE group; morcino@msegroup.com
17. Holly Miller -- SEPI; hmillers@sepiinc.com
18. Lee Lance -- Ecobot; lee@ecobotapp.com
19. Jeremy Swheve; jeremy@ecobotapp.com
20. Brad Kee -- Kee Mapping & Surveying; brad@keemap.com
21. Adam Carter and Wesley Johnson -- Wetland Solutions LLC, wesley@wetlandnc.com,
adam@wetlandnc.com

Also, at this meeting we got **Dr. Bill Mitsch** interested in supporting the organization. He is interested in helping with our workshops, so this is a possibility in the works. Kim and Norton also met with Dan Hitchcock (on our Board from SC) and Bill Mitsch and they talked about doing a significant event in SC, maybe by the end of the year.

- **Resiliency Summit by NC DEQ and NC Coastal Federation -- Havelock, NC June 11-12**

Rick Savage attended the summit. He talked with several “citizens” who say that this summit was good, but the information needed to get down further, to the county commissioners, town officials, elected officials. In other words, the information presented at the summit was not getting to the implementors/decision makers. Second, he talked to Marlina Byrne (NC Office of Resiliency and Recovery) who with Jess Whitehead (hired to head the Resilience part of NCORR) and Amanda Martin will work with the Natural and Working lands group and organizations who want to help in the Coastal Resilience effort. He talked to Marlina about our proposal to do workshops on the value of wetlands/nature-based solutions to local communities. She was very interested and felt that NCORR should be able to help. Rick also talked to Whitney Jenkins (Coastal Reserve/NEERS; doing coastal training) about the workshops to the local communities and Whitney is very much on board. She can help with logistics, places to have the workshops, local contacts, etc. Rick talked briefly to Lauren Kolodij, Deputy Director NC Coastal Federation and expressed our interest in getting to know each other better and she agreed. Rick also talked quite a bit with Cat Bowler of Audubon (Coastal Resiliency Program Manager) and she says she is interested in helping with this effort and that Audubon would be also.

George Howard and Norton Webster list of initial contacts for funding:

- Land Management Group (Rob Moul)
- Withers and Raveland (Sam Raveland)

- Land Mechanics (Lloyd Glover)
- North State Environmental (Darryl Westmoreland)
- Axiom (Grant Lewis)
- Moffat and Nicol (Jerry McCrain)
- RES (Daniel Ramsey?)
- Stantec (Grant Ginn)
- Wildlands (Sean Wilkerson)
- EPR (Kevin Tweedy)
- Water and Land Solutions (Adam McIntyre)
- KCI (Tim Morris)
- Palustrine Group (Tommy Cousins)
- McGriff Insurance (Ken Peebles)
- SEPI
- McAdams Group
- Kimley Horn
- HDR

George Howard letter to potential funders (list above):

Dear [XXXX], I hope you are well and [Your Co.] is thriving. I have a tremendous respect for your firm. I am writing you and some other environmental business owners – in particular companies that deal with WETLANDS -- to introduce your company to the Carolina Wetland Association (CARWA).

I am on the board of the CARWA and want to familiarize you with the new conservation group, and hopefully generate some participation and support for us. Strong support for wetland protection is absolutely critical to both our businesses, and RS is a strong supporter of CARWA.

Here are some key facts:

- CARWA is the ONLY conservation non-profit in the Carolinas working exclusively to protect and appreciate wetlands.
- Wetlands policy and protection is subject to ROLL BACK in many forms. ROLL BACKS are not good for our business.
- Public appreciation of wetlands seems to be waning, while resentment of regulation seems to be growing.

I would like to follow-up with you to further describe CARWA and how they can support the wetland resource -- that supports us!

Can I buy you lunch or have a call? I will have Alexis Bond of RS follow up with you or others to coordinate a time. Thanks a lot for letting me know

I would also appreciate you emailing this link CARWA to your employees to let them know of CARWA, and perhaps join or support us:

<http://carolinawetlands.org/> We meet six times a year with the following dates coming up: XXXXX CARWA is a great way for your wetland professionals to network and receive valuable policy briefings outside the office.

Thanks, [], I look forward to hearing from you.

KIM's comments on letter/questions:

Overall the message looks good. I think some clarity on what actions you want from them might be needed.

On the website, there is a link to How You Can Support Us - <http://carolinawetlands.org/index.php/support-us/>
Either through volunteering or donations so you might to add that link.

or add that they can sign-up for our newsletter on this link - <http://carolinawetlands.org/index.php/newsletters/>

Here is another thought for maybe a follow-up message - would be to have a "meet and greet" event in August or September where it is just an informational session about the organization? You could invite them to that?

As for eye-candy - we have the Annual report that talks about what we have done: <http://carolinawetlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/biannual-report-2017-2018-final.pdf>

OR we (a.k.a. Kristie) could create a one-page document summarize our Strategic plan which would focus on our future plans.