



North Carolina
**WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Winter 2016



2015 | Annual
Report



GRACE *Under* PRESSURE

by Tim Gestwicki, Chief Executive Officer

Twelve months. Three hundred sixty-five days. Winter, spring, summer and fall. When looking back over this past year, and as readers will see throughout this annual report, it was a very positive year for the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. These positive outcomes, however, didn't come easily, not by any stretch of the imagination. Our success in 2015 was rooted in tenacity, doggedness and resolve, especially our efforts in the policy and protection arena of our strategic plan.

Throughout the year, as you will read about in this annual report, our programs blossomed, new initiatives were born and direct, hands-on conservation took place across the state. That's exactly what you should expect from the best conservation staff and board in the country. And it's exactly what we pledge to continue for our supporters, and for the partners, agencies and resources that depend on us.

The year ended with good news on many fronts. After years of effort, a license agreement was finally issued for the Catawba River hydropower interests, an agreement that includes a huge conservation mitigation package, tax incentives for conservation easements and a phoenix-like rebirth of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. All very good news. In looking back, it was the dog days of summer that were so brutal for conservation advocates in the General Assembly and this is what NCWF can be most proud of: Persevering with grace under pressure.

In Raleigh there are some elected officials who are wildlife advocates, but by and large attacks on conservation safeguards kept coming in waves like platoons of tundra swans rolling into the fields of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. These waves, however, were not majestic in any sense but rather crushing, an onslaught both swift and sustained throughout the long legislative session. There were maneuvers to strip conservation agency budgets, weaken authorities and roll back basic conservation tenets, safeguards and guiding principles. Some were staggering, some were downright nefarious and some were blatant kowtows to the commercialization of natural resources. These often were delivered with dog whistle politics under the guise of jobs and economic growth.

Regardless of how some elected officials comported themselves—especially if their attempts were ever questioned or in jeopardy of being thwarted—NCWF never ceded the higher ground to often outlandish behavior and tactics occurring in the legislature. We never took to name calling or spreading false innuendos or fabrications. We chose to instead keep data, science and non-partisanship at the forefront of our positions.

Certainly professional conservation employs emotion and passion as that is what drives our commitment, but effective conservation marries those drivers with foundational convictions. That is why regardless of the setbacks in policy that occurred in 2015, we believe that our stewardship will result in a North Carolina with bountiful and diverse wildlife, including all species of wild flora and fauna, that is valued by its citizens and elected officials, and sustainably managed for future generations. And we believe that our strength is derived from values-driven leadership, science-based decision making, a non-partisan approach to policy, inclusivity of broad wildlife interests and perspectives, and partnering with organizations and individuals who share our vision and our passion for wildlife.

And may all the members of the General Assembly, and those running for election in the fall, understand that we are up to the task. We are not flagging. We are mobilizing. And we are doubling down on our commitment to help reclaim North Carolina's mantle as the beacon of common sense conservation in the South. **NC WF**

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North Carolina WILDLIFE FEDERATION Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

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HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE FOR WILDLIFE

What does a year of fighting tooth and nail for wildlife conservation look like? A year of hard work in the woods and in the courts, around a conference table and across the entire state? A year of celebration, achievements and knuckling down for tough issues to come?

It looks a little like this >>



NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

MISSION To protect, conserve and restore North Carolina wildlife and habitat.

VISION Our stewardship will result in a North Carolina with bountiful and diverse wildlife, including all species of wild flora and fauna, that is valued by its citizens and elected officials, and sustainably managed for future generations.

Our strength is derived from values driven leadership – science-based decision making; non-partisan approach to policy; stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources; inclusivity of broad wildlife interests and perspectives; and partnering with organizations and individuals who share our vision and our passion for wildlife.

GOALS Toward that vision, we will:

POLICY AND PROTECTION – Strongly influence state and federal policy that affects wildlife and habitat in North Carolina using established conservation models to guide our positions.

NETWORK OF IMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT – Foster a diverse, robust network of chapters, members, affiliates and partners; a network fortified by a variety of wildlife and outdoor interests.

EXPERIENCE AND LEARN – Enhance and expand opportunities for youth and adults that foster awareness and appreciation of wildlife and the important role healthy habitat plays in sustaining wildlife and humanity.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS – Sponsor and support programs for the enjoyment and conservation of wildlife and habitat, including ethical and sustainable outdoor recreation pursuits.

AHEAD OF THE GAME / To bring sporting groups together, NCWF hosts a sportsmen's forum and roundtable to plan coordination for the upcoming legislative session.

TRAWL ALERT / NCWF provides testimony and comments to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council regarding the monitoring of bycatch of river herring and shad in the Midwater Trawl Fishery. In North Carolina, as well as other states along the Atlantic coast, river herring and shad have been important components of both cultural traditions and recreational and commercial fisheries. Recent population declines have led to severe reductions in commercial and recreational catch limits, year-round closure of the river herring fisheries, significant diminution of the forage base, and loss of many festivals and other events centered around these fishes that are important to the cultures and economies of eastern North Carolina communities.



CAROLINA CAUCUS / NCWF sponsors a legislative reception for the Sportsmen's Caucus in Raleigh.

NO SMALL CONCERN / At the winter meeting of the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission, NCWF and its legal team provide testimony on the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan encouraging the Commission to adopt rules and subsequent rulemakings that put into place meaningful protections for the millions of juvenile finfish that are caught and discarded each year in the state's shrimp trawl fishery and for the fragile habitat areas that are essential to species development. Supporting a sustainable shrimp harvest and conserving important marine species and their habitat are central to the mission of the N.C. Wildlife Federation.



ONE WILD CITY / Charlotte makes list of top 10 wildlife cities in USA, according to a National Wildlife Federation report. "With nature preserves, greenways, riparian buffers, creek system and urban gardens, Charlotte is a haven for wildlife," says Tim Gestwicki, CEO of the N.C. Wildlife Federation. "The region has osprey nesting on Mountain Island Lake, barred owls throughout inner city neighborhoods, peregrine falcons downtown, and a host of wildlife species in and around the Queen City. And Charlotte is fortunate to have city leaders who value natural resources as well as many passionate and dedicated volunteers and Wildlife Federation members in our local CROWN chapter who are actively nurturing urban wildlife gardens, and restoring habitat for imperiled pollinators."

>> A year of fighting tooth and nail for wildlife conservation <<



WELCOME TO THE CLUB / The Pamlico-Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists formally launch as a new chapter of NCWF.

PADDLE PUB / *9 Top River Trips for Wildlife* is released. Published by NCWF, the list details the top places to enjoy wildlife and wildlife-associated activities while paddling in the state. As the Federation suggests, call it a bucket list, a wish list, or a life list. The Federation urges wildlife enthusiasts to grab their paddles, and check out these unforgettable North Carolina paddling destinations that have inspired NCWF leaders.

BIOFUEL BRAKES / As the Department of Energy moves forward its program for funding southeast field trials of engineered high-energy crops, the Federation DOE to use a well-established method (called a Weed Risk Assessment) to assess invasiveness of proposed plants, exclude highly-invasive plants from certain programs, and implement Best Management Practices for those plants that are approved during the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement process.

RIGHT THING TO DO / NCWF urges the National Marine Fisheries Service to expand critical habitat for the highly endangered North Atlantic right whale offshore of North Carolina.

PUBLIC FORESTS MANAGEMENT /

NCWF is at the forefront working within three different stakeholder groups to work towards reaching consensus over the revisions to the management plans for the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests. Given that there are more than a million acres of western North Carolina public lands at stake, there is a broad range of interests, user objectives, and stakeholders voicing opinions as to how these forests will be managed for the next 15 -20 years. The N.C. Wildlife Federation is working with Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council as participating observers and is represented on the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership collaborative and Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala-Pisgah Plan Revision.

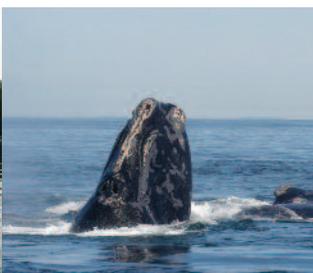
NCWF wildlife scientists and advisors are concerned about plummeting wildlife populations on these two forests. To that end, on management areas designated for active management we support prescribed burning, and timber stand improvement and other management activities in the repair, recovery, restoration, and maintenance of a balanced distribution of habitat conditions on National Forest lands in the Southern Appalachians. We believe this full complement of options is essential for the reintroduction of American chestnut, the improvement of trout stream riparian zones, the return of open woodland conditions, meadows, and fire-adapted ecosystems once prevalent in the mountains. A related matter is the need for protection of old growth forest, which is also under-represented on these forest units. Several wildlife species such as bear, owls, hawks, squirrels and many songbirds require old growth habitat.

NCWF will work towards achieving an overall healthy forest landscape, and what it takes to create that

type of mixed forest that sustains a wide range of wildlife populations. We envision a desirable mosaic ranging from fields and scrubby edge habitats to midstory and old growth dense forests.



USFWS



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ANOTHER CITY FOR WILDLIFE / Concord becomes certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat.

CLIMATE CHANGE / NCWF joins with the Institute for the Environment at UNC-Chapel Hill on a series of videos that tell the story of how regular North Carolina citizens are experiencing the impacts of climate change on their daily lives and in the field.



CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCILWOMAN PATSY KINSEY WITH NWF CEO COLIN O'MARA

CHARLOTTE SHINDIG / Charlotte certified as Community Wildlife Habitat with a celebratory festival.

BITTER DRILL PILL / NCWF signs letters of concern regarding seismic testing permit applications to the N.C. Division of Coastal Management. Exploratory drilling for oil and gas off the state's coast is opened up by Obama Administration much to the chagrin of NCWF, anglers, coastal communities, and conservationists.

SEEING RED / Myths, misinformation and mismanagement all create a boiling point with regards to the last known wild population of red wolves in the world. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service charged the Wildlife Management Institute to complete a review of the Red Wolf Recovery Program which was released for public comment. NCWF believes that the supporting science, program management, and human dimension discussions throughout the document demonstrate that the red wolf reintroduction and recovery program is fundamentally sound. Red wolves are successfully reproducing in the wild. Adaptive management efforts to address hybridization with coyotes, reduce gunshot mortality, and landowner-community relations are important measures to ensure the red wolf's continued success in the wild. There is much work to be done and data to be collected, and NCWF strongly urges USFWS to refine and strengthen the recovery program, rather than abandoning this crucially important work. Moving forward will inevitably need to include public-private partnerships and new management tools.

>> *A year of hard work in the woods*

SOUND SOLUTIONS CAMPAIGN /

Initiated in 2014, NCWF's Sound Solutions campaign is in full swing. The campaign takes a comprehensive approach to protecting and sustaining North Carolina's coastal waters. Sound Solutions is just what its title refers to—both literally and figuratively. It is about pursuing, finding, and advocating for the soundest, most rational policy solutions to the state's pressing coastal issues and problems.

NCWF took a three-pronged approach to this comprehensive, adaptive campaign. The campaign has presented policy recommendations on how to better protect our coastal habitat, how to better manage our marine fisheries, and how to modernize and fishing gear and methods used in the state's coastal waters.

NCWF made great strides forward with Sound Solutions in 2015. Some highlights include:

- >> In May, the Federation released its public policy recommendations at a press conference in Morehead City. David Knight, NCWF's marine fisheries policy advisor, conducted numerous one-on-one interviews over a year's period with commercial fishermen, seafood dealers and vendors, recreational fishing guides, scientists, coastal business people, and other experts and interested parties. From these interviews and research, the Campaign determined the policy recommendations that we believed would move the state toward better coastal management.
- >> WRAL produced a documentary called Net Effects with well-known news anchor David Crabtree serving as narrator. The hour-long documentary was shown in prime time on its television network across the state. It fairly presented the state of our coast, and the problems and controversies surrounding these issues. NCWF played a significant role in the development of this timely documentary.
- >> The *Raleigh New & Observer*, the state's leading newspaper, ran a three-part series on the problems facing our marine fisheries. The N&O, as did other newspapers across the state, published periodic editorials, articles, and letters to the editor on the topic. The Sound Solutions campaign received radio and television coverage during the year.

It was an active year for the Sound Solutions campaign. 2016 looks to be just as busy and challenging, with MFC having to still make some big decisions on the implementation of the southern flounder plan, as well as moving forward on the reduction of by-catch from the large shrimp trawlers in our sounds. The Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) is scheduled to be completed in 2016, and NCWF has helped steer the direction of that plan. With the implementation phase starting up this year, NCWF will be working with MFC, the state's marine fisheries division, and other stakeholders in moving forward different facets of the plan. Oyster restoration, in particular, will be a key priority for the campaign this year, through the CHPP and other venues.



and in the courts and across the entire state <<

DEER DISASTER / Summer 2015 was dominated by legislative work, and much of that surrounded the deer farming issue as commercial interests pour political support to curry high-powered politicians in favor of high-stakes changes in how and what agency manages deer farming. NCWF has major concerns over expansion of the industry in North Carolina, based on concerns of chronic wasting disease transmission to wild deer and elk herds.

REWARD OFFERED / NCWF and Coastal Conservation Association join to offer a crime tip reward after a juvenile loggerhead sea turtle was found on the Portsmouth flats of North Core Banks. A post-mortem report by doctors at the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine Center for Marine Sciences and Technology concluded that death was caused by human-inflicted blunt force trauma to the brain.

PERMANENT FIX / NCWF works with land trusts in support of federal legislation (the Conservation Easement Incentive Act) that permanently provides land protection tools for private landowners.

PUBLIC LOSS / The Nantahala National Forest and its flora and fauna is not private property. It belongs to all citizens with the U.S. Forest Service being charged with stewardship of natural resources and the conservation of those resources. Thus, NCWF files an objection letter against USFS Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Laurel Creek Property Owners Access Across National Forest Systems Lands Project for proposed roads through public lands to private in-holdings.

HIGH MARKS / NCWF submits a letter of support for the 2015 draft Wildlife Action Plan and offers an enthusiastic commendation to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for a job well done. The Federation points out the habitat descriptions and recommendations that will be very helpful to land resource managers, resource agencies and landowners who must make decisions regarding species and habitat protection. Recommendations in the plan will be used to implement conservation efforts and influence management decisions over the next 10 years.





NO SMOKE / NCWF supports the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's issuance of a strong rule under the Clean Power Plan for reducing harmful carbon emissions. This serves as a centerpiece of the Climate Action Plan and spurs wildlife-friendly renewable energy.

AWARD APPLAUSE / At the 52nd Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, highlights include the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards banquet and presentations by the N.C. Falconers Guild, USFWS on red wolves and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation on elk and other western North Carolina wildlife.

ROAD RASH / Monroe Road appeal issues linger. NCWF files an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit to prevent the negative consequences of sprawl flowing from unnecessary road construction projects and to protect the integrity of air quality, wetlands and protected species within the proposed corridor. This ill-conceived road saga and corresponding appeal challenges the adequacy of the environmental analysis for the Monroe Connector/Bypass Toll Road.

TEAMING FOR WILD / Orvis and NCWF participate in a "Get Outdoors" campaign.

>> *A year of
celebration
&
achievement* <<



TROUT TROUBLE / NCWF participates in a mountain trout health summit. Recent years have seen a plethora of threats, issues and headlines related to trout health in North Carolina. With the recent discoveries of gill lice and whirling disease in the region, the time is right to increase communication, discussion, and collaborative problem-solving related to trout health issues.

NET GAIN / Sound Solutions campaign receives boost when “Net Effect,” a one-hour documentary hosted by WRAL News in Raleigh, re-airs in Wilmington, covering the state of North Carolina’s marine fisheries including NCWF and our conservation partners’ perspectives and solutions.

HUNT EXPANSIONS / Proposed regulation changes to allow elk and alligator hunting in North Carolina prompts response from the Federation. We believe that the record of survey and study for alligators in North Carolina does not conclude that alligators are well suited for a general harvest season at this time. North Carolina is the northern-most limit of distribution for alligators. The state’s elk population could support a nominal harvest since North Carolina now has a well-established and widely distributed elk herd in far western parts of the state. The introduction and spread of elk from the initial stocking several years ago on the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has resulted in migration of elk from public lands to private lands, with commensurate depredation and other co-existence issues for some landowners. An application process that generates funds to help administer the elk management plan with priority consideration to invest realized funds into further elk habitat conservation could bolster conservation work. NCWF and our partners such as The Conservation Fund, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and NCWRC have worked diligently on this issue. NCWF has also entered into a long-term lease on a tract of land elk inhabit.



DUANE RAVER

FLATFISH KERFUFFLE / In November, the Marine Fisheries Commission passes a supplement to the southern flounder management plan that was intended to reduce the overall catch of the flounder. After months of prodding and pushing by the Federation and other resource-minded groups, and delays and setbacks effected by legislative meddling and interference, MFC finally made significant steps in protecting the southern flounder. This reduction in catch will give the flounder a better opportunity to sustain itself. There was a need for a supplement because of the dire situation that the southern flounder has been in for many years in North Carolina. Up until the November meeting, MFC had not taken any concrete measures to protect the southern flounder. So while some may say the commission didn’t go far enough, it is important that it did indeed take significant immediate steps to sustain our southern flounder population.



USFWS

LCWF REVIVED / The Land and Water Conservation Fund, a 50-year symbol of nonpartisan conservation legislation, expires in Congress due to political shenanigans and outright attacks on public lands in America. Fortunately, champions from the sporting, conservation and outdoor recreation communities keep extolling the values of this highly effective conservation tool, a program that does not need or receive any taxpayer monies but is funded by reinvesting a portion of oil and gas extraction leases back into our public lands. North Carolina Senator Richard Burr champions the program and its full reauthorization, ardently stating often that LWCF is “dollar for dollar the most effective government program that has ever existed.” During the waning days of Congress, the Fund receives new life as it was temporarily funded. There’s more work to be done in 2016 for this program.

POLLINATOR PROGRAM BUDS / The Butterfly Highway is a statewide conservation initiative that aims to restore native pollinator habitats to areas impacted by urbanization, land use change and agriculture. From backyard pollinator “pit stops” to large-scale utility right-of-way habitat restoration, the project goal is to create a network of native flowering plants to support butterflies, bees, birds and other pollen and nectar-dependent wildlife. These green spaces and pollinator gardens will connect and thread throughout North Carolina to create the Butterfly Highway.

THE BUTTERFLY HIGHWAY
A ROADMAP FOR POLLINATOR & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

This property provides food and habitat for native insects and wildlife that help pollinate and protect North Carolina's plant and food sources. This site has been designated a Pollinator Friendly Habitat by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation and is part of *The Butterfly Highway* connecting green spaces and pollinator gardens throughout our State.

North Carolina Wildlife Federation
ncwf.org

NCWF seeks to partner with state and local transportation agencies to include native grasses, pollinator nectar and host plants in all roadside plantings and engage private landowners and public lands in large-scale native meadow and river restoration projects. We'll also work with the community to add “pollinator pit stops”—areas that include native pollinator nectar and host plants—to residential yards, libraries, community centers and local businesses.

NATIVE FISH CONSERVATION /

In 2013, NCWF initiated the Native Fish Conservation Area (NFCA) project in North Carolina by convening a broad group of agencies, organizations and businesses to develop strategies for the conservation of native fishes. An outcome of the meeting was the Little Tennessee River Native Fish Conservation Partnership. On October 14, 2015, at a ceremony in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Little Tennessee River was designated as the nation’s first Native Fish Conservation Area.

The Little Tennessee River Basin stretches from north Georgia, across the western counties of North Carolina, and into Tennessee. It has long been recognized for the incredibly rich diversity of fish and wildlife found within the river and tributary streams. The basin is home to more than 100 species of fish, as well as mussels, snails, crayfish, and aquatic plants, including a number of state and federally listed threatened or endangered species.

NCWF and our partners are engaged in a non-regulatory, collaborative approach to conservation that incorporates biological needs and local community values into watershed management practices. Our work in 2015 included removal of obstacles within streams that hinder or prevent the upstream and downstream movements of fishes and other aquatic animals, development of video segments emphasizing the important resources of the river and development of an interactive, web-based map that can be used by researchers and interested citizens.

The Little Tennessee River system represents a biological and cultural treasure for North Carolina that also supports important recreational and economic activities. The collaborative efforts of NCWF and its conservation partners offer a promising strategy for sustaining the system and its resources for succeeding generations. **NCWF**

>> *A year of knuckling down for tough issues to come* <<

Deer & Hunger Program GROWS



The Farmers and Communities Manage Deer (F&CMD) Program finished out the year by harvesting approximately 10,000 pounds of venison to feed the hungry during the 2015 deer season. A joint effort between farmers, hunters, NCWF, the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, N.C. Hunters for the Hungry, and community groups has continued to make this program a success in North Carolina. The program, funded primarily by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, expanded its infrastructure and reach during 2015. The major 2015 accomplishments for the F&CMD program are:

- >> Displayed mobile deer cooler at Southern Farm Show, Dixie Deer Classic, Cape Fear Wildlife Expo, and Goldleaf Waterfowl Expo
- >> Donated a mobile cooler to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
- >> Added 3 stationary walk-in deer coolers to the program; Plymouth, Swan Quarter, and Fremont
- >> Assisted with purchase of deer collection van for Food Bank of the Albemarle & Soul Hunters
- >> Obtained more than 1 million media impressions
- >> More than 24,000 acres impacted by deer removal for the program
- >> Increased direct education and awareness of the program to 54,000 individuals
- >> More than \$44,000 leveraged for the program from other sources
- >> Collected and processed between 200 and 300 deer for the program



As we move into 2016, the program is looking to continue its expansion in eastern North Carolina and to increase public awareness in other areas of the state. Specifically, we would like to locate a new cooler site in either Columbus or Bladen county, continue to raise funds for deer processing, and increase deer donations at all program drop-off locations.

If you would like to help feed hungry people in your community by volunteering your time, sponsoring a community deer drive, or hosting a permanent stationary cooler for deer donation, please email liz@ncwf.org or call (828) 783-8013.

F&CMD DEER DONATION LOCATIONS:

Beaufort County / Old Ford Ruritan Club, 48 US Hwy 171 N, Washington, (252) 946-3388; Acre Station Meat Farm, 17076 NC-32, Pinetown, (252) 927-3489

Bladen County / Clarkton Processing Company, 105 N Gooden St., Clarkton, (910) 647-8191

Columbus County / American Legion Post 204, 486 Irvin Enzor Rd. S., Fair Bluff, (919) 630-3634; Country Boy Outfitters, 1702 S. Madison St., Whiteville, (910) 770-0786

Edgecombe County / Conetoe Family Life Center Farm, Vine Lane off of Hwy 42 in Conetoe, (252) 258-5176

Hyde County / Behind Dare to Hyde Adventures, 23145 US Hwy 264, Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Washington County / Plymouth Food Pantry, 811 Washington St. Plymouth, (252) 793-4152

Wayne County / Polly Watson Volunteer Fire Department, 4825 NC Hwy 581 N., Fremont, (919) 921-0061

Wilson County / George Flowers Slaughterhouse, 5154 St Rose Church Rd., Sims, (252) 237-2982

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Food Bank of the Albemarle (FBA) and Soul Hunters Ministry, Pasquotank County Food Bank of the Albemarle and Soul Hunters began their involvement with the Farmers and Communities Manage Deer program in 2014. This partnership flourished over the next year and a half and FBA and Soul Hunters have become two of our driving forces to help farmers reduce crop damage while feeding the hungry in northeastern NC.

In October 2015, FBA and Soul Hunters partnered with Farm Fresh and AgCarolina Farm Credit, among other community groups, to unveil their new refrigerated deer collection van, while continuing to raise funds for deer processing and spread the word about the F&CMD program. In addition to grant funds provided by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, FBA and Soul Hunters raised approximately \$19,000 in processing and project funds, and collected 36 deer to feed the hungry in 2015. This year, 11-year old Eli Gregory was the first person to donate a deer to FBA and Soul Hunters for the F&CMD program. Eli brought these groups one deer closer to their goal of collecting 100 deer annually!

Contact Justin Perry from Soul Hunters at (252) 562-5080 or Food Bank of the Albemarle at (252) 335-4035 if you would like to donate deer or funds to process deer to the program in northeastern North Carolina. 



RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR DEER COLLECTION VAN



GoU Rooted for Success!



In 2015, NCWF's Great Outdoors University (GoU) realized a year of success and growth providing opportunities for kids of all ages to connect with nature. For us at NCWF, there is nothing like watching the expressions on the faces of these young people—expressions of joy, amazement, awe, happiness, peace and elation. Successes abounded this year as evidenced by those numerous kids who did a 180 over the course of a GoU trip. They arrived skeptical, nervous, uninterested and often unwilling. Yet they left energized, engaged, connected and eagerly expressing interest in participating in future GoU outings.

Connecting kids to nature is making a difference for GoU participants. In 2015, we had a banner year serving a total of 12,565 participants through 107 daytrips and 10 Family Fun Days and events. Five new curriculum options were developed and successfully implemented including:

Lake Dwellers, a paddling exploration of lake ecosystems

Animal Forensics, which taught forensic science skills discovering wildlife clues in the woods to uncover hair, tracks, scat, and bite marks

Trailblazers, in which students learn about wildlife adaptations for survival and prey-versus-predator dynamics

Super Snakes, an exploration of these herpetological wonders

Environmental Challenge, ropes course and emphasis on how wildlife survives in the wild

We would be remiss if we did not thank our supporters who made all of this possible, including Women's Impact Fund, Duke Energy Foundation, Glenn Foundation and the Arts and Science Council. We also value and appreciate our partners which increased to 17 participant partners and 19 destination partners including Cedar Grove Retreat, Carolina Raptor Center, Rescue Ranch and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation.

We look forward to an even greater 2016 by expanding our support, the number of excursions, our Family Fun Days and events, participant and destination partners and curriculum offerings as well as finalizing the development of and begin prototyping a GoU Junior Naturalist Club concept. 

CHECK OUT OUR CHAPTERS!

For more information on how you can participate, contact Christopher North at chris@ncwf.org.



Capital Chapter



Concord Wildlife Alliance



CROWN (Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature)



PAWS (Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards)



HAWK (Habitat and Wildlife Keepers)



Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society



Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists



Mountain Island Lake Wildlife Stewards



Mountain WILD



PACT (Protecting, Advocating and Conserving)



PAWC (Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists)



River Hawks (Wake Forest)



South Wake Conservationists



The Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter

BIG YEAR FOR THE NCWF CHAPTER NETWORK

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation welcomed two new local wildlife chapters to the family in 2015—the Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists out of Washington, and the River Hawks in Wake Forest. If you are in those areas, contact them to get involved in free nature programs, activities and projects.

The diversity and accomplishments of chapter member efforts is only matched by the diversity of wildlife and habitats in North Carolina. Here is a sampling of highlights from 2015.

Habitat and Wildlife Keepers (HAWK), the first NCWF wildlife chapter, had record attendance at its monthly educational program. 2016 is its 10th year anniversary and the chapter has planned plenty of activities to celebrate, including hosting Douglas W. Talley, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, and television host David Mizejewski of the *Backyard Habitat* on Animal Planet.

A dedicated crew of volunteers from the Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society planted a native pollinator garden at the Linville Gorge overlook at Lake James State Park. The group planted approximately 200 native pollinator plants under the guidance of NCWF and park staff.

The Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards (PAWS) successfully hosted its annual Youth Day Event for kids age 6 to 16 years old. This event included various outdoor activities such as rock climbing, bow & arrow shooting, fishing, pellet, skeet, and sling shot shooting, horseback riding, bounce house, fire truck demos and rock climbing.

The South Wake Conservationists planted a pollinator garden at Base Lake Park in Holly Springs. Chapter members even made decorative mushrooms, butterfly pools, and toad abodes and spread them around the new garden.

The Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists organized a full day of wildlife projects on Lake Norman. More than 30 volunteers, 4 camera crews, and wildlife biologists took to the lake to plant 250 buttonbush plants, erect 8 wood duck boxes and 30 brown-headed nuthatch boxes, an osprey nesting platform, and created an artificial rock reef for fish.

Two chapters, the Concord Wildlife Alliance and Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature (CROWN), accomplished the equivalent of a wildlife habitat Holy Grail. Thanks to hard work and dedication from chapter leaders and volunteers, both the cities of Charlotte and Concord achieved the national certification as a Community Wildlife Habitat. Charlotte is now the third-largest Community Wildlife Habitat in the country and the largest east of the Mississippi, while Concord certified its community faster than any other municipality in the country. The Mountain WILD chapter has embarked on the same quest to certify the entire City of Asheville as a certified Community Wildlife Habitat.

Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter installed fishing line recycling bins at Wildlife Commission boat ramps and county fishing boardwalks in Pasquotank, Camden, Perquimans, Gates, Martin, Currituck, Dare and Bertie Counties. The chapter also donated money to help with the purchase of a wildlife education trailer, and built several wood duck nesting boxes.

The NC Wildlife Federation supplied the funds and the Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists stepped up with the labor to construct a handicapped-accessible wildlife blind at the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. We encourage people with disabilities to take advantage of North Carolina's natural resources. Contact the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge to reserve.



(LEFT TO RIGHT) RICK ZABLOCKI, JIM WOOD, JOHN CHRYSAL, JENNIFER ALLIGOOD, ATTILA NEMECZ, EDWARD PHELPS, HOWARD PHILLIPS, DORIS MORRIS



Together, we are strong.

Our strength is derived from values driven leadership – science-based decision making; non-partisan approach to policy; stewardship of North Carolina’s natural resources; inclusivity of broad wildlife interests and perspectives; and partnering with organizations and individuals who share our vision and our passion for wildlife.

NCWF thanks our thousands of members and contributors who entrust their dollars to the Federation, and choose to work for wildlife through NCWF’s proven programs and initiatives.

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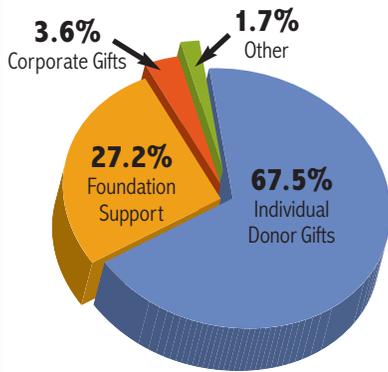
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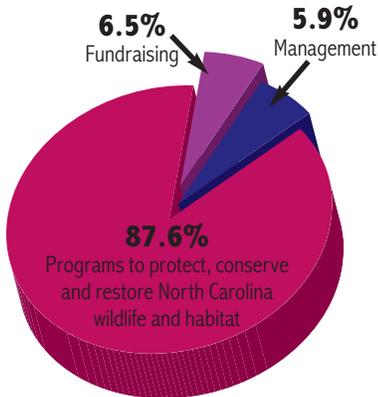
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Charlie Shaw Society



NCWRC

John Robbins, owner of Greathorn Properties in Concord, and a long-time philanthropist and sportsman is the current chair of the Charlie Shaw Society. He encourages others to join him in support of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation.



Current Members

Members in the Charlie Shaw Society are our most dedicated supporters—generous members who have made a commitment to the work and programs of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation through an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more. Gifts can be made in one lump sum or in any number of smaller contributions within a calendar year, and can be directed to any Federation program that is of interest to the donor.

To learn more about the Charlie Shaw Society and benefits of membership, please visit our website at www.ncwf.org, or Dom Canavarro, Development and Operations Director, at (919) 833-1923; dom@ncwf.org.

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