

Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Area Annual Meeting  
August 7, 2014  
Knoxville Outdoor Center  
(COMBINED NOTES rev 9/9/14)

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## **Agenda**

10:00 Welcome (Fred Harris, NC Wildlife Federation)

Introductions

Native Fish Conservation Area (NFCA) concept

10:30 Little Tennessee NFCA: first year's efforts (Andrea Leslie, NC Wildlife Resources Commission)

10:45 Little Tennessee River basin: impacts and conservation efforts

- The role of hydropower and the FERC relicensing process (Mark Cantrell, US Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Fish community restoration (Pat Rakes, Conservation Fisheries, Inc.)
- Restoration and protection on a watershed level (Jason Meador, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee)
- US Forest Service snorkeling education program (Jim Herrig, US Forest Service)
- Recreation in the Little Tennessee watershed (Mark Thurman, TN Wildlife Resources Agency)

12:00 Lunch (provided by NC Wildlife Federation)

12:30 Group brainstorm: on-the-ground projects, education and outreach, assessment

2:00 Little Tennessee NFCA: steering committee and working groups

3:00 Adjourn

## Attendees

Name	Organization	Email
Andrea Leslie	N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission	<a href="mailto:andrea.leslie@ncwildlife.org">andrea.leslie@ncwildlife.org</a>
Andrew Henderson	Tennessee Valley Authority	<a href="mailto:ahenderson@tva.gov">ahenderson@tva.gov</a>
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Damon Hearne	Trout Unlimited	
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Jason Farmer	U.S. Forest Service	<a href="mailto:jfarmer@fs.fed.us">jfarmer@fs.fed.us</a>
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33 attendees representing ~ 21 agencies, organizations, institutions...

## NFCA Steering committee discussion notes

- Ideas:
  - Working group would find the funding. Pool resources to find funding. E.g., competitive wildlife grants.
  - Should projects originate from the NFCA & then the NFCA pursue funding as a group?
  - An idea can originate from one or more partners in the group, can bounce that to the steering committee, ask for its endorsement and recommendations for whom to involve.
  - Working groups propose projects to steering committee, then SC prioritizes projects to pursue funding. SC develops an annual workplan for group. But—there is on-going coordination among agency partners.
- How does the Foundation work with this project? Need to move this from a concept to a project with focus areas and priorities. 2 groups are ready—Fisheries Conservation Foundation and NC Wildlife Federation are willing to pursue funding.
- Steering committee responsibilities. Develop priorities and work plan for effort. Lead communication, coordinate funding. Executive in nature but knowledgeable. Make sure that the participants are dedicated and show up.
- Damon suggests that we add a core value: strive for diverse representation within agencies, states, etc. Make sure that the steering committee reflect this.
- Steering committee commitments: 4-6 meetings per year, not all in person. Ebb and flow with time and activities.
- List of interested in Steering Committee:
  - Sierra Club (possible) (Axel)
  - TVA (Shannon O'Quinn)
  - Fish and Wildlife Service
  - LTLT (Ben?)
  - American Rivers (Erin)
  - NCWRC (TBD)
  - USFS (Jason)
  - NC Wildlife Federation
  - NPS (Matt Culp)
  - CFI (Pat Rakes)
  - EBCI (Caleb or Mike)
  - TDEC (Larry Everett)
  - TWRA (TBD)
  - Trout Unlimited (Damon Hearne)
- Steering Committee will develop structure of the organization. Perhaps develop a Memorandum of Understanding (see John Fridell's MOU). Fred, with Damon's help, will convene the SC.
- Some key questions: Matt—buy-in from the public—must sell this concept to the public. Snorkeling—watch it—is there detriment to popularizing snorkeling? E.g., exceed snorkeler carrying capacity or private businesses taking it on.

**Projects ranked within topical area, i.e. assessment, outreach, on-the-ground projects**

Group brainstorm: top 2 vote-getters in each category

**Assessment**

- 1-Watershed-wide barrier assessment for AOP
- 2-Investigation into mussel die-off in upper Little T

**On-the-ground**

- 1-Large-scale riparian buffer rest initiative
  - 2-Restore AOP, especially to benefit brook trout
- NOTE: if all the individual fish/mussel restoration project scores were summed up, biological community restoration was the top vote-getter

**Outreach**

- 1-Develop audio-visual resources to use for outreach
- 2-Snorkeling as education