



Fiscal Note for Proposed Lands Management Rule Amendments for the Wildlife Resources Commission

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10D .0106 Bear Sanctuaries

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Impact Summary: State Government: No
Local Government: No
Private Impact: No
Substantial Economic Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113 – 134; 113-264; 113-291.1; 113-291.5

BACKGROUND

The wildlife resources of the State belong to the people of the State as a whole, including the enjoyment of these resources (G.S. § 113-131(a)). The Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) is tasked with the conservation of wildlife resources of the State (G.S. § 143-239). This responsibility includes managing, as equitably as possible, the various competing interests regarding these resources, including the use and take of such resources (G.S. § 113-131.1(a)). The statutes governing wildlife resources are found in Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes, and WRC has been granted rulemaking authority to implement the provisions of these statutes (G.S. § 113-134).

As part of its mission, WRC conducts an annual review of its fish, wildlife, boating safety, and game land regulations, to determine whether such rules need to be adjusted in order to accomplish the objectives of: managing wildlife resources through a biologically sustainable harvest of such resources by hunters, trappers and anglers consistent with sound conservation objectives; ensuring the safety of the boating public; managing Commission-owned land for the conservation of wildlife resources and the enjoyment of the public; and implementing legislative directives.

Many of the proposed rule changes are expected to increase hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities, while others are expected to restrict such opportunities. Additional changes are intended to improve the quality of future opportunities.

Although the Commission does not have a mechanism to determine the fiscal impact of these specific rule changes on recreationists' behavior, economic research on the value individuals place on outdoor recreation can provide useful context for rules that affect opportunities for recreation. Taking the median of the findings across multiple studies, researchers have estimated that the value of hunting per person per day is approximately \$63; both hiking and "nature-related recreation" are valued at \$47 per person per day; and fishing is valued at approximately \$53 per person per day.¹ These figures represent individuals' total willingness to pay to engage in the activity, less the cost to do so. It does not represent any economic activity generated by the activity, such as retail sales. Note that these estimates are not species or location-specific. However, to the extent that the proposed rules induce recreationists to increase or decrease their trips in particular areas of the state, these findings provide a rough approximation of the costs or benefits to the individual.

The following is a summary of the proposed rule amendments to the game land rules 15A NCAC 10D .0106, with the proposed text included in Appendix A.

15A NCAC 10D .0106 Bear Sanctuaries

The proposed changes to this rule cover topics related to bear sanctuaries.

For the reasons outlined below, the WRC believes that the proposed rule changes will have minimal fiscal impacts.

This proposed amendment clarifies bear sanctuary rules in the NCAC and update the county locations of existing bear sanctuaries. Additionally, Bombing Range Bear Sanctuary and part of Green Swamp Bear Sanctuary will be renamed Dare Bear Sanctuary and Juniper Creek Bear Sanctuary, respectively. These administrative changes will allow staff to better track and implement changes to bear sanctuaries. Additionally, the name changes will reduce confusion by aligning sanctuary names with the names of adjacent game lands.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

No impact

Local Impact

No impact

Private Impact

No impact

¹ Rosenberger, Randall S.; White, Eric M.; Kline, Jeffrey D.; Cvitanovich, Claire. 2017. Recreation economic values for estimating outdoor recreation economic benefits from the National Forest System. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNWGTR-957. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 33 p.

Appendix A

15A NCAC 10D .0106 BEAR SANCTUARIES (EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2019)

(a) It shall be unlawful to take bear on lands posted as bear sanctuaries, except when authorized by permit issued by the Commission on sanctuaries specified in Subparagraph (b) of this Rule.

(b) The following are posted bear sanctuaries:

Bachelor Bay bear sanctuary – Bertie and Washington counties

Columbus County bear sanctuary – Brunswick and Columbus counties

Croatan bear sanctuary – Carteret, Craven, and Jones counties

Daniel Boone bear sanctuary – Avery, Burke, and Caldwell counties, permit only

Dare bear sanctuary – Dare and Hyde counties, permit only

Fires Creek bear sanctuary – Clay County

Flat Top bear sanctuary – Mitchell and Yancey counties

Green Swamp bear sanctuary – Brunswick County

Gull Rock bear sanctuary – Hyde County

Harmon Den bear sanctuary – Haywood County

Juniper Creek bear sanctuary – Brunswick and Columbus counties

Mt. Mitchell bear sanctuary – McDowell and Yancey counties, permit only

North River bear sanctuary – Camden and Currituck counties

Panther town – Bonas Defeat bear sanctuary – Jackson County

Pisgah Bear Sanctuary – Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson and Transylvania

Pungo River bear sanctuary – Hyde County

Rich Mountain bear sanctuary – Madison County

Sherwood bear sanctuary – Haywood County

Suggs Mill Pond bear sanctuary – Bladen and Cumberland counties

Standing Indian bear sanctuary – Macon County

Thurmond Chatham bear sanctuary – Allegheny and Wilkes counties

Wayah bear sanctuary – Macon County

(c) Feral Swine shall not be taken with the use of dogs on bear sanctuaries.

(d) Dogs shall not be trained or allowed to run unleashed between March 1 and the Monday on or nearest October 15 on bear sanctuaries located in and west of the counties and parts of counties described in 15A NCAC 10B .0109.