



# NORTH CAROLINA **YOUTH OUTDOOR** ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION

## **AGENDA**

**February 8, 2024, 9:00 AM**

**River Landing Clubhouse – Magnolia Room**

**120 Clubhouse Drive**

**Wallace, NC 28466**

- 1) Call To Order** – Chairman Dell Murphy
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance** – Vice Chairman Jim Harrell
- 3) Roll Call** – Megan Law, Communications Manager
- 4) Mandatory Ethics Inquiry** - North Carolina General Statute 138A-15(e)  
mandates that the Commission Chair shall remind all Commissioners of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict under this Chapter, and that the chair also inquire as to whether there is any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Commission at this time. It is the duty of each Commissioner who is aware of such personal conflict of interest or of an appearance of a conflict, to notify the Chair of the same. – Chairman Dell Murphy
- 5) Approval Of Minutes** – Take action on the October 4, 2023 NC Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission meeting minutes as written in the exhibit and distributed to members (**EXHIBIT A**)
- 6) Election of a Chair and Vice-Chair** – Chairman Dell Murphy

**7) Youth Archery** – Justin Burr, Executive Director, Alan Pomeroy, Program Director, and Noel Griffin, Outreach and Engagement Manager

**8) Field Trip Policies** – Alan Pomeroy and Noel Griffin

**9) Trailblazers Club Report** – Alan Pomeroy and Noel Griffin

**10) GO Grants Program Report** – Alan Pomeroy and Megan Wendt, Grants Coordinator

**11) Youth Sports Grants** – Alan Pomeroy and Megan Wendt

**12) Trust Fund Report** – Layne Randolph, Fundraising and Finance Manager

**13) Legislative and Budget Requests for Short Session** – Justin Burr

**14) Patch Program Report** – Alan Pomeroy

**15) Communications Report** – Megan Law

**16) Outreach Report** – Noel Griffin

**17) Commission Discussion/Other New Business** – Chairman Dell Murphy

**18) Next Meeting: May 22, 2024** – Chairman Dell Murphy

**19) Closing Remarks** – Chairman Dell Murphy

**20) Adjourn**



# NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH OUTDOOR ENGAGEMENT COMMISSION

**EXHIBIT A**  
**N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission**  
**October 4, 2023**  
**Raleigh, NC**  
**MINUTES**

1) Call To Order – NC Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission Chairman Dell Murphy called the meeting to order at 10:32 am.

2) Roll Call –

**COUNCIL ATTENDANCE**

Owen Andrews  
Brick Brown  
J.T. Coley  
Mikey Nye Fulk  
Jim Harrell  
Dell Murphy  
Gordon Myers  
Aaron Thomas

**STAFF ATTENDANCE**

Justin Burr, Executive Director  
Alan Pomeroy, Program Director  
Megan Law, Communications Manager  
Layne Randolph, Fundraising and Finance Manager  
Megan Wendt, Grants Coordinator  
Noel Griffin, Outreach and Engagement Manager

3) Mandatory Ethics Inquiry – At the request of Chairman Murphy, Megan Law, Communications Manager, read the mandatory ethics inquiry as stated in GS 138A-15(e).

4) Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Brick Brown moved that the minutes from July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 be approved as written and Commissioner Gordon Myers seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

5) 2023 Legislative & Update – Executive Director Justin Burr introduced the proposed YOEC budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The budget, Exhibit B, detailed the funding allocated towards Go Outside (GO) Grants, the Patch Program, the Trailblazers Outdoor Clubs, and other necessities (including

marketing). Commissioner Brick Brown asked whether a budget regarding the staff's salaries and administrations is kept separately from the overall programming budget. Executive Director Burr responded that there is an allocation from the General Assembly's funds that goes directly toward staff salaries and administrative needs. Vice Chairman Jim Harrell moved for the proposed budget of \$3.5 million to be approved. Commissioner Aaron Thomas seconded the motion. The motion to approve the proposed budget passed.

6) Trailblazers Club Report – Program Director, Alan Pomeroy, presented updates on the Trailblazers Outdoor Clubs throughout the state. There are 34 clubs, each of which was either in the process of completing their workplans or had already completed their workplans and been on their first outing. Pomeroy brought up some situations in which some high school clubs received pushback from their board of education, or their administration, on activities they wished to participate in. Though the situations were resolved with some edits to their trip details, this is important information going forward. The application for the 2024-2025 school year is already being drafted and Pomeroy will be soliciting feedback from current club advisors to see what is working, what could be improved upon, etc. Outreach and Engagement Manager, Noel Griffin, elaborated upon the Slack Channel that was created to facilitate discussions with the club advisors, address any questions they may have, and send reminders for upcoming due dates.

7) GO Grants Program Report – Alan Pomeroy and Grants Coordinator, Megan Wendt, presented to the Commissioners an overview of the 225 GO Grants awarded so far in Fiscal Year 23-24, including some creative GO Grant shout-outs for structures and field trips that were original and aligned with YOEC's mission. Wendt thanked the Commission for previously approving the use of trust fund dollars to supplement and award grants while YOEC was waiting for the state budget to pass (the state funding is unavailable until the budget is passed). Wendt and Pomeroy also introduced grants that directly benefited from the (previously passed) additional GO Grant categories that allow for increased funding to go to applicants who applied for multi-day (overnight) field trips, interactive trail structures, agriculture-related structures, archery ranges and equipment, and aquatic structures and equipment- as it relates to activities such as fishing or kayaking. At the end of the GO Grants presentation, Pomeroy proposed a motion to increase the funding cap for specific advanced projects- namely archery, agricultural, and educational nature trail structures- from \$20,000 (approved in July 2023) to \$25,000. Due to the heavy interest in these advanced projects, the motion was proposed in order to allow for the potential to attract even more applicants and larger, more specialized projects. The increase in funding would accommodate larger structures, with the possibility of impacting larger numbers of kids and teens. Vice Chairman Harrell brought up a focus on cost-effectiveness and the importance of infrastructure that

appropriately complements YOEC's programs. He clarified that he is not opposed to raising the cap, but doesn't know how effective or sustainable this is without a program. His concerns were over YOEC's one-time expenditure not being used properly or sufficiently without an existing program to encourage proper and continuous use of funds. Chairman Murphy agreed with Vice Chairman Harrell that this should be tabled and discussed further at a later date, possibly enlisting a committee to explore this. Commissioner Gordon Myers mentioned that if a committee were formed, it may be worth including input from- or a partnership with- the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) regarding the archery ranges in particular. Myers raised the topic of possibly pursuing supplementary funding through WRC's access to Pittman-Robertson (PR) federal funds, as well, in order to reach the increased cap without spending more of YOEC's money (specifically for archery range advanced structures). The Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act sees funding distributed from the federal level to state governments for wildlife projects. Executive Director Burr replied that Commissioner Myers' idea is something that could certainly be beneficial to YOEC's mission and informs the Commissioners that Noel Griffin and Alan Pomeroy have already reached out to WRC staff to connect and see how the teams could work together on archery projects in the future. Burr stated that while WRC staff has received these emails, the YOEC staff is awaiting word back from them on how- and when- the teams can move forward with this discussion. Burr said the YOEC staff is on board to potentially collaborate on these matters. Vice Chairman Harrell stated that he is hopeful that, with the clubs being established, YOEC will see an increase in grant applications and requests from clubs and their respective schools. Chairman Murphy ultimately recommended that this discussion and the proposed motion be tabled until a later date. Burr replies that staff are available for further discussion of this topic at any time and that in the case of a committee being formed, staff would support the committee and provide necessary information in order to help potentially build a committee. Pomeroy stated that he will gather information with future applications to get a sense of how much funding the applicants are requesting and other relevant information to provide evidence of a need for increased funding. Pomeroy reiterated the goal to impact all 100 counties in the state and requested that any Commissioners that have contacts in the remaining areas use their connections to attract grant applicants.

8) Patch Program Report – Alan Pomeroy stated that there has been steady interest in and requests for patches, requiring YOEC to reorder more 2023 patches to keep up with demand. He addressed the Leaderboard and confirmed that the winners would receive gifts and prizes for their outstanding effort and involvement in the Patch Program. Pomeroy

mentioned that the 2024 patches are in the midst of being designed and that there will be a few additional patches added to the collection. The patch additions on the short list include mountain biking and a “My First Hunt” patch (to capture small game hunters). Pomeroy brought up the possibility of temporarily replacing or ordering less of certain patches that are among the least requested. The bear hunter and striped bass angler patches are the least requested patches. He mentions implementing a dove hunting patch and/or blue gill/crappy patch (to capture the more commonly caught fish in ponds, etc.) in place of the bear and striped bass patches to gauge demand. Chairman Murphy commented that, in regards to the freshwater pan fish, brim and crappy are common in the small ponds in North Carolina. Pomeroy addressed this comment and stated that those common smaller fish are requested quite often and that YOEC currently lacks a specific patch for them, suggesting that there may be a need to implement a patch for them in order to award anglers that catch these specific fish.

9) Communications Report – Megan Law provided highlights from recent social media posts and advertising, including YOEC’s sponsorship of the Outdoor Economy Conference in Cherokee, NC. Noel Griffin touches more on YOEC’s role and involvement in the Outdoor Economy Conference in her presentation. Law shared that there have been posts made to attract donors to the YOEC website to make their donations directly through YOEC’s page so that they can enter their contact information and receive a free gift in return for their donation (hat, sticker, magnet, etc.). The donor traffic going through the YOEC website is taken to the Go Outdoors NC system to finalize their donation. Law posted an audio/visual tutorial to assist folks in following this donation route. Law mentions the quarterly newsletter emails blasts, as well as other email blasts to promote GO Grant applications and share updates with YOEC’s audience. During the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, Law announced that YOEC would be featured on an episode of NC STEM Explorers- a TV program with teenage hosts that focuses on opportunities and activities in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The episode YOEC was featured in aired on 9/23 and can be found on the NC STEM Explorers YouTube Channel. Commissioner Fulk asked whether YOEC staff had done any press releases to promote GO Grants that had been awarded to schools. Law replied that this had been a previously addressed topic and that it is something that YOEC staff had contemplated doing, but that during the rebranding period there was concern over whether the effort required to pursue GO Grant press releases would be worth it during a time when the main push was primarily to advertise the name and logo changes and introduce these new visuals to the public. Executive Director Justin Burr added that in the past he had noticed it was more effective to allow legislators to work with press in their districts after notifying the applicants of their awarded grants. He mentioned that press releases and features had been pursued in the past and that they required

time and effort that could be better served in other areas.

10) Outreach Report – Noel Griffin provided an overview of the events that YOEC had attended since the July meeting- the Education and Workforce Conference, the YMCA Triangle Area Y-Guides Event, and the Outdoor Economy Conference. Griffin and staff planned to attend the National Hunting and Fishing Day event, organized by WRC, but the event was cancelled due to weather. Griffin elaborated on each of these events and requested that Commissioners share any events of interest with her so that she could research them for future plans. She also showed Commissioners an image of the outdoor structure plaque that is intended to be mounted on structures granted by YOEC through the GO Grants Program. Chairman Murphy said he would rather see the logo in color on the plaque than the existing gold background with black text for the purpose of brand visibility and consistency. Commissioner Aaron Thomas agreed that he'd like to see a proof that included the logo colors, etc. Griffin said she'd reach out to the engraving company to explore this option further.

11) Trust Fund Report – Fundraising and Finance Manager Layne Randolph thanked the Commissioners for allowing YOEC staff to use the trust fund dollars to approve GO Grants during the time period that appropriated funds were not available. She shared that the new donation page is live on the Go Outdoors NC system, but announced that donation numbers are down significantly. She addressed some factors that could have caused this decline in donation numbers and also shared more information about the reason behind directing traffic to the YOEC website for donations so that she can document the guest donations and donor information and keep record of the information (something that has yet to be made available to YOEC through the Go Outdoors NC system). This information can, for example, be used to reach out to donors to encourage future donations. Randolph mentioned that she has reached out to WRC to see whether they can assist in retrieving this information through their system. Randolph presented graphs depicting monthly donation rates, which also included the visible decline and the month with the lowest donation rate since the inception of the organization. Graphs of the breakdowns between licensed check-off donations, outside funding sources, and interest rates were also shown on screen. Randolph reported that the licensed check-off rates so far for this fiscal year are currently 30% of what they were measured at during the same time period in the previous fiscal year (3-month time period). Comparisons were made between the two fiscal years. Randolph reminded Commissioners that they can submit their donations to her and contact her with any questions they may have. Executive Director Justin Burr added that Commissioners would need to send donations directly to Layne Randolph because YOEC staff are unable to retrieve names from the Brandt system

and are therefore not able to see who exactly has donated through the Go Outdoors NC system. Chairman Murphy began a discussion surrounding the difficulties being faced in retrieving this information and requested that a plan be made to solve this problem. Burr replied that YOEC staff had reached out to WRC to troubleshoot and work toward a solution, but state that the issue is now in WRC's hands and that YOEC is waiting for a response. Burr mentioned that without these donations, YOEC has less flexibility to award to grants, spend on office expenses, promotional items, patches, etc. during times when, for example, the funds from the state are not available prior to a budget being passed. He reiterated that a push for recurring funds from the General Assembly is necessary to alleviate these restrictions. Chairman Murphy requested that he be kept informed of the progress made with WRC and donation numbers.

12) Commission Discussion/Other New Business –

13) 2024 Meeting Schedule – Chairman Murphy announces the proposed 2024 meeting schedule (Exhibit C) and presents a motion to approve these dates. Commissioner Fulk motioned to approve the meeting schedule and Commissioner Brown seconded this motion. The 2024 meeting schedule was approved.

14) Closing Remarks – Chairman Murphy thanked the Commissioners and YOEC staff for their continued effort toward accomplishing the organization's mission and working through any obstacles that come up.

15) Adjourn – Chairman Dell Murphy adjourned the Commission meeting at 11:40 am.