



NORTH CAROLINA SPORTING DOG ASSOCIATION – 2024 END OF SESSION NEWSLETTER

The North Carolina Constitution acknowledges the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife by traditional means. Hunting with dogs has been a human tradition for thousands of years and has been a part of our culture in North Carolina since its founding. The North Carolina Sporting Dog Association and its lobbyists are working to make sure this tradition is protected for generations to come. We are working to ensure that everyone in our state and our legislative leaders are educated about our way of life. Please see below for an update on the 2024/2025 General Assembly schedule, our recent Board meeting, and a description of past lobbying accomplishments.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

In 2024, the total number of individual memberships decreased compared to 2023. It is important to share this newsletter and the accomplishments of our lobbying team with your friends, family, and anyone who enjoys our way of life. Without representation at the General Assembly, we risk losing our heritage and an important part of our culture.

FOR ANYONE ASKING WHY SHOULD I GIVE? REVIEW THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER WHERE WE LIST FIVE FULL PAGES OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS OF OUR CURRENT LOBBYING CONTRACT WITH NATHAN HONAKER AND JACKSON STANCIL

The information for the corporation (including how to donate) is as follows. Please note the address listed below will be our new corporate address beginning 11/15/2024:

North Carolina Sporting Dog Association, Inc.
5 West Hargett Street, Suite 1010
Raleigh, NC 27601

WEB: <https://ncsportingdog.com>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/NC-Sporting-Dog-Association-Inc-91748479183>

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE/2024 SHORT Session

Accomplishments: NO DOG BILLS

The North Carolina General Assembly operates on a biennium – a two-year legislative cycle. In 2024 the legislature met for the “short session,” designed to make corrections to legislation filed in the previous long Session. In 2023, thousands of bills were filed on all subjects, and a state budget was introduced and passed. So far in 2024, **our lobbying team was 100% successful** in ensuring something did not slip through which could negatively affect us.

The legislature has *still not adjourned* for the 2024 Short Session. They will return for a brief three-day session on November 19, and again for another three days on December 11. The November session will likely include some policy items and potentially some new spending, especially related to disaster relief and recovery from Hurricane Helene. In December, they will return to override a veto from Governor Cooper, if necessary, on any items passed in November.

Our lobbyists will be at the General Assembly throughout these two remaining short sessions to make sure our rights are protected. The 2025 Long Session will begin in January of next year where thousands of new bills will be filed and another 2-year state budget will be negotiated. It is always the legislature’s goal to pass a budget by July 1, but rarely do they meet this goal. More than likely, they will stay in Session well into the fall of next year and even potentially all year as in 2024.

OCTOBER 3 BOARD MEETING:

As a reminder, we are governed by an 11-member Board. The Board met at our corporate headquarters in Raleigh on October 3 to conduct the regular business of the corporation. Here is a summary of the agenda:

1. Election of Board Members:

Each member of the Board was up for re-election to another two-year term. Gerald Chandler and Gary Cox from Western North Carolina Houndsmen Association chose not to seek re-election to the Board so they could spend more time with friends and family. We greatly appreciate their service.

The 9 members who were re-elected to serve another two-year term are as follows:

- **Keith Loudermilt – Tar Heel Beagle Club**
- **Butler Anderson – Burgaw Hunting Club**
- **Reg Cook – Ole School Hunt Club**
- **Chris Alphin – Duplin-Onslow Hunters Association**
- **Jason Ashe – Big Dog Hunt Club**
- **Bryan Bray – Price & Richardson Hunt Club**
- **John Morse – Albemarle Houndsmen Association**
- **Jonathan Bender – Warren County Houndsmen Association**
- **Marshall Conrad – Odell Adams Hunt Club**

Because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, the Board unanimously voted to leave the two seats designated for Western North Carolina vacant so they may be filled later by a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors. Many in the Sporting Dog Association have actively participated in cleanup and recovery efforts in Western NC, including our lobbyist Nathan Honaker who has a family home in Newland (Avery County). We know it is a long road to recovery and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the citizens of Western NC as they deal with the devastating effects of the storm. We look forward to accepting applications for the two seats meant to represent Western North Carolina and are also accepting suggestions from the membership if anyone wishes to serve. Please email these suggestions directly to Nathan Honaker by December 31 at nathan@nwh-law.com

2. Election of Officers: We were pleased that each Officer of the corporation wished to serve another two-year term. The Executive Committee remains as follows:

- **PRESIDENT: Keith Loudermilt**
- **VICE PRESIDENT: Butler Anderson**
- **TREASURER: Reg Cook**
- **SECRETARY: Marshall Conrad**

3. Creation of Fundraising Committee: The importance of continued fundraising efforts was discussed, and the concern with individual memberships declining despite the tremendous success of the group's lobbying efforts. A fundraising committee was created to recruit new individual, club, and corporate members. The Board members on this committee will be **Keith Loudermilt, Butler Anderson, and Jason Ashe**

4. Lobbying Contract – the lobbying contract was discussed and unanimously approved by the Board. Jackson Stancil and Nathan Honaker will remain our lobbyists for the next two years, and we are thankful for their service. We have enjoyed tremendous success in state government since they took over in 2021 and trust they will continue to be great advocates for our interests at all levels of government.

WHY SHOULD YOU GIVE? SEE BELOW:

2021 Long Session Accomplishments

House Bill 181 Separate Licensing Requirements for Dog Hunters – DEFEATED

When the Wildlife Resource Commission agency bill (H181) was filed this year, it contained an extremely concerning section:

RESPONSIBLE HUNTER TRAINING 19 SECTION 10.(a) G.S. 113-270.1A is amended by adding a new subsection to read: "(a2) No person may pursue or chase deer with dogs for the purpose of training or hunting unless they first obtain a dog hunter education certificate issued by the Commission that demonstrates that the person has completed a dog hunter education course. The requirements of subdivisions (b)(1) through (b)(4) of this section shall apply to the certificate and education course required by this subsection. The Wildlife Resources Commission shall adopt rules to implement this subsection." SECTION 10.(b) The Commission shall establish from its membership an advisory committee to create the dog hunter education course required by this section. The advisory committee shall also include at least two representatives from organizations promoting or conducting dog hunting in the State.

This section was NOT an agency request of the Wildlife Resource Commission. The Commission did not support this section and they did not get in the way of our lobbyists removing it from the bill. After pushback from our organization and from other legislators, the elected official who was supportive of this section amended the bill in a second draft, but the legislation still required WRC to implement a manual of best practices for deer dog hunting. Our lobbyists used a procedural maneuver in the next committee to ensure that **in the third draft of the bill, the section was REMOVED ENTIRELY.**

Prohibitions on Dog Hunting on Butner-Falls Game Lands – DEFEATED

The Wildlife Resources Commission reached out to our organization expressing their desire to investigate restrictions on dog hunting on the Wake County portion of Butner-Falls Game Lands. After discussions with our lobbyists and examining the totality of the circumstances, the Commission made an internal decision to postpone any discussion of Wake County restrictions at this time.

Prohibitions on Dog Hunting on Kings Creek GameLand – DEFEATED

This past year, the Wildlife Resources Commission added a 2,340-acre property in Wilkes and Caldwell Counties owned by the NC Department of Agriculture to its gamelands program. The initial proposal to add the gameland would have prohibited hunting bear with dogs. After our lobbyists engaged, the Wildlife Resources Commission and North Carolina Department of Agriculture adopted an open access policy for this game land and removed all restriction on hunting bear with dogs.

Prohibitions on Dog Hunting on Goose Creek Gameland – AMENDED

Initial proposals for new game lands regulations on the Goose Creek Gamelands contained extremely restrictive language which would have prohibited dog hunting on large portions of the gamelands. After our attorney, Nathan Honaker, engaged with staff at the Wildlife Resource Commission, the Commission worked with our organization to amend these restrictions to allow dog hunting to continue on hundreds of acres which were initially included in the restriction.

Regulation for Controlled Rabbit Hunting Preserves – PASSED

Our attorney, Nathan Honaker, and our President, Keith Loudermilt, attended several meetings at the Wildlife Resource Commission headquarters in Raleigh, NC to discuss and negotiate the controlled rabbit hunting preserve regulations. The process involved input from different rabbit preserve operators of all sizes and different regions of the state, and our organization played a key role in negotiating the compromise. The rules were eventually passed and can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

BURKE COUNTY ANIMAL ORDINANCE CHANGES - DEFEATED

The Animal Advisory Board to the Burke County Commission proposed some concerning restrictions on dog ownership including kennel size, food and water requirements, tethering, and implementation of breeder permits. The regulatory scheme would have placed a tremendous burden on the sporting dog community in Burke County.

PASQUOTANK COUNTY MORATORIUM ON DOG RULES - PASSED

After members of our organization mounted a grassroots campaign in response to animal rights activists, Pasquotank County Commissioners passed a moratorium on discussing any restriction on dog hunting for three years. We will seek to use this as a model for future counties who have consistent agitators seeking to restrict dog hunting.

2022 Short Session Accomplishments

House Bill 1116 – Humane Society of the United States Bill – DEFEATED

House Bill 1116 was a bill sponsored by a Wake County legislator to help the Humane Society of the United States advance their legislative agenda. The full bill text can be found here: <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2021/Bills/House/PDF/H1116v1.pdf>

The bill would have created ambiguous space and shelter requirements for animals including sporting dogs. The requirements included a ban on tethering any animal during a period of “extreme weather,” defined as any temperature above 85 degrees or below 32 degrees. The definition of “adequate shelter” included requirements that the shelter must prevent the animal from suffering ANY adverse effects of heat or cold, and many other conditions. These requirements for space and shelter are worded in a way which is subjective and open to interpretation.

In the very first line of the North Carolina Sporting Dog Association’s Code of Ethics (Click [here](#)) we make it clear that our members are to care for their animals. We know that hunters are the best animal advocates, as they know firsthand the value of their dogs from using them in the field. If a law is passed such as H1116, it will be used by animal rights activists to prosecute good people who are law-abiding citizens. We have existing laws which are strong protections against animal cruelty, and we must enforce those laws while defending against proposals which could be used as weapons by animal rights activists.

Hunter’s Education Supplement – PASSED

After successfully defeating legislation in 2021 which would have mandated extra hunter safety certificates and additional licensing requirements for deer dog hunters, our organization worked with the Wildlife Resources Commission to develop a supplement to the existing North Carolina Hunter Education Course for ALL hunters. We want all hunters to understand the heritage and tradition of hunting with hounds, and we also want hunters who use dogs to follow the law and to be responsible in their practices. The link to the supplement can be found [here](#).

2023 LONG Session Accomplishments

S686 and H600 - REGULATORY REFORM ACT OF 2023 – AMENDED

The first draft of the Senate’s Regulatory Reform Act of 2023 (S586) contained a section which would be problematic for many hunters across the state:

Any person who willfully goes on the land, waters, ponds, or a legally established waterfowl blind of another to hunt, fish, or trap without verbal or written permission from the landowner, lessee, or agent of such property shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Written permission shall be dated within the last 12 months. Information establishing permission shall be provided to any law enforcement officer with general subject matter jurisdiction upon request.

This language came from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. We opposed this change for several reasons:

1. This change to the law is unnecessary and it would have created an undue burden on hunting clubs across the state.
2. This is a slippery slope and could lead to further restrictions in the future
3. There are existing protections in the Landowner Protection Act allowing landowners to post their land with signage or purple paint to prevent anyone from trespassing without written permission.
4. Hunt club members would need separate written permission for each tract of land the club hunts, and each note would need to be signed by every owner of every tract of land. It would be difficult to comply when a piece of property is owned by multiple people, or owned by a legal entity such as a trust or LLC.
5. The new requirement would put many people in violation of the law unintentionally.

Our lobbying team made this our top priority, and after discussions with members in both chambers there was an agreement to remove this section. The House version of the Regulatory Reform bill eventually passed (House Bill 600) and this section was not included.

House Bill 540 – PETA Bill – DEFEATED

House Bill 540 was a bill sponsored by a Wake County legislator at the request of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The full bill text can be found here: <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H540v1.pdf>. This is another version of a bill which we discussed and defeated in the 2022 Legislative Session – House Bill 1116. **The bill was never given a hearing and is no longer eligible for consideration for the rest of the biennium (through December 2024).**

Just like the previous version of the bill, H540 would have created ambiguous space and shelter requirements for animals including sporting dogs. In the very first line of the North Carolina Sporting Dog Association's Code of Ethics (Click [here](#)) we make it clear that our members are to care for their animals. We know that hunters are the best animal advocates, as they know firsthand the value of their dogs from using them in the field. If a law is passed such as H540, it will be used by animal rights activists to prosecute good people who are law-abiding citizens. We have existing laws which are strong protections against animal cruelty, and we must enforce those laws while defending against proposals which could be used as weapons by animal rights activists.

House Bill 93 – ALLOW PRESERVES TO PURCHASE RABBITS – PASSED NC HOUSE

One of our Association's best friends in the legislature, Rep. Ben Moss, introduced helpful legislation to allow rabbit pen operators to purchase rabbits. Coyote pens and fox pens have always been allowed to purchase animals to stock the pen. When rabbit pens were licensed a few years ago, this permission was left out. We support Rep. Moss helping the rabbit preserves be treated equally to other preserves. **The bill passed the NC House of Representatives by a vote of 101-14.** The NC Senate must now act to approve the bill if it is to become law.

PROPOSED RULE RESTRICTING HUNTING in COLUMBUS COUNTY - DEFEATED

After receiving requests from members of the public, the Wildlife Resources Commission proposed a rule which would have banned pursuing or chasing deer with dogs for the purposes of training or hunting on that portion of the Wannanish tract south of NC 214, Columbus County Game Lands. **After public comment and further discussion with the Commission staff and Executive Director Cam Ingram, the Commission decided not to move forward with this rule.** To the best of our knowledge, none of our Association members were involved in the situations which caused the complaints. We trust that our members will always be good examples of how to hunt responsibly.

We hope the above information motivates you to support our organization. Even if your club participates or sponsors NCSDA, we rely on the support of individual donations to fund our advocacy efforts and we hope you will consider joining the fight.

Sincerely yours,

Keith Loudermilt
President
North Carolina Sporting Dog Association, Inc.
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