

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee
October 16, 2007 Meeting Minutes
McCormick County, South Carolina

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Stephen Davis, Vice Chair Ed Muckenfuss, Paul Bennett, John Gramling, II, Billy Hoole, Charles Howard, Bryson Thomason, John Troutman

MEMBER ABSENT:

Milton Brazell

DNR STAFF PRESENT: Breck Carmichael, Val Nash, Derrell Shipes, Tim Ivey, Ross Self, Charles Ruth, Monica Linnenbrink, Major Greg Smith, Susan Johnson

Chair Davis opened the meeting and the minutes of the July 10, 2007 meeting were approved as submitted.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS:

Committee Member Bennett stated he and Dan Caster of NAPA Auto Parts sponsored a youth fishing event that was held at the Cheraw Fish Hatchery the latter part of September. Bennett further stated a total of 74 anglers participated. Bennett commended DNR staff for their efforts and the success of the event. The youth harvested 289 bream, 48 bass and 9 catfish.

Committee Member Howard stated he received good input from DNR's Engineering Section regarding maintenance of public boat landings. As a result of his inquiry and help from DNR's Engineering Section, Darlington County personnel have repaired one public boat landing and will hopefully be more attentive to repairs at other landings.

Committee Members thanked Chair Davis for his hospitality and for hosting the meeting.

Committee Member Muckenfuss stated he continues to be concerned about loopholes in the doe harvest program that allows overharvesting of does on specific areas. He is aware that staff is working on the deer management program statewide and stated he looks forward to the results of staff's efforts in this regard.

SANTEE COOPER STRIPED BASS STAKEHOLDER PROCESS UPDATE:

Fisheries Chief Ross Self stated the Stakeholder Group met for the first time on October 3rd at the Sandhills Research and Education Center on Clemson Road in Columbia. A faculty member from Clemson University, Jae Espey, facilitated the meeting and the meeting was mostly organizational in nature. Self stated approximately 44 individuals were invited to attend the meeting (individuals that had been appointed by legislators whose districts border the Santee system or had been invited by DNR to participate). Of the 44 invited, 32 individuals attended. The group consists of fishing guides, casual anglers, owner/operators of some of the bait and tackle shops, operators of several fish camps on the lake system, as well as two legislators, representing themselves.

A presentation was made on the background and history of the Santee Cooper striped bass population, and participants made comments and asked some questions. Four additional meetings were then scheduled for the Stakeholder Group – October 24 at the Sandhills facility; November 14, December 12 and on January 10, if a fifth meeting is necessary (locations to be determined). At least one meeting will be held in Moncks Corner, possibly one at Santee State Park and one in Orangeburg. Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM with the meetings scheduled to begin at 6:00 PM.

PUBLIC DOVE FIELD OPENING DAY RESULTS:

Wildlife Chief Tim Ivey provided a hand-out reflecting opening day results on Wildlife Management Area public dove fields (copy attached to the minutes). Thirty-three fields were monitored out of a total of 51 fields in 29 counties, plus an additional 8 youth fields. Ivey stated this year there was a record number of hunters (3,170) on fields monitored in the past 12 years. Approximately 62,000 shots were fired and 9,683 doves harvested. Additionally there were 8 youth hunts held with the second highest attendance (235 youth) on opening day. 11,633 shots were fired and 1,235 doves harvested on these special youth hunts. Ivey suggested that Small Game Project Leader Billy Dukes provide the Committee with an update on dove banding and wing age data results at the January 2008 meeting.

DNR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2008:

Deputy Director Carmichael distributed a copy of the “draft” DNR Legislative Priority Proposal list (copy attached to the original minutes). Carmichael stated several bills will automatically become active again in the 2008 legislative session due to 2008 being the second year of a session. S.452 (recreational alligator harvest) passed the Senate last year and went to the House Ag. and Natural Resources Committee. Carmichael expects this bill will receive an early hearing and hopefully quick passage due to the interest and attention to this issue. The Game Zone Consolidation Conforming bill (S.691) is to take care of a few hanging issues relating to going from 11 to 6 game zones. H.3510 amended the statute relating to the purchase of a migratory waterfowl stamp. This bill was technical in nature to allow the electronic sale of the migratory waterfowl stamp. This bill was amended in the House Committee to increase the cost of the duck stamp from \$5.50 to \$10.00. Although DNR did not request the increase, the Agency supported this increase. Carmichael stated results from the waterfowl hunter survey conducted two years ago indicated support for an increase in the waterfowl stamp, as long as funds would be used for waterfowl management. Governor Sanford vetoed the bill, and the General Assembly sustained the veto. Staff plans to re-file this bill, without the fee increase, in order to get the technical changes needed.

Carmichael stated the road safety bill, which is not yet introduced, would make it unlawful for any person to shoot from, on to, or across any paved, secondary, primary or interstate highway open to traffic. This bill would also make it unlawful to possess a rifle or shotgun on any paved, secondary, primary or interstate highway open to traffic unless the weapon is empty of all ammunition. This bill would create a statute in Title 56, which deals with highway safety, as opposed to being located in Title 50 related to hunting and fishing.

Carmichael stated discussion is ongoing regarding buck limits, and staff plans to present proposed changes regarding turkey baiting at the October DNR Board meeting.

Carmichael stated the Striped Bass Stakeholder Group could possibly develop legislation to be introduced regarding the striped bass issue.

Carmichael further stated that once an official DNR Board approved legislative packet becomes available, copies will be distributed to Advisory Committee members.

Chair Davis welcomed Dr. Kevin Keel of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (University of Georgia) and Julie Abbey of Oklahoma State University.

ARTIFICIAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THAT INCREASE WILDLIFE DISEASE RISKS:

Dr. Kevin Keel provided a detailed presentation entitled “Highly Artificial Wildlife Management Activities, Consequences of Altering Risk Factors”. In the presentation he pointed out the risks and consequences of 1) translocation of wildlife, 2) supplemental feeding of wildlife, 3) propagation and release of wildlife, 4) development and/or use of biological products in wildlife and 5) high-fenced wildlife enclosures. He provided case histories and evidence of the consequences and costs of problems in humans, livestock and wildlife associated with these practices. (A copy of the slide presentation and a published paper is attached to the original minutes.)

MARKETING UPDATE:

DNR’s Marketing Director, Monica Linnenbrink, reviewed three marketing campaigns DNR has been developing. Linnenbrink stated the three campaigns are to increase hunting participation, (some ads are currently appearing throughout the Columbia media market) a fishing participation campaign planned for the spring of 2008, and a general campaign designed to increase the public’s awareness of the DNR (also to be released in the spring).

Linnenbrink stated in 2004 a public opinion poll was conducted for DNR by Responsive Management and results from that poll indicated only 17% to 20% of South Carolinians knew DNR was responsible for conserving the natural resources of the State. The awareness campaign is designed to increase these percentages.

The hunting campaign began as a result of funding received from a grant from the National Shooting Sports Foundation. License sales data was reviewed and the campaign is designed to target individuals that do not purchase a hunting license each year. Information derived from data collected included sex, demographic information, and lifestyle to determine what type of media would be most likely to reach lapsed hunters. News and talk radio, country music, classic rock, sporting events and NASCAR were determined to be the most popular media venues. An integrated campaign was developed using paid media, and a direct mail piece was sent to hunters within the Columbia media market.

Linnenbrink stated if the Columbia media market ads produce positive results, a decision will be made to go statewide. The ad is also included in the latest *SC Wildlife Magazine*.

Linnenbrink stated this process and approach to marketing hunters and anglers has worked in other states. Linnenbrink showed the television ad currently being used as well as a picture of billboards being used.

Linnenbrink stated she has been working with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) in an effort to secure funding for the fishing campaign. Funds in the amount of \$25,000 have been received and RBFF will fund the cost of a contractor to analyze licensing sales data relating to fishing as was done for the hunting campaign. There is a possibility of partnering with North Carolina to promote a campaign (in the Charlotte area) since 80% of SC's non-resident anglers come from North Carolina.

DNR's Graphics and Design Section has been working on several different options for developing imagery and a slogan describing what the agency does and to "brand" the DNR. Linnenbrink displayed several mock-ups being considered for the campaign.

There was no old and/or new business.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:
January 8, 2008, location and time to be determined.