

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE AND MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Room 335, Rembert C. Dennis Building
Columbia, S. C.
January 15, 1988
10:00 A. M.

The regular monthly meeting of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission was held at 10:00 a.m., January 15, 1988, in Room 335 of the Rembert C. Dennis Building, Columbia, S. C., with Chairman Webster presiding. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was mailed to the state's media. Commissioners present included: Commissioners Webster, Compton, Owen, Stokes, Thomason, Bennett and Harrelson. Directors and staff present included: Dr. Timmerman, Larry Cartee, Dan Dobbins, Benny Reeves, John Davis, Bill Chastain, Brock Conrad, John Miglarese and various other staff and guests. Dr. Timmerman introduced all guests at the meeting and welcomed them to such.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Webster called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and expressed a welcome to all guests that were attending the meeting.

ITEM I READING OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Webster asked for approval of the Minutes of the November 20, 1987 Commission Meeting. Commissioner Owen noted that he had asked that the Minutes reflect that he opposed the motion that was approved by the Commission on the commercialization of hybrid/striped bass. Commissioners Thomason and Stokes noted that they also would like for the Minutes to reflect that they voted against this motion also. Subject to this amendment, the Commission adopted a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 20, 1987 Commission Meeting.

ITEM II COMMENTS

Dr. Timmerman expressed thanks to the Commission for their assistance during 1987 and noted that he hopes for an even better year in 1988.

Dr. Timmerman noted that we are developing our Accomplishments in 1987 and Goals and Objectives for 1988 which will be on the agenda for the February Commission Meeting for the Commission's input. Dr. Timmerman further noted that he will use this information to give a State of Wildlife message at the upcoming Annual Awards Banquet of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation.

Dr. Timmerman presented an in-depth discussion of our proposed FY 88-89 budget requests which has been submitted to the State Budget and Control Board. Dr. Timmerman discussed recommendations submitted by the Budget and Control Board and the Governor's Office and went over various additional needs for funds that we have in the Department. Dr. Timmerman noted that our request for funds will be submitted through the legislative budget process and this was discussed with the Commission.

Dr. Timmerman distributed, to the Commission, a copy of the Department's bonding request and this matter and our funding request for bond monies were discussed in detail with the Commission.

Dr. Timmerman distributed letters that he has received from Congressman Ravenel and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in support of proposed TED regulations which will be discussed later on the agenda by the Commission.

Dr. Timmerman distributed, to the Commission, the six-month vehicle accident report for their information.

Dr. Timmerman noted that this weekend, he will be representing the Department in lands to be donated by Mr. Gaylord Donnelley, representing 2,584 acres of marsh and 112 acres of upland habitat.

Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission of an article in The State newspaper, on this date, concerning heritage preserves.

Dr. Timmerman noted that the proposed pump back storage at the Lake Russell Project is of concern to our Department and may have an effect on fisheries and he asked Buford Mabry to discuss the Department's concerns. Buford Mabry went over the various concerns of the Department and noted that potential legal action concerning this matter may be needed. Following detailed discussion with the Commission, Commissioner Stokes moved for the Commission to oppose the proposed pump back storage construction at the Lake Russell Project and to authorize the staff to take appropriate means to prevent pump back storage including legal action, if needed. Commissioner Thomason seconded the motion and it was adopted by the Commission.

ITEM III LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dan Dobbins informed the Commission that he is currently preparing a legislative report and this will be sent to the Commission as soon as it is completed. Mr. Dobbins distributed to the

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Commission, H.2877 which is a proposed bill to eliminate the agricultural exemption on property tax for lands that are utilized for recreational purposes. Mr. Dobbins noted that this proposed legislation would include hunting lands and would affect wildlife management area properties leased to the Department. Following a detailed discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to oppose this legislation as presented.

Commissioner Thomason asked about the status of the Department's radio system. Dr. Timmerman noted that this new system is being implemented and should be completed by the end of the fiscal year. He noted that this will be an item for update to the Commission at the February Meeting.

Dr. Timmerman further informed the Commission that we have secured a new helicopter and a Cessna 206 aircraft.

ITEM IV OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Turtle Excluder Device (TED) Regulations: Tom Kohlsaas noted that a proposed regulation requiring Turtle Excluder Devices in all South Carolina by May 1, 1988 has been sent to the Commission for their consideration. Mr. Kohlsaas discussed the proposed regulation with the Commission. Following detailed discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to approve the proposed regulation as submitted (copy attached to original Commission Minutes).

ITEM V NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Field Trial Regulations: Buddy Baker noted that the proposed field trial regulations have been submitted to the Commission for their consideration (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Following discussion, Commissioner Harrelson moved for the Commission to approve the concept of some type of field trial regulations, but for any fees or penalties to be included in such regulations to be presented back to the Commission at a later meeting as a separate recommendation. Commission Compton seconded the motion and it was adopted by the Commission.

B. Proposed Creel Limit on Striped Bass in Santee Cooper: Miller White noted that the Commission had been sent a recommendation proposing a change in the creel limit on striped bass in the Santee Cooper system so as to decrease such from ten (10) to five (5). (Copy attached to original Commission Minutes.) Mr. White discussed this recommendation and went over the data and justification for the proposed change in this creel limit. Following discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to carry this proposal over to a future meeting for consideration.

C. Webb Center Quail Hunt Drawing: John Frampton noted that a proposed preference system for the quail hunts at Webb Wildlife Center was sent to the Commission for their consideration (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Mr. Frampton noted that this system is similar to the current system used for preference selection for the deer hunts at the Webb Wildlife Center. Following discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to approve this preference selection system as submitted.

D. Proposed Bunch Arrowhead Registration Agreements: Tom Kohlsaas noted that the proposed Bunch Arrowhead Registrations in Greenville County were sent to the Commission in their packet (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Following discussion of these proposed Registrations by Mr. Kohlsaas, the Commission adopted a motion to approve the Registration Agreements as submitted.

E. Division Reports:

1. Administrative Services: Benny Reeves informed the Commission that we are in the process of renovations of the Marshlands House at the Marine Center and the house at the Webb Wildlife Center.

2. Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries: Brock Conrad noted that we have been working with personnel at Clemson University and funding has recently been approved to establish a Coop Unit at Clemson. Dan Dobbins discussed the background information concerning our efforts to secure funding for this Coop Unit noting that Dr. Timmerman and the state's congressional delegation played a key role in seeking approval for this Coop Unit.

3. Law Enforcement & Boating: Bill Chastain informed the Commission of the recent arrest of two (2) individuals in Lexington County with illegal fur and he provided details concerning this arrest. Mr. Chastain further noted that a news conference was recently held in Charleston on the illegal sale of shrimp over bait in which fifty-two (52) individuals were arrested involving twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) tons of shrimp valued at approximately \$120,000. Mr. Chastain noted that the maximum finds for these violations could be in the range of \$10,000 or \$11,000. Dr. Timmerman commended the Law Enforcement staff and the covert operations on the manner in which this was handled.

Commissioner Thomason noted that the Law Enforcement Officers in the upstate and biologists in that area put forth a tremendous effort recently to provide assistance during the recent snow storm.

4. Conservation Education & Communications: John Davis informed the Commission that Governor Campbell has recently submitted the Project WILD program for nomination for a national award in the "TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA" campaign. Mr. Davis also presented the new issue of the magazine to the Commission which is entitled, "Silhouettes of Carolina".

5. Marine Resources: John Miglares informed the Commission that the Marine Resources Research Institute held a very successful workshop on aquaculture on December 5, 1987. Mr. Milares also informed the Commission that through the EPA, Charleston Harbor has been nominated for the National Estuarine Program and such has been endorsed by the Marine Advisory Board. This is a cooperative effort involving a number of state and federal agencies.

F. Advisory Board Reports:

1. Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries: Commissioner Owen noted that the Board met in December and the Commission has already acted on the items which the Board approved. Commissioner Owen went over the other items discussed by the Board with the Commission for their information.

2. Law Enforcement & Boating: Commissioner Stokes noted that the Board met this week, but he did not have any action items for the Commission to consider.

3. Marine Resources: Commissioner Harrelson noted that the Board met on December 4, 1987 and he went over the items which were discussed. Commissioner Harrelson recommended that the Commission approved the reappointment of H. H. Von Harten to the Marine Resources Advisory Board. The Commission adopted a motion to approve this recommendation.

4. Conservation Education & Communications: Commissioner Thomason asked John Evans to present a report on the various programs and activities in the Public Information Section. Mr. Evans and his staff presented an in-depth report to the Commission of the numerous programs and activities in the Public Information Program. Commissioner Thomason noted that the CEC Board would hold its next meeting on February 5, 1988. Commissioner Thomason noted that the Aquatic Education Guides have been distributed to the Commission and that he will ask Don Winslow to report to the Commission on Project WILD at the February Meeting.

5. Heritage Trust: There was nothing further to report.

G. Other Remarks: There were no further remarks from the Commissioners.

At this time, Commissioner Harrelson moved for the Commission to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Compton seconded the motion and it was adopted by the Commission. Chairman Webster announced that the Commission would now recess the regular meeting to hold an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Following the Executive Session, the regular meeting was resumed and participants were invited into the meeting.

Commissioner Harrelson moved for the Commission to approve all appointments and reappointments of Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers as submitted (copy attached to original Commission Minutes), and he further moved for the Commission, along with the concurrence and approval of the Governor, to create the position of and appoint as Commissioner Emeritus, Senator Robert C. Dennis, because of his long years of interest and service to the Department and the great help he has provided through the years in the General Assembly to upgrade the Department to the position it is today. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion as presented by Commissioner Harrelson and such was adopted by the Commission.

H. Appointments: This matter was previously acted upon by the Commission.

I. Time and Place of Next Meeting: The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting on February 12, 1988, 11:00 a.m., at the Marine Resources Center in Charleston.

ITEM VI ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Commission adopted a motion to adjourn the meeting.