

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee
September 8, 2021, Minutes
Santee Coastal Reserve
McClellanville, SC**

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Hutchins, Vice Chairman Cleveland Smith, Stan Halliday, Titus Duren, Martha Herbert, Jonathan Rabon, Mac Baughman, Sam Hiott, and Trey Watford.

Members Absent:

Eddie Kinsey and Will Shirley.

Members attending via teleconference:

There were no members attending via teleconference.

Staff Present:

Robert Boyles, Emily Cope, Ken Prosser, Billy Dukes, Sam Chappellear, Will Dillman, Ross Self, Alicia Farrell, Achi Treptow, Felicia Sanders, Molly Kneece, Kelsey Huffstetler.

Others Present:

There were no constituents present.

Chairman Hutchins called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the of the June 24, 2021, meeting was approved as submitted.

Region 4 WFF staff members Sam Chappellear, Achi Treptow, Alicia Farrell, and Molly Kneece, reported on the history of Santee Coastal Reserve, and provided updates on wetland management plans and practices at Samworth WMA. SCDNR implemented an external review process to enhance their research and develop an unbiased management plan for the property.

Billy Dukes, Chief of Wildlife, reported on results of the WMA Sunday Hunting Survey and noted that 50% of those surveyed were in favor, 25% were opposed, and the remaining 25% were neutral. The proposed plan is to continue to prohibit Sunday hunting on Heritage Preserves, WMA's where there are deer lottery hunts, Category 1 Waterfowl areas, and during bear and turkey seasons.

Ross Self, Chief of Fisheries, presented an update on the Sport Fishing Industry Outreach program. SCDNR is working with the South Carolina Boating and Fishing Alliance (SCBFA) to promote boating and fishing interests, expand and protect the boating and fishing industry in South Carolina, and connect the outdoor lifestyle to economic growth policies. Two national bass fishing organizations, as well as 14 South Carolina companies attended ICAST, displaying products representing 45 brands.

Emily Cope, Deputy Director of WFF, reported on legislative updates and agency activity that included preparing state-appropriated budget requests for funding and staff for new properties, increased regional staffing for freshwater fisheries management needs, and additional funding to repair and maintain category 1 waterfowl areas. She added she is also working on obtaining additional authority to prepare for CWD and more oversight concerning the regulation of wildlife rehabilitators.

The committee approved action items regarding proposed changes to State Lake regulations and proposed changes to Section 123-204 regulations.

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee will be held at 10:00am on Thursday, November 4th. The location has not yet been determined.

Chairman Hutchins adjourned the meeting.