

MINUTES OF MEETING OF S. C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

IN COLUMBIA, JANUARY 26, 1954.

All members of the Commission were present, along with Director Richardson, Director Seabrook, Mr. Webb, Mr. Wolling and Mr. Wade.

The question of continuing to pay wardens handling licenses \$30 monthly was discussed and it was decided to continue doing this, at least for the present, since a bill to change the present system has been introduced in the General Assembly.

The financial condition of the Department was explained by Mr. Wolling, who stated the Department was running a deficit of \$8,000 monthly and that a balance of only \$43,000 would be left in the Game and Fish Fund at the end of the fiscal year. His report showed that the Fund had \$499,144, of which \$415,703 is allocated to special funds, with an additional \$40,000 to be allocated to counties July 1.

Mr. Cantey suggested that the use of funds built up in Santee-Cooper and other special funds might be broadened, particularly in paying wardens in the counties adjacent to the lakes.

Mr. Richardson said the Department was already exercising considerable latitude in the expenditure of the special funds but that it should be possible to charge county wardens' salaries to these funds in counties bordering the lakes. He and Mr. Wolling then explained the Santee-Cooper act and other acts affecting special lakes.

There was a general discussion of the need of cutting expenses, even if the lake funds were utilized for wardens' salaries, and the question of quail hatchery and office expenses was also discussed.

The following motion by Mr. Cantey was adopted: "That the Director be authorized and directed to go over payrolls and expenses and to make recommendations for trimming where necessary; and to report on the feasibility of charging the salaries of more wardens to lake and county funds where possible."

Mr. Richardson was instructed to itemize the December expenses of the Division of Game and make recommendations and the Secretary was instructed to do the same for the Administrative Division. (It was subsequently decided to have this done for October, November and December).

Mr. Warren said that several requests for additional wardens had been received and a policy decision on putting on new wardens must be made.

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Mr. Richardson said he did not believe any new men should be put on until it had been decided what to do about cutting the force and with the hunting season ending the need for wardens is not so great.

A motion of Mr. Hopkins was adopted that no new jobs be created or new appointments made until after July 1, when it could be better known whether funds would warrant this.

The question of curtailing the quail hatchery program was brought up and all Commissioners agreed something should be done. Mr. Webb said he had discussed with Clemson officials the possibility of Clemson handling the hatcheries. He said that Clemson would only supervise them and the Department would be required to finance and furnish the labor and materials, something that he did not favor.

A letter from Dr. M. D. Farrar on this was read at the request of Mr. McKeithan.

A motion of Mr. Oliphant was adopted that all hatcheries costing the Department money be closed except that Spartanburg be maintained for brood stock. Equipment would be stored at Spartanburg or other suitable places.

Mr. Warren then reported on the legislative attack on the Commission and on Mr. Seabrook and told of his meeting with the delegations from the coastal counties, as well as the statement he had issued to the press. He said that all delegations except Beaufort were sympathetic and satisfied and agreed that the great need was for stronger laws.

Mr. Warren then brought up the legislative recommendations and said that he did not believe it possible that the bill giving the Commission power to set seasons and limits would be passed.

Mr. Warren said that he had received a letter from Walter Gnann regarding the management of Bear Island and Mr. Gnann had recommended that whatever regulations were made to make the place a refuge should be abided by and the Commission and Department personnel should refrain from going into the refuge area.

Mr. Richardson said no violations of the regulations had taken place and that apparently Mr. Gnann did not understand the regulations.

The new system of handling licenses was discussed and Mr. Richardson said much criticism had been received regarding the new system.

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Mr. Johnson and Mr. Oliphant said they had heard of no complaints in their districts and it was decided to hold in abeyance ~~any~~ action regarding a change.

Mr. Seabrook said there was much confusion on the Santee river between Berkeley and Georgetown counties because of the different zone laws regarding the taking of shad. (A bill and a resolution on this were introduced later in the week).

Mr. Seabrook also stated that some stores, particularly up-state, were selling shad without tags and asked whether game wardens could enforce the law in up-state cities. Mr. Richardson said this would not be feasible. The Secretary was instructed to get out a release and ad on this feature of the law.

Mr. Warren said he had been visited by a Beaufort delegation asking a change in the law to allow the export of clams and Mr. Seabrook was instructed to write up a proposed law.

Mr. Seabrook discussed his recommendations regarding changes in the commercial fisheries laws and on motion of Mr. Oliphant it was voted to present these to the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry committee with the approval of the Commission.

Mr. McKeithan brought up the matter of Daisybank plantation in Georgetown county being for sale by the government and suggested that it might be deeded to the state by the federal government. Mr. McKeithan was asked to investigate and to contact the proper agency for information.

On motion of Mr. Cantey it was agreed that the Commission would furnish transportation for seven boys to attend the <sup>Kentucky</sup> Youth Camp this summer and the Director was instructed to provide a supervisor to accompany them, along with Mr. Wade.

The question of personnel hunting on Bear Island was discussed without any definite action being taken.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Commission was not getting the information from other divisions on finances and operation that it did from the Division of Commercial Fisheries.

The meeting was then adjourned to meet with the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee.

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Mr. Warren explained to the Committee the recommendations of the Commission and said that although the setting of seasons and limits by the Commission would be an onerous job it would be wise for the General Assembly to grant this power.

Other legislation favored by the Commission was explained by Mr. Warren and Mr. Johnson, the latter discussing the recommended changes in the fishing license law.

In discussing the Division of Commercial Fisheries, Mr. Warren stated it was doing a good job within the limitations of the law. He cited unfair and unwise features of the tax and license laws and said insufficient revenue from these was responsible for the Division not being self-supporting. He then gave Mr. Seabrook's recommendations, as well as the possibility of exporting clams.

Senator Rodgers of Beaufort brought out the fact that holders of oyster leases took the view that clams were covered by their shellfish lease. He said that taxes and licenses were out of line but suggested a sliding scale to meet price changes.

Rep. Carter of Beaufort said he favored a revision of the laws and asked whether the Commission had any objection to his Resolution (adopted by the House that morning) providing that a separate committee be set up to study the commercial fisheries laws.

Mr. Warren said the Commission had no objection and that it was entirely up to the General Assembly.

Mr. Carter then discussed his bill to lessen the tax on crab pots and Mr. Seabrook said he was agreeable to any law that was passed.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Commission would be held at Edisto Island at the call of the Chairman.

*Eddie Finlay*