MINUTES OF MEETING OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION HELD IN COLUMBIA

JANUARY 5, 1955.

All members of the Commission were present except Mr. Johnson. Also present were Mr. Richardson, Mr. Webb, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Wade, Charlie Brice and James S. Verner.

The Commission went into executive session, after which the matter of a liaison committee was brought up, Mr. McKeithan discussing the plan of the Forestry Commission. A motion of Mr. McKeithan was adopted that a committee of seven men, one from each congressional district and the president of the Wildlife Federation, be invited to serve as a liaison and advisory committee between the Commission and the people of the State. The member from each congressional district will be named by the Commissioner from that district.

Mr. Richardson then submitted several wardens and non-pay game wardens for commissioning or recommissioning, all his recommendations being approved. The Commission approved Mr. Richardson's putting Roy Bessinger, who has been serving as a part-time warden in Georgetown county, on the regular force in Bamberg county. Mr. Richardson said Mr. Bessinger could be used where needed over the State.

Mr. Richardson brought up the manner in which hardwood trees are being girdled on public and private lands and said this was destroying much food for wildlife and this should be called to the attention of the public.

Several proposed bills were discussed and Mr. Webb stated the Budget and Control Board favored a universal fishing license bill and was ready to submit one as a provision of the General Appropriations bill.

The Commission directed Director Richardson to present the bills approved to the chairman of the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee and the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee.

Recommendations of Mr. Fuller regarding Lake Murray and the operation of the Four-County hatchery were discussed. It was agreed that it would not be wise to close the hatchery and Mr. Richardson pointed out that under the law the output of the hatchery could be put anywhere in the four counties, including private ponds. Mr. Warren said that it would be a good idea for Mr. Fuller to explain the entire Lake Murray situation to the legislators from the four counties.

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The state-wide fish hatchery program was discussed and Mr. Fuller said three hatcheries could meet the demands from all pond owners.

Mr. Wade suggested that Dr. Eschmeyer's fisheries fundamentals book should be sent to all legislators.

Hunting on Belmont was discussed and several Commissioners said they had heard criticism of this. Mr. Richardson stated that under the agreement with the federal government control of the game crop was approved and quail crops were studied for scientific purposes. It was decided to leave the matter of controlling hunting on Belmont up to Mr. Richardson.

The Commission approved raises of $300 annually for Mr. Fuller and for George Scruggs and also voted that Mr. Nelson's salary be raised to that of Mr. Fuller.

Mr. McKeithan presented the report of the special committee set up to study the quail hatchery situation and said the committee recommended that the quail at the Spartanburg hatchery be released (which has already been done); that the brood stock from the Chester hatchery be moved to Spartanburg, and the latter hatchery be continued for another year of operation.

Mr. Richardson said he believed the contaminated soil at Spartanburg would prevent successful operation of the hatchery. It was agreed to hold off action on the recommendations until the next meeting.

The matter of a Georgetown warden was discussed without any definite action being taken.

Mr. Wade stated that he had been named to the curriculum revision committee set up by the Department of Education, serving as conservation consultant.

Mr. Warren said that an inspection of Bear Island would be held Friday.

A meeting at Bears Bluff was discussed without any definite action being taken.

No date was set for the next meeting.

Eddie Finlay