

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE AND MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

ROOM 335, REMBERT C. DENNIS BUILDING
Columbia, S. C.
September 16, 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. on Friday, September 16, 1988, in Room 335, Rembert C. Dennis Building, Columbia, S. C., with Chairman Marion Burnside presiding. Notice of the date, time and place of meeting was mailed to the State's media. Commissioners present included Commissioners Burnside, Drummond, Compton, Pendarvis, Owen, Miller, Stokes, Thomason and Bennett. Directors and staff members present included Dr. Timmerman, Dan Dobbins, Benny Reeves, Bill Chastain, Sonny Baines, Brock Conrad and various other staff and guests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burnside called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all guests who were in attendance at the meeting.

ITEM I - READING OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Thomason made a motion that the minutes be approved as mailed, Commissioner Compton seconded and the motion passed.

ITEM II - COMMENTS

Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission that the Department's budget hearing before the Budget and Control Board was held on September 8, 1988, and had been scheduled from 2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., but because of very friendly questions from the Board, did not finish up until 3:00 p.m. Dr. Timmerman stated that he thought that the Department had received a very favorable hearing from the Board and commended Benny Reeves for his part in the presentation. Senator Drummond reiterated that the hearing was very successful and very well received.

Dr. Timmerman then circulated Minutes of the monthly Directors' Staff Meeting to the Commission.

Dr. Timmerman then introduced Knox Haynesworth of Greenville, S.C., and announced that Mr. Haynesworth had just been appointed by the Governor to serve on the Department's Law Enforcement and Boating Advisory Board. Bo Stokes, Chairman of that Advisory Board, also welcomed Mr. Haynesworth and noted that Joe Wyatt and John Jernigan, Advisory Board members, were also present at the Commission meeting.

Dr. Timmerman also stated that Mr. Sam Hiott of Charleston had also been appointed by the Governor to the Marine Resources Advisory Board.

ITEM III - OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion - Moreland Hunt Club Request to Use Santee Coastal Reserve Boat Ramp: Dr. Timmerman stated that the Moreland Hunt Club had again requested the use of the boat ramp on Santee Coastal Reserve in order to access their hunt club property. This request had been made in the past and had been granted by the Commission. He stated that one additional step would be necessary this year, in that the Budget and Control Board would have to review the matter to determine if they need to take action on it as well. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Compton made the motion that this matter be taken up at the next meeting and that staff be asked to give a complete briefing to the Commission on this matter and that representatives of the Moreland Hunt Club be asked to be present to make their request at that time. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion and the motion was passed. Commissioner Compton commented that there are several other groups seeking access of various types to Department-owned properties in addition to the Moreland Hunt Club group, and expressed some concern over this matter.

B. Lake Wallace Property Sale: Dr. Timmerman then called on Benny Reeves to present this matter. Mr. Reeves stated that the Board of Directors of the Marlboro Country Club had asked the Department to consider selling them six acres of land of the Department's Lake Paul Wallace property which is adjacent to their golf course. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries has reviewed the proposal and has indicated that the land is of little value to the Department. Mr. Reeves asked the Commission's approval to enter into further negotiations with the Country Club to see if a land swap would be feasible. He stated he envisioned swapping this land, which is quite valuable, for a much larger tract in another area which could be used to much more advantage by the Department. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Compton made a motion that the staff be authorized to enter into negotiations with the Country Club, Commissioner Stokes seconded, and the motion passed.

C. Update - Proposed Coley Creek Project: Dr. Timmerman asked Ed Duncan to brief the Commission on this project. Ed Duncan then circulated a letter from Dr. Timmerman to Duke Power which detailed the Department's staff position at this time. Mr. Duncan reported that Duke Power had filed an Initial State Consultation Report (ISCR) and that this is the initial step in the licensing process. He stated that since this report was filed, our staff has had 20 different meetings with Duke staff to discuss the project in detail. He stated that this letter will document our initial concerns and will detail the areas that we would like to see addressed in their licensing application. He pointed out that this is an enormous project

that would be built within a major wilderness area and would have a severe impact on the environment of the area and would remove land from our public hunting program. He stated that the staff would be coming back to the Commission again as this project develops. He said again that the letter that had been distributed to them was a draft letter and asked if any of the Commissioners had any comments or suggestions for inclusion in the final copy of the letter to please pass them to staff and they would be included.

Dr. Timmerman then asked Ed Duncan to discuss with the Commission the review process that the staff goes through on any major project of this type. Mr. Duncan then went into a detailed discussion of the type of review process used by our staff. Commissioner Owen expressed grave concern over this project and expressed the belief that the Department should go ahead and formulate a position of opposition and not be tied to any time schedule that may be dictated by Duke Power or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). There was then a brief discussion concerning the severity of the staff concern over the potential damage this project could cause. During the discussion, it was pointed out that the first draft license application, if they move ahead with the project, should be prepared sometime in October, and that would be the first opportunity the Commission would have to express its opposition. Following the discussion, Senator Drummond moved that the draft letter be completed in a timely manner and forwarded to Duke and that the staff input be taken as information at this time, Commissioner Compton seconded, and the motion passed.

ITEM IV - NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding Between the National Wild Turkey Federation and the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department: Chairman Burnside stated that Mr. Rob Keck, Executive Director of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Dr. James Earl Kennamer, Director of Research and Management of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Mrs. Tweedie Mills, State Wild Turkey Federation Chapter President, were in attendance and called on Brock Conrad to discuss this item.

Mr. Conrad stated that the Department had been working with the National Wild Turkey Federation as well as the state and local chapters for a number of years, and that the Memorandum of Understanding was proposed in order to formalize the cooperative effort that has been ongoing in an informal manner in the past. He expressed the Department's gratitude to the Federation and its members for the good work that they have done on behalf of the wild turkey resource of the State. Rob Keck was then recognized

and he expressed the Federation's gratitude to the Department for the great partnership effort that they have enjoyed in the past. Following comments by Dr. James Earl Kennamer, Chairman Burnside and the officers of the Wild Turkey Federation formally signed the Memorandum of Agreement.

B. Proposed 1988 Fall Turkey Season: Chairman Burnside called on Brock Conrad, who introduced Mr. Dave Baumann, State Turkey Project Leader. Mr. Baumann stated that the recommendations for the Fall Turkey Season for the State had been mailed to the Commission and that there were only two modifications this year from what has been approved in the past. The two changes include an extension of the area where a Fall Season will be opened, the first being in the Central Piedmont which will encompass all of York County and a portion of Cherokee County. The second change was to begin for the first time a Fall Turkey Season in Jasper County. Commissioner Owen stated that this Fall Season framework was approved by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Board at their August meeting, and made a motion that they be accepted as presented. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion, and that motion was passed.

C. Proposed McAlhany's Hardwoods Registration Agreement: Chairman Burnside then called on Stuart Greeter. Mr. Greeter distributed a memo to the Commission proposing that a Registration Agreement be entered into between the Department and the owners of McAlhany's Hardwoods. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Compton moved that the agreement be signed, Commissioner Drummond seconded, and the motion passed.

D. Proposed Purchase of Property in Marion and Lexington Counties: Chairman Burnside again called on Stuart Greeter who proposed the purchase of two parcels of property, both of which had been approved for purchase by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board. The first being a parcel referred to as the Dargan Property in Marion County, comprised of 655 acres lying along the Little Pee Dee River. He stated that this would be a part of the Department's Large Area Preservation Project. He stated that the property was being purchased at 60% of the assessed fair market value, pointing out that it lies along a very scenic portion of the Little Pee Dee River and does harbor one endangered plant species. He stated that while the opportunity for deer hunting may be somewhat limited because of the habitat, that it would provide excellent waterfowl hunting and small game hunting and would be added to the Department's Game Management Area Program. He also pointed out that there would be daily recreational use and that it would provide an excellent site for overnight camping for those people floating the river. After a brief discussion, Senator Drummond made the motion that

the Commission approve the expenditure of funds from the Heritage Land Trust Fund necessary to purchase the property, Commissioner Compton seconded, and the motion was passed.

Mr. Greeter stated that the second piece of property that they were asking the Commission to consider is a parcel adjacent to Shealy's Pond in Lexington County. Mr. Greeter stated that the Department already owned a 40 acre site on one side of the pond and that they are proposing that the Commission approve the purchase of another 21 acre site on the opposite side of the pond. The other parcels around the pond are in private ownership and are not available for purchase at present. He stated that the negotiated price for the property was about 10% below fair market value. Following the discussion, Commissioner Compton made the motion that the purchase be approved, Senator Drummond seconded, and the motion passed.

E. Division Reports:

1. Administrative Services: There was nothing further to report, however, Dr. Timmerman pointed out that the State Auditor's Office's staff had been auditing the Department for over four months and that the Department's operation was in such good shape that there may not even be a need to issue a Management Report. He stated that this reflected very well on Director Reeves and his staff.

2. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: Director Brock Conrad stated that he had provided the Commission with a report on the bids the Department had received for our first sale of nuisance alligator hides and stated that he felt this has been a very successful program. He stated that our trappers had harvested 223 hides during this first year of the program and that these hides brought a price of \$44.01 per foot at the recent sale, which was considered an excellent price. He stated that the biologist in charge of this project was Pete Swiderek and commended him for an excellent job.

He also stated that the Commission, in February, had approved an expansion of the deer bag limit in the Central and Western Piedmonts, allowing for an additional two deer in the bag limit if they were does. Because of the timing of the approval of that regulation, it will be necessary to file an Emergency Regulation in order to get that extended bag limit into effect for the 1988 Deer Season.

He informed the Commission that the Cooperative Project between Ducks Unlimited and the Wildlife and Marine Resources Department at the Springfield Marsh was moving ahead very well and showed the Commission a six minute videotape produced by the Conservation, Education and Communications Division on that project.

3. Law Enforcement and Boating: Director Chastain reported that his division was involved in a project on Lake Marion clearing a 100 foot wide channel three and one-half miles long. He stated that they were averaging about 200 trees every hundred yards, with the divers removing these trees by using underwater chainsaws to a depth of 12 feet uniformly throughout the area. He stated that they are halfway finished and that there will be a press conference at 10:00 a.m., Monday, September 19th, at Goat Island to acquaint the press with the project. He commended Leonard Mishoe and the Department's dive team for the tremendous job that they have done.

4. Conservation, Education and Communications: Director Baines then distributed copies of the new Resource newspaper, pointing out a new section dealing with newly enacted fish and game laws. Dr. Timmerman also commented that the Carolina Business Communicators will recognize our magazine in their awards program to be held October 13th in Charleston.

5. Marine Resources: John Miglarese stated that Dr. Sandifer sent his regrets that he could not attend the Commission meeting, but he was representing the Department by giving an address at the dedication of the new Marine Fisheries Service Lab at Fort Johnson.

He stated that the new Billfish Management Plan had been signed by the Secretary of Commerce and will go into effect October 18th. He stated that this Plan culminates ten years of effort and was initiated because of the enormous billfish by-catch in the swordfishing industry. He stated that the Plan has a no-sale provision for billfish and the next Marine Resources Advisory Board meeting should result in some specific recommendations to the Commission as to how we can better implement this Plan in South Carolina.

He stated that Dr. Sandifer was meeting with the leadership of the National Marine Fisheries Service today to finalize an agreement whereby they would provide the Department with forensic backup and testing, particularly in the area of identifying various fisheries species. He stated that this would enable us to insure that people are not bringing in billfish carcasses cut up and selling them claiming that they are another species of fish other than billfish.

He stated that this year's budget provided funds for the Division to purchase a new research vessel, and stated that they were very close to closing a purchase agreement for a 110 foot offshore utility vessel that should provide us with a research platform that we can use through the year 2000. He also commended Benny Reeves and his staff for their assistance in helping them through the regulations and procurement requirements necessary for purchasing such a vessel.

F. Advisory Board Reports:

1. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: Chairman Owen stated that there were no items other than the Fall Turkey Season that needed Commission approval.

2. Law Enforcement and Boating: Chairman Stokes stated that the next meeting was going to be on October 13th at Mr. Joe Wyatt's and issued an invitation to all of the Commission to attend. He also expressed his appreciation to those members of his Advisory Board who were attending the Commission meeting and commended them for their interest.

He stated that Mr. Arthur Williams' Commission appointment to the Advisory Board expires on September 30th and he made a motion that Mr. Williams be reappointed to serve for another term by the Commission, Chuck Compton seconded, and the motion was passed.

He also stated that Mr. Lamar Dawkins' term expires at the same time, but he is a gubernatorial appointee, and he had not heard from the Governor's Office as to whether or not the Governor intends to reappoint Mr. Dawkins.

3. Marine Resources: Chairman Pendarvis stated that the next Marine Resources Advisory Board meeting would be on October 6th at the Waddell Center and invited the Commission to attend. He stated that one of the items on their agenda would be a discussion of the Billfish Plan and enforcement recommendations. He stated that they would also be discussing the possibility of a saltwater fishing license for South Carolina and TEDs. He recommended that anyone who wanted to come contact Ginnie Martin to make plans for overnight accommodations. He stated that the Marine Resources Advisory Board also will have a vacancy that is a Commission appointment, and he intended to determine if the Advisory Board had any recommendations to bring to the Commission next month.

He stated that his Advisory Board planned to have another meeting sometime between December 6th and 9th for the purpose of meeting with the leadership of the South Carolina Shrimpers Association. He stated that as soon as the date was set, he would be in contact with the Commission and asked that as many members of the Commission as possible attend.

4. Heritage Trust: No further business.

G. Other Remarks: Chairman Burnside then recognized John Jernigan, on behalf of the Midlands Chapter of Quail Unlimited.

Mr. Jernigan stated that he would like to express the appreciation of the Midlands Chapter of Quail Unlimited to the Department and the Commission for everything that they have done to assist:

them in efforts to improve and protect the quail resource in the Midlands area. He then issued an invitation to the Commission and their guests to be the Quail Unlimited Midlands Chapter's guests at their banquet on September 29th. He stated that there would be tickets at the door with the Commissioners' names on them and expressed the hope that they would all attend.

Dr. Timmerman then announced that the Conservation Officer of the Year Banquet would be held at 1:00 p.m. following the Commission meeting at the Radisson Hotel. He also reminded the Commission of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting on November 6th through 9th at Hilton Head and asked that those Commissioners planning to attend complete and send in their registration forms as soon as possible.

H. Appointments: Commissioner Stokes moved for the Commission to hold an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Compton seconded the motion, and it was adopted by the Commission. Chairman Burnside announced that, at this time, the Commission would 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 Compton moved for the Commission to approve all appointments and reappointments of Conservation Officers and Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers as presented to the Commission, with one correction in spelling (corrected copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion, and the motion was adopted by the Commission.

Commissioner Thomason made a motion that the radios requested as per the information sent to the Commission be approved. Commissioner Compton seconded, and the motion was passed.

I. Time and Place of Next Meeting: Commissioner Stokes stated that the next Commission meeting will be held at the Kingstree Inn on Friday, October 21st at 2:30 p.m.

ITEM V - ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion was adopted to adjourn.