

Minutes of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council

1. Call to Order

Chairman Chris Page called the 110th meeting of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council to order at 10:00 am on February 14, 2012. The meeting was held in Conference Room 310 of the Dennis Building at 1000 Assembly St. in Columbia, SC. This meeting was open to the public and ample notice had been provided according to Section 30-4-80 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Attendance:

Council members in attendance were Mr. John Inabinet, S.C. Public Service Authority; Mrs. Jeannie Eidson, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control; Mr. David Tompkins, S.C. Department of Agriculture; Mr. Mark Cribb, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division and Mr. Chris Page, S.C. and Stan Hutto, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism.

Visitors in attendance were Mr. Carl Cagle, of the Goat Island Boat Club; Mr. Michael Palladin, of the Goat Island Boat Club; Mrs. Debra Gleaton, of the Goat Island Boat Club; Mr. Paul Taylor, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Justin Stroud, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Clark McCrary, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Mac Stephens; Mr. Kevin Quinn, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Mathew Parrott, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Ryan Coyle, a concerned sportsman; Mr. Ronald Kyzer, a concerned sportsman; Mrs. Mary Shriner, Santee Cooper Counties Promotion Commission; Mr. Larry McCord, S.C. Public Service Authority; **Mr. , S.C. Department of Agriculture**; Mr. Ross Self, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division; Mrs. Emily Cope, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division

2. Public Comments on the Draft 2012 Aquatic Plant Mangement Plan

Carl Cagle, of the Goat Island Boat Club, wanted to thank the Council for the work

done in the past. The Goat Island Boat Club has been involved with the fight against hydrilla because they have seen what has happened to the lakes in the past. They have no problems with the natural grasses but dislike the hydrilla and the floating heart. Also, if there is anything the boat club can do please let them know.

Paul Taylor, a concerned sportsman, was wondering about the 1 to 8 ratio. Is there a definitive number of carp for the system? The concern is there will be additional carp asked for in the next years. What about timing the spraying of the hydrilla? Could the invasives be sprayed earlier in the year as opposed to the October treatments so as to not coincide with the waterfowl seasons.

Chairman Page responds and provides details on the early stocking of the Santee Cooper system. Details were also given about the new grass carp data that has come out in recent years. The timing of the treatments can sometimes be attributed to manpower issues, sometimes money issues, and sometimes it is because of untimely surveying.

Justin Stroud, a concerned sportsman, appreciates the homeowner's position on hydrilla and would like to see a balanced approach to the treatment of hydrilla. Mr. Stroud has concerns about introducing an invasive species to combat an invasive species. He feels that some of the unintended consequences of the initial stocking led to the long time period of little vegetation in the lake. Mr. Stroud is concerned that the removal of hydrilla will lead to the demise of water fowling and fishing on the lakes. He also expressed his concern over the SCDNR having one section promoting the fisheries and wildlife aspects of the lake and one section doing harm to the lakes.

Clark McCrary, a concerned sportsman, is seeing a major turnaround in the lake. The valisneria is incredible. The sportsman's biggest fear is the over-introduction of carp and the impact they may have on the native grasses. Native vegetation has been thriving and sportsmen would hate to see those plant populations be impacted. He would like the carp to be introduced in smaller numbers but with an increased effort in herbicide treatments. Mr. McCrary had a question about the 243 names on the petition and whether they would be included in the comment period.

Chairman Page indicated that they would be included in the comments section of the plan.

Mr. David Tomkins also added that he personally goes through the comments and

checks to see if he recognizes names and reads all the comments.

Discussion ensued on the strategies of stocking grass carp and their effect on the ecosystem. Details were also discussed about the entire Santee Cooper grass carp stocking efforts from the 1980's to now. Biology of hydrilla and grass carp was also discussed. The plant survey process was detailed as well.

3. Minutes of the November 16, 2011 Council Meeting

Mr. Page presented the minutes from the 109th meeting of the Aquatic Plant Management Council for review. Minutes were reviewed. Mrs. Eidson made the motion for the 109th meeting of the Aquatic Plant Management Council minutes to be accepted as written. Mr. Cribb seconded the motion. No discussion was needed and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Discussion and Approval of the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan

Several additional water bodies have been added to the plan. Pickens County would like to stock sterile grass carp in some of their county owned waters and these water bodies will be added to the plan.

Turkey Creek will be added to the plan as well. The existing plan for Lake Edgar A. Brown will be modified to include the portion of Turkey Creek extending from Lake Brown to the end of the new Barnwell county park/SCDNR Barnwell fish hatchery.

One comment on the plan questioned why Lake Thurmond was not included in the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan. It was not included because it is a Corps of Engineers Lake and we have very little input to the management of the lake itself. Mrs. Eidson reminded the Council that there was a prior conversation discussing the issues on Lake Thurmond and that it was decided to put at least a small section mentioning aquatic vegetation issues at Lake Thurmond into the Plan. Discussion ensued on the value of having a Lake Thurmond section in the plan. Chairman Page indicated that he would put it in the plan in some manner. He also reminded the Council that additional water bodies could be added as amendments at later dates.

No discussion followed on any of the other water bodies within the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan.

A discussion of the \$40,000 cost share per waterbody was entertained. The cost share remains the same for each waterbody.

Mr. Inabinet made the motion to accept the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan as written. Mr. Tompkins seconded the motion. Mrs. Eidson wanted to point out that the Council was approving a stocking rate of 25 fish per vegetative acre of hydrilla and a 10 fish per “un-palatable” vegetative acre, which is a reduced stocking rate from what was originally proposed to the Council. Discussion followed about the stocking rate and details were given about a discussion between Scott Lamprecht, SCDNR Fisheries Biologist, and Steve Thomas, member of the SCDNR Waterfowl Advisory Committee, concerning the stocking rates and herbivory of non-target species. No other discussion was heard. Mr. Page called for the vote to pass the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan as written. The vote to pass the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan as written was unanimous. The 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan is approved.

The logistics of getting the grass carp stockings approved by the SCDNR Board of Directors was discussed. It was stated that the grass carp stocking plan will be brought to the SCDNR Board's attention by Deputy Director Ken Rentiers for informational purposes and then Deputy Director Emily Cope will ask for approval to permit the stocking of the grass carp in state waters.

No other discussion followed.

5. Adjournment

Being no further business the Council adjourned at 12:30 p.m.