

Minutes of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council

1. Call to Order

Chairman Chris Page called the 111th meeting of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council to order at 10:15 am on November 14, 2012. The meeting was held in Conference Room 205 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. Mark Cribb, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division and Mr. Chris Page, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division; Stan Hutto, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and Mr. Bob Perry, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

Visitors in attendance were Mr. Larry McCord, S.C. Public Service Authority; Mr. John Morrison, S.C. Public Service Authority; Mr. Bryan Lynch, S.C. Public Service Authority and Mr. Michael Hook, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division.

2. Minutes of the February 14, 2012 Council Meeting

Mr. Page notified the council minutes from the 110th meeting of the Aquatic Plant Management Council were just completed. Mr. Page made the motion to electronically distribute the minutes to the members of the Council. Mr. Perry made the motion for the 110th meeting of the Aquatic Plant Management Council minutes to be electronically distributed for review. Mrs. Eidson seconded the motion. No discussion was needed and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Review of 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Activities

Mr. Page brought forth to the Council the management activities for 2012 in an effort to review the work accomplished and possibly serve as a guide to what may be needed in the 2013 management season.

Mr. Hook detailed the S.C.D.N.R. Aquatic Nuisance Species Section's 2012 management activities. In 2012, after enduring a personnel loss, focus was shifted to the larger water bodies and high priority areas with large numbers of problematic species. Back River Reservoir was a high priority with 227 acres of work being completed. The Cooper River was also a priority with work being done on hydrilla near subdivisions and hyacinth throughout the river. 624 acres of phragmites work was completed at Santee Coastal Reserve, Santee Delta WMA, and Samworth WMA. We also cooperated with S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and provided assistance in treating several state parks. Island Apple Snails were also a focus in Horry County with 70 acres of infested waters being treated. The snail population is smaller than in the past but we have not been able to remove all of the snails from the area. One of the highest priority areas was Goose Creek Reservoir, where 270 acres of invasives were treated. The majority of the activity was water lettuce. We tested a new product, Clipper, on Goose Creek Reservoir with very good results. 3, 675 sterile grass carp were stocked in state waters. The majority of the carp were stocked in Goose Creek Reservoir, some went into state park lakes, with a few stocked in a reservoir owned by the City of Pickens, and a few were released in S.C.D.N.R. owned lakes.

Mr. Page mentioned that hydrilla has come on strong in the upstate. Both species of hydrilla has been found. Work was even done on Lake Monticello recently. The plan is to stock grass carp in Lake Monticello next year.

Mr. Page also mentioned that the Aquatic Nuisance Species program also assisted the S.C. Public Service Authority by treating 173 acres of Crested Floating Heart on several WMA's on the Santee Cooper Lakes. Work was also completed on Potato Creek WMA and Sandy Beach WMA as well. Mr. Page indicated he would like to continue this type of cooperation in the future.

Mr. McCord mentioned that operationally the work was a good thing but he does not like that procedurally Santee Cooper has been eliminated from the cost share and he does

not think that is appropriate. He believes that Santee Cooper should be included on the cost share.

A discussion describing a Santee Cooper/S.C.D.N.R. cost share follows.

It was brought to the council's attention that at one point Santee Cooper received a cost share portion. Mr. Page responded that for 20 years the cost share that was received by Santee Cooper was federal monies that were being distributed by the S.C.D.N.R. Mr. Page described the process to which a cost share has to be documented and noted that with recent personnel actions within the last decade it was becoming increasingly difficult to fiscally justify the cost share as required by the proper authorities. He also noted that other agencies and entities receiving the cost share were matching the cost share with their own monies and the management work was being completed by the S.C.D.N.R. The justification process between two state agencies were described and discussed. Within this discussion Mr. Inabinet mentioned that he would like to see changes made to the current policy of paying \$1 for every sterile grass carp brought into the state. He said a fee of \$1 per every fish that gets certified would be more than reasonable and indicated that a request was made to S.C.D.N.R. noting such but it was not granted. Mr. Perry suggests that a meeting between S.C.D.N.R. and Santee Cooper be set up and the merits of making a minor change to the statute regulating that fee. Mr. Inabinet agreed that would be a good idea and also said it would be advisable for upper management of both agencies to discuss this issue.

Mr. Page invited Mr. McCord to present some preliminary surveys and data for the Santee Cooper system. He also gave a little back ground as to what has transpired over the last few months. 109,000 sterile grass carp were stocked into the Santee Cooper Lakes but the stocking was spread out over several months with the last stocking being 2 weeks prior to this meeting. He also noted that at this time we are a 1/3 the way to the highest recorded number of sterile grass carp in the system.

Mr. McCord started his presentation discussing hydrilla. He states that the hydrilla has expanded from about 3,684 acres in 2011 to 5,469 acres in 2012. This includes the impoundments. There were three main areas where expansion was taking place: upper Lake Marion, Angel's cove on Lake Moultrie, and near the Hatchery. It was noted that in 2010 there were 1,249 acres of hydrilla. A discussion followed about the difference in

the rate of increase between 2010 to 2011 and 2011 to 2012. Lake Moultrie has the higher percentage of hydrilla between the two lakes. A big concern for both reservoirs is losing the eel grass to hydrilla. Right now the biggest component of submersed aquatic species is eel grass but hydrilla is quickly taking over. The rest of the vegetation numbers are in their preliminary stages and will be revised most likely. Sterile grass carp stocking locations were pointed out and discussed. Sterile grass carp stocking strategies were then discussed. One item of note that was discussed was switching the stocking dates from the spring to the fall. It was also noted, that whatever strategy that is adopted, the maintenance stocking should be adhered to. The expansion of crested floating heart was discussed next. It has been rapidly expanding since 2010. It also appears that it is being moved throughout the lakes by humans. In 2011 there were 2,500 to 3,000 acres and we will have 6,000 acres plus this year. It should be noted that there are some areas that have been held at bay with serious effort. It is a more aggressive growing plant than hydrilla and it can withstand colder weather and can tolerate low light conditions. So far it has only been documented in the Santee Cooper lakes, a few golf courses in the Georgetown/Horry county area, and then the Santee River below the dam as far as the 52 bridge. Details of crested floating heart herbicide treatment were discussed in detail. Water hyacinth has become a problem this year as well. The upper end of Lake Marion is filling up with hyacinth. Funding is a problem. Grass carp cost is a major factor. Crested floating heart is also a very expensive plant to treat per acre. Then to compound the issue the emergence of water hyacinth is creating problems financially as well. In 2012 over 1,000 acres of hydrilla were treated chemically, 1,200 acres of floating heart, and over 1,000 acres of water hyacinth was treated as well.

4. J. Strom Thurmond Reservoir Invasive Species and User Survey Draft Review

Mr. Bob Perry presented and updated the Council members of the progress made in the development of the survey instrument to be used on the J. Strom Thurmond Reservoir to gauge user group's thoughts and feeling on the subject of invasive species within the reservoir. A brief history of the process and development of the survey instrument was given. The draft survey was presented to the council and after review the council made

several recommendations. Discussion ensued and changes were suggested for many questions on the survey. Mr. Perry will compile the suggested changes and send them to the appropriate authority.

5. John Inabinet's Retirement

Mr. Page noted that as of December 31, 2012 John Inabinet will be retiring. Mrs. Eidson suggested that in the spring several of the recent retirees be invited and be recognized. Mr. Inabinet noted that he enjoyed his time on the council and he believes the council is a great one due to the low turnover throughout the years. Mr. Page also shared that Mr. Inabinet won the Award of Honor at the S.C. Aquatic Plant Mangement Society. Many thanks goes out to John Inabinet for all his work over the years.

6. Meeting adjourned

Being no further business a motion was made for the Council to adjourn at 1:30 p.m by Mr. Perry. 2nd was made by Mrs. Eidson. Motion passed unanimously.