

## **Minutes of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council**

### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Chris Page called the 108th meeting of the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council to order at 1:00 pm on November 16, 2011. The meeting was held in the meeting room of the interpretational center at Old Santee Canal Park, 900 Stony Landing Road, Moncks Corner, SC 29641. 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. Bob Perry S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division; Mr. Mark Cribb, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Land, Water, and Conservation Division and Stan Hutto, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

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

### **2. Minutes of the March 17, 2011 Council Meeting**

Mr. Page brought it to the attention of the council (3:00) that the minutes of the 106<sup>th</sup> meeting were amended as described in the minutes of the 107<sup>th</sup> APMC meeting minutes.

Mr. Perry made a motion to accept the minutes from the 107<sup>th</sup> APMC meeting as written, (3:33) seconded by Mr. Inabinet, the motion carried unanimously.

### **3. Draft 2012 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan (preliminary vegetative results of the Santee Cooper Lakes and proposed sterile grass carp stocking recommendations)**

Chairman brought attention to the fact that Santee Cooper Staff and SCDNR staff held their annual meeting to review aquatic plant control activities and vegetative surveys completed on the Santee Cooper lakes in 2011. At this meeting the staffs from both agencies were in full agreement with the recommendations to be put forth at the then upcoming November 16, 2011 Aquatic Plant Management Council meeting.

Mr. Larry McCord, S.C. Public Service Authority, updated the Council on the Valisneria population expansion and relocation efforts, Hydrilla population expansion, Crested Floating Heart expansion, aquatic plant control operations, and the preliminary 2011 vegetation survey results. The survey results discussion concentrated on hydrilla expansion. Hydrilla is expanding faster in Lake Moultrie than in Lake Marion. There is a marked increase in hydrilla from last year to this year. Non-invasive, native plant populations are expanding slightly but are being displaced by the faster growing hydrilla. Discussion ensued detailing last year's sterile grass stocking.

Chairman Page began discussion of aquatic plant management strategy for the Santee Cooper Lakes. 31:00 He stated that after a joint meeting of the SCDNR and Santee Cooper Staff, the general consensus was that the management of hydrilla in the Santee Cooper System has progressed from maintenance mode to control mode or rebalancing mode.

John Inabinet then provided details of the hydrilla expansion. There was a 300+% increase in hydrilla growth from last year to this year. A plan was put forth to stock sterile grass carp at a control stocking rate of 25 fish/acre for the 3,244 acres of hydrilla. Consideration also needs to be also needs to be taken for the other palatable vegetation that is in the system that the carp will also feed on. There is an additional 4,790 acres of submersed vegetation, excluding vallisneria, in the two lakes. A rate of 10 fish/acre was deemed acceptable for the additional palatable vegetation. So the total sterile grass carp threshold proposed for the 2012 Aquatic Plant Management Plan is 129,000 fish for the Santee Cooper Lakes. Taking into account the current population of sterile grass carp the proposed stocking for 2012 is 108,600 sterile grass carp. This would not be a onetime

stocking rate; this level of stocking would be maintained until control of the hydrilla population was achieved.

A discussion of the historical sterile grass carp stocking strategy ensued. Eidson brought forth a discussion detailing a fear of overstocking. It was noted that the hydrilla population would have to be closely monitored and future grass carp stocking would be based on the yearly acreage provided by the annual survey. Perry proposed to name this process, “SCAPMC Adaptive Management Plan for Rebalancing the Sterile Grass Carp Population in Accordance with the Current and Expanding Coverage of Nuisance Submerged Aquatic Vegetation” with the 2012 goal being stated as “to check the growth at the present level or hopefully reduce the level of hydrilla while minimizing impact to desirable habitat”. Perry would like to see a rebalancing of the sterile grass carp population to counter the recent hydrilla expansion. A discussion of grass carp population dynamics and historical hydrilla coverage followed. 52:30 Measures to address a function to remove grass carp from the system if a reduction in hydrilla is realized was mentioned. 1:36:30 Perry made a motion to accept the proposed stocking rate of 108,600 sterile grass carp for a total of 129,000 fish system wide with the operational title and goal stated previously. 1:44:30 Perry also stated the hydrilla population would be assessed next year, hopefully the goal will be met and a provision for future use should be included to provide a mechanism to harvest grass carp, utilizing any methodology available, in case of a higher than necessary grass carp population resulting from a reduction in hydrilla acreage. Inabinet seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **4. Other Business**

Chairman Page updated the APMC on the status of the NPDES permit. SCDNR was issued the first NPDES permit in SC. 1:56:00

Lake Thurmond’s hydrilla is still expanding. Currently the acreage is said to be between 6,000 and 8,000 acres. The USACE is becoming more involved.

The SCDNR Aquatic Nuisance Species Section treated about 11,000 acres for an overall cost of approximately \$190,000. The cost per acre was approximately \$172. The SCDNR surpassed 10,000+ acres of Phragmites treated this past year.

Walt Meitzen will be leaving the section and the department and the ANS staff will be reduced by one third. He had been instrumental in developing the habitat restoration project for the ANS section.

Marc Cribb mentioned a new species to SC, a stink bug. If seen please contact Cam Lay.

## **5. Adjournment**

Being no further business the Council adjourned at 3:10 p.m.