

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE & MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Aiken Electric Cooperative
Highway 25 Bypass
Edgefield, S. C.
April 21, 1989

The regular monthly meeting of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission was held at 11:00 a.m., April 21, 1989, at the Aiken Electric Cooperative on Highway 25 Bypass, Edgefield, S. C., with Chairman Burnside presiding. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was mailed to the state's media. Commissioners present included: Commissioners Burnside, Thomason, Stokes, Pendarvis, Owen, Miller, Compton and Drummond. Staff members present included: Dr. Timmerman, Larry Cartee, Dan Dobbins, Benny Reeves, Bill Chastain, Brock Conrad, Sonny Baines, Paul Sandifer and various other staff and guests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burnside called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed all guests to the meeting.

ITEM I - READING OF THE MINUTES

The Commission adopted a motion to dispense with the reading of the Minutes of the March 17, 1989 Commission Meeting and approve them as submitted.

ITEM II - COMMENTS

Dr. Timmerman read a letter to the Commission from President Bush noting that the administration would not place a cap on Wallop-Breaux funds to be allocated to the states. Dr. Timmerman noted that this was very good information and was an item that many of the state game and fish agencies had been working on over the past several months.

Dr. Timmerman distributed to the Commission, a brochure on the S. C. Governor's Cup Billfishing Series and noted that all funds for this effort have been raised or committed and no state funds will be utilized for this event.

Dr. Timmerman noted that he recently was in Washington, D. C. and met with several members of the Congressional Delegation and gained their total support on the ACE Basin Project.

Dr. Timmerman noted that there are a lot of issues which need discussion and he asked the Commission's support for setting up a "retreat" sometime this summer for the Commission and Staff to discuss various issues and problems facing the Department.

ITEM III - CHECK PRESENTATION - Striper Kings Fishing Club

Mr. Mitchell Allen and Mr. Lewis Vest of the Greenville Striper Kings Fishing Club presented a check for \$1,712.00 to the Department for striped bass tagging research work at the Dennis Wildlife Center. Mr. Allen noted that they represent about 400 fishermen in the upstate and he extended "Thanks" to the Department for their efforts in establishing the best striped bass fishery in the southeast. Chairman Burnside accepted this check on behalf of the Department and expressed "Thanks" to the Greenville Striper Kings Fishing Club for this donation.

ITEM IV - LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dan Dobbins noted that the Legislative Report has been sent to the Commission and he went over various items in this report. Mr. Dobbins noted that the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee has passed out most of the legislation requested by the Department and such is now up for consideration on the Senate Floor.

Mr. Dobbins noted that Senator Moore has filed a bill to provide a September 1 deer season opening date in Game Zone 2. Dr. Timmerman discussed this matter with the Commission noting that he would recommend the Commission review its previous action whereby the Commission had approved the adoption of a September 1 deer season statewide. Following discussion, Commissioner Owen moved for the Commission to rescind its previous position on a September 1 statewide deer season and, in the future, only recommend changes in the present deer season structure based upon biological recommendations from the staff. Commissioner Pendarvis seconded the motion and during the discussion, Commissioner Thomason moved to table the motion. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion to table and this motion was adopted by the Commission, thus the motion was tabled. Dr. Timmerman noted that we would send out the past minutes to the Commission concerning their previous action on a September 1 statewide deer season for their information and action as desired.

Commissioner Drummond discussed the items approved in the Department's budget request by the subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee.

Mr. Dobbins discussed recent airboat legislation and went over proposals being considered at this time. Mr. Dobbins noted that the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee has asked for the Commission's position on proposed airboat legislation which they are currently considering. Following discussions, the Commission adopted a motion to support the proposed airboat

Minutes - SCWMRC Meeting
April 21, 1989
Page Three

legislation as introduced by Senator Sherry Martschink. Commissioner Pendarvis voted in the negative on this motion.

ITEM V - OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Guidelines for Turkey Restoration:

Commissioner Owen noted that this matter was discussed at the Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Board and requested that such be carried over until the next Commission Meeting.

John Frampton informed the Commission that the Wild Turkey Symposium will be held in Charleston from February 26 - March 3, 1990, as well as the National Wild Turkey Federation Annual Convention. Rob Keck, Executive Vice President of the National Wild Turkey Federation, went over the items for the Symposium and the Annual Meeting and commended the Department's work in the turkey management program in South Carolina. Mr. Keck noted that about 5,000 people attended this past Annual Meeting and a very large turnout is expected for the Annual Meeting in 1990 in Charleston.

B. South Island Ferry: Larry Cartee informed the Commission that the Department has experienced some operational problems at the South Island Ferry within the past few months. Mr. Cartee noted that the staff has met with the S. C. Department of Highways and Public Transportation to discuss these operational problems and some legal questions have arisen which are being worked out by the Department's Legal Staff. Mr. Cartee noted that the Department is seeking a resolution to these various operational problems and hopes that all items of concern can be handled in the near future. Commissioner Stokes noted that he is aware of some of the problems concerning the South Island Ferry operation and he noted that such should be handled as soon as possible by the staff in order to seek a resolution on this matter.

ITEM VI - NEW BUSINESS

A. Santee Cooper Blueback Herring Study: Dick Christie presented the Commission with a Fact Sheet concerning the Cooper River Rediversion and the Blueback Herring Study (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Mr. Christie noted that the Department has expressed concerns that reduced flows in the Cooper River would negatively impact anadromous fish including blueback herring, American shad and others, as well as reduce the number of striped bass brood fish available for the state's hatchery program. Mr. Christie noted that with current water flows at the St. Stephen Powerhouse, we are having severe problems in locking the needed number of blueback herring into the

Santee Cooper lakes for forage fish for the striped bass fishery. Mr. Christie presented an in-depth discussion of the Department's concerns with this project and noted that the problems with water flows have been of concern to the Department since the beginning of this project. Mr. Christie presented additional charts and information to the Commission as well as data that has been collected prior to redirection and comparison made with data collected for the past four (4) years since redirection. Following discussion, the Commission approved a motion to carry this matter over for further discussion at the "retreat" to be held later this summer and for Dr. Timmerman, in the meantime, to take necessary action to get the Corps of Engineers to increase the water flow at these locations so as to protect the fishery resources.

B. Proposed Amendment to Commission Policy on Signs at Boat Ramps: Bill Chastain noted that the proposed change in the Commission's policy on signs at boat ramps has been sent to the Commission (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Following discussion, the Commission adopted this amendment to the Commission policy for boat ramp signs as presented by Mr. Chastain.

C. Fish Mortality (First Creek - Lake Secession): Brock Conrad noted that the fish kill investigation concerning a fish mortality on First Creek at Lake Secession had been sent to the Commission (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Following discussion, the Commission approved the fish kill investigation report as presented by Mr. Conrad and noted that appropriate action should be taken concerning this matter with the S. C. Department of Health & Environmental Control.

D. Division Reports:

1. Administrative Services: There was nothing further to report.

2. Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries: There was nothing further to report.

3. Law Enforcement & Boating: Bill Chastain discussed the recent cases where several individuals had illegally harvested a large number of ducks and he advised the Commission of the sentences that were handed down concerning these violations in federal court.

Mr. Chastain also advised the Commission that the Department recently assisted at a demonstration in Columbia and he commended

the Department's staff for the manner in which they handled themselves during this demonstration.

4. Conservation Education & Communications: There was nothing further to report.

5. Marine Resources: Paul Sandifer discussed the proposed upcoming shrimp season noting that at this time, it does not appear there is enough spawning of white shrimp to recommend a season opening on May 15, 1989. As such, Dr. Sandifer asked the Commission for authority to open the season as the Marine Division would recommend based upon sampling and informing the Commission of the season opening date. Following discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to carry this matter over until the May Commission Meeting.

E. Advisory Board Reports:

1. Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries: Commissioner Owen noted that the Board met on April 20, 1989 in Union and three (3) items will be presented to the Commission for action at the May Meeting. Commissioner Owen advised the Commissioners that their next meeting will be held at Bear Island on June 2, 1989 in conjunction with the Marine Resources Advisory Board.

2. Law Enforcement & Boating: Commissioner Stokes advised the Commission that one of their Board members, Art Williams, had recently had a stroke.

Commissioner Stokes went over the items discussed at the meeting noting that the Board had acted upon the proposed DWCOs for District #9 and recommended that inland law enforcement officials be trained for assistance in the marine enforcement area and to not have a marine DWCO program at this time.

3. Marine Resources: Commissioner Pendarvis noted the Board met on April 14, 1989 and he went over items discussed at this meeting. Commissioner Pendarvis noted the Board discussed the shark fishery and did not have any recommendations to make to the Commission concerning this matter.

Commissioner Pendarvis also noted the Board had recommended, and he moved, that a legal assistant be sought with experience in maritime law and for this position to be located in Charleston at the Marine Center. The Commission noted that action was taken on this matter two (2) years ago and such should be put in the Department's budget request.

Commissioner Pendarvis noted that the Board discussed a recommendation concerning the prohibition of finfish trawling at night and he asked that this matter be deferred to the Law Enforcement Advisory Board. Chairman Burnside noted that this item should be considered by the Law Enforcement & Boating Advisory Board.

Commissioner Pendarvis noted the Marine Advisory Board would meet at Bear Island on June 2, 1989 in conjunction with the Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Board.

Commissioner Pendarvis noted that a letter has been drafted by the Environmental Evaluation Section concerning the proposed Thunderbird Boat Manufacturing Plant to be located adjacent to the Waddell Mariculture Center. Commissioner Pendarvis noted the Board had some concerns on this matter and a letter will be sent expressing concerns over this proposed project.

4. Conservation Education & Communications:

Commissioner Thomason noted the Board met on March 17, 1989 and he went over the items discussed at that meeting.

Commissioner Thomason noted the Commission had been sent a proposed CEC Division policy concerning identification of priorities and completion of public relations projects (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Following discussion, the Commission adopted this policy as presented.

5. Heritage Trust: There was no report from the Board this month.

F. Other Remarks: There were no further remarks from the Commissioners.

At this time, Commissioner Thomason moved for the Commission to hold an Executive Session to discuss personnel and legal 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 and legal matters.

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RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Following the Executive Session, the regular meeting was resumed and participants were invited into the meeting.

Minutes - SCWMRC Meeting
April 21, 1989
Page Seven

Commissioner Compton moved for the Commission to approve all appointments, reappointments, revocation and change of authority for Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers (DWCOs) and to also approve the purchase of a radio by Mr. Jimmy Reardon. Commissioner Stokes seconded the motion and it was adopted by the Commission.

The Commission expressed "Thanks" to the Law Enforcement District Two Officers and staff for their efforts in hosting this meeting of the Commission in Edgefield.

G. Appointments: This item was previously acted upon by the Commission.

H. Time and Place of Next Meeting: The Commission agreed that its next meeting would be held on May 19, 1989 in Spartanburg, S. C.

ITEM VII - ADJOURN

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

