

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE AND MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Wampee, Pinopolis, South Carolina
December 8, 1978

The regular monthly meeting of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission was held at Wampee, Pinopolis, South Carolina at 11:00 a.m., December 8, 1978, with Chairman Trask presiding. Notice of the date, time and place for the meeting was mailed to the State's newspapers, radio and television stations through a news release dated December 4, 1978. Commissioners at the meeting included Commissioner Trask, Boykin, Edens, Dawson, Stubbs, Shuler and Dennis. Directors and staff members present included Dr. Timmerman, Larry Cartee, Dan Dobbins, Ned Pendarvis, Benny Reeves, Gene Smoak, John Culler, John Evans, Pete Laurie, John Davis, Mac Flood, A. S. Lachicotte, Brock Conrad, Leonard Mishoe and Pat Ryan. Guests at the meeting included Pat Robertson of "The Columbia Record" and Belvin Horres of "The Charleston News and Courier".

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Trask called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

ITEM I. READING OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Edens moved for approval of the minutes of the November 17, 1978 meeting as submitted. Commissioner Boykin seconded the motion and such was approved by the Commission.

ITEM II. COMMENTS

Dr. Timmerman introduced Pat Robertson of "The Columbia Record" and Belvin Horres of "The Charleston News and Courier" as guests at the meeting noting that Mr. Horres is planning to retire shortly. Chairman Trask expressed his thanks to Mr. Horres for his friendship with the Department over the years and recommended that the Commission present a plaque to Mr. Horres in commemoration for his assistance over the years. Commissioner Boykin moved that the Commission adopt Chairman Trask's recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Stubbs and the motion was approved by the Commission.

Dr. Timmerman noted that the next routine date for the Commission meeting would be on January 19, 1979--a state holiday.

Dr. Timmerman read a resolution from the Board of Directors of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation expressing their appreciation for the Commissions' positive action on approving the enforcement of steel shot regulations this year in South Carolina. Chairman Trask asked if there had been any further determinations on the benefits of steel shot. Brock Conrad stated that studies from duck gizzard collections have shown steel shot rather than lead shot. As such, it appears the program has been successful. Collections will be taken in five more counties which are being considered by the USFWS for the steel shot zone next year.

Dr. Timmerman noted that he has received a letter from the USFWS stating that a district court had ordered a stop in issuing Pittman-Robertson funds until NEPA requirements concerning environmental assessments have been completed. Currently, this is no problem for the Department as all projects have been funded but this could affect any new projects.



Dr. Timmerman noted that the Commission has requested that an employee vehicle accident report be distributed to the Commission every six months. As such, a copy of this report was distributed to the Commission noting that for most accidents the insurance company paid for damages or someone else was liable. Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission that it was revealed recently that the State carried liability insurance on employees using state vehicles up to \$15,000. Any liability incurred beyond \$15,000 would be the responsibility of the individual. Commissioner Stubbs noted that group non-owners policies are available which could be used to subsidize this coverage. Commissioner Edens stated that some blanket policy should be available for employees to purchase, if desired. Dr. Timmerman stated that he would ask Fred Zeigler to contact them and look further into this matter.

Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission that a detailed study on office facilities for the field staff has been conducted and most offices currently used are a disgrace to the Department. Funds are needed to construct storage facilities and add offices to existing law enforcement offices to make more offices accessible to the public. As such, the Department is seeking about \$600,000 in capital improvement bonds to construct these badly needed facilities. This amount is quite small compared to funds that other agencies are seeking.

ITEM III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed 1979-80 GMA Regulations: Commissioner Boykin noted that the committee appointed by Chairman Trask to evaluate the proposed GMA regulations had a long, detailed meeting on such at the Dutch Plaza Office on December 6, 1978. The overall result of the meeting was that a majority of the committee voted to recommend to the Commission that the 1979-80 GMA regulations be adopted as submitted at the November 17, 1978 Commission meeting with the following exceptions: (1) the either-sex days in the Western and Central Piedmont Hunt Units shall be on the same day so as to disperse the hunters, (2) the hunt units shall be saturated with law enforcement personnel on either-sex days to concentrate on trespassing problems, and (3) that the Commission recommend to the Legislature that trespassing laws be made stronger, and that an individual hunting on private land be required to carry written permission to hunt from the landowner while hunting. Commissioner Boykin stated that the fine for trespassing should be changed so as to specify a fine that must be charged by a magistrate for trespassing.

Commissioner Boykin informed the Commission that the committee was not unanimous in these recommendations as Commissioner Buchanan wanted about ten changes which were discussed but not recommended by the committee report. It was noted that the biologists have reported that various problem areas have been improving over the last two years. Chairman Trask stated that he had talked with Commissioner Buchanan who was opposed to the committee recommendations and was seeking a longer deer season, additional either-sex days, etc.

Chairman Trask asked if the committee had considered the small landowners in their discussion. Commissioner Boykin noted that they did not have a solution for the small landowners. Two landowners at the committee meeting stated that if more law enforcement was available, there would not be a problem. Commissioner Edens noted that the number one complaint is that of trespassing. As such, the committee had recommended that fines for trespassing be increased and that the areas be saturated with law enforcement on either-sex days. It would be left up to the biologists to determine the number of either-sex days needed.



Commissioner Shuler asked what objections exist for opening the deer season in the upstate on August 15th as is done in the lowcountry. Dr. Timmerman noted that the opening dates in the upstate are set by law and an earlier opening of the season would require a change in the law. Brock Conrad noted that about one million acres are open for public hunting in the upstate. In the lowcountry, there is a lot of dog hunting on Saturdays and holidays on large tracts of land. In the upstate, the archery hunters have traditionally had the first chance in the hunting season to ensure quality hunting. In addition, the fawns are dependent on the mothers' milk up until about October 1. The peak of the breeding season usually runs from about the latter part of October until the first part of November. Commissioner Shuler stated that the people in the upstate should have the opportunity to hunt the same as people in the lowcountry. Commissioner Shuler suggested that the season in the upstate could open on August 15th to gun hunters, bucks only, until October 1, and the archery hunters could have their season in October as it currently exists.

Commissioner Dennis noted that each year in the lowcountry deer are on the increase and many farmers are complaining. Commissioner Dennis stated that he favored a long season statewide and was in favor of biologists checking out property and issuing permits. Commissioner Dennis stated that he was in sympathy with the bow hunters and suggested that the season be extended with certain days of the week set aside for bow hunters and muzzle loaders as well as certain days for dog hunting. Commissioner Dawson noted under such a system, the success for bow hunting would be very slight. Dr. Timmerman asked if certain areas could be set aside in the upstate for bow hunting only. Commissioner Dawson stated that this seems like a good idea. Commissioner Edens noted that certain areas in the Western and Central Piedmont Hunt Units could be set aside exclusively for bow hunters. Brock Conrad noted that the bow hunters probably would not harvest enough deer to control the herd.

Chairman Trask noted that Commissioner Dennis had recommended the issue of doe permits rather than using the either-sex days as currently exists. Brock Conrad stated that there are a large number of small landowners in the upstate and the GMA lands are not consolidated. Commissioner Dennis suggested that the biologists determine how many doe should be harvested in an area and have a public drawing for doe tags on, for example, a county basis.

Following other discussion, Commissioner Edens moved for the Commission to adopt the recommendations as submitted with the exceptions noted from the committee report by Commissioner Boykin for the 1979 season only (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Commissioner Boykin seconded the motion and such was adopted by the Commission. Chairman Trask noted that the Department will recommend legislative changes as adopted by the Commission.

Chairman Trask stated that several suggestions had been made for consideration to be effective in the 1980 hunting season. One of these suggestions was the opening of the season on the same date statewide. Following some discussion, Commissioner Dennis moved that, for the 1980 hunting season, the Commission recommend to the General Assembly that the opening date for deer season be September 1st in all game zones in South Carolina with buck only hunting during the month of September with the Department having discretionary authority on GMA lands to divide the territory for gun hunters, bow hunters, and the like. Commissioner Edens seconded the motion and such was approved by the Commission.



Commissioner Dennis noted that this is the Commission's recommendation to the General Assembly and will require the changing of several existing statutes.

Chairman Trask noted that the next issue to consider for the 1980 hunting season is the issuance of doe tags or permits. Brock Conrad stated that if this is done on an area concept it can be handled but there is not enough manpower to do on an individual landowner basis. Chairman Trask suggested that doe days be used on the public hunting lands with the issuance of doe tags to landowners surrounding the public hunting lands to harvest doe deer that are needed to be taken to meet the harvest required in the area. Brock Conrad stated that there are not enough personnel for individual investigations. As such, areas as a whole should be considered. Commissioner Dennis suggested that if a tag system is agreed upon, the Department should have the discretion to handle the issuance of tags on an area basis or on a landowner basis in different parts of the state. As such, the either-sex days could be eliminated and tags could be issued on an area or landowner basis by discretionary authority of the Department. Commissioner Edens noted that certain clubs in the State need to harvest a certain number of doe deer but may not be able to secure enough tags through a lottery system. Commissioner Dennis noted that the regulations could reflect that drawing for tags would be on an individual basis or a certain number of tags for hunting clubs. Following other discussion, Commissioner Dennis moved that the Commission recommend to the General Assembly the elimination of the statute pertaining to doe days and in lieu recommending the establishment of the harvest of surplus doe deer by a tag method with the Department to determine which areas of the State the tags will be issued and in what number to individuals and clubs or to landowners, and that no charge will be made for these tags. Commissioner Shuler seconded the motion. Dr. Timmerman noted that the staff is getting a clear message from the Commission on what is to be done and this concept needs to be fine-tuned by the staff for a report back to the Commission at a later meeting. At this point, Commissioner Dennis withdrew his motion at this time and Chairman Trask stated that the staff would bring this matter back to the Commission at a later meeting.

ITEM IV. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission that Dan Dobbins has been working with the staff in developing legislative proposals for the 1979 Legislative Session. Dan Dobbins reported that the draft proposals are being developed and will be presented for the Commission's consideration at the January meeting. Dr. Timmerman stated that we usually have fifteen to twenty bills with five or so primary proposals from each division and several bills of a secondary importance. Commissioner Shuler stated that he would like to see a law making it illegal to shine by light in the state after midnight. Dr. Timmerman noted that if the Commission so desires, we can draw this up for the Commission's consideration.

A. Division Reports

1. Administrative Services: Benny Reeves noted that the December Commission report will be included with the January report next month.

2. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: There was nothing to report at this time.

3. Law Enforcement and Boating: There was nothing additional to report at



this time.

4. Information and Public Affairs: John Culler reported that the duck identification film seminars have been conducted throughout the State and the turnout has been very good.

5. Marine Resources: Gene Smoak reported that the building design at the Marine Center is such that energy costs have been quite excessive. Some bonding funds were available and an engineering study was conducted to determine the deficiencies which exist. Upon completion of this study, a public notice was placed in the newspapers inviting firms to bid on developing specifications and drawings to put out on bid. Six firms responded and all were interviewed. As a result of the interview, three firms were selected for recommendation to the Budget and Control Board. These firms and the order of selection are: (1) C. B. Othersen, (2) Cummings and McCrady, and (3) William B. Leland. Mr. Smoak noted that the engineering improvements should save the Department \$8,000-\$10,000 a year in energy costs. Following other discussion, Commissioner Boykin moved for the Commission to approve these recommendations and their order of selection for presentation to the Budget and Control Board. Commissioner Dawson seconded the motion and such was approved by the Commission.

B. Advisory Board Reports

1. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: Commissioner Edens noted that the Board will meet next in February 1979.

2. Law Enforcement and Boating: Commissioner Shuler stated that he did not have anything to report.

3. Marine Resources: Commissioner Dawson stated that the board will meet in January 1979.

4. Heritage Trust: Dr. Timmerman noted that the Board recently went on a field trip at Tillman Ridge in Jasper County. In addition, Dr. Timmerman reported that Governor-elect Riley has expressed interest in the Heritage Trust Program.

C. Salary Review Committee: Dr. Timmerman stated that he will have a report at the next meeting.

D. Appointments: Dr. Timmerman distributed the recommendations for appointments and reappointments of Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers and the appointments and reappointments of Conservation Officers (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Commissioner Boykin moved for approval of all appointments as submitted. Commissioner Edens seconded the motion and such was approved by Commission.

E. Other Remarks: Chairman Trask expressed his thanks to Commissioner Dennis for hosting this meeting of the Commission at Wampee. Dr. Timmerman noted that Jeff Fuller has received a letter from Senator Ed Garrison requesting an extension in the bear season in his area. This has been set by rules and regulations and this would have to be changed.

F. Time and Place of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held in Columbia on January 19, 1979.



G. Call for Executive Session: Commissioner Dawson moved for an Executive Session for the purpose of receiving an administrative briefing from the staff. Commissioner Boykin seconded the motion and such was unanimously approved by the Commission.

ITEM V. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the regular meeting, the Commission approved a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and go into Executive Session.

ITEM VI. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Trask reported that in the Executive Session the Commission had adopted a motion whereby the Commission requested that Commissioner Dennis express the Department's concern on inadequate computer services received from the Division of General Services to the State Budget and Control Board. Commissioner Boykin moved that the Commission ratify this action. Commissioner Edens seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the Commission. There being no further business, the Commission adopted a motion to adjourn the meeting.

