

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE AND MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Room 335, Dennis Building
Columbia, S. C.
October 19, 1984
10:00 A.M.

The regular monthly meeting of the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission was held in Room 335 of the Dennis Building, Columbia, S. C. at 10:00 A.M., October 19, 1984, with Chairman Webster presiding. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was mailed to the state's media. Commissioners present included Commissioners Webster, Compton, Harrelson, Owen, Stokes, Thomason, and Bennett. Directors and staff members present included Dr. Timmerman, Larry Cartee, Dan Dobbins, Sonny Baines, Paul Sandifer, Bill Chastain and various other staff and guests.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Webster called the meeting to order at 10:00 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 September 19, 1984 Commission Meeting and approve them as submitted.

ITEM II. COMMENTS

Dr. Timmerman advised the Commission that we recently held a press outing at Bonneau Ferry and it was the most successful such event held to date. He commended Sonny Baines, John Evans and staff for the success of this outing.

Dr. Timmerman gave the Commission an update on the Department's budget noting shortages in various program areas. He noted that a Staff Revenue Committee has been put together to develop recommendations for the Commission's consideration.

Dr. Timmerman discussed the funding for personnel in each Division for this fiscal year. He advised the Commission that the law enforcement reallocation had put this Division's budget out of line being about \$111,000 short if we do not fill any further positions. This shortage is being made up with County Game and Fish Funds, but we need to look at a schedule for filling the 13 law enforcement positions. An alternate schedule for filling these 13 positions is being developed and will be presented for the Commission's consideration at the next Commission Meeting.

Dan Dobbins informed the Commission that the Land Procurement Committee has been structured with Craig Wall, Jr. serving as Chairman. Mr. Dobbins noted that a meeting of this Committee will be scheduled in the near future. A packet of background information was distributed to the Commission for information.

Dr. Timmerman noted that several positions and grades are being considered in law enforcement. He advised the Commission that we recommend adding a stripe to the Sergeant insignia, but there would be no change in grade. He noted that we need an administrative position in law enforcement and we have an unassigned Sergeant's position which is recommended for the Commission's approval to use for this position. Dr. Timmerman stated that the detailed responsibilities of various positions will be developed and presented to the Commission for information.

Dr. Timmerman noted that the Commission had approved assessing \$20,000 in damages to McCall Farms for a fish kill in the Lynches River. The Board of the Department of Health and Environmental Control recently issued a decision to reduce this fine to \$2,000. Rich Roberson discussed the hearing before the DHEC Board on this matter and recommended that the Commission appeal this decision on the fine to the circuit court. Dr. Timmerman noted this action sets a bad precedent for the future and advised the Commission that he had no objection to court action. Following discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to appeal the DHEC Board's decision on the fine for this fish kill to the appropriate circuit court.

The Commission also adopted a motion to approve Dr. Timmerman's recommendation on adding a stripe to the Sergeant's insignia and to utilize the unassigned Sergeant's position for an administrative position in law enforcement.

Dr. Timmerman asked the Commission to advise him if any of them would like to attend the upcoming meeting of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

ITEM III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Upstate Hydro Project: Ed Duncan presented an in-depth discussion concerning a proposed hydro project on the Horsepasture River in Transylvania County, N. C. which will impact trout streams and habitat in South Carolina. Following discussion, the Commission adopted a motion to take a position of opposing this project. In addition, the Commission asked the staff to develop a general policy statement for the Commission's consideration which would address actions affecting trout streams and habitat. Commissioner Owen noted the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Board had recently discussed these matters. He stated the Board recommended the Water Resources Commission seek to protect the Thompson and Whitewater Rivers under the State Scenic Rivers Act. Ed Duncan informed the Commission that the Final Environment Impact Statement on the Georgetown Oil Refinery has been released which has deleted substantive information provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency.

ITEM IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Proposed Habitat Management Trust: Dr. Timmerman noted that the staff and S. C. Ducks Unlimited have been discussing this matter for several months and the proposed Habitat Management Trust has been sent out in the Commission packet (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Dr. Timmerman stated this proposal would provide for an organization which would provide waterfowl habitat and funding for management, and lease this property to the

Department to manage. David Rodwell, State Chairman of S. C. Ducks Unlimited, went over this proposal noting that a portion of DU funds will be returned to the state which will be used to manage properties which are donated. Under this proposal, Mr. Rodwell stated that it is hoped to increase the Department's budget and property base at no capital expense to the state. Rich Roberson noted that this proposal represents a framework under which to operate with funding and a lease to be developed on each specific tract of property. Following discussion, the Commission approved a motion to adopt in concept the Habitat Management Trust proposal as presented.

B. Division Reports:

1. Administrative Services: Benny Reeves informed the Commission that bids on the Lake Oak Grove Project will be opened on November 7, 1984. At Lake Wallace, the firm of Wilbur Smith and Associates has been hired to develop plans and specifications to repair the dam and such should be available by the end of December. Mr. Reeves noted the bids for constructing the Georgetown Office are being developed and construction should occur in January, 1985. Mr. Reeves advised the Commission that the budget has been put on the computer which has saved a lot of staff time. Mr. Reeves distributed a copy of this for the Commission's review. Dr. Timmerman commended the staff for developing this computerized budget.

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

3. Law Enforcement & Boating: Bill Chastain noted the Commission had approved adding the stripe to the Sergeant's insignia which will create a Staff Sergeant. Mr. Chastain stated that three of the divers will be promoted to the basic Sergeant's rank. Mr. Chastain stated the administrative position approved by the Commission will be a Lieutenant's position. Mr. Chastain advised the Commission that about \$130,000 from County Game and Fish Funds for equipment has been approved this year. Mr. Chastain stated that a schedule for filling the 13 Conservation Officers' positions will be developed and presented to the Commission at its next meeting. Mr. Chastain stated that there are times when the administrative staff needs to be in uniform and a rank for these people has been developed administratively. Mr. Chastain noted that his position will be a Colonel, the Chief of Law Enforcement will be a Lieutenant Colonel and the Assistant Chiefs will be a Major. Bobby Gifford recommended three requests for radio frequencies at no cost to the Department as follows: Bennettsville Fire Department Emergency Van, DWCO Judson Holliday, and Hobcaw Plantation. Mr. Gifford also recommended the Department furnishing the S. C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism a radio to use on the Mountain Bridge Project. The Commission adopted a motion to approve these recommendations as presented by Mr. Gifford.

4. Information & Public Affairs: There was nothing further to report.

5. Marine Resources: Dr. Sandifer informed the Commission of a recent seafood supplement in the Charleston newspaper.

C. Advisory Board Reports:

1. Law Enforcement & Boating: Dr. Timmerman informed the Commission that Commissioner Quackenbush had contacted him and asked that Arthur Williams be recommended for re-appointment to the Board and that Yancey A. McCleod be appointed to fill the term of Jim Kinard. The Commission adopted a motion to approve these recommendations.

2. Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries: Commissioner Owen stated the Board met recently at Bonneau Ferry. He stated the Board discussed raccoon regulations in Game Zones 1, 2, and 4. The Board recommended to the Commission the following proposals: 1) Reduce the spring and fall running season in Game Zone 1 by one month. The seasons would be as follows: Fall Running Season - September 15 - October 14, Gun Season - October 15 - March 1, and Spring Running Season - March 2 - April 15; 2) Reduce the daily bag limit in Game Zone 1 from 3 raccoons to 1 per party per night; and 3) Impose a season limit of 20 raccoons per season per person (both hunters and trappers) in Game Zone 1, to be regulated through fur tag restrictions on Commercial Fur Licenses. The Commission adopted a motion to approve these recommendations. Commissioner Owen stated the Board supported the concept of mandatory hunter safety training.

3. Marine Resources: Commissioner Harrelson noted the Board met on October 18th and discussed the disastrous shrimp season, recreational fisheries, and budget needs in the marine area. He stated the Board recommends the proposal in the legislative packet on the sturgeon fishery.

D. Appointments: Dr. Timmerman distributed a copy of the recommendations for appointments and re-appointments of Conservation Officers and Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers (copy attached to original Commission Minutes). Dr. Timmerman also recommended that Michael Hickman and William R. Nance be appointed as new DWCOs subject to a favorable background investigation. The Commission adopted a motion to approve all appointments and re-appointments as presented.

E. Other Remarks: Chairman Webster stated that he is appointing a new Finance Committee composed of Commissioners Compton (Chairman), Bennett, Stokes, and Thomason. He noted that the duties and responsibilities of this Committee will be sent to each member.

Dan Dobbins stated that the draft 1985 Legislative Package has been distributed and will be on the agenda for the Commission's action at the next meeting.

Commissioner Harrelson moved for the Commission to hold an Executive Session following the regular meeting to discuss a legal matter. Commissioner Compton seconded the motion and it was adopted by the Commission. Chairman Webster announced that the Commission will hold an Executive Session following the regular meeting to discuss a legal matter.

F. Time and Place of Next Meeting: Chairman Webster stated the Commission will hold its next meeting at 10:00 A.M. in Columbia on November 16, 1984.

With the completion of the regular meeting, the Commission went into Executive Session.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Following the Executive Session, the Commission returned to regular session and participants were invited to the meeting. Commissioner Harrelson stated the Commission discussed legal matters in Executive Session and no formal actions were taken.

ITEM V. ADJOURN

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

