

# ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022, 1 PM  
1105 WEST PORT ST.  
ABBEVILLE, LA 70510

## ATTENDANCE

### Council Members Present

Tim Allen  
Chad Courville  
Jeff Donald  
Nathan Wall  
John Currier  
Craig Sagrera  
Tom Benge

### LDWF Present

Jeb Linscombe  
Larry Reynolds

### Others Present

Evelyn Watts, Sea Grant  
Thomas Himmel, Sea Grant  
Julie Lively, Sea Grant  
Ann Dula, Sea Grant  
Leslie Davis, Sea Grant  
Christy Plott, Monarch Marketing  
Matt Fannin, LSU Ag Center

### Council Members Absent

Tony Howard  
Ryan Smith

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS AAC MEETING

*Motion made by Jeff Donald to approve the minutes as presented. Chad Courville seconded.  
Motion carried.*

## ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL BUDGET UPDATE

Jeb Linscombe gave a budget update. In 2018 there was a high balance in the Alligator Resource Funds, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) reduced the tag fees temporarily to give economic relief to the alligator farmers. The tag fee reduction has elapsed, and next season's tags will be \$4.

The Alligator Advisory Council's current budget is \$500,000. It used to be \$350,000. For the past several years, the allocation increased to \$500,000. The council has never spent the entire \$500,000. The council has \$96,566 remaining for the current fiscal year. The Principal Symmetry contract will finish in June. Therefore, next fiscal year there will be about \$170,000 unallocated.

Jeb Linscombe explained the various videos that the Principal Symmetry contract is producing. There will be five videos covering various topics related to the alligator industry.

## MEAT HANDLING VIDEO

Sea Grant staff, Evelyn Watts, talked about the Sea Grant projected goals and the partnership Sea Grant has with LDWF to support the Louisiana seafood industry.

She explained that alligator meat quality depends on the microbial load, enzymatic activity, and fat oxidation. She reviewed several research projects related to microbial loads in seafood, alligator and chicken. She talked about methods that hunters and farmers can implement in the field to produce quality, safe alligator meat.

She presented the alligator meat-handling video they created.

## LSU ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

Matt Fannin gave a short update on the economic impact study. One point of interest was that 52% of out of state sport hunters surveyed reported that they would not come to Louisiana as a tourist if they did not have the opportunity to do an alligator hunt. Ninety-three percent of those surveyed plan to come again in the future.

The economic impact to the state was broad. Many people who came to Louisiana for an alligator hunt stayed in Louisiana to do other activities after the alligator hunt. Many also had their alligator skins processed and then developed into products by local manufacturers.

## ALLIGATOR MARKET UPDATE

Christy Plott presented a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for alligator marketing. Louisiana's alligator marketing strengths include large wild alligator skins, a strong conservation story, a good reputation with manufacturers, high quality farming resulting in quality of hides, and farming practices that produce alligators with a longer belly. Weaknesses include reduced skin quality due to transporting and storing alligators in coolers, too many hides in the market, depressed markets, and online shopping. Opportunities include expanding marketing within the United States, providing alligator skins to Mexico for boots, and increasing alligator consumption with the brands already using crocodilians. Threats include an increase in the boot market using Nile crocodile, international conflicts related to Russia and China, increased fuel costs, animal rights movements, and legislative bands.

She reviewed some current fashion trends and strategies for producing leather to optimize Louisiana alligator for these market trends. She talked about the impact of social media on the market and about how small craft producers affect the leather market.

## DISEASE TESTING UPDATE

Jeb Linscombe expounded a little on a presentation that he gave during the Alligator Farmers and Ranchers Association meeting. The Department requires a vet certificate to import alligators into Louisiana, because they cannot allow animals with known diseases to enter the state. LDWF tests alligators for Chlamydia and Mycoplasma virus. Data indicates that live alligators brought in from Florida bring Chlamydia to Louisiana alligator farms.

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Jeb Linscombe explained that the Attorney General's office billed more than the Council had previously approved for legal work. The original approval was for \$200,000 from the Alligator Resource Fund. The current amount

needed to clear the bill is \$3,185.30. There may be other bills yet to come, but the Department would like the Council to go ahead and approve the amount due currently.

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*Motion made Chad Courville to give the AAC chair authority to review Attorney General Bills with LDWF and approve up to \$20,000 above the \$200,000 previously approved. Nathan Wall seconded. Motion carried.*

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#### PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

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*Motion made by Jeff Donald to adjourn. John Currier seconded. Motion carried.*

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