

**Summary of the Alligator Advisory Council Meeting
December 12, 2012
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Council Present

Nathan Wall
Chad Courville
Mike Bengé
Dan Davis
Tim Allen
Dwight Savoie
Errol Falgout

Others

Dr. Javier Nevarez
Dr. Robert Reigh
Micah Bujol
Marco Demody
Dr. Reighs-LSU Ag Center
Don & Pam Ashley
Ted Joanen

Council Absent

Ronald Guy
Gerald Savoie

LDWF Presence

Noel Kinler
Bob Love
Lance Campbell
Tanya Sturman
Buddy Baker
Ruth Elsey
Ryan King
Shelby Richard

Dwight motioned to approve the minutes from the August, 2012 meeting. Errol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Tim motioned to move the Technical Representation Scope of Services to the top of the agenda. Mike seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Technical Representation Scope of Service- Noel Kinler

Noel Kinler gave a background on the Technical Representation contract. The contractor is currently finishing a three year contract based on an RFP done three years ago. The new scope of service included the scope of the previous contract plus a couple of additional items, working on maintaining a California law allowing alligator products in California. This was handled in the past, but the California law has a sunset clause built in that reverts to the previous law forbidding alligator products. The sunset law comes to term in 2014. There is also the issue that has come up recently with euthanasia and public concern. Tim Allen expressed concern that the scope appears to be doubling since the last RFP and that the Council cannot pay double the contract fee. Chad explained that task two of the scope requires the contractor to keep the Council informed of issues pertaining to the alligator industry. Task four asks the contractor to address an important issue. Dan asked what the potential would be for completely repelling the California law preventing

alligator product sales in California. Don Ashley said that California is a very animal sensitive state. The last time that it came up, the sunset law passed by just one vote.

Dan motioned to approve the Technical Representation Scope of Services. Tim seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Final Report, Promotion of Grade 3 Alligator Skins- Dr. McRoberts

Dr. McRoberts played the educational video that she created under the contract. Then she showed photos from the Marsh on the Catwalk fashion show. She has incorporated alligator into 4 fashion shows now, but only two fashion shows were required in the contract. One alumni designed a hat line with alligator trim that is being sold in Palm Beach and in international stores. Another alumni designs purses.

CITES Update

The Fish and Wildlife Service sent a representative to Louisiana to meet with LDWF and some representatives from the alligator industry. They discussed issues related to exporting skins and products. The proposal is to start a master file system. Once a master file is in place, dealers can call and request pre-issued permits for up to six months ahead. The inventory page will be simplified to allow for sequential lists.

Chad asked that the Council send a letter to **Bahrnam, Landrieu and Vitter**.

LSU School of Human Ecology Proposal- Dr. McRoberts

Dr. McRoberts showed the Facebook and mentioned a Wix page as well. The presentation included a look at detailed classroom assignments that required students to research and make a business plan to incorporate alligator leather into products. Ms. Liu incorporated alligator related assignments into required courses. Dr. McRoberts gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining a plan for the next two years. Doing a program at an international educators conference would pass this information on to design teachers in the U.S. and worldwide. The cost of adding this conference would be \$2,000. They also propose to do collaboration with the Beijing Institute. This would include students' products being shown at the Beijing Fashion Show in March. A Chinese company is contributing money for the booth and for students to purchase supporting materials for designs.

Tim said that they fulfilled everything that the Council requested in the contract and then some. He said that they've done a good job. Chad asked how many students had been reached at LSU and through various trade and fashion shows. Buddy Baker suggested that they focus on domestic training, because they are more likely to use alligator. Noel said that they need to make sure that skins can be transported into Beijing.

Chad said that the Council is limited by budget. Tim said that looking at potential budget increases and potential contract increases. Tim thinks that the Council could spend \$125 for a two year period. He asked if Dr. McRoberts could propose a new scope that would fit that budget. Chad said educating the students is the number one priority. He likes the idea of moving into China, but we need to know how to get the skins in to China.

Tim motioned to approve a budget of \$125,000 divided relatively equally between two years. Nathan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Vet School Report- Dr. Nevarez

The euthanasia study has led to the following results. Penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolt led to immediate death of the animal. Pithing was acceptable but needs further investigation. Immediate death could not be confirmed with cord severance alone. These animals still showed blinking reflexes. Dr. Nevarez showed a bar graph comparing alpha and beta waves results of the animals awake, anesthetized and post euthanized. The next steps of the research will look at stunning and immobilization, analyzing handling and euthanasia of alligators larger than six feet, and further pithing studies.

Captive Research Facility- Dr. Reigh

Dr. Reigh showed photos of the new installations in the facility. Flow controllers for the outdoor water tanks, water heaters, and electronic controls for the tank have been added. Each tank is 4 feet by 8 feet. Wiring and plumbing in the alligator quarantine room is underway.

The feeding trial is in the second year. There are three experimental diets with digestible protein of 43%, 45% and 47%. The primary components are soybean and wheat proteins with some fish meal included. These diet trials will run for six months.

Alligator Hunting Fees

Dr. Elsey compared resident and nonresident alligator hunting fees of states across the south east. She added various license fees to deduce a minimum fee to hunt an alligator in each state. The total costs varied considerable from state to state. Chad wanted to know how much money each state is generating, so he wants to know how many tags and licenses are sold in each state.

Chad believes that at some point in the future we will need to raise hunting fees. Dr. Elsey pointed out that if the fees had raised with inflation that the fee today would be about \$130.

Program Update

Noel presented numbers for 2012. 454,402 eggs were collected. Revenue for 2012-2013 totals to \$969,539.25 for the beginning of the fiscal year. The average price is \$23.50 per foot. This is up from last year at \$17.00. Louisiana has started their tag year in August. We are proposing tagging on a calendar year. Other states are issued alligator tags on a calendar year, so USFWS welcomes this change for Louisiana. This would require a rule change to adjust hunter license dates. Noel introduced two new employees. Ryan King and Shelby Richard are new to the alligator program.

Nathan motioned to adjourn. Mike seconded. Motion carried unanimously.