

Alligator Advisory Council Meeting

July 9, 2014

LDWF

New Iberia, LA

Council Members Present

Ronald Guy
Chad Courville
Errol Falgout
Tim Allen
Gerald Savoie
Dwight Savoie
Mike Bengé
Al Marmande

LDWF Present

Ruth Elsey
Buddy Baker
Edmond Mouton
Tanya Sturman
Alicia Holden
Jeb Linscombe
Jennifer Manuel

Council Members Absent

Nathan Wall

Others Present

John Currier
Johnny Price
Andre Neto
Tony Howard
Marco Demory
Andre Neto
Robert Reigh
Kenneth Dupont
James Trahan
Ted Joanen
Rebecca Hale
Noel Kinler
Marilyn Ensminger
Allan Ensminger

Dwight motioned to reappoint Chad as chairman. Errol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Tim motioned to reappoint Dwight as vice chairman. Gerald seconded. Motioned carried unanimously.

Motion made by Tim to approve the minutes as amended from the May meeting. Dwight seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D.C. Education- Consideration

Edmond explained the RFP process. Only one proposer submitted for this contract. The review committee graded the contractor. He earned 85. The contract has been drafted and is awaiting council approval. The contract cost would be split between the FAC and the AAC. The FAC approved funding for the contract.

Gerald asked what the contractor has accomplished in the past several years. Edmond explained the funding that he has secured for research. He said that funding in the past few years have been difficult to obtain, but that he does a lot with educating the delegation and in keeping the Department abreast of issues that may affect alligator and fur industries.

Buddy said that LDWF does not have the personal relationship with the delegates. Glenn Delaney was able to get letters from the delegates in under two days to support our position on the California sunset issue.

Motion made by Tim to approve the contract as proposed. Errol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Chad asked if Glenn might attend an AAC meeting in the near future.

Tagging Alligator Lines- Discussion

Ronald said that a hunter in his area has suggested tagging lines, because he feels like other hunters are encroaching on his area. Gerald said that he thinks it might be a good idea. It would be a little more trouble. Tim said that it would result in more regulations and paperwork.

Mike said that his trappers would like to see more involvement from enforcement.

Tony Howard said that he was tagging his hooks as a nuisance hunter. He had his hooks stolen when he had tags on them.

Johnny Price said that it is an enforcement problem. The landowner needs to take care of problems on his land and get law enforcement on it.

Mike said that he would like an enforcement officer to come to the next meeting.

Chad asked if a trapper feels like there is a line on his lease that is not his, if he can remove it. Buddy said he would ask enforcement.

Nuisance Hunting and Filming- Discussion

Edmond gave some background information on this issue. The State Parks contacted LDWF and asked for two alligator tags for a promotional video. It ended up being an episode of Swamp People, and the footage was staged as if it were a nuisance alligator, but it was not an official nuisance call. It was during wild season.

The protocol of nuisance hunter is that filming is not allowed unless previously authorized by the Department.

Technically this was not a violation of Department policy. The term nuisance was not used in the episode. Tim asked if the Department might refuse to issue State Parks additional tags. Buddy said that it is unlikely that State Parks will request additional tags. He thought that this was a one-time thing. Buddy said that the Department of State Parks understands why LDWF doesn't allow filming, but the Department of State Parks feels like the publicity was good for them.

Chad said that he thinks they will ask again. Moving forward, Chad would like to think that LDWF would not look favorably on the Department of State Parks requesting additional tags.

Mike motioned that AAC would encourage LDWF to not issue additional tags to State Parks or other state lands if they suspect that the tags will be used for filming opportunities. Tim seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Dr. McRoberts' contract will end in February. Errol asked if we are seeing any results. Buddy said that students are graduating from school and continuing to use alligator. Buddy said that we could ask her how she would measure impact. Errol said he would like her to justify the investment and to illustrate her goals and how they are being met. Buddy recommends that the Council ask her to develop some higher level justification for continuing her contract.

The assistant director of the Seafood and Promotion Board called Edmond and let him know that Tommy Stoddard had resigned. She is looking for someone who can represent the alligator industry. Noel said that this position was added to the Seafood Promotion Board in recent years. Tim suggested that the Alligator Farmers Association might have a recommendation.

Tony Howard said that the Fur Advisory Council met and discussed shipping furs out of country. The FAC would like to ask the AAC for some assistance in how to go about shipping. Gerald said that he would talk to Tony about it.

Errol Falgout, Kevin Sagera, Nathan Wall, Jeff Donald, and Rebecca Hale had met previously to discuss research.

Chad suggested that Rebecca take charge of the committee that can evaluate projects that might come up at the LSU facility and report back to the Council. Chad said he would like a committee to review the research and determine if it makes sense, fits Department goals, and is applicable in the real world, on farms, or in the marsh.

Gerald said that 90% of what is being done has already been done before. Chad said that pulling expertise from various perspectives will provide the feedback necessary to move forward into beneficial areas of research. Rebecca said that the management practices are varied among farmers. We don't have a set of best management practices. We don't know the optimal amount of feed.

Errol said that a lot of the funding is coming from farmers, and he thinks that this discussion should be picked up by the Alligator Farmers Association. Rebecca Hale and Dr. Reigh said that they would include them in the discussion. Errol said he would take the lead in taking this to the farmers. Noel said that the Department also has an interest in this. Edmond and Ruth will attend the research committees.

Chad asked about the California issue. Edmond said that they are still waiting for it to be signed by the governor. There will be a five year sunset clause.

Motion made by Dwight to adjourn. Mike seconded. Motion carried unanimously.