

Alligator Advisory Council Meeting

October 29, 2015

LDWF

New Iberia, LA

Council Members Present

Ronald Guy
Randy Moertle
Errol Falgout
Vic Blanchard
Dwight Savoie
Mike Benge
Barry Wall

Council Members Absent

Al Marmande
Gerald Savoie

LDWF Present

Buddy Baker
Edmond Mouton
Tanya Sturman
Bob Love
Jeb Linscombe
Mike Dupuis
Eric Ledet

Others Present

Don Ashley
Pam Ashley
Kevin Ashley
Noel Kinler
Mark Shirley, LSU
Javier Nevarez
Scott Warren, LSAF, Texas
Nathan Wall, Walls Gator Farm
David Wolf, Walls Gator Farm
Shaine Stelly, Deep South Gators
Dr. McRoberts, LSU
Dr. Reigh, LSU
Dr. Losso, LSU
Jose Daniel Estrada, LSU
Castagne Serge
Ted Joanen, Miami Corporation
Andre Neto, RTL

Motion made by Errol to approve the minutes as amended from the February meeting. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Introduction of New Council Members/Appreciation for Retiring Members

Edmond introduced two new land owners, Vic Blanchard and Randy Moertle. He also introduced Barry Wall, a farmer representative. Edmond presented a plaque to Nathan Wall and commended him on seven years of service to the Council and the industry.

Errol nominated Mike Benge as chairman. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Dwight nominated Errol Falgout as vice chairman. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

LSU School of Human Ecology- Dr. McRoberts

Dr. McRoberts gave a summary of what she and Dr. Liu accomplished last year. Dr. Liu presented a paper at a conference in New Mexico. Dr. McRoberts submitted a garment at an annual conference and

a research paper at another. A Chinese exchange student developed a unique pattern and garment with alligator skin scraps. The design class competition yielded some creative garments with alligator trim. She showed a link for a website that showcases many of the garment designs. Dr. McRoberts showed a piece designed by a graduate student from the Beijing Institute using small scraps.

Dr. McRoberts went over the proposed objectives for a new contract. They plan to expand their web presence with links to where to purchase alligator skins.

Randy said that he believes there is a ready market for garments from flawed skins.

Mike asked about the budget, and Edmond responded that the Council's budget was sufficient to fund the contract.

Randy moved to approve the LSU School of Human Ecology contract for a total of \$125,098 for a two year period. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

LSU AgCenter Cooperative Agreement - Edmond Mouton

Edmond went over the scope of the feed research agreement. They study looks at types of feed and amounts of feed to optimize health and growth of farm raised alligators. The Department would like to extend this agreement for another three years. The funding is from the Department's budget and would not affect the Council's budget.

Barry moved to approve the LSU Ag Center contract for a three year period. Vic seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

LSU AgCenter Research Agreement – Dr. Losso

Dr. Losso made a presentation for developing value-added products from alligator waste for biomedical and cosmetic applications. They are looking at uses for bones, backstraps, feet, and eyes. There can be beneficial use from this waste that would add economic benefits to farmers and create new jobs in Louisiana. They can extract linear polysaccharides that assist the body in reducing inflammation, healing wounds, and reducing metastasis.

Dr. Losso explained that Type II collagen comes from cartilage and the alligator would have to be harvested by 12 months. At 18 months, the cartilage has turned to bone and Type I collagen can be extracted.

Edmond said that the funding for this study would come from the Department's budget, so that it would not affect the Council's budget.

Vic moved to approve the LSU Ag Center contract for a two year period. Randy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CITES and IACTS Update – Don Ashley

Don said that the IACTS report has been the foundation for all of the work they have done for the Council. It can take two years to gather enough data from range state countries to compile the report. The data shows that Columbia is exporting more skins than they should be able to legally harvest. Alligator represents about half of the world wide classic skin trade, and Louisiana exports most of these skins. The study looks at what species comes from which countries and are sold to which countries. An analysis is done to look for red flags that may indicate illegal trade.

Don mentioned that if Switzerland shut down trade based on questions about humane killing, it would have a large effect on Louisiana's trade as Switzerland accounts for about 60-70% of Louisiana trade. Javier said that he has been communicating with AVA to get alligator included in their regulations document. The AVA mentioned that the AVA has had some pushback on the issue. Some of the information has been put online. Don asked Javier if a small group from the AVA would meet with us. Javier said we have to be careful how we navigate this. The information has come out in an AVA paper, so the information is available in other locations besides the large document. The regulations document is just another venue.

Don said the California Bill will be filed in 2019 and come to vote in 2020. He would like to prepare and try to get the Bill to pass without a Sunset Clause this time.

Technical Representation RFP- Edmond Mouton

Edmond pointed out that the Council had a copy of the scope of service for the proposed RFP. The RFP process is rather lengthy, and the current contract ends in June 30, 2016. Issues covered by the scope includes the California Bill and maintaining interactions with CITES and assisting with the IACTS report. An additional task would include some public education. Edmond explained the RFP process and how a contract would develop from that process. Council members would be on the committee to review proposals, and the Council would decide which items to include in the contract. There is no cost associated to the tasks in the RFP. Each proposer would submit a budget needed per task per year. The Council would be able to decide later which tasks they want to cover in a contract.

Dwight moved to approve publish an RFP for a Technical Representation contract. Errol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Alligator Regulations Additions/Changes and BMP – Edmond Mouton

Edmond presented the draft regulations changes. The changes enumerate the legal method for farmed alligator slaughter. Definitions for slaughter and pithing would be added to the definition section of the regulations. These additions would have to be added by the Commission.

There is also a proposed change to the alligator farm facility requirements. The square footage required for each size of alligator will be refined. Reference to dry areas in farming regulations will be removed.

Edmond showed some additional language for the BMP document. It is a living document and was last updated in January.

The Farmers Association has already reviewed these proposed changes. The Department is asking that the Council give input before they bring these proposed changes to the Commission. Barry Wall said that he has concerns about the 60 day time limit for farmers to make changes. Edmond said that the 60 day limit has been in the regulations for some time and has never been an issue. Edmond said that the animals should be out of danger by the 60 day mark. LDWF would understand if some renovations require more than 60 days, but most issues would be husbandry issues that could be addressed in this time frame. Edmond said that the issue can be discussed among farmers and there will be opportunities to refine the language. Mike Benge said that he didn't read it as a 60 day hard limit.

Mark Shirley said that the Farmers Association reviewed and agreed to these changes in the regulations and in the additions to the BMPs. Nathan said that this was probably the first time that the farmers have requested to be regulated more. These regulations will help protect the industry from outside criticisms. Nathan said that he would like to revisit the slaughter language for the BMPs, but he would like to see the Department to move forward with the regulation changes. Edmond said that he can present the BMPs to the farmers for further discussion and comments.

Javier said that people already know about the individual housing. He thinks that the Department should publish why it is acceptable now rather than waiting until someone questions it. Buddy said that a red flag would be raised if we deleted it from regulations and did not put it into the BMPs. The BMPs is a more appropriate place for the housing guidelines.

Noel suggested that the paragraph with the bold heading of "Adults" could be moved to a seventh item in the section before. This would draw less attention to that particular item. Edmond and Jeb agreed to rewrite it and recirculate it with some new language. Javier will assist with the language. Edmond said that the BMP document is not time critical since it is published within the Department.

Motion made by Barry to approve the proposed regulations changes as presented and the BMPs pending the corrections made by Javier and the subsequent review and approval by the Farmers Association. Vic seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Mike said that there were some tag issues this year and asked if Edmond had other reports with broken tags. Edmond said that there have been a few problems, and they plan to address the issue with the tag manufacturer.

Motion made by Randy to adjourn. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.