

## Alligator Advisory Council Meeting

October 14, 2014

LDWF

New Iberia, LA

### Council Members Present

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

### LDWF Present

Buddy Baker  
Edmond Mouton  
Tanya Sturman  
Bob Love  
Jeb Linscombe

### Council Members Absent

Nathan Wall  
Al Marmande  
Gerald Savoie

### Others Present

Lisa McRoberts  
Dr. Liu  
Donny Boseman  
Mark Merchant  
Don Ashley  
Pam Ashley  
Rebecca Hale  
James Trahan

Dwight motioned to amend agenda item 5 to agenda item 2. Ronald seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

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

### Enforcement- Update

Mr. Boseman gave a summary of alligator violations. There were 41 violations of taking alligators illegally or out of season. There were also 13 possession violations. These violations were not by hunters, rather by the general public. The biggest violation by hunters were cutting small ones off of the line or shooting them with a shotgun. There were more violations in 2013 than in 2014. The alligator

community is small. So a few big cases in 2013 got the word out and people were more inclined to stay in line in 2014.

Many infringements are discovered on social media. People post pictures of alligators that they have taken out of season. Chad asked how people can alert enforcement about infringements. Mr. Boseman said that they can call the tip line, TIP 411 or Operation Game Thief.

Chad said that he would like enforcement to come about once a year to give the council an update.

### **LSU School of Human Ecology- Update and Consideration**

Dr. McRoberts gave an update on what they've done the past year. Dr. McRoberts stated that from her experience at trade show it appears that Legarto Black Jack Boots Company has a monopoly on the boot market. Dr. McRoberts said that there is interest in alligator in the Western and English Sales Association.

Dr. Liu said that she does not understand the distribution channels for alligator skins or the added cost of shipping and CITES for international shipping. There is interest in China, but the manufacturers want exclusivity for such a high end product. Dr. Liu said that the next step would be to connect student design via a copyright to a manufacturer.

Dr. McRoberts showed photos from two fashion shows with student designs. They also gave a workshop at fashion week on cutting and sewing with alligator.

Dr. McRoberts said that the impact is much larger now, because they are not only working with students, but also with educators. They have done public demonstrations such as the one at fashion week. They also presented at the NuNu convention.

Dr. McRoberts reviewed the objectives for the new proposal. She went over the things that they would do to meet these objectives.

Tim asked about the travel costs for students. Dr. McRoberts said that the students will pay for their own travel.

Rebecca Hale asked about the perception of grade 3 skins in China. Dr. Liu said that even the grade 3 alligator skins are better quality than the crocodilian skins they are producing in China.

Errol asked about the supply and demand. He wondered if we have a need for more skins here, and if we can really supply skins to China. Chad said that he thinks the more demand the better. Tim suggested that Don can help sift out the information about the supply in the U.S., but he agreed that it should not affect the marketing in China.

Chad explained that as changes evolve and settle out in the Department at LSU that we should move forward with a one year contract now even though we are coming out of a two year contract. The proposal from LSU specified that the Department or Council would supply a specific number of skins to LSU. Chad is concerned about putting a specific number of skins in the proposal that the Department

will solicit and/or get donated as they might not be able to reach that level and thereby violate the terms of the contract.

Mike motioned to contract with LSU School of Human Ecology for \$61,938. No second.

Errol motioned to contract with LSU School of Human Ecology for \$60,938 with Don Ashley assisting with shipping technicalities of donated skins from Singapore to Beijing. Dwight seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **CSG- Update**

Mark Merchant said that the CSG meeting this year was the biggest ever. He thanked those that donated and those that presented. He said everything went really well. He thanked Don Ashley for doing the leg work and putting together the presentation for Ted Joanen. Graham Webb wanted to thank everyone for helping put it all together.

Errol said that the only problem he noticed was the sound system.

Chad said that he was impressed with how far ahead Louisiana is. Chad said he thinks Louisiana handles things well. He was surprised that based on the presentations it appeared the other state programs were focused on how to expose the public to alligator harvest as opposed to managing the resource and ensuring their State programs provided an accurate depiction of a sustainable use model.

Mark mentioned that there were also some behind the scenes issues being discussed, such as issues in Columbia.

Graham Webb is interested in doing more. Mark asked if the industry here would be interested in hosting another meeting in a couple of years that would be shorter.

Chad said that there was a real interest in a media friendly outreach. He would like to include that issue in the next meeting, if we do a follow up meeting. Chad said that the follow up meeting is a consideration that is more appropriate for Buddy, Bob and Don to discuss as it will require more of their time to pull together. He said the Council would assist.

Don said that for years he has been trying to express how far ahead Louisiana is in the industry. Louisiana has set the bar and keeps raising the bar. There has never been so much discussion on industry issues at these meetings before. Generally the discussions are about science and management. Don was also impressed with the representatives from zoos and aquariums, because the public gets a lot of information from them.

### **Technical Representation Update- Don Ashley**

The small leather good issue was not brought up for consideration or discussion at the CITES meeting. This would have considered an exemption for permits on small leather pieces, similar to the personal

effects exemption. If that had come up and passed, then small leather goods made from questionable sources would have flooded the market. The python issue was decided. It does not require individual products to be marked.

The IACTS report is the first line of defense for tracking trade of crocodilians. The Nile crocodile and *porosis* are increasing. Farming and ranching is increasing in Africa. The caiman trade is decreasing. Farming issues in Central America have led to this decrease. Manufacturers want to know that products are legal, sustainable and verifiable. In the past, the high numbers of caiman exports brought the legality of the skins into question.

The California Governor signed the bill to continue to allow crocodilian imports. HSUS was petitioning the Governor to veto the bill. HSUS cannot beat the science. HSUS will try to undermine credibility. Don said that public education is important to building our credibility. There is a five year sunset on this law.

HSUS and PETA raises more money for public education than any industry can raise. The CSG intends to start a fund for conservation education. They intend to raise \$60,000 for education. They have raised about half of the funds. As things progress, Don will keep the Council updated.

#### **Alligator Program Update- Edmond Mouton**

Edmond said that the wild season went very well. 38,342 tags were issued statewide. The nest survey shows a 3% increase in nests. Farmers collected an estimated 537,155 eggs, which will be new record when confirmed. Since January, 46,794 alligators have been released.

#### **Other Business**

Ronald was invited to the trappers' convention in Arkansas to do an alligator skinning demonstration. He took a 12 foot alligator. It was a big show and very well received. There were 250 people around the table watching the demonstration. The Council paid for travel to Arkansas. Ronald thanked the Council for the travel budget.

Ronald also does skinning demonstrations in Louisiana. Hunting and Fishing day was huge this year. The Woodworth event was the biggest even yet this year.

**Motion made by Mike to purchase educational materials and giveaways up to \$1,000. Errol seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Edmond said that Tommy Stoddard donated alligator meat for an event.

Buddy suggested purchasing something more sustainable like stadium cups.

Tim suggested that we get a committee together with Don to research the gap in supply indicated by Dr. McRoberts. Errol agreed to look into it with Don.

Rebecca Hale announced that the farmers donated about \$57,000 through the Cargill program to the LSU research program. Cargill matches 50 cents on the dollar. The LSU budget was relatively small.

Chad said that a request was made to increase the Council's budget but we have not received a response at this time.

Chad also requested an update on the status of the media outreach program that the Department was doing in conjunction with LPB.

Out the Bayou TV. show did a couple of good shows. One was with Ted Joanen about egg collecting.

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