

Alligator Advisory Council Meeting

June 18, 2013
LDWF, New Iberia

Council Members Present

Gerald Savoie
Ronald Guy
Tim Allen
Nathan Wall
Chad Courville
Dwight Savoie

Council Members Absent

Errol Falgout
Mike Benge

LDWF Present

Noel Kinler
Buddy Baker
Ruth Elsey
Edmond Mouton
Tanya Sturman
Lance Campbell
Ryan King
Jeb Linscombe

Others Present

Johnny Price
Ted Joanen
Mark Shirley
Natalie McElyea
John Currier
Kenneth Dupont
James Trahan
Robert Reigh
Dan Davis

Motion made by Tim Allen to approve the minutes as amended from the May 1, 2013 meeting. Dwight seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Chad Courville awarded a plaque of appreciation to Dan Davis for 20 years of Council and industry service.

Electrical Immobilization Project Contracts

Noel explained the background of the company, Smith-Root, Inc. Prior work focused on preliminary studies looking for the best current and voltage for doing electrical mobilization. It is now time to do another study combining blood chemistry and neural studies with the electrical mobilization. This project involves two contracts, one with LSU Vet School to do the biological studies, and the other with Smith-Root to do the immobilization. Currently it is acceptable to do electrical immobilization if the alligator will be immediately euthanized, but they want to determine the safety of using electrical immobilization to be used as an anesthesia for handling the alligators when they will be returned to the

tank alive. The request for funding is for \$9,700 to LSU and \$24,000 to Smith-Root from the Alligator Resource Fund. Buddy Baker asked if there is any indication that Smith-Root would later invest in further research and development. Noel said that he thought they would, because the technology would also be applicable to crocodile farmers. Chad suggested that in the contract someone should address the disclosure of videos and photos, because he is concerned of public perception. Noel said that photos were prohibited during the first phase without prior approval from the Department and the farmer. Buddy Baker mentioned that if the Department owned the videos and photos then anyone could make a request to see them. Noel and Ruth both agreed that the image of the stunning and immobilization was not offensive and appeared more humane than using a noose and wrestling an alligator out of the pen. Ruth said that in the fish literature that they used the term electrical sedation. Chad stated that due to the sensitive nature of this testing and current atmosphere, it was very important that if photo or video documentation is collected of this research, proper responsible management of that material is imperative.

Motion made by Gerald Savoie to accept the contracts to LSU Vet School and to Smith-Root. Nathan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alligator Program Update

LDWF has issued 514 permits for eggs. Noel anticipates the permitting number to be the same as last year. He anticipates a good year for revenue generation. They have 282,000 skins so far this year. He expects to set a record for the revenues to the Alligator Resource Funds. Farmers have already released 25,000 this year and will probably release another 10,000 this season. LDWF accepted \$15 per egg contract on the last two public lands available for egg collection. Gerald said that the collection permits have caused a problem when two permitted collectors call in sick at the same time and he needs to send another employee out to collect. He suggested that he be able to purchase blank permits that can be signed by the employee on the morning that he begins egg collecting. Noel said that the Department would try to incorporate a way to speed up this permitting process for the next season.

Regulations of Sale of Live Nuisance Alligator

Noel said that the only people who can possess live alligators are farmers and exhibitors. When wild adult alligators are placed in confinement they have traditionally not done very well. Hatchling alligators handle captive situations much better. If a nuisance hunter were allowed to sell live nuisance alligators to farmers, then he would have to have a permit to hold live alligators and a facility to hold them in. Gerald agreed that the only benefit would be if the nuisance hunter was also a farmer and wanted to grow out these alligators, but he thinks that farmers should not be nuisance alligator hunters. Nathan said that he appreciates the Department's response. He said that nuisance alligator sales have been implemented in other states.

Other Business

Chad reminded everyone to get their ethics paperwork in if it's not already in.

Noel mentioned that there should be a new Council member to fill Dan's old seat by the next Council meeting.

Lance said that there a few tracks of land that the State and a landowner both claim. These tracks of land cannot be used for egg collection or alligator hunting until the ownership has been determined. The LSU facility is doing well. Chad asked about having a Council meeting there so that the Council can tour the facility.

Chad had some concerns about the content of Swamp People. He asked if the Department would look at the techniques being used on the show. Noel agreed that shooting and using a treble hook to capture an alligator are techniques that concern him. The rules are written as such that the hooks are being used in legally acceptable ways, but that the rules were intended for a bow and arrow hunt. Ronald said that the hook method is beneficial to a nuisance hunter. Noel agreed that the technique needed to be written in for nuisance hunter. Chad suggested looking further at these issues and that the Department may want to consider a rule change in the future.

Chad said that Ewell Smith contacted him and would like to get involved in promoting alligator again. Chad said that he would like for someone in the Department to review the content of the promotion.

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