

ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

MARCH 22, 2021
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES (LDWF)
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Council Members Present

Vic Blanchard
Tom Benge
Craig Sagrera
Al Marmande
Jeff Donald
John Currier
Chad Courville
Barry Wall

Council Members Absent

Tony Howard

LDWF Present

Jack Montoucet
Jason Waller
Jeb Linscombe
Jessica Saloom
Tanya Sturman
Joel Courtney
Ruth Elsey
Amity Bass
Brodee Landry
Ty Medlen
Scott Longman

Others Present

Archie Domangue
Christen Wall
Christy Plott
Greg Linscombe
Kaya Lambert
Luke Fallis
Noel Kinler
Rebecca Hale
Tim Allen
Chuanlan Liu

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS AAC MEETING

Motion made by Jeff Donald to dispense with the reading of the November 2020 meeting minutes and approve those minutes as presented. Barry Wall seconded. Motion carried.

MARKETING AND TECHNICAL REPRESENTATION CONTRACT CONSIDERATION (EXECUTIVE)

The AAC members broke away from the public AAC meeting and entered a private executive session meeting to discuss the contract related to the RFP for Marketing and Technical Representation.

The AAC members rejoined the public meeting and made a recommendation to approve the Marketing and Technical Representation contract with Monarch Marketing for a three year period for \$250,000 annually.

Motion made by John Currier to accept the Monarch Marketing bid. Craig Sagrera seconded. Motion carried.

LSU DIGITAL MARKETING PROPOSAL

Dr. Chuanlan Liu gave a PowerPoint presentation to discuss recent industry and marketing shifts to digital marketing. Digital markets had already been trending upward before the pandemic, but the pandemic accelerated these markets.

Alibaba is an important digital platform for selling to manufacturers and directly to consumers. Alibaba has already surpassed Walmart in sales. It has users in over 240 countries and has expanded its market to luxury products.

It is important to build public awareness about ethically sourced exotic skins, because recent negative messages have been detrimental. For example, Chanel responded to a PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) campaign and stopped using exotic leather in 2018. Many millennial and Gen-Z luxury consumers are looking for ethically sourced products that have a minimal environmental impact. These consumers also look for information online and make online purchases.

There is an abundance of imperfect alligator skins that can be used to create beautiful, functional and durable products. There is potential for many buyers to purchase slightly damaged hides via ecommerce. This market could meet or exceed the current market using the highest quality skins.

Jeb Linscombe mentioned that the Department was not requesting a vote on this contract at this point, but would like to open the floor for discussion. The council members discussed the potential market for wild alligator leather and the particular objectives of Dr. Liu's proposal.

ALLIGATOR PROGRAM UPDATE

Ruth Elsey gave an alligator program update. Nest counts have increased, but egg collection and inventory numbers were down relative to previous years. The nest count has been strong for the past five years. Generally the egg collection numbers correlate with nest counts, but this year it was down about 50% due to market conditions and COVID. Thus total farm inventory was also down. The Department and the alligator farmers managed to get the releases done, even though it was postponed due to COVID for several months. Four farmers did not renew their licenses, and two new farmers received new licenses.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion made by Jeff Donald to adjourn. Barry Wall seconded. Motion carried.

Jeb Linscombe shared an invitation to login to a webinar entitled, "How to Talk About Hunting."