

MEETING OF THE NORTHWEST LOUISIANA GAME
AND FISH PRESERVE COMMISSION

Meeting held on February 1, 2024

Present were Chairman Winfred Lonadier and Commissioners Austin (waiting appointment), Cooper, Cason, Tingle and Bedgood.

On motion by Cooper and seconded by Cason, the meeting was called to order.

On motion by Bedgood and seconded by Cooper, the minutes were accepted as written.

Guests were introduced including Mickey Hennigan, Villis Dowden, Steve Smith and Kane Finkbeiner.

Commissioner Bedgood gave a report on the boat ramps and fishing pier. On motion by Cason and seconded by Tingle, Bedgood was authorized to obtain the rock and do the necessary work at CD Baker, West Wind and Dickson to correct current deficiencies. There was also a great deal of discussion concerning the recreation area. People keep throwing their trash and damaging the stop posts. On motion by Cooper and seconded by Bedgood the Commission voted to contact President John Salter about assuming the recreation area and perhaps closing it if the Police Jury is unwilling to do so.

Concerning lake management Villis Dowden and Kane Finkbeiner gave a report. The vegetation looks good. There was some reported alligator weed in Prairie Lake. That is due to the lake of giant salvania. Dowden advised that the juvenile numbers for bass are down. He is checking to see if we can stock a strain of northern black bass. They hope to obtain some of the fingerlings from a hatchery that Wildlife and Fisheries is trying to develop. It was reported that the ice over and cold temperatures had a good impact on the giant salvania. They were disappointed in the recruitment and size of the Florida bass. It appears our lake, at the present time, is more conducive of the northern black bass.

The east boat ramp was in good condition and will be reopened for use on February 2, 2024. It was temporarily closed due to high water.

On the Facebook page Commissioner Hubbard was not in attendance. However the Commission agreed that we need to post on the Facebook page when we are going to be closing the boat ramps and perhaps post information about specific times when the boat ramp would be closed such as when the lake reaches a certain level and is rising and would be reopened when it reaches certain level and is dropping. That way the public will have access to when the ramps will be opened and/or closed.

There was much discussion concerning harassment. Mickey Hennigan reported numerous instances of improper behavior by the hunters on the lake complex. Mr. Hennigan also discussed the harassment that took place during teal season and asked that the rules and regulations be

amended so that they would apply to any waterfowl season, including teal.

On motion by Bedgood and seconded by Cason the Commission agreed to request that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries amend R.S. 56:648.1 to specifically state that statute would apply to the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve. The motion passed unanimously. On motion by Cason and seconded by Cooper the rules and regulations were amended to include all waterfowl seasons including teal.

The actual discussion of adopting new rules and regulations was tabled to allow the Commission to review the current rules. It was suggested that the rules specifically state that no metal should be driven in the lake bed during the construction of a permanent or temporary blind.

The no camping sign payment was approved on motion by Bedgood and seconded by Tingle and the signs were taken to be erected.

Concerning new business there was a discussion of a 1:00 p.m. closing for duck season. Steve Smith, on behalf of Wildlife and Fisheries, asked that it be changed to 2:00 p.m. to match other closing times in the State of Louisiana. On motion by Cason and seconded by Cooper the Commission agreed to amend the waterfowl season rules to provide that any and all hunting of waterfowl shall cease after 2:00 p.m. CST.

Assistant Secretary Treasurer Steven Crews advised that he was working on obtaining a replacement due to his retirement after the June 2024 meeting.

On motion by Bedgood and seconded Tingle the meeting did adjourn.

STEVEN D. CREWS