

ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

NOVEMBER 18, 2020
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES (LDWF)
ZOOM MEETING

ATTENDANCE

Council Members Present

Vic Blanchard
Tom Benge
Craig Sagrera
Al Marmande
Jeff Donald

Council Members Absent

Barry Wall
Tony Howard
John Currier
Randy Moertle

LDWF Present

Jason Waller
Jeb Linscombe
Jessica Saloom
Tanya Sturman
Joel Courtney
Ruth Elsey
Buddy Baker
Amity Bass

Others Present

Stephen Sagrera
Christy Plott
Andre Neto
Breanna Dominguez
Marco Dermody
Chad Courville
Frank Ellender
Mark Shirley
Nicole Lundberg
Noel Kinler
Rebecca Hale
Ryan Schaefer
Tom Roth
Chuanlan Liu

Jeb Linscombe made an announcement that we are in a black out period for the current alligator marketing request for proposal (RFP) process. No discussion related to the RFP is permitted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS AAC MEETING

Motion made by Craig Sagrera to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2020 meeting. Jeff Donald seconded. Motion carried.

AAC BUDGET UPDATE

Jeb Linscombe discussed the encumbered expenditures for the current fiscal year. There remains \$185,474 unencumbered funds. He went over some historical data for the alligator resource fund. Although the fund is in good shape now, income is projected to decrease over the next few years. The majority of the fund's income is based on alligator shipping fees, and fewer hides are being shipped. He reviewed contracts that paid out in recent years and noted that many of those will not be recurring expenditures.

FUNDING APPROVAL 2020 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUSES

Jeb Linscombe mentioned that LDWF and the AAC attended the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses last year, which is a large gathering of pro-sportsmen legislators. It offers a bi-partisan opportunity for legislators, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and industry partners to interact with one another to promote outdoor heritage.

Stephen Sagrera explained that Christy Plott was a presenter at the caucuses last year and that she has been invited to present again this year.

Members who attended last year reported that the networking opportunities from the caucuses are worth the investment.

The cost to participate as a Title Sponsor is \$25,000.

Motion made by Craig Sagrera to approve funding for the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses at the \$25,000 level. Tom Benge seconded. Motion carried.

ALLIGATOR MARKET UPDATE

Christy Plott gave an alligator market update. She reported that leather is not moving in the current market. Traditionally, much of the leather consumers in Europe are tourists, and tourism has halted in Europe. Production is also stymied in Europe due to COVID-19 restrictions. Production has also slowed in places like El Paso, Texas due to COVID-19 infection rates. Ms. Plott anticipates that the leather market will be suppressed for another two years.

Christy worked on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet through Epic Diversity. The FAQ sheet focuses on the reptile trade and facts about sustainability and ethics. <https://www.epicbiodiversity.com/faqs>

Ms. Plott worked on a traceability study with the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG). This report has not been published yet, but it should be posted on the CSG website in the coming weeks.

Ms. Plott suggested that LDWF host an alligator webinar for producers, manufacturers, and retailers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Chuanlan Liu of Louisiana State University would like to submit a proposal to the council to utilize social media and content marketing on Ali Baba to increase the awareness of grade 3 alligator skins to consumers.

Jeb Linscombe explained that the alligator program is developing an RFP to contract out the labor related to alligator releases. LDWF staff would still fully monitor the releases and maintain the data.

Motion made by Craig Sagrera to adjourn. Tom Benge seconded. Motion carried.
