

**Summary of the Alligator Advisory Council Meeting
August 22, 2012
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Council Present

Nathan Wall
Chad Courville
Mike Bengé
Dan Davis
Tim Allen
Dwight Savoie
Gerald Savoie

Council Absent

Ronald Guy
Errol Falgout

LDWF Presence

Noel Kinler
Edmond Mouton
Bob Love
Tanya Sturman
Buddy Baker
Ruth Elsey
Scooter Trosclair

Others

Dr. Javier Nevarez
Greg Linscombe
Dr. Robert Reigh
Micah Bujol
John C.
Marco Demody
Dr. Ross-LSU Ag Center
Johnnie Morgan- LSU Ag Center
Millie
Cargill Representatives: Willie Core,
Rebecca Hale and David Hines
Don & Pam Ashley
Ted Joanen
Allan Ensminger

Dwight motioned to approve the minutes from the May, 2012 meeting. Nathan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Nathan motioned to amend the agenda to vote on officers last. Mike seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mike motioned to amend the agenda to add an enforcement report. Dan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Enforcement Report

Violations naturally increase as alligators come more frequently into contact with humans. People are taking alligators for recreational purposes when they are out fishing. There were 4 cases of hunting at night. Every case in the report has been prosecuted. There was one case of sport hunting without tags. Several individuals were selling hunts and taking alligators off of private land without permission and without tags. This was the biggest case of the year.

Cargill Donation and LSU Research Facility

Nathan introduced Cargill corporation representatives, Willie Core, Rebecca Hale and David Hines. Ms. Hale explained that they want to generate funds for research so that they can benefit

from the research. Cargill set up a program called Gator Bait. Farmers earned credit through usage and had a choice of keeping their funds or donating them to the research center. Cargill donated an additional 50 cents per every dollar generated by the farmers. They donated \$47,306.76.

Dr. Robert Reigh gave an update on the facility and showed slides of the new construction.

LSU Vet School Update

Dr. Nevarez gave an update. He has had about ten cases of aflatoxin, pneumonia, dermatitis and systemic bacterial infections. Aflatoxin is prevalent in hot, humid environments. It causes obliteration of liver tissue. They have only confirmed three cases of aflatoxin. They believe that there are other cases, but by the time they got to them, the liver was too bad to identify the toxin. Storing feed in a dry, cool place will help prevent this. Avoiding whole chicken and cleaning up any food remnants will also help avoid aflatoxin.

West Nile virus has been noted this year. It has been ten years since the last bad outbreak. There is a vaccine available for alligators.

They have proceeded with a couple of research projects. They did a corticosterone comparison of group versus individually housed alligators. They also did a vitamin D3, iCa and Ca comparison between captive and wild alligators. There were not significant differences between the captive and wild alligators.

CITES Update

There has been a whole host of compliance issues regarding international trade at CITES meetings. The alligator industry has a positive reputation for leading the way with sustainable and verifiable trade.

Japan has finally adopted the personal affects exemption. China is the major hold out with personal affects. China has national legislation requiring export permits. Don met with a couple of Chinese delegates and has been invited to submit a position paper.

Alligator trade recovered quite well based on 2010 numbers. Alligator has averaged 56% of market share for the past ten years of classic trade.

CITES doesn't want to get into animal welfare issues. A Swiss panel has been put together to work with this. We are being proactive with husbandry and welfare issues.

Chad would like to address the negative display by USFW. Buddy Baker said that he met with USFW specifically about this issue. Secretary Barham sent a follow up letter. Buddy Baker said that LDWF works closely with USFW on many issues. It is important to keep a good working relationship with the organization. Buddy Baker said that he and Noel will meet with USFW service on CITES issues in early September. They will ask that this issue be added to the agenda. If this doesn't work then we can look at another approach.

Program Update

Nest production continues to increase. However many eggs were flooded out of the nests this year. Southeastern nesting is much stronger than nesting in the southwestern part of the state, although nesting is improving in the southwest. Number of tags issued has increased. Prices continue to recover. The price was up to \$17 per foot in 2011. The quota for tags has not increased, but LDWF projects an increase in tag sales. Noel gave an overview of lottery opportunities. There were 2,800 applicants for lottery tags.

Projected hatch is about 300,000, which is a little above last year. Projected releases are 36,000. Estimated farm inventory is 330,925, which is about 80,000 more than last year.

Alligator Resource Fund (ARF) expenditures were \$1,498,044, which includes \$280,437 from the Council. Income totaled just under 1.4 million. We are on the road to recovery financially.

Chad asked that Noel find out what resident and non-resident hunter fees are in Florida. The ARF balance dropped to \$1,121,572. Noel thinks that the drop in the fund should reverse in the upcoming year. The projection for the 2012-2013 income is \$1,465,750.

There are two bills in legislation which may interest the Council. One pertains to the freedom of information act and the amount of information included with shipping. The other pertains to stream of income for ARF. Additional income will come from sale of alligators, eggs, skins and fees from alligator lottery harvest program.

Nathan asked that we send a letter to Jack Montousette thanking him for his support.

Other Business

The Alligator Farmers and Ranchers Association is donating about \$30,000 to the alligator research projects. Chad asked that we send a letter to Cargill and the Alligator Farmers and Ranchers Association.

Dr. Reigh gave an update on feed research. Five diets were used in the research. The control diet was the traditional Cargill feed with 55% protein. The other diets had lower level of proteins but added vitamins and cellulose. There was no significant difference in weight, length and girth between most of the diets. The lowest protein diet, at 37%, did not do well. Comparing by products and mortalities along with size of the alligator, the 45% protein was the optimum feed. The next experiment will determine a suitable dietary protein to energy ratio.

Chad said that some issues have come up with rights to trap on claimed property. Trappers and hunters need to be careful to only put lines where they are authorized.

Election of Officers

Nathan nominated Tim Allen for chair. Tim declined.

Tim motioned to keep the same officers for another year. Dwight seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Tim motioned to adjourn. Mike seconded. Motion carried unanimously.