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MINUTES
August 28, 2019

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met in the Buffalo Barracks at Fort Robinson State Park Crawford, NE for the transaction of business, advance public notice having been given through release to news media and official public notice published in the Lincoln Journal Star on August 13, 2019.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Allen advised this meeting was being held in conformance with the State Open Meeting Act and the act was available for review on the table at the back of the room. The Commissioners introduced themselves. Members present were: Rick Brandt, Lincoln; Dan Kreitman, Wahoo; John Hoggatt, Kearney, Bob Allen, Eustis; Jim Ernst, Columbus; Pat Berggren, Broken Bow; Scott Cassels, Omaha; Dick Bell, Omaha and Doug Zingula, Sidney.

Minutes of the business meeting held June 21, 2019 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve the minutes. Voting aye: Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for June and July were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Berggren to approve the financial vouchers. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Jim Douglas thanked the Fort Robinson staff for the assistance they provided with area tours and the meals they prepared the previous day.

The Director reviewed economic impact statistics in Sioux and Dawes County related to outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing activities in the region, including Fort Robinson and Chadron State Parks.

The Director shared information regarding the Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act.

Director Douglas asked Hunter Education Coordinator Jackson Ellis to present hunter education volunteer instructor awards. Honorees in District 7 were Roger Eaton and Richard Snyder.

End Director's Report

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Senator Tom Brewer requested to be on the agenda to discuss the R Line Project through the Sandhills. He shared that new information has come to light that wasn't available in 2014 when the Commission signed off on the project. The Senator feels this should cause the agency to rescind their approval and asked that the Commission consider doing so. He presented Commissioners with packets of information on the subject and there were a large number of his constituents present to show their support of his request.

Chairman Allen opened the public hearing at 8:58 AM for to consider amendments to Chapter Commission Order, C14, Mountain Sheep. Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations to authorize one lottery ram resident only tag and no auction tags for the 2020 season. There was no public testimony and the hearing was closed at 9:03 AM.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Zingula to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Allen called for a ten-minute recess at 9:04 AM.

Chairman Allen opened the public hearing at 9:14 A.M. to consider amendments to Chapter 2, Fisheries Regulations, Section 012, Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal requested the Commission not approve the proposed amendments due to new information received from the Attorney General's Office. There was no public testimony and the hearing was closed at 9:16 AM.

Mr. Kreitman moved that the Commission not approve staff recommendations, but advise staff to continue to work with the Attorney General's Office to correct any identified issue and re-submit at a future meeting; seconded by Mr. Ernst. Voting aye: Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Allen read the staff recommendations to call for public hearings at the October Commission meeting for Commission District 2 input on proposed listing and de-listing of State Threatened and Endangered Species; to consider amendments to Chapter 4, Wildlife Regulations, Section 1, General Regulations Governing Wildlife Species; and to consider amendments to Fisheries Commission Order C06 Sport Fishing.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Cassels to adopt staff recommendations for agenda items 5, 6, and 7. Voting aye: Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Big Game Disease & Research Program Manager Todd Nordeen was present to review the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan and recommend Commission approval. Nordeen shared details of the plan, which is designed to manage bighorn sheep herds for optimum success.

Motion by Mr. Berggren and seconded by Mr. Kreitman to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

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Parks Division Administrator Jim Swenson was present to share staff recommendations for Commission approval of hunting seasons in specific state parks and state historical parks to offer additional hunting opportunities in the shoulder park season. The only changes from the previous year were to update the calendar dates and to recommend no antlerless deer hunting at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park.

Motion by Mr. Ernst and seconded by Mr. Brandt to adopt staff recommendations.
Voting aye: Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Scott Kile requested to be on the agenda to address the Commission on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), also known as drones, on public lands owned or managed by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. He asked the Commission to allow FAA Certified UAS Remote pilots to operate UAVs on these properties without going through the current special event process, especially to capture aerial images to promote the state on social media.

Division Administrators Jim Swenson, Michelle Stryker, Dean Rosenthal and Alicia Hardin gave flood updates related to parks, trails, fisheries, and wildlife divisions respectively. Progress has been made, although later flooding in July caused additional issues and expenses for the agency. Conversations and negotiations with NEMA and FEMA are ongoing.

Dr. Dirac Twidwell, an Associate Professor of Rangeland and Fire Ecology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, gave an environmental report on the spread of eastern red cedar in Nebraska and potential mitigation practices which could prove to be successful.

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed a new challenge for Nebraska waterfowl hunters and the requirements to complete the "Duck Slam." All hunters that complete the slam will be registered for an opportunity to win prizes through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

Assistant Wildlife Division Administrator Will Inselman gave a quick report on the preliminary upland game outlook for the upcoming season.

Everyone was invited outside for Critter Moment, where Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal pointed out the differences in the different species of trout required for the Trout Slam. The four required species are rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout.

The Commissioners agreed to share copies of their reports amongst themselves rather than to give verbal reports on their Commissioner Committees.

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Ernst to enter into executive session at 11:52 AM for the purpose of discussing legal matters. Voting aye: Brandt, Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Regular session was resumed at 12:09 PM.

Motion by Mr. Berggren and seconded by Mr. Brandt to leave executive session.

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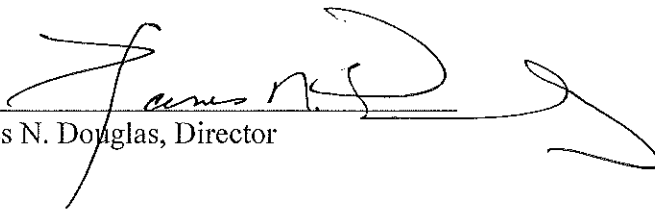
Voting aye: Bell, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Commissioners compared calendars to look for a date for a special meeting to review information and discuss Lake McConaughy planning as well as waterfowl seasons and zones. September 13 was selected as a strong possibility.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Kreitman to adjourn at 12:17 PM. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Ernst, Hoggatt, Kreitman, Brandt, Bell, and Allen; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

I hereby certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at its meeting held August 28, 2019.



James N. Douglas, Director