The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met at the Mid-plains Community College in North Platte, 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 October 8, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Kreitman 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. Members present: Chairman Dan Kreitman, Pat Berggren, Broken Bow; Doug Zingula, Sidney; Rick Brandt, Lincoln; Bob Allen, Eustis, Donna Kusel, Omaha, Ken Curry, Columbus; John Hoggatt, Kearney; and Scott Cassels, Omaha arrived at 8:56 AM.

Minutes of the business meeting held August 27, 2021 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Berggren and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to approve the meeting minutes. Voting aye: Kush, Zingula, Berggren, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush, Curry and Kreitman; Cassels absent not voting; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Minutes of the special meeting held September 29, 2021 were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Curry and seconded by Mr. Brandt to approve the September 29 minutes. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Curry, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush and Kreitman; Cassels absent, not voting; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for August and September were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Zingula to approve staff recommendations. Berggren, Curry, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush, Zingula and Kreitman; Cassels absent and not voting; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

**Director's Report**

Director Douglas thanked Park Staff for the tour of Buffalo Bill SRA and the North Platte Fisheries staff for hosting the great fish fry the night before.

The Director gave updates on the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act by Congress, the specialty license plates that benefit the agency and the two-tier duck pilot program.

Director Douglas recognized Rick Windham with a Prominent Partner Award of Excellence for
his vast contributions to the agency and conservation in the state of Nebraska as a widely published writer.

The Director introduced Employee Enterprise Award winner State Hatchery Biologist Bryan Sweet who was honored for showing initiative, creativity and ingenuity in the creation and implementation of the agency’s freshwater mussels program.

**End Director’s Report**

Agenda Item #5 was tabled, and item # 6 delayed until the presenter arrived.

The Chair moved to agenda item #7 John Laux was present to bestow NBCI awards to Brad Seitz and Mike Remund for their outstanding efforts as public land managers and their contributions to bobwhite quail in their areas. Each have an impressive 40+ years of field experience managing habitat for bobwhites in southeastern Nebraska.

Chairman Kreitman read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Chapter 4, Wildlife Regulations, Section 019, Area-Specific Regulations.

Motion by Mr. Berggren and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Curry, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush, Zingula, Berggren and Kreitman; Cassels was absent and not voting; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Kreitman opened the public hearing at 8:38 AM to consider amendments to Title 163, Chapter 5, Section 001 General Regulations governing the administration and use of state park property to update technical language regarding Nebraska Resident Disabled American Veterans Permit pursuant to LB 336 (2020) and establish the fee for an annual non-resident park permit be two times the fee of a resident park permit pursuant to LB770 (2021). Parks Division Administrator Jim Swenson reviewed the staff recommendations. There were no comments received before the meeting and no testimony at the meeting, so the hearing was closed at 8:49 AM. Commissioners discussed details of the way this will be implemented and enforced.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Ms. Kush to adopt staff recommendations. Voting aye: Curry, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush, Zingula, Berggren and Kreitman; Cassels was absent and not voting; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Kreitman opened the public hearing at 8:51 AM to consider amendments to Title 163 Chapter 4, Wildlife Regulations, Section 003. Antelope, Deer, Elk, to create procedures, forms, required documentation, and the number of antlerless elk harvests to qualify for a free-earned landowner elk permit. to consider amendments to Chapter 4, Wildlife Regulations, Section 003. Antelope, Deer, Elk. Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations. There was no comment received before the meeting and no testimony at the hearing, so the hearing was closed at 9:08 AM. Commissioners had a variety of questions and discussion on landowner permits.

Motion by Mr. Hoggatt and seconded by Mr. Zingula to adopt staff recommendations. Voting aye: Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Zingula, Kush,

**TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT**

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Berggren, Cassels, Curry and Kreitman; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Kreitman opened the public hearing at 9:10 AM to consider amendments to Commission Order C06, Sport Fishing, regarding daily bag limits, possession limits, length limits, and open areas. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal presented staff recommendations. There were no comments received before the meeting. There was one testifier, Rick Windham who asked about the potential review by Fisheries to making changes to small mouth bass orders for the tri-county canal system. The public hearing was closed at 9:24 AM. Commissioners had a discussion regarding various species, locations and fishing tournaments.

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

The Chairman moved back to item #6 as Ducks Unlimited representative Tim Horst made an appearance to present a duck decoy to Director Jim Douglas to commemorate his years of service.

Big Game Program Manager Luke Meduna reviewed the staff recommendation to approve the Elk Management Plan. The Commissioners asked questions and thanked Luke for his work on the plan.

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

Parks Division Administrator Jim Swenson reviewed the staff recommendations to approve permitting of hunting in some recommended State and Historical Parks. The Commissioners asked detailed questions regarding the posting, safety and limitations of allowing hunting in these areas.

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

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin reviewed staff recommendations that the Commission approve a Permanent 100’ wide right of way easement to Cherry County, Nebraska, for Maintenance of an existing road, known as Carver Road at Cottonwood Steverson Wildlife Management area in Cherry County.

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

Vice-chairman Pat Berggren led the discussion on the Commission meeting schedule for 2022. The Commissioners made several changes in dates and locations to the proposed schedule to fit their needs. The schedule is as follows: Planning Meeting December 10, January 27 & 28 in Lincoln, March 22 & 23 in Nebraska City, April 27 & 28 at Niobrara State Park, June 16 & 17 in Lexington, Strategic meeting July 22 in Omaha, August 30 & 31 Fort Robinson State Park, and October 20 & 21 in Broken Bow.

TIME OUTDOORS IS TIME WELL SPENT
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Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Kush, Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Curry, Allen, Brandt, and Kreitman; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Kreitman moved to agenda item #20 NGPC’s state hatchery biologist Bryan Sweet gave an environmental report on fresh-water mussels.

While on the subject of freshwater mussels, Chairman Kreitman moved back to agenda item 17 and Bryan Sweet presented critter moment on the same topic, showing the Commissioners mussels up close.

Chairman Kreitman moved back to agenda item # 16, for the staff’s recommendation that the Commission set the salary for new Director Tim McCoy to take after Director Douglas’ retirement (beginning 11/2/2021). Commissioner Scott Cassels was designated by the Commission to have the salary negotiation conversation with Tim McCoy and he reported they had that conversation.

Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Ms. Kush to approve hiring McCoy as the Director starting on November 2 with a salary of $164,176.48. Voting aye: Zingula, Berggren, Cassels, Curry, Allen, Brandt, Kush, and Kreitman; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Public Information Officer Julie Geiser shared west central Nebraska outreach efforts that she is doing in the western part of the state.

Wildlife Division Administrator Alicia Hardin gave an update of the 2021 elk season and showed pictures of bulls that have been harvested in several units. Bull harvest is 42% ahead of last year and antlerless harvest is 25% ahead. Many of the antlerless elk have been taken on areas that have had past depredation issues So far, a total of 271 elk have been harvested with no CWD positives (100 tested) to date.

Lindsay Rogers, Fish and Wildlife Education Division Administrator, presented on the results of the Commission’s Community Survey conducted in spring 2021. The survey targeted underserved audiences and focused on the perspective of diverse audiences and their interests in education offerings, determining what encourages them to attend programs, how to best contact them and what kinds of programs they prefer. These results were tied to demographic information including identified race, gender, age and rural vs. urban divide.

Commissioner Committee Reports were tabled.

There was no Executive Session.

The Commissioners presented a Resolution of Appreciation to Director Jim Douglas for his 47 years of service to the agency and congratulated him on is upcoming retirement.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Hoggatt and seconded by Mr. Cassels to adjourn the meeting at 12:27 PM. Voting aye: Berggren, Cassels, Hoggatt, Allen, Brandt, Kush,
Zingula and Kreitman; Curry was absent. 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 October 22, 2021.

[Signature]

for James N. Douglas, Director