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MINUTES
AUGUST 16, 2024

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met 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 1, 2024.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Zingula advised this meeting was being held in conformance with the State Open Meetings Act and the act was available for review on the table at the back of the room. Members present: Kent McNeill, Papillion; Pat Berggren, Broken Bow; Doug Zingula, Sidney; Rick Brandt, Lincoln; Ken Curry, Columbus; Scott Cassels, Omaha; Dan Hughes, Venango, Donna Kush, Omaha, and John Hoggatt, Kearney.

Minutes of the meeting held June 21, 2024, were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Hoggatt and seconded by Ms. Kush to approve the meeting minutes. Voting aye: Kush, Cassels, Curry, Hoggatt, McNeill, Hughes, Brandt, Berggren, and Zingula; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for June and July were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Brandt and seconded by Mr. Hughes to approve financial vouchers. Voting aye: Cassels, Curry, Hoggatt, McNeill, Hughes, Berggren, Brandt, Kush and Zingula; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director McCoy expressed thanks to the Fort Robinson State Park staff for hosting the Commission meetings and the excellent meals provided during this visit.

The Director reported that NGPC received awards in 17 out of 35 categories at the recent Association of Conservation Information conference.

The Director shared information on recent and upcoming NGPC events, including the opening dates of hunting seasons this fall.

The October Commission meetings will be at the Broken Bow City Auditorium October 24 and 25.

End Director's Report

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Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Fisheries Commission Orders C06 Sportfishing.

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

Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Chapter 4 Wildlife Regulations Section 004 Threatened and Endangered Species.

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

Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October meeting to consider amendments to Chapter 2 Fisheries Regulations Section 012 Aquatic Invasive Species.

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

Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Chapter 4 Wildlife Regulations Section 012 Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation.

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

Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Wildlife Commission Order C014, Mountain Sheep.

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

Chairman Zingula read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the October Commission meeting to consider amendments to Chapter 2 Fisheries Regulations Section 009 Bait Collecting and Dealer Regulations.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 8:17 AM to consider amendments to Chapter 5, Park Regulations Section 001 General Regulations Governing the Administration and Use of State Park property to update language regarding where snowmobiles and all-terrain and motorized off-highway amphibious vehicles can be operated on frozen lake surfaces. Parks Division Administrator Jeff

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Fields reviewed staff recommendations. There were no public comments received before the hearing and no public testimony at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 8:23 AM.

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

With time before the next hearing, Chairman Zingula moved to item 14. Parks Division Administrator Jeff Fields reviewed staff recommendation for Commission approval of an easement request from the City of Fort Calhoun to build a cement hike/bike trail on the property of Fort Atkinson State Historical Park in Burt County Nebraska. This trail will connect Fort Atkinson SHP to Fort Calhoun's trail system and is being funded and maintained by the City.

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

Chairman Zingula continued with Item 15 as it was not time for the hearing. Budget & Fiscal Division Administrator Kay Mencl reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the proposed budget request for the FY26 and FY27 Biennium.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 8:39 AM to consider amendments to Wildlife Commission Order CO14 Mountain Sheep regarding the authorization of mountain sheep hunting permits for the 2025 season. Big Game Disease and Research Program Manager Todd Nordeen reviewed staff recommendations for one lottery permit and one auction permit. There were no public comments received before the hearing and no public testimony at the hearing, so the hearing was closed at 8:52AM.

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

Outgoing Commissioner Rick Brandt did the drawing for the lottery bighorn sheep hunt. The winner was Robin Ward of Lincoln, NE.

Public comment period: Randy James of Crawford shared his thoughts and some history about Cater P Johnson Lake on the Fort Rob property. The lake was tagged as having a high hazard dam and is being decommissioned. It was very popular for fishing among visitors and locals.

After a ten-minute recess, the meeting resumed at 9:32 AM.

Big Game Disease and Research Program Manager Todd Nordeen reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Plan.

Motion by Mr. Curry, seconded by Mr. Brandt to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Hoggatt, McNeill, Brandt, Kush, Cassels, Curry, Hughes and Zingula; voting nay: Berggren. Motion carried.

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Parks Division Administrator Jeff Fields reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval to apply for 2024 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding to enhance Sandhill crane viewing areas and interpretive signage on the pedestrian bridge and nearby trails at Fort Kearny State Recreation Area.

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

Law Enforcement Administrator Jeff Clauson gave a report on the restructuring in Law Enforcement to provide better coverage, supervision and investigation support across the state.

Fisheries Biologist Joe Rydell gave a presentation on the work that has been done at Fort Robinson State Park to improve angler access.

Big Game Manager Luke Meduna reviewed the Spring Turkey report with the Commissioners.

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Mr. Berggren to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel at 11:09 AM. Voting aye: Berggren, Brandt, Kush, Hughes, Cassels, Curry, Hoggatt, Mc Neill and Zingula; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

The Chairman called the meeting back into regular session at 12:27 PM.

Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Mr. Curry to leave executive session. Voting aye: Brandt, Kush, Hughes, Cassels, Curry, Hoggatt, Berggren, and Zingula; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Curry and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 PM. Voting aye: Hughes, Hoggatt, Cassels, Curry, Berggren, Brandt and Zingula; 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 16, 2024.



Timothy McCoy, Director

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