



2200 N. 33rd St. • P.O. Box 30370 • Lincoln, NE 68503-0370 • Phone: 402-471-0641

MINUTES
October 25, 2024

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met at the municipal auditorium in Broken Bow, 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 11, 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: 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. Kent McNeill, Papillion; absent.

Minutes of the meeting held August 16, 2024, were reviewed.

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

Financial vouchers for August and September were reviewed.

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

Director's Report

Director McCoy expressed thanks to Commissioner Pat Berggren and his wife Tristan for hosting the Commission dinner last evening.

The Director shared information on recent and upcoming NGPC events, including the opening dates of hunting seasons this fall. He also relayed that this year marks 40 years of public access for hunting and reminded those attending that there is now a tele-check option for firearm deer season.

The January Commission meetings will be in Lincoln, NE, the dates will be decided later during this meeting.

The Commissioners read a resolution of appreciation for Commissioner Pat Berggren, whose term is expiring in January.

End Director's Report

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Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 8:20 AM to consider amendments to Chapter 2 Fisheries Regulations Section 009 Bait Collecting and Dealer Regulations. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal reviewed the staff recommendations. There were no public comments received prior to the hearing and no public testimony was given at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 8:28 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 8:28 AM to consider amendments to Chapter 4 Wildlife Regulations Section 004 Threatened and Endangered Species. Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Melissa Marinovich reviewed the staff recommendations. There were no public comments received prior to the hearing and no public testimony was given at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 8:34 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula opened public hearing at 8:35 AM to consider amendments to Chapter 2 Fisheries Regulations Section 012 Aquatic Invasive Species. Fisheries Division Administrator Dean Rosenthal reviewed the staff recommendations. There were no public comments received prior to the hearing and no public testimony was given at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 8:57 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 8:58 AM to consider amendments to Chapter 4 Wildlife Regulations Section 012 Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation. Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Melissa Marinovich reviewed the staff recommendations. There were no public comments received prior to the hearing and no public testimony was given at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 9:07 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 9:08 AM to consider amendments to Fisheries Commission Orders C06 Sportfishing. Fisheries Assistant Division Administrator Tony Barada reviewed staff recommendations to take effect January 1, 2025. There were no public comments received prior to the hearing and no public testimony was given at the hearing. The hearing was closed at 9:32 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula opened the public hearing at 9:33 AM to consider amendments to Wildlife Commission Order C014, Mountain Sheep. Big Game Disease and Research Program Manager Todd Nordeen reviewed staff recommendations. Safari Club International commented in support prior to the meeting. No public testimony was given at the meeting. The hearing was closed at 9:45 AM.

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

Chairman Zingula resumed the meeting after a ten-minute recess with the public comment opportunity. Dave Haumont of Broken Bow thanked the Berggren family for their service. He shared his frustration about the number of raccoons and wondered why they are protected by a season. He does not feel he is getting help from biologists and that NGPC is behind in addressing his issue. He stated he is not able to keep them out of his sweet corn.

Chairman Zingula moved to item 15 to recognize several Hunter Education volunteers from Ravenna and asked Kyle Gaston to introduce them and talk about the 50-year anniversary of Hunter Education. Bill Kucera was present to accept his 30-year Heritage Award. Kent and David Zeller were present to receive awards for 50 years of service, as they have been volunteering to teach Hunter Ed since the inception of the program in Nebraska.

Planning and Programming Assistant Division Administrator Hannah Jones reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of Supplemental Agreement Number 1 for the Transportation Alternatives Program, funding the Cowboy Trail from Rushville to Mile Marker 400 near Chadron.

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

Parks Division Administrator Jeff Fields reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the Recreational Road Program's 1-5 Year Plan. This plan is updated annually by NGPC and Nebraska Department of Transportation and submitted to the Governor's Office.

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

Parks Division Administrator Jeff Fields reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval and adoption of the proposed fee increases for park activities, lodging, and rental facilities.

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

Director Tim McCoy reviewed staff recommendations for Commission approval of the 2025 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission meeting schedule. The location for the April meeting was discussed and is yet to be determined.

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

Parks Division Administrator Jeff Fields gave the Parks End of Summer Report.

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Hoggatt, seconded by Mr. Cassels to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel at 11:01 AM. Voting aye: Berggren, Brandt, Kush, Cassels, Curry, Hughes, Hoggatt, and Zingula; McNeill, absent; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

The Chairman called the meeting back into regular session at 12:24 PM.

Motion by Mr. Cassels and seconded by Ms. Kush to leave executive session at 12:24 PM. Voting aye: Brandt, Kush, Hughes, Cassels, Curry, Hoggatt, Berggren, and Zingula; McNeill, absent; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Curry and seconded by Mr. Hoggatt to adjourn the meeting at 12:25 PM. Voting aye: Hughes, Hoggatt, Cassels, Curry, Berggren, Brandt and Zingula; McNeill, 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 25, 2024.



Timothy McCoy, Director

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