



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

MINUTES
April 18, 2025

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission met at the Crete Carrier Riverview Lodge at ET Mahoney State Park Ashland, 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 April 3, 2025.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Chairman Hoggatt 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: Kurt Arganbright, Valentine; Doug Zingula, Sidney; Scott Cassels, Omaha; Kent McNeill, Papillion; Dan Hughes, Venango; Donna Kush, Omaha; Steve Mossman, Lincoln; Lisa Roskens, Omaha; and John Hoggatt, Kearney.

Minutes of the meeting held March 21, 2025, were reviewed.

Motion by Ms. Kush and seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve the meeting minutes. Voting aye: Kush, Cassels, Arganbright, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, and Hoggatt; Roskens and Mossman abstained; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Financial vouchers for March were reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Cassels to approve financial vouchers. Voting aye: Cassels, Arganbright, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, and Hoggatt; abstain-Roskens, voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director McCoy began his report thanking ET Mahoney Park staff for hosting the meetings and Carl's at Mahoney for the excellent meals they provided.

The Director shared information on recent and upcoming NGPC events, including the Outdoor Discovery Programs, walleye spawn results, the Midwest Walleye Challenge, RV There Yet upcoming program showcasing northeast Nebraska, birding events, and the memorial donation from the annual Tyler Vanderheiden Memorial Run. Free Parks and Fishing Day will be May 17.

The June Commission meetings will be held at the Country Inn and Suites in Sidney on June 11 and 12.

End Director's Report

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Chairman Hoggatt read staff recommendations to call for a public hearing at the June Commission meeting to consider amendments to Wildlife Regulations concerning mountain lions.

Motion by Mr. Cassels, seconded by Ms. Kush to approve staff recommendations. Voting aye: Arganbright, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Cassels, Hughes, Roskens, and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Because it was not yet time for the public hearing, Chairman Hoggatt moved to Item 8 on the agenda. Director McCoy presented staff recommendations to move the October Commission meetings from Omaha to Niobrara State Park to decrease the number of meetings in the metro area this year.

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

Chairman Hoggatt opened the public hearing to consider amendments to Wildlife Commission Orders C03, Antelope, Deer, Elk, regarding changes to permit numbers, season dates, bag limits, personal limits, and areas open at 8:15 AM. Big Game Program Manager Luke Meduna reviewed staff recommendations. They include decreases in the number of permits to be offered related to decreased populations in most units. Staff recommends that the Commission amend the proposed Order C03 Antelope, Deer Elk to insert "east to NE Hwy 62A link," in C03.12E4 and "to NE Hwy 62 A Link, west" in C03.12E8 to address the elk unit boundary issue. Jon Ross of Bancroft was present to testify that the decreasing herd size suggests that there shouldn't be any antlerless permits for a few years.

Commissioner Cassels suggested that Wildlife might want to consider having a Big Game Subcommittee of Commissioners and staff to look at these issues. There was no other public testimony so the public hearing was closed at 9:50 AM.

Motion by Mr. Zingula to approve staff recommendations with the added amendment, seconded by Ms. Kush. Voting aye: Hughes, Roskens, Zingula, Arganbright, Kush, McNeill, Mossman, Cassels and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chair Hoggatt called for a ten-minute recess.

Public Comment Period- Julie Harris of Bike Walk Nebraska was present to thank NGPC for their support, they are willing to help however they can. They would like to encourage maximized use of the Cowboy Trail. She wanted to draw attention to LB 647 which the Nebraska Trails Foundation is backing that would provide property tax credit to landowners allowing easements for recreational trails.

Deputy Director Jim Swenson presented staff recommendations for Commissioners to approve the restructuring of the agency regulations to streamline the regulation process and make NGPC regulations more compatible with the Secretary of State's regulation portal.

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

NGPC Recreational Planner Erin Johnson reviewed the high-level results from the Generalized Outdoor Recreation Survey done last year and gave a brief over of SCORP.

NGPC Non-game Bird Program Manager Joel Jorgenson reviewed non-game bird research that is being done related to several species including the American Woodcock and Ovenbirds.

NGPC Trails Manager Alex Duryea gave a trails update to include the Cowboy Trail and Platte River State Park Trail.

Fisheries Division Administrator Tony Barada provided a summary of the Fisheries District Meetings held across the state.

Motion by Mr. Cassels, seconded by Mr. Mossman to enter executive session for personnel issues at 11:05 AM. Voting aye: Kush, Cassels, McNeill, Mossman, Zingula, Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Chairman Hoggatt resumed regular session at 12:33 PM.

Motion by Ms. Kush, seconded by Mr. Zingula to leave executive session. Voting aye: Cassels, McNeill, Mossman, Hughes, Roskens, Arganbright, Zingula, Kush and Hoggatt; voting nay: None. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Arganbright and seconded by Mr. Hughes to adjourn the meeting at 12:37 PM. Voting aye: Hughes, Roskens, McNeill, Mossman, Cassels, Arganbright, Zingula, Kush, and Hoggatt; 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 April 18, 2025.



Timothy McCoy, Director

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