

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

MINUTES

June 2, 2011

**STEPHEN W. SAGRERA
CHAIRMAN**

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

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Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

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AGENDA
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA
JUNE 2, 2011

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Chairman Stephen Sagrera presiding.

Ronny Graham
Patrick Morrow
Ann Taylor
Mike Voisin

Secretary Robert Barham was also present.

Commissioners Billy Broussard and Stephen Oats were absent from the meeting.

Chairman Sagrera called for a motion for approval of the **May 5 and May 13, 2011 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Voisin and seconded by Commissioner Morrow. The motion passed with no opposition.

Under **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege** for this month, Commissioner Voisin stated he asked that the Sabine Lake issue be pulled from the agenda and there were issues in the legislature that may make the Commission deal with Sabine and Calcasieu Lakes. At the next Stakeholders meeting, he will ask that they take a look at the issues and move forward.

To hear Report on State's Current Reef Program Including a Scheduled of Planned Reefs and Future Plans for Reef Development and Inshore and Offshore Enhanced Fishing Areas began with Commissioner Ann Taylor asking Mr. Randy Pausina to provide a report. Mr. Pausina introduced Mr. Doug Peter who was the Artificial Reef Program Manager. Mr. Peter began the presentation with a brief history of the program. In 1984, the federal government passed the National Fishing Enhancement Act which required a National Artificial Reef Plan be developed. It set general guidelines and procedures for developing artificial reefs in the coastal states nationwide. In 1986, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 100 which created the Louisiana Artificial Reef Program within the Department. This program required a State Plan be written which related more to the local environment, establish an Artificial Reef Trust Fund and form the Artificial Reef Council with 3 members (an employee of the Department, and representatives from the School of Coast and Environment and Louisiana Sea Grant program). The Council was charged with providing guidance on the policy site selections procedures, and allocation of funds and

meet whenever necessary on guidance on the operation of the program, set up procedures, determine site selections and assist with user conflicts. In January 2005, the Council met to discuss the Trust Fund and they decided that \$25 million would be a base fund amount which could provide enough interest to operate the program each fiscal year and set a consumer price index increase for subsequent years. Mr. Pausina added that the program started slow and began accumulating funds and the intent of the Council was to be fiscally responsible and when the money grew beyond that, those monies would be available for in-house research and habitat projects or contracts for universities to do specialized research. In 2007-2008, \$15 million above the \$25 million cap was used to rebuild the fisheries research lab on Grand Isle. Then as the plan continued to grow again, the staff looked at the Department needs for artificial reef plan as well as habitat needs and utilize the monies accordingly. A table was shown with the columns showing the beginning balance, actual/ projected revenues, interest earned, actual/projected operating expenses (staff and maintenance of buoys and other technical needs for operating the program), other withdrawals, ending balance, consumer price index (adjusts the base fund), and funds left after operating, maintenance and cap was known each year. After the withdrawal in 2007 for the Grand Isle lab, the remaining fund dropped to \$1.2 million and it has begun to grow. But last year a withdrawal was made which brought it to -\$3 million into the cap. Estimates for this year may bring the fund above the cap by \$4 million. Commissioner Graham asked if \$18 million was the withdrawal the state took from the fund last year and Mr. Pausina answered yes. Mr. Peter continued the presentation adding that the Department administers the program as set by the federal government and the state's regulations and under the budget allocation given each year. A broad overview of the planning areas was shown. So far, there are 65 established offshore artificial reef sites and the majority were within the planning area. There are 15 special artificial reef sites and a number of deepwater sites. Since the inception of the program, 264 platforms have been preserved with an average of 24-25 structures over the last 4 years. The next map of 364 acres showed 18 structures with 4 more planned within the area. Staff was working on additional reef sites, 11 sites were permitted, 4 new planning areas and 1 deepwater site were ready to be done this summer, and it was hoped another 6 SARS affected by the 2005 hurricanes would be completed this year. The projects could take from as little as 6 months up to 6 or 7 years to complete. Right now, 80 platforms were in some stage of being completed, from the initial stage of discussing placement of the structure to the end of the process. Of the 80, 62 were permitted and 18 were in the permit process. Oil and gas companies contact Mr. Peter daily asking for a place to put their structures. An example of a deepwater site was shown. Part of the maintenance and monitoring process was making sure the materials were staying put. Mr. Pausina noted that the \$25 million cap was security in the event some of the structures move since it was the Department's responsibility to put it back in its place. Mr. Peter then talked about a 1996 project involving an old sulphur mine off Grand Isle and a recent survey that showed it was still creating the habitat it was intended. Also, the Department has been working on 28 inshore reefs with the first being reef balls in Lake Pontchartrain in 2000. Recently the first phase of the bridge rubble reef from the I-10 twin span demolition was completed. A second and possibly third reef site may be constructed from additional rubble. Currently, a barge was off-loading 8,000 tons of limestone material on the now submerged Independence Island to

create a reef. Going forward, Mr. Peter noted they assess oil and gas industry and platforms since they contribute funds to the program (and results in savings to the industry). They also were looking at how to better serve some of the smaller structures that are slated to come out. With the inshore reefs, staff was looking at oyster shell reclamation and surplus concrete. Mr. Peter concluded stating they were looking at expanding the program to make it one of the most robust artificial reef programs in the nation.

Following the presentation, Commissioner Morrow asked if the money for the Rigs to Reef program goes into the Conservation Fund and Mr. Pausina stated it was put into the Artificial Reef Trust Fund. Then Commissioner Morrow asked if the Artificial Reef Trust Fund was created under Title 56 and he was told yes. He then asked what did the Trust Fund document say the money could be used for. Mr. Don Puckett noted the donation document states that the money should be used exclusively for the establishment and maintenance of artificial reefs and if available, additional monies could be used for fisheries enhancement programs. Next Commissioner Morrow asked if the use of any funds other than what was stated in statute would be a violation of that statute and he was told it would be contrary to the statute. Commissioner Morrow then asked if using the monies for the General Fund to plug the hole in the budget, etc., would it be in violation of that statute and Mr. Puckett stated it would be contrary to the language in the statute. If the money was deposited into the Conservation Fund would it be constitutionally protected from any department or area of government, asked Commissioner Morrow and Mr. Puckett answered the Conservation Funds were constitutionally protected. Commissioner Morrow suggested the Department seek to have the artificial reef funds deposited into the Conservation Fund and there would be no questions in the future. He added that the oil companies give monies to the reef program in order to enhance fishing as well as save themselves money. Mr. Pausina mentioned that Mr. David Cresson, CCA, wanted to make a presentation on some of the cooperative projects with funds above the cap. Commissioner Voisin stated, with the Appropriations bill, the most current law would “trump” any other law and asked if it would be illegal to take the monies from the reef funds if the legislature passed the Appropriations law and Mr. Puckett stated existing legislation can be effected with subsequent legislation. Commissioner Voisin understood that to be the way the funds were taken, but he added he did not support it. Commissioner Morrow asked if the \$18 million was taken by an Executive Order and Mr. Puckett stated it was through an Act. Commissioner Graham asked if the Rigs to Reef program was not part of the Conservation Fund. Mr. Pausina noted he mentioned that, but it was part of the argument of whether those funds were a part of the Conservation Funds or not. Commissioner Morrow read a part of the standard donation clause which he interpreted to mean that those funds should be in the Conservation Fund which would make them constitutionally protected.

Mr. David Cresson, CCA Executive Director, began showing pictures of alternative reef material used in Alabama. Next he showed pictures of reef projects done in cooperation with the Department (Bird Island, Redfish Point, Turner’s Bay in Lake Calcasieu). Pictures of the demolition and dumping of the Twin Span bridges were also shown. The Independence Island reef project was currently going on and several pictures were shown.

Next, Mr. Cresson noted some of the material from the Twin Span bridges would be used in St. Tammany for a pier and more may be used for a reef around a pier on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Then he mentioned they have met with the Department on a reef logistics program. The material involved included debris from torn up roads, buildings, old bridges, unused oyster shells, pipeline anchors, etc. and no place to put them, transport or collect them. The program would be designed to identify, transport, store and crush the materials which should be funded through the Artificial Reef Development Fund. Mr. Cresson was hopeful the new program would begin within the next 6 months.

Mr. Keith Saucier, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, stated the presentation was excellent and noted lots of good things were being planned. He wondered if the plans would be accomplished with no money in the budget and also asked who would pay to put reefs back into place if they moved. Mr. Saucier thanked the Commission for keeping this on the radar and he urged the Commission to contact the legislators on House Bill 477.

Commissioner Morrow asked that the presentation be put on the Department's website and he agreed that it was good. Commissioner Voisin asked if legislation that created the Artificial Reef created the Council as well and Mr. Pausina stated the Council was in legislation. Commissioner Voisin then asked if the Council has met recently and discussed implementing the program described by Mr. Cresson which would fully utilize the \$25 million. Mr. Pausina stated that when a plan was fully formed and ready to be recommended to the Council, a meeting would be called and action taken. On some of the new plans, Mr. Pausina felt they were close to formalizing the plans and then reform the Council to meet. Commissioner Voisin further asked who appoints the Council members and he was told it was in statute, one member each from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, head of the Louisiana Sea Grant and the Dean of the LSU Department of Coast and Environment. Mr. Pausina added that 90 percent of the program was operations and maintenance and the Council does not get involved in this aspect of the program. Commissioner Voisin felt the cap creates challenges at this point and the ideas such as those from CCA made good sense. Commissioner Taylor asked if the legislature has voted to take the funds out of the reef program. Commissioner Graham stated it passed the House and was in the Senate. He then agreed with Commissioner Voisin that \$25 million was a lot of money and suggested the Department start using that money on projects. Mr. Pausina agreed it was a good recommendation to re-evaluate the plan.

To receive and hear Enforcement & Aviation Reports/May began with Lt. Col. Jeff Mayne stating this month, activity was associated with the working the flood event. Also a total of 1,134 citations and 427 written warnings were issued and agents responded to 55 public assists. There were 21 boating accidents reported with 4 injuries and 4 fatalities. The fatalities occurred in Cameron, Livingston, Calcasieu and Sabine Parishes. The Department's planes flew a total of 83 hours for the month. Then Lt. Col. Mayne talked on News Releases involving 10 DWI arrests statewide over the Memorial Day weekend and 7 people arrested for vandalism on Sherburne WMA. Commissioner Voisin asked if the DWI arrests was a regular activity or just occurred during the holidays and Lt. Col. Mayne stated DWI arrests are written every day of the year.

To present public comments on Waterfowl Zone Alternatives was handled by Mr. Larry Reynolds. He began stating this report was on the comments received since March 2011 on the zones and splits for the 2011-2015 waterfowl hunting seasons. For the last 30 years, Louisiana has had east and west zones with split seasons. There is the opportunity to change the zone and split options at 5 year intervals, the selection would be used for the next 5 duck hunting seasons and a decision would be needed from the Commission at the next meeting. Mr. Reynolds noted this was not a typical regulatory cycle. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service usually limits the number of options for zones and splits - 2 zones with split seasons, 3 zones with straight zones or no seasons with up to 2 season splits. However, the state could be more conservative and have a statewide season with no splits. This year there was a proposed expansion of opportunities which included 4 zones with a straight season and no splits or 3 zones with split seasons. Commissioner Graham asked what would be involved to split the state into 3 zones and Mr. Reynolds stated that would be discussed. The expanded proposed options has not been approved since there are 3 requirements, an Environmental Assessment and the changes must go through a public comment period (this has occurred); a revised monitoring plan was due June 1 and then the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regulations Committee would make a final decision at their June 23 meeting. Another reason this year was not typical was the Service was giving the states 2 years to go through the process, so Mr. Reynolds mentioned changes can be made this year and next year. If one of the new options was chosen, the state would be asked to develop human dimension objectives and a study plan to evaluate the effect of the proposed action to achieve those objectives. Mr. Reynolds then explained that human dimensions data focused on 3 things: hunter satisfaction with season structure before and after implementing new zones and splits; monitor duck hunter numbers and trends; and waterfowl harvest. If a change was made this year, the first aspect on hunter satisfaction would be difficult to evaluate. Using press releases, internet solicitation, word of mouth and public meetings, comments have been collected on the new and old options. Mr. Reynolds stated he received 85 contacts and 52 percent favored the current set-up of 2 zones with split seasons, 28 percent favored no zones with 2 splits, 13 percent favored 3 zones with split seasons (largely dominated by hunters in northwest Louisiana), 3 percent wanted no zones with splits, 3 percent wanted no zones with no splits, 1 individual wanted 4 zones with straight seasons and 1 wanted the duck season to start as soon as the teal season ended. Mr. Reynolds pointed out that this was not a representative sample, but a solicited sample nor did it give regional information. Six public meetings were conducted (Alexandria, Minden, Pontchatoula, Lake Charles, Opelousas and Bastrop) and their comments were solicited and regional. A total of 19 comments were received, 16 for 2 zones with splits and 3 for no zones with 2 splits. A game harvest survey was conducted each year and sent to a random sample of 6 percent of Louisiana resident hunters. Of the respondents, 938 reported hunting ducks and about 35 percent favored 2 zones with split seasons, 27 percent had no opinion, 22 percent favored no zones with 2 splits, 10 percent favored a north-south zone with split seasons and 1.4 percent wanted 3 zones with split seasons. Issues to consider, right now Louisiana has 60 day seasons but there is a chance in the future that the seasons could be 45 days or even 30 days, the duck season must be

open during Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years holidays, and what would be required for evaluation if a new option was selected. Specific considerations were the 2 zones with split seasons have been used for 30 years which allows hunters to hunt in both zones and was flexible especially if seasons were reduced to 45 or 30 days; if the Commission goes with no zones with 2 splits, there would be 3 opening dates but no weekends were gained, an opening or closing would be on a day that was not a weekend, 2 rests period as opposed to 1, hunters could not move across zones and less flexibility; if consider 3 zones with split seasons, there would be additional hunting opportunity, additional flexibility if season length was reduced, but there would need to be a statement of objectives and study plan with methods to evaluate and monitor. Then Mr. Reynolds noted he has been contacted by a group of hunters from northwest Louisiana and showed a map of what a third zone would look like for that group. Next he talked about the harvest data from the West Zone over the last 10 years as divided into 3 groups (southwest Louisiana representing the 5 southwest Louisiana parishes, southeast Louisiana representing the 5 southeast parishes, and northwest was the remaining area). In the first week of the duck season, southwest Louisiana averaged 22 percent of their seasonal harvest of ducks, week two, 13.6 percent and week three, 11.1 percent. Comparing northwest Louisiana with southwest and southeast, data shows northwest hunters begin killing birds later than the other areas (14 percent the first week and then jumps up the second week) and killed more birds after the split compared to the other areas. The early season harvest data does not reflect the information from the northwest hunters that have contacted Mr. Reynolds. Listening to a small group of hunters from that area may not be capturing what is actually happening in northwest Louisiana. Commissioner Graham asked Mr. Reynolds if he had the same numbers for the east zone. He was told yes and further, Mr. Reynolds noted the east zone opens a week later. On June 23, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will let the states know whether the additional options will be available. With the 2 year option of making changes, there was the potential to not make a change this year and make changes next year or make a change this year and then change it back next year and it will allow staff to collect human dimensions data. Mr. Reynolds stated he would need a decision from the Commission at their next meeting. Commissioner Morrow asked if the option of 4 zones was chosen there would be no split and Mr. Reynolds answered yes. Then he asked if there was 3 zones you could have 2 splits, but Mr. Reynolds corrected him to say it was 3 zones with 1 split. Next Commissioner Morrow asked if there was an option for 3 zones with no splits and was told that was correct. Commissioner Morrow felt 90 percent of the people that spoke at the meetings favored the east-west zone and Mr. Reynolds agreed. He then asked if the internet and e-mails were solicited comments with the majority favoring the east-west zone and Mr. Reynolds said yes. Commissioner Morrow asked if the data base survey had a 6 percent response. Mr. Reynolds stated it was a 6 percent random sample with 3,000 responses. Of those 3,000, 938 were duck hunters. Commissioner Morrow asked if over 50 percent of those hunters favored the east-west zone as it had for the last 30 years. Based on all of the results, Commissioner Morrow then asked Mr. Reynolds if it would be fair to say the majority were in favor of keeping an east-west split and Mr. Reynolds answered yes.

Mr. Dave Kustersky presented the next agenda item, **To present Ducks Unlimited Project Progress**. He began stating the Commission made a decision about a year ago to provide a 2 year contract to Ducks Unlimited. A copy of the report was provided in the packets as well as maps of actual locations where individual projects were done this first year and a spreadsheet listing the segments on the ground provided as a result of funding.

There is a need to work continentally in order to benefit waterfowl in Louisiana and elsewhere. Conservation strategies were to establish new policies to protect wetlands, restore productive capacity through extensive wetland restoration (biggest challenge on Canadian prairies), secure existing habitats through land purchase and conservation easements, establish agricultural policies in order to retain habitats, and continue to find other ways to work with agriculture on the land that will provide benefits to waterfowl (winter wheat). Context on the prairies was pressure to continue to plow, drain, pave and fragment landscapes and as the population expands, these pressures would continue and the policies were needed to benefit waterfowl with the changes occurring on the landscape. Strong alliances were had with ranching communities, recreational users and the administrations in order to work as partners on the landscape. Other DU needs were to continue working with waterfowlers and over conservation organizations and continue novel partnerships. In order to be successful, 2 things must occur - abundant wetlands on the landscape and have healthy nesting cover. Mr. Kustersky then explained that DU continues to have abundant wetlands in many parts of the Canadian prairies but they have changed and continue to change. With nesting cover, native grass still exists, but loss has also occurred. Historical loss of expansion of the agriculture has caused a big alteration of the landscape. DU needs to work on wetland protection laws since they are much weaker in Canada than the United States. With wetland loss continuing, ways to mitigate for that loss needs to be found. The way to get there is through policy and active programs on the ground. Most of the agricultural zones in Saskatchewan and prairie Canada have lost 90 percent of their grasslands and there was a need to protect what was left. Recent increases in grassland cover has occurred due to subsidy economic changes in favor of the beef industry. DU hopes to encourage the cattle industry since they would be future partners in the grassland conservation. The beef industry was having a hard time competing for land with the current commodity prices (wheat, canola, barley). Next Mr. Kustersky talked about the science. Over the past 20 years, DU has focused research on the Canadian prairies and have nested over 350,000 acres of habitat, captured and radio tracked 3,920 mallard hens, and located and determined nest fate on over 10,000 duck nests. All of this research and data has allowed DU to develop a waterfowl productivity model.

In the report for this year, the funding was directed to the area Louisiana gets most of their ducks from, Saskatchewan and prairie Canada. The programs the funding supported were conservation easements, land purchase, rangeland stewardship, wetland rebuilds, habitat restoration, forage programs and planting nesting cover. The goal for the 2 years of funding was to have 15,510 acres of habitat protection and DU got 9,889 acres for the first year; restore wetlands was to be 67 acres, but only got 7 acres; upland restoration was to be 12,000 over 2 years and DU accomplished over 11,000 the first year; and they exceeded the habitat asset management goal of 104,000 acres with 111,176 acres. The

total goal for the 2 years was over 27,000 acres and DU was already at over 21,000 acres of habitat on the ground. The Department's funding of \$318,705 was leveraged 5 times for a total of almost \$1.6 million. A more detailed chart of the accomplishments was shown and Mr. Kostersky talked about the lower conservation easements, wetland restoration and planted cover establishment. The driver for the lower and higher accomplishments was the landscape conditions which has been wet since the end of May 2010. When the lands are as wet as it has been, farmers are not willing to sign up for easements, but the land does reveal that it may be less valuable to farm which will result in an increase in interests to sell to DU. Wetland restoration and planting nesting cover were very similar to easements due to the wet conditions. A map of the priority areas in Saskatchewan was shown. DU bought a ranch totaling over 6,400 acres in size which will be a center piece for conservation, demonstration areas for landowners, bringing up partners in the spring to show what the landscape would look like, and offered a great opportunity for habitat conservation. Mr. Kostersky next talked about habitat funding needs, the average breeding number of ducks in Saskatchewan was 3.5 million which was a decline of over 700,000 breeding pairs over the past 30 years. The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture objectives were to restore 6 million acres and protect 2.5 million acres of waterfowl habitat in Saskatchewan. The 25 year plan was estimated to cost \$525 million or \$21 million per year with the current funding in Saskatchewan at \$10 million. Mr. Kostersky noted DU does not have a lot of partners with money in Canada to do a lot of conservation since waterfowling was not a strong motivator in Canada which was different than in the United States. Conservation and ecological goods and services were the future drivers for Canada. In the future, there was a need to continue to have a real effective mix of conservation strategies, adapt and be innovative, embrace the big picture and work across both the Canadian and U.S. prairie potholes. He concluded by thanking the Department and Commission for their continued support and appreciation for the partnership. Commissioner Morrow asked if all of the money given was dedicated to the Canadian prairies or was some used in North Dakota. Mr. Kostersky answered that the money was dedicated to the Canadian prairies.

The next agenda item, **To hear an Update on WMA Reforestation Program** was handled by Mr. Buddy Dupuy with the Wildlife Division Forestry Section. He began stating when you think of reforestation you think of tree planting which was the most important activity but then you need to have restoration of old fields. The program began about 44 years ago and since then, staff has enhanced or restored about 22,000 acres with over 8 million seedlings on 33 refuges and WMAs. The bigger projects occurred within the Mississippi and Red River Alluvial Valley. A picture of Red River WMA which showed the original plantation planted from 1967-1973 and Mr. Dupuy noted it has been used as a tool to learn about reforestation. Since then the area has grown and they have done more planting on the site. The next major project for over 10 years was on Russell Sage WMA which resulted in a major corridor between Ouachita and Russell Sage WMAs. The Boeuf project connected the wooded portions of Boeuf WMA to Sicily Island Hills WMA. A more recent project was on Buckhorn WMA that helped "square up" and block off larger, contiguous blocks of woods. Methods of planting included machine, hand planting and direct seeding. In forested areas, hand planting was the best option. In machine planting, a Department employee was responsible for planting what the right species in the correct site. Pictures of

a hand planting job was shown, and Mr. Dupuy mentioned that an average of 2,000 trees can be planted per day. Direct seeding was actually dropping seeds one at a time at a total of 1,500 seeds per acre. This method was not used much any longer due to the difficulty of planting the smaller seed species. Enrichment planting involves bringing in a crew into a timber harvest area and meet and discuss the job. Next shown was a picture of a conversion, taking a loblolly stand and converting it to a long leaf pine in order to maintain the ecosystem. Current approach was to sub-soil with an eco-till, hand planting, and on a flat, flood prone site, only 3 to 4 species would be used; on rolling hills, up to 12 species could be planted. Oak and pecan were the primary species planted, but now staff uses miscellaneous species. Instead of planting in a single row, planting was done by alternating steps to the left and right with an average space of 10 feet which results in more variation in the development of the trees and less of a plantation look. Mr. Dupuy noted research was very important with various agencies and universities. Different studies were discussed such as on Bayou Macon WMA studying planting techniques and direct seeding on Ouachita WMA, commented Mr. Dupuy. The last picture shown was from Red River WMA at age 30 years after thinning.

To receive general information on Upcoming 2012 Wild Turkey Season and Regulations Recommendations began with Mr. Jimmy Stafford stating this item was for information with the final proposal being presented at the July meeting. Flooding has occurred in Louisiana this year from East Carroll to the Gulf of Mexico primarily in the batture lands and spillways. This flooding will affect turkey nesting but past studies have shown that turkeys can live in trees for quite a while. To find out what the turkeys were doing during the flood, staff went to Sherburne WMA and were able to capture a small number of turkeys and fit them with a radio telemetry device. Monitoring of the birds occurred about once a week and so far all of the birds were alive and living in trees. Mr. Stafford felt the floods would impact nesting success and production this year. The habitat regions had production indices in excess of 2, which was the break even point to sustain the turkey population. Reported harvest for 2011 showed harvest was up 14 percent from 2010 (which was a poor year) and very similar to 2009. The jake harvest was high which showed signs of good production. Vernon Parish came in strong as well as Union Parish and the Florida Parishes had respectable kills. The last annual hunter survey estimated 6,500 turkeys were taken. A hunter survey was conducted with 4,500 surveys mailed and about 1,000 returned with final results pending. A question asked was what was the most important condition as a turkey hunter and the top 2 responses were hunting where there was a lot of gobbling and hunting when the gobblers were receptive to the harvest. Also, the survey showed hunters now support multiple season openings within the state. The 2012 proposal was to create a north-south turkey zone. The south zone would open on the Saturday nearest March 22 (range of openings from March 19-March 25), and the north zone would open on the Saturday nearest March 29 (range of openings March 26-April 1). Dates for the split zones for the 2012 calendar would have the youth weekend on March 17-18 with the regular season running March 24-April 22 for Area A, Area B would run March 24-April 15 and Area C would be March 24-April 8. The north zone youth weekend would be March 24-25 and the regular season for Area A would run March 31-April 21, Area B - March 31-April 22 and Area C - March 31-April 15.

The Commissioners agreed to hold the **October 2011 Meeting** on Thursday, October 6, 2011, beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Baton Rouge Headquarters.

Chairman Sagrera then asked for **Public Comments** and none were heard.

There being no further business, Chairman Sagrera **Adjourned** the meeting.

Stephen W. Sagrera
Chairman

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