

Minutes

Coastal Committee

2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

February 22, 2011

Attending:

Committee Members

Mabel Jenkins, Vice Chairman
Bill Archer
Gene Bishop
Robert Leebern
Mark Smith
Loyce Turner
Philip Wilheit
Jim Walters
Earl Barrs, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

Dennis Billew
Warren Budd
Joe Hatfield
Walter Hudson
Ray Lambert
Philip Watt

Visitors

Ronny Just, Georgia Power
Andrew Schock, The Conservation Fund
Katie Kirkpatrick, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Doug Fulle, Oglethorpe Power
Steven Hart, Atlanta Environmental Management
Scott Tanner, Joe Tanner & Associates

Staff Members

Mark Williams
Allen Barnes
Todd Holbrook
Spud Woodward
Becky Kelley
Marlin Gottschalk
Dan Forster
Emily Hitchcock
Kyle Pearson
Lauren Curry
Candy Henderson
Steve Friedman
Suzanne Burnes
John Biagi
Linda MacGregor
Jac Capp
Jim Ussery
Doralyn Kirkland
Ben Stowers
Homer Bryson
Cathy Barnette
Paul Nelson
Nathan Schaub
Mary Ann Evans
Hellen Harris

The February 22, 2011 meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Board Chairman Earl Barrs. Chairman Barrs called on Mabel Jenkins, Vice Chair, Coastal Committee in the absence of Chair Phyllis Johnson.

Mrs. Jenkins called on Spud Woodward, Director, Coastal Resources Division (CRD), for an informational briefing of the fishery management process.

Director Woodward called on John Biagi, Chief of Fisheries Management Section, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) for the first half of the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Biagi stated that a fishery is comprised of a fish population of particular species, the people who fish for them, either for recreation or commercial gain, and the habitat necessary for all parts of the life cycle of the fish.

Mr. Biagi then described why fisheries are managed. He stated that in Georgia, fishermen spend approximately \$1 billion a year in direct expenditures, and recreational fishing is one of the most popular outdoor recreations for families and individuals. He further stated that fishing provides an important food source for humans.

Mr. Biagi stated that, thanks to modern technology, humans can remove greater quantities of fish than ever thought possible and those human activities can sometimes adversely impact the fish habitat. He further described how WRD and CRD use fisheries science, fish population surveys and fisherman surveys as the basis for the fishery management process.

Mr. Biagi stated that the fishery management process also includes removal of non-native species, fish habitat restoration and enhancement, and release of hatchery-reared fish.

Director Woodward stated that the fishing regulation process includes establishing goals for the fishery, identifying potential regulations, predicting effects, selecting candidate regulations, obtaining public input, implementing regulation and finally monitoring and evaluating the fishery. He further stated that neither fish populations nor human populations are static, and the principle of adaptive management should be used to continually monitor and assess the status of both the fishermen and the fish.

Director Woodward stated that the Georgia General Assembly has the authority for managing public waters, shorelines, marshes, fish and wildlife. He further stated that for some species, areas, and activities, the General Assembly has retained management authority exclusively through statute. Examples include licensing of commercial and recreational fishing. He added that for others, the General Assembly has vested authority in the Board of Natural Resources to handle issues such as the majority of hunting and fishing regulations. He further

added that for yet others, authority is vested in the Commissioner of DNR to do such things as opening and closing state waters for shrimping and blue crab harvesting.

Director Woodward stated that to make fishery management successful, it takes a two-pronged approach – education of the fishing community and the ability to enforce the laws governing the fishery. He further stated that in a majority of the cases, law enforcement officers are the best educators, communicating the laws and acting as ambassadors to the fisherman and the general population.

Director Woodward stated that DNR depends on partnerships to make fishery management successful. He further stated that other state agencies as well as federal government agencies, and non-governmental organizations are important to the success of the fishery management process.

Director Woodward cited several fishery management facts for the State of Georgia such as there being 4,000 miles of coldwater trout streams, 12,000 miles of warmwater streams, 500,000 acres of freshwater reservoirs, 2,230 acres of Public Fishing Area waters, 500,000 acres of estuaries with 3,400 miles of tidal shoreline, 100 miles of barrier island beaches, 300 square miles of open Atlantic Ocean, over 55 species covered by fishing regulations, annual trout production of 800,000 fish, annual warmwater hatchery production of 7.7 million fish, annual participation in DNR fishing events of 25,000, and full-time DNR fishery management staff of 144 individuals.

Director Woodward briefed the Committee and Board on Coastal Day at the Capitol, the black sea bass fishery closure, and the 2010 food shrimp season statistics.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.