

Minutes

Coastal Committee

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

October 21, 2013

Attending:

Committee Members

Phyllis Johnson, Chairman
Mark Smith, Vice Chairman
Nancy Addison
William Bagwell
Duncan Johnson
Aaron McWhorter
Philip Wilheit
Dee Yancey
Rob Leebern, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

Dwight Davis
Ray Lambert
Mark Mobley
Mike Phelps
Paul Shailendra
Bodine Sinyard

Visitors

Michael Pisciotta, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Melony Wilson, The University of Georgia
Jeffrey A. Harvey, Farm Bureau
Charles Griffin, GPPA
Terry Danforth, GPPA
Leon Watkins, Inert Landfill
Bob Hanner, GSWCC
Ronny Just, Georgia Power Company
Stephen Lanier, Georgia Power Company
Doug Fulle, Oglethorpe Power
Gina Rogers, Georgia Wildlife Federation
David Word, Joe Tanner and Associates
Chris Manganiello, Georgia River Network
Lauren Joy, Southern Environmental Law Center
John Eberhart, Georgia Earth Alliance
Anup Shah, Metro Atlanta Chamber

Staff Members

Mark Williams
Jud Turner
Homer Bryson
Dan Forster
Becky Kelley
Eddie Henderson
Spud Woodward
Steve Friedman
Lauren Curry
Kyle Pearson
Zachary Harris
Mary Walker
Doralyn Kirkland
Russ Pennington
Cathy Barnette
Taylor Brown
Terry West
Doug Haymans
Jeff Cown
Jac Capp
Antoinette Norfleet

The October 21, 2013 meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Chairman Rob Leebern.

Chairman Leebern called on Phyllis Johnson, Chairman of the Coastal Committee, who called on Spud Woodward, Director of the Coastal Resources Division.

Director Woodward called on Doug Haymans, Policy Coordinator, to present the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-2-4, and Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-4-3.

Mr. Haymans stated the proposal would extensively amend Chapter 391-2-4 and Chapter 391-4-3 to include the following:

- Repeal of seasonal closures for amberjack, bluefish, cobia, Spanish mackerel, and tarpon;
- Repeal of minimum length limits for Atlantic croaker and spot;
- Change the minimum length for black drum from 10 inches to 14 inches;
- Require that catfish traps in saltwater be marked with visible floats;
- Require that eel traps in fresh water and saltwater be marked with visible floats; increase the minimum length for eels from 6 inches to 9 inches; apply minimum length to recreational harvest; and create a daily creel limit of 25 eels per person for recreational harvest;
- Close the Ogeechee River to commercial harvest of shad;
- Designate sound-beach boundaries by defined latitude/longitude coordinates with a repeal of the requirement that the sound-beach boundaries be marked by DNR;
- Define reporting requirements for licensed saltwater fishing guides and licensed saltwater fishing pier operators.

Mr. Haymans stated public hearings were held on September 9, 2013 and September 10, 2013 in Brunswick and Richmond Hill, and three people attended each meeting. He further stated at the public hearing in Brunswick, one person spoke in favor of the proposed amendments, and in Richmond Hill one person spoke in opposition to the closing of the Ogeechee River commercial shad fishing. He added that the commenter at the Richmond Hill public hearing, Charles Russo, provided his written notes which were in the Board package.

Mr. Haymans stated five written comments were received via email during the public comment period.

Mr. Haymans stated he would request the committee recommend that the Board approve the item, as presented.

Chairman Leebern asked if only one person had voiced opposition to the closing of commercial shad fishing on the Ogeechee River and if this person's concerns had been addressed by CRD.

Mr. Haymans stated Mr. Russo was the only person to voice opposition. He further stated he had spoken with Mr. Russo about his concerns.

Mr. Smith stated he had spoken with Mr. Russo several times and understands his position. He further stated he has spoken with CRD staff, who will continue to monitor shad populations in the Ogeechee River. He added the Board could possibly revisit this issue in the future.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried unanimously that the committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-2-4, and Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-4-3, as presented.

Chairman Johnson thanked Mr. Smith for his comments.

Chairman Johnson called on Director Woodward for his division update.

Director Woodward stated Henry Morgan had been nominated to serve on the Coastal Marshland Protection Committee/Shore Protection Committee. He further stated Board approval to fill the vacancy on this committee would be asked for at the December Board meeting. He added all other prospective nominees information should be turned in by November 15, 2013.

Director Woodward gave an update on CoastFest and the Boating and Fishing industry summit held on Sapelo Island.

Chairman Johnson stated she would like to thank all staff members who helped to make CoastFest a success. She further stated she would like to especially thank Nancy Butler, Paul Medders, and Jennifer Kline from CRD; Tommy Turk from Parks; David Nixon and Jason Lee from WRD; Captain Doug Lewis from LED; and Bruce Foisy from EPD for their time and effort. She added she would like to thank Spud Woodward for hosting another successful Coastfest.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.