



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION
ONE CONSERVATION WAY • BRUNSWICK, GA 31520 • 912.264.7218
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Coastal Advisory Council
January 13, 2023
Location: SSEL
Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Charles McMillan. The meeting first began with introductions of new members including Mr. Alan Robertson (Local Government with Tybee Island), Mr. Tony Giarrusso (Research/Academia with Georgia Tech), Ms. Kate Hargrove (Regional/State representative with Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency - law enforcement side). All other Coastal Advisory Council (CAC) members, guests, and Coastal Resources Division staff introduced themselves during round robin introductions.

Presentation: Proposed Amendments to NOAA's Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule

Presenter - Clay George, Senior Wildlife Biologist and Marine Mammal Coordinator with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Resources Division (WRD).

Mr. George presented on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) proposed changes to speed rules for vessels in Right Whale habitat, which were last updated in 2008. The presentation focused on the biology of the whales, background of the current rule, why an amendment is being considered, the proposed rule changes, the impacts that the proposed changes would have on different vessel types, and where DNR and NOAA are going from here.

Old Business:

Meeting Summary October 26, 2022

No comments were made on the meeting summary.

New Business:

Committee Reports

Communications Committee, *Stacia Hendricks*

Ms. Hendricks stated there was no report from the Communications Committee during this period.

Legislative Committee, Scott Hendricks

Mr. Hendricks reported that he was not aware of any relevant legislation to be introduced at this time and that HB 748 was not likely to be reintroduced in the 2023 session. Mr. Hendricks stated that session 2022 taught the CAC that they will need to be nimbler and on the lookout for introduced bills in the future to mitigate surprises and enable effective response. Subsequently, the CAC will be following up with members to confirm contact information to ensure that everyone can be contacted quickly.

Jill Andrews stated that DNR Law Enforcement Division is focused on digital distress signals and DNR State Parks Division is focused on open records requests and exemptions. Ms. Andrews stated that DNR Coastal Resources Division (CRD) is focused on adjusting some aspects of our shellfish program, specifically that cage fees don't make sense based on the size of cages people are currently using or proposing to use. As such, cage fees will be eliminated and replaced by lease fees. Ms. Andrews also stated that fisheries is working on increasing reporting. Specifically, fisheries would like to elucidate reporting of "no landings". Currently, it's unclear if "no landings" means that fishing occurred but no fish were caught, or just that no fishing trip occurred at all.

Ms. Andrews also stated that the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) passed and now Tybee has funding and approval for 12 years for their beach nourishment program. Mr. Alan Robertson said they still have to raise money for future years and are currently working on a year-by-year budget. Tybee had to pay 40% of the first \$18 million cost.

Mr. Alton Brown spoke about a Biden administration proposal for Waters of the United States (WOTUS) to include a "significant nexus" connection component that would incorporate some "isolated" waters, making the rule more expansive than the Trump administration, but less expansive than the Obama administration.

25 years of Coastal Management in Georgia! Jill Andrews

Ms. Andrews gave a brief history about the 25-year anniversary of the formation of the Georgia Coastal Management Program. A lot has changed over the 25 years, and we will focus on where we're at, where we're going, and how we're going to get there in future meetings. Ms. Jan Mackinnon emphasized that we are starting this year with a meeting looking back and that the rest of the CAC meetings this year will be looking forward.

Staff updates, Year in Review (Please see presentation in email link)

- Compliance and Enforcement - Buck Bennett
- Shellfish and Water Quality - Michael Mock
- Marsh and Shore Regulatory - Josh Noble
- Federal Consistency – Jill Andrews
- Wetland Health and Restoration – Jaynie Gaskin
- Wetland policy and Living Shorelines – Meghan Angelina
- GIS/UAV – Dan Quinn

- Coastal Hazards – Jennifer Kline
- Green Growth – Kelly Hill
- Communication and Outreach – Tyler Jones
- Grants – Jan Mackinnon

CAC member vacancies, Charles McMillan:

Chairman McMillan stated that the following member positions were vacant: 1) Citizen at Large (vacated by Mr. Dorset Hurley), 2) State/Regional (vacated by Mr. Ben Carswell), and Environmental Organization (vacated by Ms. Ashby Worley). Chairman McMillan stated that the announcement for those vacancies will go out via the GovDelivery distribution list in the next couple of weeks and applicants can send in their applications following the instructions in the email. Ms. Mackinnon said that she will also send the information out to committee members as well.

Member and staff discussion

Dr. Montague stated that Noyes Cut has had 3 approved cut closures. The first closure has been completed and it has made a difference in how the water flows. Dr. Montague emphasized that the local community is very happy with this project and that the project is likely helpful for establishing a salinity gradient and increasing fish diversity. Dr. Montague stated that this water will impact thousands of acres of salt marsh.

Chairman McMillan stated that he expects the Georgia Conservancy to finish a final report on impaired wetlands for the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI) by the time the CAC has their next meeting. Chairman McMillan may be able to present on this report in a future CAC meeting.

Mr. Hendricks stated that the staff updates were helpful and informative for him to understand what they do.

Other Announcements:

No other announcements were made.

Additional updates from CAC members:

No comments were made on additional updates from CAC members.

Chairman McMillan adjourned the meeting.