

**Minutes
Coastal Committee
Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center
Banquet Room – Dining Hall
543 Elliott Trail
Mansfield, GA 30055**

**Tuesday, August 23, 2022
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Nancy Addison, Chair
Rob Leebern, Vice Chair
William Bagwell
Randy Dellinger
Joe Hatfield
Tim Lowe
Miki Thomaston
Gary Vowell
Bill Jones, Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Nick Ayers
Patrick Denney
Dwight Evans
Ray Lambert
Billy New
Bodine Sinyard

Guests

Andrea White, Georgia River Network
Max Brown, Georgia Audubon, Sierra Club
Lyndy Saparow, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Cathy Barnette
Artica Gaston
Thomas Barnard
Jeff Cown
Steve Friedman
Ted Will
Doug Haymans
Brett Albanese
Alan Isler
Jon Ambrose
Taylor Brown
Daniel Brown
Lindsey Brown
Whitney Fenwick
Jared Flowers
Jennifer Gadson
Brock Hoyt
Jessica James-Weems
Casey Jones
Thom Litts
Soheila Naji
Mark Patterson

Richard Dunn, Director
Karen Hays
Chuck Mueller

The August 23, 2022 meeting of the Coastal Resources Committee was called to order by Bill Jones, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Jones called on Ms. Nancy Addison, Chair of the Coastal Resources Committee.

Ms. Addison called on Doug Haymans, Director of the Coastal Resources Division, to present the proposed amendments to the Coastal Incentive Grant Program Description, Chapter 391-2-5-.01 through 391-2-5-.15.

Director Haymans stated that Georgia participates in the National Coastal Zone Management Program Network and receives \$2 million annually through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). He further stated the Coastal Incentive Grants Program (CIG) passes funds to local governments in 11 coastal counties, academia, and state agencies. He added that \$20+ million in CIGs have been awarded to date. He further added that grant recipients spent an additional \$40+ million on jobs, goods, and services.

Director Haymans stated the themes of the FY 2023-2024 Cycle 26 CIG Program as adopted by the CAC are Oceans and Wetlands, Non-Point Source Pollution, Sustainable Communities, Disaster Resiliency and Coastal Hazards, and Public Access and Land Conservation. He further stated the program will involve a competitive pre-application process and must be submitted by December 2, 2022 and is followed by an invitation only competitive full application process, which must be submitted by February 10, 2023. He added that all applicants will be notified of the Committee's recommendations by April 28, 2023 and will be notified of the final NOAA approval by August 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Mr. Leebern, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Coastal Committee recommend the Board approve the proposed amendments to the Coastal Incentive Grant Program Description, Chapter 391-2-5-.01 through 391-2-5-.15.

Ms. Addison asked Director Haymans to continue with a briefing on the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-2-4.

Director Haymans stated the purpose of the proposed amended rule is to respond to angler and guide concerns of Red Drum overfishing. He further stated that the proposed amendment to Chapter 391-2-4, Saltwater Fishing Regulations provides a conservative response to reduce harvest of Red Drum by approximately 10% through a decrease in the Red Drum daily creel limit from five (5) to three (3) fish, establishing a vessel limit of nine (9) Red Drum, and

prohibiting the retention of a creel limit by guides and mates. He added that though the current creel limit is five (5) fish, most anglers on private and guide trips harvest three (3) or fewer Red Drum per trip. He further added that a reduction to a three fish creel limit could reduce annual Red Drum harvest by an estimated 11%; therefore, most angler trips would not be significantly impacted by this change.

Director Haymans stated the majority of anglers and guides participating in the Town Hall surveys supported decreasing the Red Drum daily creel limit. He further stated though the current creel limit is five (5) fish, most anglers on private and guide trips harvest three (3) or fewer Red Drum per trip. He added that a reduction to a three fish creel limit could reduce annual Red Drum harvest by an estimated 11% (number of fish); and, therefore, most angler trips would not be significantly impacted by this change.

Director Haymans stated the proposed amendments will prohibit guides and mates from retaining their creel limit. He further stated that the majority of the anglers and guides participating in the Town Hall surveys supported the proposal.

Director Haymans stated the proposed amendments do not change the slot size limit. He further stated that recent regional stock assessments determined the Southern stock, consisting of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, was not undergoing overfishing and that recruitment was relatively stable though variable. He added that because the stock was considered healthy, the assessments did not result in management analyses for creel or size limit recommendations. He further added that the CRD has requested the creel and slot size limit analysis relative to management goals be provided as part of the upcoming 2024 regional stock assessment, which will allow CRD to make a better-informed decision about slot size as it pertains to management objectives and angler concerns.

Director Haymans stated the proposed amendments do not establish a Red Drum Season. He further stated that the majority of the anglers and guides participating in both the satisfaction and Town Hall surveys opposed a season.

Director Haymans stated that public hearings will be held in Savannah, Georgia on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, and Brunswick, Georgia on Thursday, September 22, 2022. He added that written public comment will be received through Thursday, October 6, 2022. He further added that following in the comment period, the Board will consider the proposed rule at the October board meeting.

Ms. Addison opened the public comment period.

Ms. Addison called on Brooks Schoen, Coastal Conservation Association of Georgia.

Mr. Schoen spoke in favor of decreasing the Red Drum daily creel limit from five (5) fish to two (2) fish and an increase of the slot size limit from 14 inches to 18 inches.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.