

AAC Annual Report

ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Louisiana's Alligator Industry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Louisiana's Alligator Industry	1
Washington D.C.	2
Technical Representation	3
LSU School of Human Ecology	7
2013-2014 Expenditures	11
AAC Members	12

Louisiana leads the U. S. in the production of alligator skins. After rebuilding the population through research, management and law enforcement during the 1960's, the wild harvest from 1972 through 2013 has produced over 940,000 wild skins. The alligator industry, including the wild harvest, egg collection and farm raised alligators, has generated over \$988,000,000 in economic benefit to the state of Louisiana.

This wild harvest has averaged approximately 27,570 skins annually, worth around \$7.8 million dockside including meat during the past 5 years. The 2013 wild harvest of 35,357 alligators was valued at over \$13.3 million including alligator meat. In 2012, farmers sold 293,496 skins, which averaged 25.91 cm belly width and were valued at over \$64 million. Since 1986 the Louisiana Alligator ranching program has collected over 8 million eggs and returned over 900,000 healthy alligators back to the wild.

Despite the worldwide economic crisis in 2009, which initially reduced the price and demand for alligators, the value of genuine Louisiana alligators has continued to recover and is approaching 2008 values.



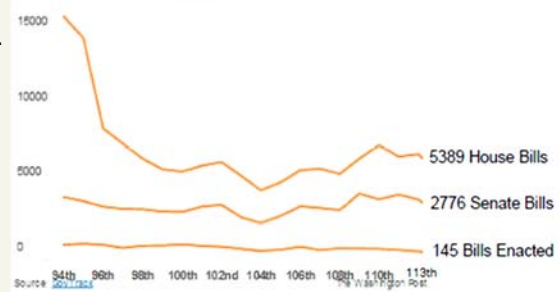
Washington D.C. Education

The 113th Congress has been widely panned as among the least productive in history. To be fair, there is a great deal at stake for both political Parties not the least of which is an intense battle for majority control of the Senate. Nevertheless, the nearly blank-screen of legislation since this Congress convened 20 months ago is unprecedented in modern history.

On one hand, the Democrat-controlled Senate went three months this spring without taking a single vote on an amendment to a pending bill. At the same time the Republican-controlled House has taken no action on more than 70 of the bills the Senate did manage to pass. As of August 6, 2014, only 145 bills passed both chambers and made it to the President to be signed into law.

Legislation introduced by Congress

The number of bills introduced in the House and Senate — and the number enacted. As of August 6, 2014.



And, who can forget the 16-day government shutdown last October due to a Party-line stalemate over the FY 2014 budget? Nobody came out of that looking good and so a repeat this year is unlikely. Nevertheless, few if any of the twelve FY 2015 appropriations bills are destined to be enacted by the September 30th end of the fiscal year.

Former Senate Majority Leaders Trent Lott (R-MS) and Tom Daschle (D-SD), co-chairs of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Commission on Political Reform, pretty much summed it up in a recent article and report on reforming Congress: "...the Senate has degenerated into a polarized mess...". Although the two former Majority Leaders put forth a roster of thoughtful recommendations for how to fix that mess, it's difficult to see how people who don't want to work together will now work together to implement recommendations for how they can work together — even if those recommendations did come from two of the most distinguished Senate Leaders in modern history. The results of the November 2014 elections will either set the stage for a fresh start in the upcoming 114th Congress — or another round of partisan battles and campaign posturing with all eyes on the 2016 Presidential election. Right now things seem destined to get worse before they get better.

You might think that this situation has limited the ability of the AAC and FAC to advance their agendas in Congress, and you would be correct. It's been a tough go. Still, the AAC and FAC remain the definitive voice of Louisiana's fur and alligator industries and sustainable-use management programs on Capitol Hill. There may not be much on Congress's legislative screen; but the AAC and FAC remain on it — maintaining an apolitical, "what's good for Louisiana" approach. Consequently, Council agendas --including alligator disease research, feral swine and nutria damage control, CITES trade policies, and the constant need to defend against endless assaults on trapping and the fundamental principles of sustainable use-- continues to have the benefit of strong bipartisan support throughout the Louisiana Delegation.

Special recognition must be given for the bipartisan hands-on leadership provided by Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and David Vitter (R-LA), and in the House from Congressmen Charles Boustany (R-LA) and Cedric Richmond (D-LA). Rising above the political fray, they have been persistent if not relentless in pursuing state and Federal agency officials, and all manner of legislation as champions of FAC and AAC funding and policy objectives.

Recognizing the impacts of an uncontrolled feral swine population on alligator egg predation and the destruction of essential fur and alligator habitat, for example, they even managed to squeeze some funding out of USDA APHIS for feral swine population control in Louisiana -- notwithstanding the initial meltdown on the FY 2014 budget and all the chaos that followed. In a 'normal' year, that might not have been a heavy lift; but in today's world, that's worth mentioning.

Its also well worth mentioning that Senator Landrieu and Congressman Boustany once again stood tall with the AAC and consultant Don Ashley to defend the sale in California of sustainable Louisiana alligator products by standing up to the animal rights extremists that for the past decade have been pushing for a ban. Following on their previously successful efforts in 2006 and 2009, the Senator and Congressman again made their case in a June 2014 letter to California Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairwoman Fran Pavley stating; *"we are very proud that Louisiana's alligator program continues to provide a global model for how the sustainable use of wildlife and fishery resources can most effectively conserve and restore their populations."*

The truth is, these days it takes considerable persistence and patience-- and prayer-- to get anything done in Washington, DC. It also takes an experienced and dedicated Delegation that is well educated on our issues. The Louisiana Delegation continues to have what it takes, but let's still say a prayer that the picture gets a little brighter for the FAC and AAC in the 114th Congress.

T e c h n i c a l R e p r e s e n t a t i o n

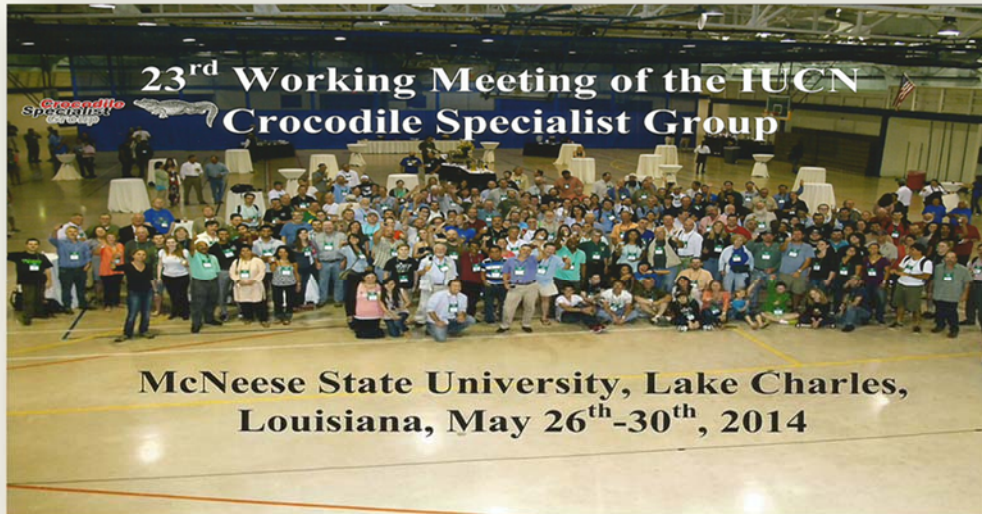
There have been three primary priorities for the Technical Representation contract this year.

- 1) CSG Working Meeting (Lake Charles, Louisiana)
- 2) California Sunset Extension
- 3) CITES Animals and Steering Committee meetings (Vera Cruz, Mexico and Geneva, Switzerland)

Louisiana and McNeese State University hosted the 23rd Working Group meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Crocodile Specialists Group

Technical Representation

(CSG) in Lake Charles. Professor Mark Merchant and a Committee of US IUCN CSG members helped organize this international conference attended by 363 delegates from 38 countries, a record for attendance and participation. The AAC, landowners and farmers were well represented during the CSG meeting and many contributed to support the proceedings.



The exceptional hospitality provided by Lake Charles and McNeese State University along with the coordinating efforts of Professor Merchant provided a venue for a very productive CSG Working Meeting that included Steering Committee updates, scientific papers, a Trade Panel discussion and special recognitions for Ted Joanen, retired research leader at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge.

Joanen, a wildlife biologist for over 30 years, was honored with two outstanding research awards in sustainable use management. His bachelor's degree alma mater, Southeastern Louisiana University (SELU) in Hammond, presented an endowed professorship to further studies in sustainable marsh management and conservation of wetlands. Dr. Chris Beachy, head of SELU's Biology Department presented the \$100,000 award on behalf of the University and benefactors.

A proclamation from Louisiana State University (LSU), where Joanen completed his master's degree, established the "Ted Joanen Outstanding Research Award in Sustainable Marsh Management". LSU graduate students will be eligible for annual grants to further studies and research focused on marsh and sustainable use management. A founding fund of \$30,000 was donated to the graduate studies program.

"This was extraordinary recognition by Louisiana and the trade of Ted Joanen's four decades of pioneer work to help protect Louisiana's wetlands through the sustainable use of the alligator and other renewable natural resources," said CSG Chair, Dr. Grahame

Webb. “Ted was a CSG pioneer as well from the very beginning. He shared his Rockefeller research findings with all who knew him to encourage the concepts of sustained use management around the world and, as Ted always said, “find ways to keep the marsh wet and wild.”

Also during the Lake Charles meeting a total of \$50,000 (\$10,000/yr. for 5 years) was pledged to establish a CSG Conservation education Fund (CEF) to help support sustainable use efforts for the alligator and other crocodilians. The four primary goals of the CEF are:

- 1) Better tell the Marsh to Market story about crocodilian sustainable use benefits to commerce (economic incentives), conservation (wetlands and natural habitats) and communities (local people and cultures).
- 2) Reduce negative, misleading or incorrect media references, displays, (i.e., confiscated products) and other exhibits that misinform policymakers as well as the public.
- 3) Create more positive, balanced and factual media stories, displays (i.e., airport, etc.) and exhibits (i.e., museums, zoos and aquariums) that focus policymakers and public attention on sustainable use benefits to local people, cultures, natural habitats (wetlands) and economic incentives to conserve renewable natural resources.
- 4) Retain 50% of annual CEF contributions in an endowed fund to help ensure CSG is also sustainable to protect and conserve crocodilians and their wetland habitats as well as benefit local people and cultures.

As this Report goes to press AB2075, which extends the sunset clause 5 years (through January 1, 2020) to allow the sale of alligator and crocodile products, has passed both Chambers of the California legislature. Both the Assembly and Senate passed the measure with about 70% favorable vote margins. This is significant considering the original sunset exemption (2006) and subsequent renewal (2009) only passed the Assembly by one vote margins. The bill was co-sponsored by Louisiana and the California Retailers Association with significant help from the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce, the IUCN Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) and the Louisiana Congressional delegation led by Sen. Landrieux and Congressman Boustany. The bill now moves to the Governor’s office who is reportedly still under pressure from the Humane Socie

Don and Pam Ashley, Dr. Beachy of McNeese, Ted Joanen, Benny Cenac, and Guillaume Drumel of Cartier-Richemont



Technical Representation Continued

ty of the U.S. (HSUS) to veto the measure. HSUS, like several Animal Welfare and Rights groups, has begun “recasting” itself as a conservation organization. The reality is HSUS has few credentials in science, management or compliance and increasingly targets wildlife trade issues (including CITES listed species like the elephant/Ivory trade) as a front for factory fund raising tactics as well as media publicity. Reptiles in trade, including alligators, are part of a backlash from the SE Asia python trade exposes which have recently aired in Switzerland and Europe.

Contractors met with the Governor’s staff to present background documenting the crocodilian trade is considered a model by CITES for trade that is legal, sustainable and verifiable (traceable and independently monitored). Also, the work by Louisiana to better develop humane killing guidelines approved by both the American Veterinary medical Association (AVMA) and the World Health Organization (OIE) are strong points to enhance animal welfare concerns and ethical standards. Best Management Practices (BMP’s) have now been adopted by Australia, Louisiana, Zimbabwe and Zambia with most other crocodilian range states considering BMP’s as a priority for enhancing research, management, enforcement, compliance, capacity building and trade monitoring.

The 2014 draft IACTS report updating total world trade in crocodilians will be completed by the end of August (data through 2012) and meetings with primary author, John Caldwell, in Lake Charles emphasized continued focus on variable export data reported by some range states, particularly the situation in Colombia. This long standing problem must be directly addressed by CITES and Colombian authorities. The CSG has again taken the lead to try to focus CITES attention on matter.

Contractors attended the CITES Animals Committee (AC) meeting in Vera Cruz, Mexico and the CITES Standing Committee (SC) meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. Don Ashley participated in several working group meetings including those on electronic permitting, python trade issues and captive-bred and ranched specimens.

It is important to note the CITES AC and SC recommendations on the python trade limits the tagging or marking of skins to finished leather (tannery level). Some industry proponents pushed very hard to require mandatory marking of finished products under CITES which would have set an unnecessary international precedent for reptile skins and provide little, if any, benefit to crocodilian traceability. The increasing industry dedicated funding is better put toward priorities for non-detriment findings (NDF’s), monitoring, Best Management Practices (BMP’s), Capacity building, compliance reviews and enhancing ethical standards for husbandry, harvest and humane killing.

These will continue to be important issues as animal rights groups like HSUS and PETA size up inevitable campaigns to increasingly target the reptile trades, particularly since several luxury brands now own both tanneries and farm operations. In the short term there is a need to prevail in California, CITES and increase focus through CSG and regional trade groups on conservation education (Marsh to Market) projects. Midterm the need is for a crisis response plan to counter a major animal rights campaign as well as develop a more refined strategy to offset (or deter) such a campaign. Difficult task consid-

ering HSUS and PETA are more about media coverage in core markets and fund raising rather than the facts of sustainable benefits to conservation (wetlands and natural habitats) and communities (local people and cultures). Long term the benefits to local people and cultures from working waterfronts to indigenous tribes offers the most effective counter argument that provides some credibility risk to animal rights groups and strategists. Opponents need to understand the campaigns they try to create with media spins could backfire in the court of public opinion when local people and cultures are threatened or adversely affected.

The long standing goal has been to help ensure the alligator and crocodile trades are legal, sustainable and verifiable (traceable and independently monitored) with benefits to commerce (economic incentives), conservation (wetlands and natural habitats) and communities (local people and cultures).

LSU School of Human Ecology

In Early March, 2014 Meg Farris, medical television reporter for CBS WWL in New Orleans, Louisiana, contacted PI. Farris previously did a positive story on the grade 3 alligator grant project and the tannery interviewing both PI and co-investigator and Buddy Baker from Wildlife and Fisheries last summer. In an effort to promote the awareness and use of grade 3 LA alligator skin, she requested PI to design and construct her an alligator bustier for her to wear to at the Prophets of Persia Mardi Gras Krewe annual ball held at the Ritz Carlton in New Orleans, where her niece was honored as queen. Farris said she was the talk of the town and was encircled by women interested in acquiring an alligator bustier like hers. Following the party, Nell Nolan made note of Farris' alligator bustier in the society column of the New Orleans Advocate reporting: "the above Meg Farris Adams, in a special couture creation that combined a black, alligator-skin bustier (embellished for ballgown finery) and a white skirt with black accents." Additionally, Farris forwarded interested referrals including the mother of the 2014 queen of Endymion, who was interested in wearing a similar alligator bustier to the ball.

*Alligator bustier at the
Prophets of Persia Mardi
Gras Krewe*



LSU School of Human Ecology Continued

On March 18, 2014, PI participated in an invited sole exhibition of garments that she designed and created incorporating Louisiana grade 3 alligator skin. It was scheduled as a part of NOLA Fashion Week in New Orleans, LA that caters to buyers and the fashion business.



NOLA Fashion Week displays

On March 21, 2014 PI participated as an invited designer in the Fashion Week New Orleans fashion runway show where she showcased the Louisiana grade 3 alligator garments. This is a different fashion week that focuses on celebrating the talent and culture of New Orleans and the surrounding areas of Louisiana.

Runway show at NOLA Fashion Week

On March 22, 2014 PI conducted an invited alligator workshop as a part of the NOLA Fashion Week in New Orleans, LA. Participants were taught both hand construction methods and industrial sewing via copies of the previously developed educational video. These local artisan participants were afforded a grade 3 Louisiana alligator skin, as well as pamphlets incorporating alligator skin sources.



As a part of our collaboration thru Dr. Liu with the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technolo-

gy (BIFT) students, their Louisiana grade 3 alligator accessory products were shown in the student design runway show on March 26, 2014, in Beijing, China in conjunction with the BIFT Fashion Week scheduled from March 11-16. The products were extremely creative and innovative. Administrators at BIFT are eager to continue this collaboration in the future.



Hands on demonstrations

During April, 2014 graduate students enrolled in HUEC 7030 Creativity in Product Development worked on patterning and constructing their creative design product made of grade 3 LA alligator skin.



HUEC 7030 classroom

Semaine Française d'Arnaudville Creative Placemaking Summit

On April 21, 2014 PI traveled to Arnaudville, Louisiana to conduct an invited alligator presentation at the Semaine Française d'Arnaudville Creative Placemaking Summit held at NUNU. It is a six-day cultural economy summit, developed with the assistance

□ of the French Consulate in New Orleans. It provides a platform for presentation of ideas focused on: the use of Creative Placemaking; the incorporation of arts, crafts and folk life traditions; effect on economy; the use of environment and sustainable design; and roles played by policy and advocacy.



LSU School of Human Ecology Continued

On May 6, 2014 HUEC 7030 graduate students presented their completed LA grade 3 alligator products. Products developed included a running belt, a racquetball cover, a stadium seat, an insulated wine carrier, a set of bow ties, and two purses that meet NFL requirements for entry into the Saints games.

Graduate Student Presentation



On May 7, 2014 undergraduate students enrolled in HUEC 4045 Synthesis, a collection development course, presented their alligator garments as a part of their final project.



Student garments

On May 14, 2014, in conjunction with the student organization Hemline sponsored Catalyst annual student fashion show, the Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Design Garment and Product Competition was presented. Mr. Buddy Baker represented the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Committee and assisted with handing out the winning certificate awards. Also, present was Robert Lyonnet, the CEO of the Reptile Tannery of Louisiana (RTL). The first place grade 3 LA alliga-



Jessica Sapera, first place garment winner

tor garment award went to Jessica Sopera. She has been accepted into a graduate program in London.

Graduate student Erin Davis won first place for the grade 3 LA alligator project.



Erin Davis, first place alligator project winner

2013 - 2014 Expenditures

The Alligator Advisory Council operates from the Alligator Resource Funds.

Alligator Resource Funds	
Budgeted	\$308,779
Salaries	\$29,747
Related Benefits	\$13,290
Travel	\$136
Operating Services- <i>i.e. cell phone, internet service</i>	\$181
Supplies- <i>i.e. printing supplies, office supplies</i>	\$160
Professional Services- <i>i.e. , technical contract</i>	\$231,500
Other Services– LSU Agricultural Center/McNeese State	\$68,736
Alligator Resource Funds Expended	\$343,750
The overage was covered by the Alligator Program	(\$34,971)

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