AAC Annual Report December 2016

AAC Annual Report

ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Louisiana leads the United States 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 2015 has produced over 1,000,000 wild skins. In 2015, the alligator industry, including the wild harvest, egg collection, and farm raised alligators, has generated in excess of \$100,000,000 in economic benefit to the state of Louisiana.



The wild harvest has averaged approximately 34,891 skins annually, worth over \$11.6 million dockside including meat during the past 5 years. The 2015 wild harvest of 35,410 alligators was valued at over \$11.9 million which includes the value of the alligator meat. In calendar year 2015, farmers sold 328,228 skins, which averaged 26.19 cm belly width, which were valued at over \$71 million and included the value of the alligator meat. Since 1986 the Louisiana Alligator ranching program has collected over 9 million eggs and returned over 998,000 healthy alligators back to the wild.



Washington D.C. Education

The Council contracted with Glenn Roger Delaney to provide assistance to the Fur Advisory Council (FAC) and Alligator Advisory Council (AAC) regarding federal policies and legislation that impact the management and utilization of Louisiana's wildlife resources, particularly those affecting the fur and alligator resources in Louisiana. Mr. Delaney worked with local congressional staff and federal policy makers and administrators concerning the Louisiana's wildlife resources. He also coordinated with other groups with common interests and other AAC contractors, such as Don Ashley.

It's been a tumultuous year in many respects, but nothing so much as the passing of Don Ashley. The loss of his extraordinary expertise and many great works will be felt far and wide. This includes Washington DC where the Council enjoyed the benefit of partnering with Don on a number of important projects over the years. Our sincere condolences to his wife Pam Ashley and to his entire family. He will be dearly missed here and all over the world.

One of the most important roles Don played was in the international wildlife management arena, particularly in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES plays an important part in the Louisiana fur and alligator program. CITES shares the principles of science-based sustainable use, and the data generated through the International Alligator and Crocodile Trade Study supports the sustainability of the Louisiana alligator industry. These principles are under relentless assault at CITES, including here in Washington DC where US policies, positions and proposals are developed. The future of Louisiana's wildlife programs and industries as we know them today absolutely depends on the rigorous defense and preservation of those principles.

Fortunately, the Council enjoys a highly constructive partnership with some of the world's foremost experts and leaders in the CITES community, including within our own Department of Wildlife & Fisheries as well as with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, representatives of a number of pro-sustainable use organizations, and even representatives of like-minded foreign governments here in Washington. With the upcoming CITES meeting scheduled in South Africa, this year was again marked by an aggressive campaign to advance proposals that would undermine science-based sustainable use policies at CITES. And, once again, the treatment of Polar Bears became the test case. Although the US government has previously supported such proposals at CITES, this year our informal pro-sustainable use coalition was successful in convincing the Administration to reject them.

Assaults on the sustainable use foundation of wildlife management were not limited to CITES this year. As in the previous Congress, legislation was introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives in the 114th Congress that would prohibit the use of certain traps on National Wildlife Refuges that are central to success-

ful wildlife management on both public and private lands. Although this legislation has garnered a significant number of cosponsors and has been pursued aggressively by its proponents on several fronts, so far our informal coalition of sustainable use policy defenders has prevailed in preventing this legislation from being enacted into law.

Finally, we continue to be blessed with the tireless support of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation notwithstanding a number of notable changes in recent years. Invariably, Members of the Delegation have stepped up to champion any number of ongoing initiatives on the Council's agenda ranging from nutria damage control to funding for alligator disease research. The importance of educating and maintaining a constructive working relationship with both the Louisiana Delegation and key committee leaders cannot be overstated and we deeply appreciate their continued support.



Education on the Hill

Technical Representation

The Council contracted with Ashley and Associates to represent the alligator industry at national and international meetings. The contractor worked with media, national legislative issues, and international regulatory issues.

Media:

The Marsh to Market story of Louisiana helped change the focus and conclusion of the Economist Magazine's May article. The reporter acknowledged the extensive background on sustainable use provided by the Council redirected the "tone of the article", at least with crocodilians. The article can be viewed at http://www.economist.com/news/ business/21698705-why-breeding-brutes-may-help-their-wild-brethren-snappy-dressers.

International Alligator and Crocodile Trade Study (IACTS):

The most recent IACTS Report trade data through 2013 again showed classic skins exceeding 600,000 skins a year and is encouraging. The alligator accounted for 50% of the total world trade. But another notable increase was the Nile crocodile trade accounting for 30% of the total classic trade. That left the Saltwater Crocodile with 11% of the trade rounding out the most significant classic trade figures. <u>Caiman fuscus</u> from Colombia reported its second largest export in 2013 (856,603 skins after 2006 (972,041 skins).

California:

There is growing concern over the possible change in the public's opinion to have the issue for a ban on the use of plastic bags added to their November ballot. Increased public support from animal rights activists had Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey announce they would retire elephants from its circus acts by May. This was in direct response from animal rights activists over concerns of animal cruelty. Another troublesome effort was PETA's UK demonstration coordinator using disruption techniques and a campaign to end the "senseless and discriminatory breeding" of dogs for dog shows in February. Kristy Henderson campaign coordinator said "they had been out to poison the world's biggest dog show" (held in London). "Breeding is discriminatory and senseless". (Vanity Fair February 2016). This type of continued public outcry will affect the removal of the California sunset clause in 2020. The Council intends to be pro-active with our positive sustainable use story from the Marsh to the Market.

It needs to be noted there was another troubling announcement, this time it came from SeaWorld in April. SeaWorld said that it will end its orca "killer whale" breeding program after years of pressure from animal rights activists (Time Magazine April 2016). They had already altered their shark show at their attractions after the attack on one of their trainers.

Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG)

At the last two CSG Steering Committee meetings, it was decided to prepare a Best Management Practices (BMP) Guideline for the crocodilian trade. This is a much needed pro-active industry initiative. Charlie Manolis was chosen to spearhead the drafting and after appropriate expert review circulate the revision to all CSG members. The Council was asked to provide input to this draft in early February. After extensive input from others in the crocodilian field and trade the final report has been completed. It is a very valuable document to the industry. This final Best Management Practices Guideline can be viewed at http://www.iucncsg.org/content-images/attachments/CSG-BMP.pdf

World Health Organization

The work of this Expert Panel on the Humane Killing of reptiles was completed and sent out for peer review by the Swiss Chaired Panel. It is expected to be formally adopted by OIE (World Health Organization) this month. Louisiana's input with veterinarians from LSU and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVVMA) was instrumental in the completion of the standards and guidelines for the American Alligator.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

The Alligator CITES Case Study presented by the LWF to all regional Fish and Wildlife Agencies of the AFWA was a very effective way to attempt to improve the understanding of policymakers about the benefits of sustainable use to conservation (wetlands and natural habitats) and communities (local people and cultures). Louisiana has a long standing commitment to CITES, participation in the IUCN Crocodile Specialists Group (CSG) and with the IACTS trade monitoring report continues to provide a strong foundation for the alligator program's continued success.

Electronic Permitting:

The Council is closely following this innovative cooperative program with the CITES Secretariat, France and Switzerland. Good progress is being made with the testing of a truly paperless, "real-time" electronic permitting system between the two countries for their crocodilian trade. This type of program could be adopted by the USFWS which would help speed up the issuance and monitoring of CITES permits. France and Switzerland expect to announce their progress at the upcoming CoP in September. The Council intends to encourage the USFWS to build upon the Masterfile permit system for alligator farmers, tanners and manufacturers through an electronic permitting system.

CITES Proposals for CoP 17:

A proposal on the submission of a country's annual report will be discussed. Currently a country is required by CITES to submit the previous year's trade report by October. This adherence by more CITES range states would make the IACTS Report more timely.

LSU School of Human Ecology

The Alligator Council contracted with the LSU School of Human Ecology to promote manufacturing with lower grade alligator skins. In August the principal investigator (PI), Dr. Liu, Chinese visiting scholar, Le Xing, prepared and submitted an abstract for submission of the collaborative grade 3 alligator garment to the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology (BIFT) juried exhibition entitled Culture Revival – 2015 Invitational Youth Design Exhibition. The garment was accepted for the exhibition set for October 17-18, 2015.

In September, Co-PI Chuanlan Liu and PI Lisa McRoberts gave an in-depth interview that made the front page of the Reveille. McRoberts talked about the grade 3 Louisiana alligator project from the design aspect. More specifically, she discussed the student garments incorporating the grade 3 Louisiana alligator hide. Additionally, she discussed and demonstrated the graduate students grade 3 Louisiana alligator products.

In late September, both investigators traveled to New Iberia and presented the annual report at the Alligator Council meeting. Additionally, McRoberts presented a new proposal for the 2016-2018 time period and it was accepted.

In November, PI traveled to Santa Fe, NM to present the Co-PI, graduate student and PI's research findings titled "Symbolic Ingredient Branding to Promote Premier Locally Produced Material in Global Consumer Market: A Case of American Wild Alligator Leather" at the annual International Textiles & Apparel Association (ITAA) conference. McRoberts met with apparel design professors and instructors to continue the creative collaboration of designing and constructing grade 3 LA alligator garments.

In November, McRoberts worked with a senior undergraduate student in the Advanced Apparel Product Design class to incorporate grade 3 LA alligator hide into her three-dimensional draping project. She also conducted a demonstration for all of the senior design students on how to design and construct grade 3 LA alligator garments.

In November, Liu developed a research grant proposal, Symbolic ingredient branding to promote premier locally produced material in global consumer market: A pilot study of American wild alligator leather for getting more funds to expand project scope. The grant proposal was submitted to the Louisiana State Board of Regents.

In November, Liu worked on a research paper with McRoberts and graduate student for submission to American Colligate of Retail Association Annual Conference. The paper was accepted and will be presented in New York in April 2016.

In December, McRoberts modified the syllabus of the Pattern Design with Computer Application class to incorporate a grade 3 alligator leather project in the curriculum. In January, McRoberts introduced the alligator project in her class of juniors.



Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Design Garment and Product Competition: The first place grade 3 LA alligator garment award went to Maggie Calan.

In March, researchers directed Dr. Liu's sponsored Chinese designer and visiting graduate student, Lyra Wang, through a sustainable design process to develop an alligator garment comprised of grade 3 alligator scraps. Dr. McRoberts also trained Lyra on designing and constructing with the grade 3 alligator leather.

Dr. Liu revised a research paper with her graduate student and Dr. McRoberts for submission to the International Textiles and Apparel Association for the annual 2016 conference. The paper was accepted for the November 2016, Vancouver, British Columbia convention. Dr. Liu and Dr. McRoberts also gathered data on branding of alligator.

During the week of April 13-16, 2016 Dr. Liu traveled to New York where she attended the annual American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA) conference. She presented the accepted abstract entitled, "Can American Alligator Leather be Ingredient Branded? An Exploratory Study" that she previously prepared and submitted with the assistance of teaching assistant, Luby Zhang and Dr. McRoberts.

On May 9, 2016 a panel of judges, Anne Petrie Underwood, Natasha Miller, and Tracee Dundas, evaluated all of the alligator garments and alligator products to determine the award winners of the Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Competition.

On May 11, 2016, in conjunction with the student organization Fashion Association sponsored Decadence annual student fashion show, the Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Design Garment and Product Competition was presented. Mr. Mike Benge and Ms. Amity Bass represented the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council. Amity assisted with handing out the winning certificate awards.

LSU School of Human Ecology Continued





Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Design Garment and Product Competition: The second place grade 3 LA alligator garment award went to Emma Hiller for a bra-let (left) and third place went to Laura Aymond for a collar (right).

Alligator accessory products were abundantly represented through purses, collars, a laptop case, and a hat. The grade 3 alligator product awards placed as follows: Caroline Lamonte, first, two-tone brown alligator purse with metal chain, Madeleine Broussard, second, for a black alligator and denim tote bag; and Diana Ho, third, for an alligator-trimmed hat.



Marsh on the Catwalk Alligator Design Garment and Product Competition:

First Place Accessory Award



Marsh on the Catwalk: Second Place Accessory Award



Marsh on the Catwalk: Third Place Accessory Award

During a European Fashion Field study from May 18th through May 30th, Dr. McRoberts conducted a market study of alligator products in London and Paris. She also collected market information in Stuttgart, Germany and Madrid, Spain.

On May 27, Dr. Liu received an invitation letter for a paper titled as Symbolic Ingredient Branding American Wild Alligator Leather with Fashion Brands: An Exploratory Case Study of Jeans Products to participate in the best paper competition in the International Textile and Apparel Association 2016 Annual Conference.

Dr. Liu worked with her sponsored visiting designer on polishing design and getting the designed published to generate more publicity for promoting American alligator skins. A design paper titled as: An Ideological Contour of Women was completed and sent to International Textile and Apparel Association 2016 Annual Conference on May 30.

This designed versatile dress presented a new form of expressing women's social identity in an artistic format, as well as empirically practiced a near zero-waste application for the use alligator skin scraps in different sizes and textures. Muslin was used to drape the main dress components and accurately put them together. All the pieces were hand cut for draping using a dress form. In order to further address reducing the ecological imprint, hand stitching was used to attach each of the streamlined pieces and maintain the traditional pattern of the inspiration, adding culture and aesthetic value to the dress while promoting the concept of sustainability and slow fashion.

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LSU School of Human Ecology Continued



Designs for An Ideological Contour of Women

During June, Dr. Liu worked with Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology and Shengxifu Hatting Co. LTD and completed the following tasks (1) established an alligator skin design/product development studio with Louisiana State University, Louisiana Alligator Council, Shengxifu Hatting Co. Ltd as co-sponsors; (2) moved three working stations donated from Shengxifu to support students create their designed/developed alligator products/accessories; (3) identified fifteen best senior students in both creative design and product development majors to work on donated alligator skins with 7 students working on creative/artistic design, and 8 students working on ready-to-wear products/accessories using donated alligator skins; (4) identify project themes with a focus on culture and global infusion.

2015-2016 Expenditures

The Alligator Advisory Council operates from the Alligator Resource Funds.

Alligator Resource Funds	
Budgeted	\$358,563.00
Salaries	\$21,513.80
Related Benefits	\$9,781.61
Operating Services- i.e. cell phone, internet service	\$956.48
Supplies- i.e. printing supplies, office supplies	\$1,157.12
Professional Services- i.e., technical contract	\$166,500.00
Other Services LSU Agricultural Center/McNeese State	\$53,237.25
Alligator Resource Funds Expended	\$253,146.26
Remaining	\$105,416.74



AAC Members

Landowner Representatives

Randy Moertle 108 Mar Drive Lockport, LA 70374 Office: (985) 856-3630

email: rmoertle@bellsouth.net

Term: May 4, 2015- June 30, 2017

Mike Benge 206 Decatur Street New Orleans, LA 70130 office: 504-523-2245 cell: 504-583-7821 rmbenge34@aol.com

Term: July 1, 2013- June 30, 2019

Vic Blanchard PO Box 694 Plaquemine, LA 70765 Office: 225-687-3591 Cell: 225-776-0980

vblanchard@awilbertsons.com Term: July1, 2015- June 30, 2021

Alligator Hunter Representatives

Ron Guy 700 Lamburie Rd. Lecompte, LA 71346 lagatorguy@yahoo.com Home: 318-776-5471

Term: July 1, 2013- June 30, 2019

Alidore Marmande 840 Vice Road Houma, LA 70360 Business: 985-868-5254 almarmande@yahoo.com

Term: June 24, 2013- June 30, 2021

Dwight Savoie PO Box 252 Creole, LA 70632

Dwight.Savoie@martinmlp.com Term: May 30, 2011- June 30, 2017

Alligator Farmer Representatives

Gerald Savoie 16124 Hwy. 3235 Cut Off, LA 70345 savoiesalligator@mobiletel.com Term: July 1, 2013- June 30, 2019

Barry Wall 26900 Hwy. 1037 Springfield, LA 70462 Farm: 225-294-6052 gator wall@yahoo.com

Term: July 1, 2015- June 30, 2021

Errol Falgout 750 Hamilton Street LaRose, LA 70373 Cell: 985-258-3013 bayougators@cajunnet.com

Term: July 1, 2011- June 30, 2017

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