

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Kiawah Island Municipal Center
Council Chambers
May 4, 2015 3:00 PM

Minutes

- I. **Call to Order:** *Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.*
- II. **FOIA:** Notice of this meeting has been published, and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

III. **Roll Call:**

Present:

- Mary Johnson
- David Elliott
- Jim Chitwood
- Joe Pezzullo
- Jim Sullivan
- Robert Simmons
- Jane Ellis
- Lynette Schroeder
- Robert Simmons

ARB: Amanda Mole

KIGR: Liz King

KINHC: Jack Kotz

Justin Core

TOKI: Jim Jordan

Aaron Given

Absent:

- Marilyn Olson
- Sandra Williams
- John Leffler
- Dave Achey
- Matt Hill

IV. **Approval of Minutes:**

A. Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes of February 17, 2015

Mr. Kotz made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2015 Environmental Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jordan and was unanimously approved.

V. **Chairman's Comments:**

Mrs. Johnson stated the Mayors of Kiawah and Seabrook requested she gather an educational forum on the Offshore Oil Drilling and Seismic Testing issues. She noted that before the forum was accomplished the Seabrook Environmental Committee and POA polled their residents and found 80% were against Offshore Oil Drilling and passed a resolution against Offshore Oil Drilling and Seismic Testing.

Mrs. Johnson stated the Kiawah Town Council will also be voting on a resolution against Offshore Oil Drilling and Seismic Testing, so even though reported, the Committee will not be engaging in an in-depth discussion of these issues. She added that in the research she did the issue is very complicated technical issue and opinions seem to be more emotional than educated. She stated that 41 towns in South Carolina have sent opposition to Offshore Oil Drilling and Seismic Testing to the State House.

VI. Old Business

A. None

VII. New Business

A. Bird Banding and Bird Presentation

Mr. Given, Assistant Wildlife Biologist, discussed his presentation of Bird Monitoring on Kiawah Island. He described the Bird Banding and the Breeding Bird Point-count programs and reviewed the objectives and methods for each.

Bird Banding includes:

Fall Migration

Objectives

- Gather baseline information on resident and migratory birds on Kiawah Island
- Collect data to enable long-term monitoring (i.e. population trends) of birds on Kiawah Island
- Monitor fall migration to determine the importance of Kiawah Island as stop-over habitat

Methods

- Operate daily from August 15 – November 30 (weather permitting)
- Start at sunrise and band for 5-6 hours
- 23-25 mist nets are placed in scrub, high marsh, dunes, and maritime thicket
- Nets are checked every 30 minutes
- Crew of 4-5 people needed (myself and 4 hired seasonal technicians)

Winter Songbird

Objectives

- Gather baseline information on resident and migratory birds on Kiawah Island during the winter
- Collect data to enable long-term monitoring (i.e. population trends) of birds on wintering on Kiawah Island

Methods

- Nets are operated 2-3 times per month from December to March
- Start at sunrise and band for 5-6 hours or until sunset
- 15 mist nets are placed in scrub, high marsh, dunes, and maritime thicket
- Nets are checked every 30 minutes

Marsh Sparrow

Objectives

- Determine movements, distribution, and site fidelity of Painted Buntings on Kiawah
- Collect data to enable long-term monitoring (i.e. population trends) of Painted Buntings on Kiawah Island

Methods

- May to August
- Banding begins at sunrise and continues for 4 hours
- Banding occurs primarily in the yards of Kiawah residents that are feeding Painted Buntings
- 10-12 sites are sampled twice a season
- Birds are captured in specially designed cage with a feeder placed inside

Painted Bunting

Objectives

- Determine movements, distribution, and site fidelity of Painted Buntings on Kiawah
- Collect data to enable long-term monitoring (i.e. population trends) of Painted Buntings on Kiawah Island

Methods

- May to August
- Banding begins at sunrise and continues for 4 hours
- Banding occurs primarily in the yards of Kiawah residents that are feeding Painted Buntings
- 10-12 sites are sampled twice a season.
- Birds are captured in specially designed cage with a feeder placed inside

Marsh Sparrow

Objectives

- Determine habitat requirements, site fidelity, relative abundance, and distribution of Seaside, Nelson's, and Saltmarsh Sparrows wintering in the saltmarshes of Kiawah Island
- Determine subspecies composition of Seaside Sparrows using stable isotope analysis (collaborative study with Coastal Carolina University)

Methods

- Sparrows are captured in mist nets at high tide roosts during high tide
- Birds are flushed into nets by walking through marsh vegetation
- 10-12 sites are sampled twice per season.
- Requires many volunteers to be successful

Wilson's Plover Flagging Project

Objectives

- Determine effects of the both the east end and west end beach projects on their movements, site fidelity, and nest success

Methods

- Birds are captured using mist nets strategically placed in either roosting or foraging areas
- Birds are gently walked towards nets and flushed in
- Requires 2-5 people

Results

- Started this April
- Flagged 4 birds on east end, 1 bird on west end
- Will be trying several more times before May 18
- Resighting these birds is crucial to the success of the project

Breeding Bird Point-Count

- 238 point-count stations located on secondary roads, trails, boardwalks.
- In areas where roads are not present, points are located off-road (i.e. Captain Sam's Spit, Cougar Island, Little Bear Island).
- Minimum distance between points is 250 meters.
- 9 separate routes which consist of 15-34 points each (1 route/day).
- Counts begin at sunrise and end no later than 11:00am.
- Each route is conducted in the same order and during same time period each year.
- All birds seen or heard within a 5-min period are counted.

Birds of Kiawah Island

- 281 species have been observed on Kiawah
- Another 8-10 species are hypothetical

B. Beach Nourishment – Kiawah

Mr. Jordan gave a brief background of the East End Beach Project and reviewed the highlights up to now and schedule;

- April 15 – Bids Received, Lowest qualified bidder is Lake Moultrie Construction/Ashridge (\$538,000)
- April 28 – Ways and Means approves low bidder
- May 1 – Pre-project Meeting with agencies
- May 1 – Turtle Nest Surveys begin (Norm Shea contractor)
- May 4 – Federal Permit Received
- May 5 – Town Council to approve low bidder
- May 11-15 – Mobilization of Equipment
- May 18 – Work begins (3 weeks)

Members discussed the progress of the project and what would happen to the sand bags that have been placed on the beach as an emergency measure.

C. Beach Nourishment – Seabrook

Mr. Jordan presented photographs in addition to a brief history and explanation of the Captain Sam’s Inlet relocation project done by the Seabrook Property Owners Association on the West end of the beach.

D. Alligator Study Funding Request

Mrs. Johnson stated the alligator research study is being done by the Conservancy. Mr. Core and Mr. Kotz, with the Kiawah Conservancy, gave presented the history for the need of an alligator research study. He indicated the study would not only monitor the population but also the effects of containments in their water. He stated the study would be beneficial to the Town’s Biologists in management issues and will provide the Town a report on the condition of our water as it relates to pesticides and chemicals that may be in the water. He indicated that it will be an interesting study and will hopefully go on for many years.

Mrs. Johnson stated the cost which will be incurred for the study is \$13,000 and the Conservancy is asking the Town to contribute \$5,000 toward this years cost. Mrs. Johnson stated the Biologists are in support of the study and if the Environmental Committee agreed to support the study, funding is available in the Environmental Committee budget.

Committee members agreed to approve a recommendation for the funding of an Alligator research study for one-year at a cost of \$5,000. Mrs. Johnson stated she would take the recommendation to the Ways and Means Committee.

E. Turtle Patrol Filming Funding Request

Mrs. Johnson indicated that the Conservancy was requesting \$10,000 of funding towards the total cost of \$50,000 for filming of the Turtle Patrol. She indicated that did not see a benefit to the Town or justification for the project but if the Committee approved the request the funding is available in the Environmental Committee budget.

Mrs. Johnson stated that Mr. Pezzullo, the head of the Turtle Patrol, has approval of the

Department of Natural Resources. Mrs. Johnson indicated future uses of the filming could be for guests viewing on the Resort's Station or in the new Municipal Center for viewing in the lobby area along with other Island activities.

Committee members agreed to approve a recommendation for the funding of the Turtle Patrol filming project in the amount of \$10,000. Mrs. Johnson stated she would take the recommendation to the Ways and Means Committee.

VIII. Reports:

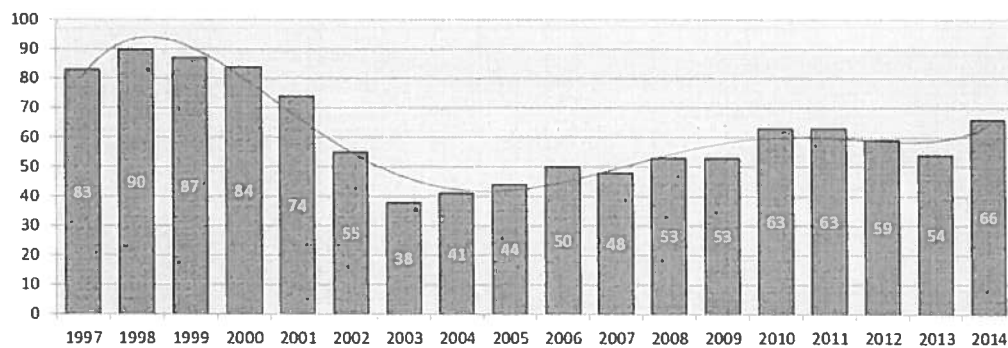
A. Town of Kiawah Island Wildlife Department – Jim Jordan/Aaron Givens

2015 PREDATOR GPS PROJECT

- Trapping conducted March 2 - 17
- 9 unique bobcats captured
 - Bobcat 450 – March 2 – Adult Female – Beachwalker County Park – Tagged as kitten in 2013
 - Home Range is Captain Sam's spit east to Night Heron Park
 - Bobcat 750 – March 4 – Juvenile Male – Captain Sam's spit – First capture
 - Home Range includes Seabrook and western 2/3 Kiawah
 - Bobcat 700 – March 5 – Adult Female – Goldeneye – First capture
 - Left Kiawah on March 28 for Johns Island, Swam Bohicket Creek on March 31 to Wadmalaw Island, April 5 swam Leadenwah Creek, April 12 swam back, May 2 hit and killed by car
 - Bobcat 701 – March 10 – Juvenile Male – Ocean Park – First capture
 - Left Kiawah on March 26 for Johns Island, April 12-15 on Wadmalaw, Currently living on Johns Island north of Ace Hardware (Orange Hill Plantation)
 - Bobcat 350 – March 12 – Juvenile Female – Parkside – Offspring of 2014 Bobcat 350
 - Home Range is Night Heron Park to Rhett's Bluff, April 6 hit and killed by car
 - Bobcat 600 – March 17 – Adult Female – Ocean Park – Collared during 2012 as Bobcat 400
 - Home Range is Ocean Park, front nine of Ocean Course, and Little Bear Island
- Trapping will resume on May 11
- 2 bobcat and 2 coyote collars to deploy

DEER SPOTLIGHT SURVEYS

- Conducted February 17th, and 20th



TOWN SEA TURTLE PERMITTING

- Attended turtle stranding workshop on April 14, Jim and Aaron permitted to respond to strandings
- Nesting Training – Jim and Aaron will train with USFWS and SCDNR this season to gain necessary experience to be permitted.

B. Kiawah Island Community Association Land & Lakes Management – Matt Hill

C. Kiawah Island Golf Resort- Liz King

Ms. King reported there were new displays including an alligator display at the Nature Center.

- D. Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board – Amanda Mole
- E. Environmental Science Committee – Jack Kotz
- F. Turtle Patrol – Joe Pezzullo

Mr. Pezzullo reported the first Loggerhead Turtle nest of the season was laid on Botany Island noting DNR have spotted a large numbers of Loggerhead Turtles in the Gulf Stream. He stated that even though the official state of the season on the Island is May 1st, patrols would not begin until May 11th.

Mr. Pezzullo stated the Turtle Patrol had been involved in a DNA study with the University of Georgia for the past eight years. He indicated the study of DNS extracted from hatchlings and the from egg shells provided information on site fidelity, nest health fidelity and clutch frequency. He stated that after a number of years the University of Florida joined the study by analyzing the yokes from the turtle eggs. Mr. Pezzullo stated the study has shown one of the turtles in our area is a grandmother.

IX. Correspondence:
None

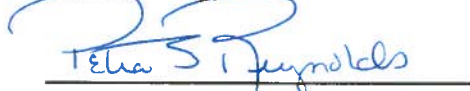
X. Citizen Comments:
None

XI. Committee Member Comments:
None

XII. Adjournment:

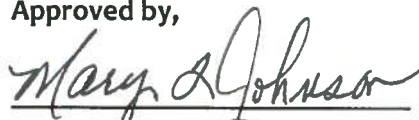
The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Submitted by,



Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Approved by,



Mary Q. Johnson, Chairman

1/13/16
Date