

Southeastern TWS - Wetlands Wildlife Committee Meeting Summary

Submitted by: Stephen V. Rockwood, Chairman

The Wetlands Wildlife committee meeting was held on October 14, 2001, Governor's Room, Galt House Hotel. Present were Mr. Stephen V. Rockwood, Chairman, Mr. David Hayden, Mr. Jeff Raasch, Mr. Chuck Sharp, Dr. Montague Whiting, Mr. Don McKenzie, and guest speaker, Mr. Jim Townsend, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE).

Mr. Townsend provided the committee with an update on the COE's Section 404 Nationwide permit program. This included 1) a summary of the Supreme Court ruling on SWANCC (Solid Waste Authority of Northern Cook County) and the subsequent deregulation of isolated wetlands, 2) the COE's request to extend the nationwide permit program for five years, and 3) the programmatic environmental impact statement (EIS) of the nationwide permit program.

Mr. McKenzie provided an update on the House of Representative's (HR) version of the Farm Bill, which passed on October 5, 2001. The committee discussed the various implications of the HR's version as it relates to the Wetlands Reserve Program. Mr. McKenzie indicated that he would monitor the Senate's version of the Farm Bill, which is expected to be stronger than the HR's version.

In other news, members discussed a plan to revitalize the committee, which has been inactive during the last three years. This will include seeking additional representation from the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) by requesting a combined TWS/SEAFWA Wetlands Wildlife committee.

Action Items:

- 1) The committee will contact Mr. Tom Franklin, TWS Policy Director, and other individuals and organizations (i.e., the Association of State Wetland Managers) who have reviewed the COE's programmatic EIS. If necessary, the committee will submit a letter commenting on the programmatic EIS to the Board for review and submittal to the COE. The deadline for commenting on the programmatic EIS is October 29, 2001.
- 2) Discuss with the Southeastern TWS Board the formation of a SEAFWA wetlands wildlife committee.

