

Minutes of the November 19, 2007 Executive Board Meeting of the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (SDTWS)

President Forman recognized a quorum and the meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM, Pierre, SD. Board members Kurt Forman, Chad Switzer, Tom Kirschenmann, Bridgette Flanders-Wanner, and Art Smith were present. In addition, Silka Kempema, Eileen Dowd Stukel, Pete Bowman, Kay Hunt, and Mary Miller were also present to discuss wind power.

Smith presented minutes of the May 2007 board meeting. Flanders-Wanner motioned to accept the minutes, Kirschenmann second. Motion passed (4-0). Smith then presented the minutes of the September 2007 board meeting. Some off the record notes written by acting Secretary Flanders-Wanner were noted needing to be removed. Kirschenmann motioned to accept the minutes with the notes removed, Switzer seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Smith then presented both the May and September 2007 Treasurers reports. No discussion, Switzer motioned to accept both reports, Flanders-Wanner Second. Motion passed (4-0).

Wind Energy

Forman gave a short introduction to the topic of wind power in South Dakota. He reported there are now more than 1 million acres of land in agreements with landowners for wind generation in eastern SD. This number has probably reached a plateau, company positioning is now starting, but obvious impacts on the landscape will be noticeable. ND TWS Chapter sent an unsolicited letter to their Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and received an innocuous thank you letter indicating most of their suggested changes required legislative action.

SD PUC will only give statutorily required siting guidelines for >100 MW farms. For farms regulated by the PUC how can territorial birds and animal needs be recognized?

At this time Jill Schaefer (ND TWS) called in and introductions all around were given.

Forman asked Schaefer where ND TWS is on renewable energy.

Schaefer is on their Alternative energy Committee, which is a sub-committee on Wind Energy. Their main activity so far has been a public statement out for member review for a vote at their annual meeting. Wind power is 1 bullet in that statement. There is a separate document that is a detailed white paper on wind energy. ND TWS letter to PUC, PUC response was viewed as common sense. 2 House bills were/will be introduced involving renewable energy that ND TWS will be following and/or be involved with. The Audubon Society is trying to get the major players (energy companies, some conservation groups) at a single meeting for issue awareness. This effort is being headed up by Wick Borwin (sp?), former Ducks Unlimited chair.

2005 ND legislature is increasing siting wind farm limits from 50 to 100MW. There is little to no state agency/NGO involvement on this issue until very recently.

Bowman reported that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is elevating the status of wind generation. They desire to include NGO's, TWS, utilities, energy companies. He wonders if similar meetings have done anything positive.

Schaefer responded that she is not familiar with progress in other state's meetings. For ND, no model was followed, and instead used who needs to be there for wind companies

to come to a meeting. Utilities were invited for that reason, used as leverage to get energy NGO's to attend.

Forman asked if any projects were large enough to be regulated under the new limits (>100 MW).

Schaefer responded that there are several examples, some are only in the planning stages.

Forman asked how much effect can regulations recognize wildlife needs? Options are to 1) work within the limits of current regulations and permits, 2) legislature lowers the size limits, or 3) work with stakeholders including utilities, NGO's, and agencies.

Schaefer was skeptical that #3 would work.

Bowman suggested that #3 won't work as self-regulation doesn't work because not all companies will self regulate.

Schaefer reported that approximately 65 towers equals 100 MW. In ND there are 3 big energy companies and a number of smaller companies. In SD there are 5+ big energy companies. 6 wind farms in ND are at 311 MW; 2 wind farms in SD are at 130 MW.

Forman spoke about other issues – the legislative option is an uphill battle. He had spoken with KC Jensen about this and KC had suggested building a coalition to make a green energy surcharge that would support education or other like group. This would benefit more than landowners and the energy company.

Schaefer was not aware that a surcharge was used elsewhere, but www.windpower.org may have something.

Bowman thought that a surcharge would be counter productive to SD's widespread use of tax break incentives to companies and expressed concern that surcharges would not be politically supported.

Schaefer asked if any landowners were concerned with agreement languages. All seem vague on land tax values and who pays for what. This question was brought up by a lawyer in ND.

Bowman gave a MN example, where there are siting requirements for < 2 MW. Single landowners fall below the requirement, but many landowners create a wind farm, but all individuals would be under the requirement. Would some sort of EIS planning be required that is more suited to bigger companies be better than allowing smaller companies to not follow rules? This would help bigger players, create partnerships with energy companies, not fight them.

Forman stated that we need good lines of communications with the PUC. Steve Wegman will give a wind energy workshop at the 2008 SD TWS annual meeting, and this should address what inroads SD TWS can influence. He also promised that SD TWS will be there at a ND TWS wind meeting if it happens.

Schaefer asked what are the right names to invite (senior levels, not field staff)? No politicians are invited at this time.

Dowd Stukel said both Chapters should remember not to miss the public education on wind farm environmental issues (viewing, migration corridors).

Hunt asked if there are other membership-based groups that could collaborate with TWS on the educational process or legislative action?

Flanders-Wanner asked what should be included in the SD TWS letter to the PUC?

Schaefer responded that the ND TWS letter to the PUC used wording "do no ecological harm" to indicate that they could be pro-wind if done in the right way.

Forman stated that the SD TWS letter is good and will be used, but not as a first contact. We will send a thank you letter to PUC after the 2008 annual meeting, hit the important points again, and asking for any clarification and guidance.

The phone call ended at 12:00pm.

Forman suggested dealing with Steve Wegman on a personal level, use the letter not to be combative and ask for guidance/clarification on issues we see as important.

Bowman agreed, establishing a personal relationship is primary.

Bowman and other TNC folks then left the meeting.

Old Business

Correspondence Received

- Thank you letter from SDSU Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation Club for travel funds for TWS meeting.
- Thank you letter from Chuck Rokusek for sponsoring Sioux Empire Sportsman/Conservationist of the Year, Ron Schauer.
- Thank you letter from Sue Grant, South Dakota Resources Coalition for donation.

Correspondence Sent

- Email from Forman to Smith for payment information on Chapter sponsored events voted on at last meeting – Smith was absent due to illness.

New Business

Correspondence Received

- Missouri River Update – email from Cliff Stone was distributed. Stone offered to write a white paper, can use that for several years to guide actions. Maybe as a resolution at the 2008 annual meeting? Flanders-Wanner motioned to task the Committee to develop a white paper on Missouri River issues and explore a resolution for the Chapter at the 2008 annual meeting, Kirschenmann seconded. Motion passed (4-0).
- America's Climate Security Act / TWW – Dowd Stukel reported that this was TWW reviewed, priority was used on species currently without a funding source. Climate change legislation is most probably source of funding for TWW. Liebermann-Warner bill will have cap and trade CO2 limits. Certain amount of limits would be auctioned off. Funds for wildlife would come from that. Coordination of the use of the funds would be mandated. AFWA is following this bill, asking organizations to sign support letters keeping wildlife funding in the bill. Flanders-Wanner motioned for the Chapter to sign on the letter, Kirschenmann seconded. Motion passed (4-0).
- 2008 South Dakota Jr Duck Stamp sponsorship for \$270 – Switzer motioned to support the event at up to \$270 of winged-migration DVD's, Kirschenmann seconded. Motion passed (4-0).

Correspondence Sent

- SD TWS invitation to Michael Hutchins – Laura Bies will attend, Hutchins cannot make it. Bies will give a half-hour update. Kirschenmann suggested putting Bies on the first day or the beginning of the 2nd day.
- SD TWS invitation to Tom Ryder – no response received.

Annual Meeting

- Jensen could not give an update due to illness, would send an email update to the Board.

Newsletter deadline for next issue will be November 23rd. The Leopold Workshop sponsored members write-ups will appear in this issue.

Forman gave a short update on the TransCanada pipeline. Forman and Carl Madsen went to an update at Groton. Some landowners in that part of the state are looking at legal action about the pipeline. Not a good fit for SD TWS as it looks like it'll take a legal fight direction. Approximately 20 landowners and 4-5 attorneys were present at the meeting.

Next meeting was tentatively set for 10am January 9th at Cedar Shore. Kirschenmann moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:05pm, seconded by Flanders-Wanner. Motion approved (4-0), meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Art Smith
Secretary/Treasurer, SDTWS