

ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, INC
646 Rotonda Circle, Rotonda West, FL 33947

Wildlife Committee

MEETING MINUTES

1 September 2020

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:30am.

Present: Patti Cowin, Cari Hale, Don Olsen, Belinda Olsen, Joan Gotthardt, Lynda Chamowitz, Jan Meades, Jim Peterfeso, Kip & Ann Stadnicki

Absent: Steve Froggatt, Jackie Baker

Guests:, Via Zoom: Patricia Aho, Bryan Cordell, Tom Roque, Ken Anselment, Bonnie Anselment, Bob Bondeson

Approval of Minutes: Lynda Chamowitz motioned to approve the minutes of the August meeting as written. 2nd Joan Gotthardt. Motion passed unanimously.

Alligators: Cari Hale related her belief that the Committee members' passion about the wildlife in Rotonda resulted in a very emotional response to the original complaint about the alligators that were being trapped and killed in Pine Valley. She inquired as to whether any alligators were actually dispatched in front of residents and Kip Stadnicki confirmed that that was indeed the case.

As part of the Educational outreach Cari has written an article about alligators for the upcoming West Ways, Alligators and Rotonda West. (see attached)

In response to the concern related by RWA members, Patti Cowin contacted FWC to try to figure out what could be done to liaise with the Trapper prior to destruction of the alligators. The Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) has a mechanism to accomplish this through a Targeted Harvest Area (THA) Permit. Patti has put together a "Sample" THA for RWA that will be distributed to the Committee Members for comments/suggestions prior to taking it to the BOD for review by the insurance carrier and, if needed, RWA attorney. (see attached)

The Proposed Alligator Response Procedure was written to provide step-by-step guidance as to how a call regarding a nuisance alligator is handled. (see attached)

Don Olsen spoke in support of a plan to stop trappers from dispatching alligators in view of RWA members.

Ann Stadnicki mentioned that she was not in favor of "making the decision" as to whether or not an alligator is harvested but rather make an effort to educate the residents of Rotonda West.

Patti indicated that that is exactly the purpose of establishing a THA with SNAP, as a means of inserting RWA into the process thereby providing an opportunity to educate the resident. The resident

(complainant) is still the one who makes the ultimate decision as to whether the animal should be harvested.

Jim Peterfeso inquired as to whether there was a problem at Riverwood with how alligators were being harvested there that drove them to implement a THA. Cari replied that it was a proactive measure by the Manager to protect the wildlife there. He further expressed his concern that a THA would not keep people from just calling to have all the gators taken out of the canals.

Patti explained that the provisions of the permit restrict the harvesting of the animal to within 100 feet of the complainant property which would prevent the trapper from randomly running up and down the canals to harvest whatever gators they come upon.

Joan Gotthardt asked how many calls were made that resulted in the harvesting of the 19 Alligators. A review of the spreadsheet seemed to reveal that 10 calls/contacts resulted in the harvesting of the 19 alligators.

Belinda Olsen, in the 60's, 70's, and 80's the alligator population was decimated. As an apex predator their demise led to serious environmental consequences. These consequences should be addressed when speaking of the impact the removal of alligators has on our ecosystem. Cari indicated that environmental impacts was to be the topic of her next West Ways article.

Jan Meades expressed concern that we would not/do not have the opportunity to educate renters (short-term). Patti indicated that pamphlets had been developed and made available to new owners and renters. Also, in the past the RWA had reached out to management companies and provided copies to them for distribution to their renters.

New Business: Cari has contacted Jason Thompson, Charlotte County Senior Environmental Specialist, to present, via Zoom, an educational program regarding alligators. She is also planning on contacting FWC biologists to provide a talk.

Meeting adjourned at: 10:58.

Next meeting: September 15, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,
Patti Cowin,
BOD Liaison