

# FAAC Annual Report

F U R   A N D   A L L I G A T O R   A D V I S O R Y   C O U N C I L ( F A A C )

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Louisiana's Fur Industry	1
Louisiana's Alligator Industry	1
California Senate Bill 1485	2
Indian Policy	2
Federal Refuges	2
Retail Education	3
Fur Market Overview	3
Alligator Disease Research & Funding	4
Current Goals for International Trade	4
State-wide Public Education	4
Council Goals & 2005-2006 Budget	5
Council History & Current Membership	6

## LOUISIANA'S FUR INDUSTRY

From the early 1900's through the 1980's, Louisiana led the nation in the production of wild fur pelts. During the early 1900's the Louisiana fur industry involved over 20,000 trappers and 1,000 fur buyers and dealers. Muskrat populations exploded during that period with the harvest peaking at over 9 million pelts worth \$12 million in 1945. This production was more than occurred in all the other states combined. A much larger rodent, the nutria, was placed in captivity in the state in the late 1930s and escaped and/or was released

into the near perfect habitat of coastal Louisiana in the late 1930's. This South American native multiplied quickly and by 1962 surpassed the muskrat in numbers harvested. Between 1962 and 1982 coastal trappers averaged harvesting over 1.3 million nutria each year, representing over 64% of the total catch and 60% of the total value of the industry.

Louisiana produces 11 different species of furbearers (beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, raccoon, red fox, river otter). During the past

10 years, the state has averaged producing nearly 195,362 pelts annually. The average annual production of nutria during the past 10 years has been, 136,040 and raccoon 37,100. These two species alone provided nearly 75% of the value of an industry worth approximately \$1million annually to Louisiana trappers. **The annual fur harvest of all species has historically been valued as high as \$25 million to the state's 10,000 trappers.**

## LOUISIANA'S ALLIGATOR INDUSTRY

Louisiana also leads the U. S. 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 2004 has produced over 699,000 wild skins with an estimated dockside value of \$191 million.

This harvest has averaged approximately 33,061 skins annually, worth around \$9 million dockside including meat during each of the past 5 years. The 2005 wild harvest of 31,269 raw skins was valued at over \$10.8 million including alligator meat. In 2004, farmers sold 298,720 skins, which averaged 3.87 feet and were valued at over \$30 million. The farm/ranch harvest from 1972 through 2004 produced 2.73 million skins with an estimated value of \$250 million.



## ALLIGATOR BILL CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 1485

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Fur and Alligator Advisory Council and Ashley & Associates collaborated with California Legislators to open the market for alligator products in California. Trade in alligator and crocodile has been forbidden by California state law. Bill 1485 will amend the law prohibiting one of Louisiana's greatest natural resources from entering into fair trade in California. The first step was to educate the legislators about Louisiana's legal, sustainable and verifiable alligator program. The bill passed both the Assembly and the Senate and is on its way to the Governor's office for signature.



*Asst. Sec. of LDWF Parke Moore, Don & Pamela Ashley discussing SB 1485 with Vice-Chair Sen. Bob Margett*

## CHANGE IN INDIAN POLICY



Representatives from the Fur and Alligator Council were approached by the managing partner of Sibrama, Rajiv Marwah, at the Baselworld Watchstrap show. He informed the FAAC representatives that his company had been denied approval to manufacture alligator leather goods in India.

*Watchstraps made in France by Indian manufacturer.*

The Fur and Alligator Advisory Council provided vital information regarding legality, sustainable use, and CITES regulations, which subsequently convince the Indian ministries to change their ruling. The Indian Government provided Sibrama with a "No objection certificate" required to import the Alligator Skins.

## FEDERAL REFUGES

The Fur and Alligator Advisory Council has recently initiated a new project to evaluate and overcome current statutory and regulatory barriers to alligator egg collection on Federal lands (Refuges). The Council has convened a small working group of FAAC members to work with staff/contractors on this important project. Initial work on evaluating the legal and policy scenario is now underway with plans to travel to D.C.



*Alligator nest*

**R E T A I L E D U C A T I O N**



*Ms. Maynard learns the basics about manufacturing with fine, Louisiana alligator skins, which she will later share with retailers and their training staff.*

Christine Maynard educates retail staff around the world about the marsh to market conservation story of Louisiana's alligators. She incorporates messages from alligator hunters, farmers, tanners, manufacturers, and biologists into her program. She trains from Palm Beach to New York and from Milan to China. Some of clients include Saks, Mont Blanc, Prada, Gucci, and Christian Dior.

**F U R M A R K E T O V E R V I E W**

Mainland China is now vying with Hong Kong for control of fur manufacturing and is now bringing in international buyers via the Beijing Fur Fair. The Beijing Fur Fair grew 50% from 2003-4, 35% from 2004-5 and 30% in 2005-6. This Fair may be as large as the Hong Kong Fur Fair within 4 years.

It should also be noted that the 2006 Hong Kong Fur Fair was the largest ever, indicating a strong fur market. The entire international fur-consuming world was well represented.

The 2006 wild fur auction season was, and still is, very strong. Buyers anticipate growth in sales again in 2006-7. The demand for furs is widespread, firmly entrenched and branching out. More new countries (like Lithuania) are represented at the fairs and fur auctions

than ever before. The prices have risen sharply for all furs with the exception of raccoon and nutria.

Louisiana's position is very positive.

*Beijing Fur Fair: FAAC Booth*



**C O A S T W I D E N U T R I A C O N T R O L P R O G R A M**

It is estimated that approximately 46,000 acres of wetlands are presently impacted by nutria. Prior to the Coastwide Nutria Control Program this figure was estimated at 80,000 acres of damage. This year a total of 168,843 nutria tails, worth \$675,372 in incentive payments were collected from 216 participants. The parishes with the most participants were: 1) Terrebonne, 2) Lafourche, 3) St Martin, 4) St Mary and 5) St. John.

As Year 5 of the CNCP approaches, LDWF has identified an important adaptive management modifica-

tion. The incentive payment, which has been \$4.00 per nutria tail turned in, will be increased to \$5.00 for the 2006-2007 Trapping Season. Due to the substantial increase in fuel cost since August 2005 and the displacement of many historical nutria trappers/hunters by the 2005 hurricanes, the cost of harvesting nutria for 2006-2007 season will certainly increase, warranting the increase in incentive payment to \$5.00 per nutria tail.

**ALLIGATOR DISEASE RESEARCH & FUNDING**

The LDWF has now finally received the funding provided by Congress in the FY05 and FY06 Agriculture Appropriations legislation through the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This funding is a direct result of FAAC's efforts in Washington, DC, working with the LA Delegation and Appropriation Committees.

FAAC is currently working to secure further funding as part of the FY07 appropriations process. To date, the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee has provided an additional \$200,000 for this research in FY07. FAAC will continue to work with the LA Delegation and Appropriations Committees to ensure this funding remains intact through this difficult and lengthy legislative process.



*Alligator disease research funded by congress*

**CURRENT GOALS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES**

*With world trade in classic crocodilians reaching almost 600,000 skins, the importance to fully implement these priorities is evident.*

The IUCN Crocodile Specialists Group meeting (CSG) in Montelimar, France was well attended with more than 200 delegates from 26 countries participating in week long sessions, Steering Committee and Working Groups meetings. The Industry Committee priorities continued to be:

- 1) Streamline CITES permitting & expedite port inspections;
- 2) Pass California SB1485;

- 3) expand CITES Personal Effects exemptions;
- 4) Improve CITES ID manual for use by trade, Customs & port inspectors;
- 5) support compliance and enforcement initiatives that ensure trade is legal, sustainable and verifiable; and
- 6) Enhance conservation education by removing negative trade messages and replacing with positive images of sustainable use benefits to people and wildlife.

**STATE-WIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The Fur and Alligator Advisory Council promotes wildlife management and interacts with students, teachers and the general public at events such as the Sportsman Show, the State Fair, the Louisiana Science Teachers' Association and Future Farmers of America.

Volunteers and staff present at public libraries and public schools, teaching children about conservation and native species.



*Mrs. Louisiana giving a girl a sticker at the Louisiana Sportsman Show*

**T H E S P E C I F I C G O A L S O F T H E C O U N C I L**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1) To educate the public regarding the need for trapping as a sound wildlife management tool and regarding the logic of managing fur-bearing species and alligators as renewable resources.</p> <p>2) To identify the current consumers of Louisiana furs and alligator hides.</p> <p>3) To identify present and potential Louisiana fur and alligator marketing problems, obstacles, and related significant issues.</p> | <p>4) To strengthen existing markets and develop new markets and marketing strategies for raw and finished Louisiana fur and alligator products.</p> <p>5) To develop and implement an international advertising campaign to promote the utilization of raw and finished Louisiana fur and alligator products.</p> <p>6) To examine, evaluate and make recommendations concerning any aspect of the fur and alligator</p> | <p>industry including habitat management, harvest, and marketing that will enhance the future of the industry and perpetuate the conservation of these species.</p> <p>7) To make specific recommendations to the Secretary regarding the expenditures of monies from the Alligator Resource Fund including any annual surplus only as provided for in R.S. 56:279.</p> |
|--|---|---|

**2 0 0 5 - 2 0 0 6 B U D G E T**

The Fur and Alligator Advisory Council operates from three funding sources, Rockefeller Trust Funds, Alligator Resource Funds, and Education and Marketing Funds.

<b>Rockefeller Trust Funds</b>	
<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>
Travel	\$216.00
Operating Services- <i>i.e. cell phone, newspaper ads</i>	\$8,247.54
Supplies- <i>i.e. sample furs, sample products</i>	\$2,986.46
Professional Services- <i>i.e. fur promotion contract, retail contract</i>	\$138,550.00
<b>Rockefeller Trust Funds Expended</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>
<b>Alligator Resource Funds</b>	
<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>\$400,000.00</b>
Salaries and Benefits	\$31,800.43
Operating Services- <i>i.e. cell phone, internet service</i>	\$5,685.64
Supplies- <i>i.e. printing supplies, office supplies</i>	\$4,505.12
Professional Services- <i>i.e. education contract, technical contract</i>	\$189,000.00
Capital Outlay	\$789.88
<b>Alligator Resource Funds Expended</b>	<b>\$231,781.07</b>
<b>Education and Marketing Fund</b>	
<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>
Salaries and Benefits	\$31,878.67
Travel	\$7,107.02
Operating Services- <i>i.e. cell phone, internet service</i>	\$8,213.44
Supplies- <i>i.e. printing supplies, office supplies, sample furs</i>	\$14,295.77
<b>Education and Marketing Funds Expended</b>	<b>\$61,494.90</b>
<b>Total FAAC Funds Budgeted</b>	<b>\$650,000.00</b>
<b>Total Expended</b>	<b>\$443,275.97</b>



**F U R   A N D  
A L L I G A T O R  
A D V I S O R Y  
C O U N C I L ( F A A C )**

1735 1/2 Washington St.  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

Phone: 318-354-1229

Fax: 318-354-9990

E-mail: t.sturman@suddenlink.net

***...Industries conserving species,  
habitats, and cultures.***

During the mid-1980s the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters Association began talking with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries about the needs of the fur and alligator industries in Louisiana. This association working closely with representatives of major coastal landowners approached the legislature with a bill during the 1986 Legislature to begin positive action to address the problems facing these industries.

Act 455 (R.S.56:266) established all of the essential elements to begin addressing the problems facing the fur and alligator industries. The Act created a special fund designated as the **"Louisiana Fur and Alligator Public Education and Marketing Fund"**. This Act spelled out 6 specific goals to be addressed through expenditures from this dedicated fund.

**The Louisiana Fur and Alligator Advisory Council (FAAC)** was created by the Legislature and is housed within that Department. This Advisory Council is responsible for reviewing and approving recommended procedures and programs to be funded from these dedicated revenues to insure that all expenditures are for the specific goals of the Act. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is responsible for maintaining all the financial records of the FAAC.

**F U R   A N D   A L L I G A T O R  
A D V I S O R Y   C O U N C I L   M E M B E R S**

**Samuel J. Smith**  
Statewide Representative  
Term: 3/23/04 - 3/23/08

**Johnny Price**  
Coastal Landowner Representative  
Term: 02/24/06 - 02/23/10

**Frank E. Ellender**  
Coastal Landowner Representative  
Term: 02/24/06 - 02/23/10

**Allan Ensminger**  
Coastal Landowner Representative  
Term: 03/06/06 - 03/05/10

**Gerald Savoie**  
La. Alligator Farmers and Ranchers  
Term: 03/23/04 - 03/23/08

**Marshal Klump**  
La. Alligator Farmers and Ranchers  
Term: 08/22/05 - 08/21/09

**Dan Davis, Vice Chairman**  
Southeast Louisiana Representative  
Term: 4/30/06 - 4/29/10

**Charles Pettefer**  
Southwest Louisiana Representative  
Term: 04/30/06 - 04/29/10

**Don Aycock**  
Senate Designee  
Term: 01/05/06 - 01/04/10

**Kevin Sagrera**  
La. Alligator Farmers and Ranchers  
Term: 04/13/04 - 04/12/08

**James Gallaspy**  
North Louisiana Representative  
Term: 04/30/06 - 04/29/10

**Nathan Wall**  
La. Alligator Farmers and Ranchers  
Term: 08/22/05 - 08/21/09



Current Council Chair: Darrell Dupont

**Darrell "Fats" Dupont, Chairman**  
House of Representatives Designee  
Term: 01/05/06 - 01/04/10