

February 8, 2007  
Policy, Regulation, and Trade Committee Meeting  
UNCG Eberhart Building Conference Room

Dave Davenport, Ann Somers, John Groves, Andrew Wyatt, Keith Farmer, Grover Barfield, Rhonda Washington, Kendrick Weeks, Dave LaPlante, Bob Pendergrass, Tanith Tyrr, Ted Williams, and Chad Hock

1:00pm

DaveD: Agenda: The main purpose is to finalize the policy recommendations that we have been working on for the past year and a half. We also have an Inherently Dangerous Animal Bill Study Committee update from DaveD and Andrew; we will table that for later. Mainly, I want to make sure we have not missed anything or left anything out. Then, we will be done until it gets kicked back to us.

Keith: Can we digress for a moment? If you look at the new turtle bill, the Commission has changed it from our recommendations.

DaveD: I think we should leave it. What happened was they accepted all of our recommendations except they pulled all exotics, snapping, mud, and musk turtles. And they defined the two original families, the emydids and trionychids, to exclude exotics. The Commission is willing to start tackling our recommendations for regulating potentially dangerous animals. I have called a meeting with the steering committee. So, our recommendations will go to the steering committee who will decide where it goes and includes the nongame advisory board and the Commission staff. It is going to take a while and get batted around a while. But what I told the steering committee is that we were formed to advise the Commission. Only when it is absolutely dead in the water, we can revisit as what NCPARC will do with these recommendations from there. This is a matter of public record and can be taken by anyone to do anything, but I hope that any top down actions will not happen until it has completely and thoroughly been grinded through the Commission. It took us 1.5 years to come up with these regulations and I wouldn't be surprised if it took twice as long to go through the Commission.

Ann: We have to be patient.

DaveD: As far as the study bill committee goes, the bottom line is that everyone was willing to discuss an exemption for reptiles and for mammals for those institutions that could qualify. I don't think the bill is going to go anywhere, but we need to act like it is. The animal rights groups got nothing they really wanted. The problem I see is that the study committee is still expecting some exemption language from us.

Tanith: Well, EAKA was going to work on that and Dr. Jones was going to make the AZA standards available to them and to date has not done so.

DaveD: OK. For one thing, I want to clearly separate herps and mammals. The best thing that could ever happen to this process is for us to amend the existing welfare animal act to put them under federal jurisdiction so that the Commission does not feel like they are opening Pandora's Box by regulating herps. Since USDA does not regulate herps then there we go.

Ann: Then there is the fear of the pet trade and birds.

DaveD: No one wants the pet trade.

John: Birds are already regulated.

DaveD: Birds were left out of the study bill committee except for the first meeting where we spent 20 minutes discussing whether parrots were inherently dangerous. Birds are out of the loop. I am going to meet with Dr. Jones and show him PRT's recommendations. The study bill was very careful not to mention any agency. In fact, the agencies are crafting their own statements that they don't want it. What is difficult is that we name an agency. I want them to have these regs without naming an agency.

Andrew: I have an idea. First of all, the chance the bill is passed into law is not good. As far as accommodating the will of the study bill committee, we can put "some agency". That way we fulfill our role and get the meat of what we want to the study bill committee.

DaveD: That sounds fine. USDA has already said publicly that they can handle the dangerous mammals. But what they don't want is every pet owner. The original intent of the study bill is to prevent the big cats from being a threat. The state would love that it comes under federal jurisdiction.

Chad: Doesn't that weaken the case of herps?

DaveD: Actually, I think it strengthens it.

Tanith: John, how far apart are USDA and AZA standards?

John: I am not sure because I don't deal with USDA, but I would think that if you pass USDA standards you would be pretty close to AZA.

Tanith: The case being made was that the USDA standards were inadequate.

DaveD: Well, remember who was saying that.

John: USDA standards are a minimum and zoos are trying to get above that with AZA standards.

Some discussion about AZA standards and snake bite alarms at NC zoos and aquariums.

DaveD: And, if I understand correctly, USDA would be able to identify an institutions ability to meet those AZA standards.

Discussion about misinformation and inflammatory comments about parties involved in the study bill committee and the whole issue. Also discussion about the views of staff and the views of an institution or agency.

DaveD: I don't want to tear down what we have worked on.

Andrew: Let's not tip over the apple cart when we are about to cross the finish line.

DaveD: Let's talk about this. One thing that Phil Bradley found is that we put snake tongs or something specific.

Andrew: For class C, I don't like "beginner"

Tanith: How about "entry"?

### **Agreement**

Andrew: I hate API's title, "Inherently"

DaveD: What does that mean?

Ann: I guess it means in and of itself.

Discussion about the title of policy recommendations.

DaveD: Can we come to a consensus on removing "inherently dangerous" from Recommendations for the Regulation of Inherently Dangerous Reptiles?

Ann: Well, there are dangerous. How about "Recommendations for the Regulation of Dangerous Reptiles?"

DaveD: What about "potentially?" Is everyone OK with "Regulation Recommendations for the Possession of Potentially Dangerous Reptiles?" Do we have a consensus?

Discussion about secure locked enclosures and locked rooms vs. locked cages and exemptions to the recommendations.

Keith: I move to leave it as it is.

Second

DaveD: All those in favor?

DaveD: Opposed?

### **Motion Passed**

DaveD: Now we can move ahead

Discussion about screen tops being inappropriate and amending caging standards.

Discussion about adding a bite protocol checklist.

DaveD: So, the license will require, “a list of species kept, a copy of the letter of anti-venom proof, the nearest and or preferred hospital information, a bite protocol check list, and once granted a copy of the venomous reptile license must be posted in the room or near the cage where the animals are kept.”

### **Agreement**

Tanith: What about instructions to where the animals are to go in case of death?

DaveD: It will be the regulating agency’s responsibility.

Andrew: That is a legitimate question, but I don’t think we need to address it in these recommendations.

Discussion about antivenin requirements for venomous reptiles which have no antivenom.

DaveD: We can easily add a statement that venomous lizards are exempt from proof of antivenom, but we should treat all snakes the same.

Discussion about specific language associated with posting copy of venomous license in plain sight for emergency personnel, etc.

DaveD: How about if we say, “copy of venomous reptile license must be posted in plain sight (on the door, in the room, or near the cage)”

**BREAK**

John Groves read statement to the Policy, Regulation, and Trade working group:

Statement: To NCPARC Policy, Regulations and Trade Committee concerning the Inherently Dangerous Animal Study Bill for NC

From: John D. Groves, Curator, Amphibians and Reptiles, North Carolina Zoological Park

Date: 8 February 2007

I have seen and am aware of a number of false statements and written documents that are being used to make the employee's of the North Carolina Zoological Park appear to be unprofessional and unethical in caring for their animals. These statements started by individuals and groups that became involved with the Inherently Dangerous Animal Study Bill that may go to the North Carolina Legislator this year.

These statements are unprofessional and distort truths about the animals at the Zoo and zoo employee's that have been reliably reported in a variety of newspapers throughout the state over the last several years. They show that some individuals and/or groups associated with the reptile and amphibian business are not taking a serious situation seriously and are just trying to press their own agendas in a very destructive way. This spreading of misinformation about the zoo attacks and hurts all of the employee's at the zoo, other state employee's and all professional reptile keepers in the state, both public and private. It helps to feed into the poor and damaging views that many citizens have about people who are interested and keep a variety of amphibians and reptiles.

It also demonstrates, in my view, that these individuals and/or groups are not professional themselves and consequentially may not care much about their own animals and their welfare. Serious consideration must be given to whether or not they themselves should be keeping animals at all.

If these behaviors are not stopped they may attack other individuals and/or reliable organizations that are trying to make our hobby and/or profession, such as NCPARC, herpetological societies and other related organizations that are well meaning and demonstrate professional attitudes about amphibians and reptiles. These behaviors may also attack individuals who care about learning more about these animals so that adequate protection and understanding about them can be advanced to the general public. A similar event such as this did indeed occur several years ago where a variety of herpetologists were attacked with a distorted and untruthful commentary in the pages of the Chicago Herpetological Society.

I am personally offended by these untrue statements and unprofessional behaviors made about the zoo and its employee's.

DaveD: Thanks John. I think we will not plan a new meeting until we need to.

Next Meeting: TBA; based upon developments