

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**

**Central Region Office
Robbinsville, New Jersey
August 8, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Fish and Game Council was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Chairman David Burke.

The flag salute and pledge of allegiance were completed.

Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State on July 27, 2017 and delivered to the designated newspapers for the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press; published on August 3, 2017.

Roll call was taken in attendance:

Councilman Phillip Brodhecker
Chairman David Burke
Councilman Joseph DeMartino
Councilman James DeStephano
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Rick Lathrop
Councilman Jeffery Link
Councilman Robert Pollock
Councilman Frank Virgilio

Absent:

Councilwoman Cathy Blumig

Division employees included: L. Herrity, P. Nelson, D. Golden, A. Ivany, B. Stoff, L. Barno, C. Stanko, M. Monteschio, Esq., J. Bullock, and D. Ogonofski.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Burke stated Senator Raymond Lesniak is expected to attend the meeting to address the Council regarding cancellation of the bear hunt. As a courtesy to the Senator, when he arrives, we will allow him to make his comments and return to the regular agenda afterwards.

Chairman Burke asked for corrections or additions to the June 12, 2017 meeting.

A Motion was made by Councilman Brodhecker to approve the June 12, 2017 minutes and seconded by Councilman DeStephano. Vote taken, all were in favor; motion carried.

Chairman Burke stated he had visited the Outer Banks of North Carolina and noticed drones are not allowed in any of their parks property. New Jersey Game Code has a new section indicating you cannot hunt, harass, drive, or rally wildlife with a drone. Chairman Burke stated the Division may want to consider this regulation for the Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). Acting Assistant Director David Golden responded signs have been put on WMAs restricting drones but it needs to be incorporated into the regulations. Researchers can be granted special use permits for drone research purposes.

Chairman Burke noted there was a 3,500-acre forest fire down in Wharton Forest. Since then, Bob Williams had a positive article in the Atlantic City Press about forest fires in the pinelands. Fires are part of the ecology plan and are not all bad. There was a short period of drought, which attributed to the forest fire. Generally, there has been a decent amount rain which is good for wildlife which does not have a lot of agriculture around. Chairman Burke noted the fluke regulation has been a concern of all sportsmen. They are happy to have the three fish, 18-inch limit although the season is going to be a lot shorter.

Chairman Burke asked Acting Director Herrighty for comments.

Director Larry Herrighty reported for the first time in the history of the ASMFC a recommendation to find a state out of compliance was not accepted by the US Secretary of Commerce. When ASMFC determines a state is out of compliance with one of their fishery management plans, a recommendation is sent to NOAA to impose a moratorium on the fishery in that state. NOAA reviews the recommendation and any justification the state puts forward in their defense, and a final determination is made by the Secretary of Commerce on whether the state is out of compliance or not. As you know, the Division hung its' hat on the fact that a 19-inch minimum size limit would increase throw backs and result in more dead discards than harvested fish. Maintaining an 18" size limit would result in nearly identical total mortality (harvest plus dead discards) while allowing anglers a better chance to take home a legal sized fish. ASMFC was concerned about that precedent of using total mortality rather than just harvest mortality as has been used historically. The Secretary of Commerce was invited to come down and speak at last week's ASMFC meeting. He declined and sent an Undersecretary there and explained it to them. The Division will see what happens next year. Next week the Division will start the process over again in Philadelphia and start analyzing the data collected from the various surveys to see what the quota should be for next year. There was an issue with black sea bass where there was a vote in May to reduce New Jersey's October/November season from 15 fish to 5 fish, with no data provided to support the reduction. Over the summer ASMFC analyzed the data and realized that the change in bag limit had the potential to reduce the harvest by 5%. With percent standard error intervals of 20% ASMFC usually work with, they realized the harvest reduction was not worth it. The Division was successful with helping New York pushing an amendment forward to re-establish a 15-fish bag limit for black sea bass in the fall season, which is one of the few species people are allowed to fish for in those months.

The Marine Digest was able to be published. It was held up because of the fluke issue and we lost our printing queue and had to wait a couple of weeks. We are on schedule for the hunting digest.

Director Herrigthy stated the newspaper published a court case that was settled where a couple of towns held up salary increments and steps for their employee and it was overturned by the Supreme Court. That may affect the State employees who have not received their normal yearly raise. Assistant Director Nelson and the accounting staff is making sure there is money in reserve if we get the word on retro pay to employees. We are also working on hiring. It is a long process as there are a lot of background checks and Ms. Ogonofski has been working on this. Interviews will be held soon for several biologists and a veterinarian position to replace Dr. Roscoe. Director Herrigthy introduced his new Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Joyce Bullock, who will also act as a backup Council Secretary, as she is doing today.

Director Herrigthy passed around an informational packet and stated it is part of the Division education effort to reduce the mortality of throwback fluke was relying on some information from a Fairleigh Dickenson study that looked at various hook sizes and recommended the 5- 7 hook size that would not catch a lot of small fish, therefore fish would not swallow the hooks. Working with the American Sport Fishing Association, Eagle Claw donated 20,000 hooks. Working with our staff and the Department staff put together the informational packet. It was submitted at a trade show a couple of weeks ago and it won first prize for the educational prize. It was passed around last week at the AMSFC and everyone was impressed. Other states are thinking about getting on board with this type effort. These packets were distributed to various bait and tackle shops along the coast. The names of the tackle shops will be put up on the website. The idea is that fisherman will try them, see how they work and if it works effectively, it is hoped they will buy that size hook. He believes Fairleigh Dickenson will look at the common circle type hook used for flounder and do a similar study to look at the effectiveness and appropriate size to use.

Chairman Burke asked if the Division will do a follow up study to see if it works or not.

Herrigthy stated the Division hired Montclair to do an economic study on the changing fluke size limit. They are going to be contracted to do a follow up study on our educational efforts.

Director Herrigthy stated on June 17th he received a letter from the Governor's office stating he has been appointed Director.

Councilman Virgilio asked about backfilling other position such as assistant directors,

Director Herrigthy stated paperwork has been submitted to backfill various open/acting positions. Assistant Director Nelson clarified that paperwork going forth is for permission to hire.

A discussion took place on the various hooks used and available. Director Herrigthy directed the Council to look at the latest Marine Digest.

Chairman Burke noted there was a couple of technical issues regarding the Fish Code which will be voted on later in the meeting. The public will be allowed to make comments on them.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture Committee Report:

Councilman Brodhecker stated it has been a really wet July and a challenge for farmers to get crops in. There has been a lot of deer and bear activity as the crops are maturing. Councilman Brodhecker reported seeing a sow and three cubs in the oat fields and signs of bear damage in the fields. He also received a second-hand report of a farmer who had tremendous bear damage to his peach crop. Councilman Brodhecker stated bear damage does not only damage this year's crop, but also future crops. There is evidence of deer damage on the outer fringe of the corn crop where they nip the bloom off and leave a stalk. The deer come across from the development overnight, feed on the edge of the field, and go back. It makes it challenging during the hunting season and with depredation permits to manage a predator like that in the crops.

Councilman Brodhecker stated this time of the year is a great time to stop by the roadside stands in Gloucester County for peaches. His area has also experienced a lot of rain with the short dry period. Councilman Brodhecker encouraged Acting Assistant Director Golden to keep active with forest management and do his best to keep the state pro-active in land management to minimize catastrophic wildfire.

Chairman Burke recognized Senator Lesniak and invited him to come to the front.

Senator Lesniak stated he wanted to voice his opposition to the bear hunt. He has put legislation forth for the way the State of New Jersey or any state should go as an alternate means to control the bear population. He stated he is not against hunting and had been qualified as a sharp shooter in the Army. He stated one other state allows bear baiting, Alaska, and noted it is not a sport. He stated hunting is "hunt your prey not killing fish in a barrel." Studies have been done regarding introducing human food into the wilderness acclimates the animals into residential areas. Senator Lesniak stated the other part of his legislation would be to require bear resistant trash disposal. He also stated there were pictures of baby cubs that were killed during the hunt. He stated the State should not allow them to be part of the hunt as it is inhumane and bear baiting should not be allowed. He stated he is from an urban area, but has studied, as chairman of the agriculture committee, the issues with states that have similar problems with national parks and can be dealt with in a better, safer way and without mass killing. Senator Lesniak urged the Council not to move on with the scheduled bear hunt in October.

Chairman Burke noted there will be a comment period at the end of the meeting as normally scheduled for those who are interested and moved back to the agenda calling on Dr. Reist for a report. Dr. Sebastian Reist from New Jersey Department of Agriculture did not have anything to report.

Farmer/Sportsman Relations:

Councilman Brodhecker stated the committee had no new report since the last meeting

State Federation Reports:

Councilmen DeMartino and DeStephano reported there were no meetings held and had nothing to report.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported he did not attend any meeting but did have the opportunity to fish with John Rogalo in the northern region in Montana. While there, and during the state closure, they both received numerous calls regarding not being able to fish and the beach being closed. He also reported receiving a call about a bear walking down the middle of the street on Grand Ave. in Hackettstown and eventually entering the State park, which was closed to the public. The bear came back four more times after that sighting.

Councilman Virgilio reported there were no meetings with the exception of the southern region meeting which was basically about communication. They are interested in cross regional communication with farmers. Meetings will be set up with Gloucester County Board of Agriculture as well as other counties. Once information is collected regionally, he will share it with the State.

Chairman Burke stated he did not attend any meetings either, but did receive feedback through the Atlantic County president. Someone was concerned about information received on the website regarding the change in the boundaries between zones 42 and 26. After reviewing it himself, he stated the maps had not been changed and asked Chief Ivany to look into getting the correct maps posted.

Finance Committee:

Councilman Link reported the Committee met on June 12th, but has nothing to report to the Council at this time.

Fish Committee:

Councilman Gudmundsson reported there was no meeting, but there are items on the agenda to discuss later.

Game Committee:

Chairman Burke reported there was a short meeting before the Council meeting began to discuss pheasant production. Another meeting will be held soon. The stocking schedule will be published in the near future.

Legislative Committee:

The legislative activity report was distributed. Assistant Director Nelson stated she changed the format of the report having the bills listed by topic. She asked for feedback on which way the Council would prefer to see the report by topic or numerical order.

S-1808 designates striped bass as NJ State Saltwater Fish; re-designates brook trout as New Jersey Freshwater Fish. This is now law.

A-4974 appropriates \$5 million from the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture for financial assistance to fishermen affected by 2017 reduction in summer flounder and black sea bass harvest quotas. This is for commercial fishermen.

S-2969 limits application of DEP shellfish habitat rules for certain dredging activities. This is now law.

The next three bills have to do with pollinators and are from the Mosquito Commission.

A-4606 directs DEP to designate native bee nesting habitat areas in each State park and forest. (Parks may have to designate some fields or provide boxes).

AJR-144 establishes “Healthy Pollinators Task Force.” Approved by the assembly

AR-216 encourages New Jersey homeowners to plant native plants that support bee populations and create habitat for all pollinators.

A-5128 requires State parks, forest and other natural and historic areas to remain open to the public for seven days if emergency is declared due to failure to enact general appropriation law as prescribed by New Jersey constitution.

Endangered & Non-Game Species Advisory Committee:

Councilman Lathrop reported the committee has been engaged in aquaculture and shorebirds on Delaware Bay. Several committee members are working with the New Jersey Sea Grant funded team to put together a meeting on oyster aquaculture and shorebirds. It has been scheduled for September 27 & 28 at the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve in Tuckerton and is limited to 60 participants. There will be a lot of interaction and participation. Invitations will be going out shortly.

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee:

Chairman Burke reported the Committee will meet on September 19th.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee:

Councilman Brodhecker reported having a meeting in July and discussed regulations on the Wildlife Control Officers. This topic had been addressed in late 1999 through 2001. Rehabilitators had written information on it, but it was dropped for an unknown reason. The Wildlife Rehabilitators Committee has formed a subcommittee to re-address regulations for Wildlife Control Officers. There was a discussion on veterinarian sign off on non-releasable animals kept in captivity. It is not in the State regulations at this time. There was talk about rabies positive test of wildlife and the statistics of what was tested so far this year. The next meeting for the committee will be on October 25, 2017.

Public Member:

Councilman Pollock reported he received an email from the Allentown Lions Club requesting the Department's help in stocking a kid's fishing tournament for the 4th of July. It was going to be a

pay event, but since the State stocked the fish it was a free to all event. Councilman Pollock stated it was a great event and they sent him a bunch of pictures.

DIVISION REPORTS

Barbara Stoff, Licensing and Permits reported July is usually the slowest month of the year. The 2018 license schedule is complete and has been sent to the vendor. The 2018 license year data tables are also complete. She is now in the process of last edits to the fishing and hunting license tables. Ms. Stoff stated everything is in the process of being tested getting ready for the over-the-counter sales which start September 11th at 10:00 am. Testing will also begin on harvest reporting within the next week. The RFP is progressing through Treasury. She does not know how long that will be. Ms. Stoff stated she is working on the matrix for scoring once the bids start to come in.

Councilman Virgilio asked if next month if she could provide information that shows the improvement for the mentor program for fishing buddies on a county level so the Federation can show progress and push recruitment. Ms. Stoff stated she could do it but it may not be 100% accurate because of the way the system handles addresses.

Chief Lisa Barno, Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries, reported on July 30th a quarry discharged a tremendous amount of sediment down Spruce Run Creek. It affected, completely, two miles of creek from the quarry discharge all the way down to Spruce Run Reservoir. Law Enforcement has been on site regularly. The Lands Management Enforcement has been on site as well as Shawn Crouse, a Fisheries Biologist. As of yesterday, a cleanup process has been started using a series of check dams that was installed at several points along the creek. Pump trucks are being used to suck out the sediment as well as water trucks to flush sediment down to the check points. It is a very slow, labor intensive process to clean the sediment. The number of dead fish is only a handful to date. The main impact is that the entire food supply for the stream is completely wiped out. Freshwater biological monitors will be out there today and tomorrow checking on the macro invertebrates. Mussels are predicted to be gone.

Chief Barno stated there have been repeated problems with the quarry, but the last two years they indicate, they are better in their operations. They are going to re-evaluate their process. The Company is paying for the cleanup by hiring a cleanup company. There is a written plan for the cleanup in order to be clear on what is to be cleaned.

Chief Barno gave an update on the West Portal Creek where the detergent spill took place last year. Staff has been going up to check as the brown trout has been moving in with the brookies. Staff has been systematically moving the browns and relocating them and allowing the native brook trout to have the edge on spawning.

Chief Barno stated there are two technical changes to be added to the Fish Code. One is there was an American Eel discrepancy between the marine regulations and the freshwater regulations. There was a 9" limit for marine waters and a 6" size for freshwater. The 9" increase was due to a ASMFC requirement and the Bureau would like to follow suit in order to be consistent and

increase the American Eel size to 9". Councilman Virgilio asked if the size change would affect the special stretch of the Delaware River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania where they share regulations. Chief Barno responded yes.

The other technical change would be changing the size limit on muskies from 40" to 44". Throughout this process, and as a result of the cool water assessment, the Bureau has been in contact with New York. New York is very interested in increasing their size limit, but due to their code cycle, they will not be able to get their regulations effective until April 1, 2019. They have requested if the Council would consider making the size limit increase for muskies on Greenwood Lake as of April 1, 2019. It is just a matter of changing the effective date.

Chairman Burke opened the floor for Public Comment before the vote.

Public Comment On Technical Changes To The Fish Code:

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ stated as an interested member of the public, she is not interested in increasing the size of the fish from 6" to 9". She is also in agreement with allowing the fish to go up from 40" to 44". Ms. Sachau also stated it is deleterious to the species.

Councilman Gudmundsson made a motion to increase the size from 6" to 9" for American Eel to remain consistent with the Marine Fisheries Regulation, seconded by Councilman DeMartino. A vote was taken; all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Councilman Gudmundsson made a motion to modify the proposed changes to the Greenwood Lake Muskie size limit increasing from 40" to 44" effective on April 1 2019 to stay consistent with New York State Regulations seconded by Councilman DeStephano. A vote was taken; all were in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Chairman Burke called attention to a letter sent by Mr. Ken Kett from Bayville, New Jersey, that was sent to the Council and is in favor of catch and release artificial only areas.

Chief Al Ivany, Information and Education reported the Bureau has been heavily involved in getting the word out about fluke and the "If you can't keep it, save it" campaign. using the website, Facebook, podcast and news releases through the DEP Press Office. It has been a very successful campaign.

The Department's website is currently being redesigned. The administration wants to get it live and going by the end of the year. Division Webmaster Paul Tarlowe is the lead on coordinating the effort for the Division. Fish and Wildlife has the most visited pages in DEP.

Meetings continue with Granicus, (formally called GovDelivery,) to develop a template and improved delivery system for e-mails sent by the Division through its listservs. This will also help us deliver more e-mails with attachments and capture e-mail addresses from the public. Improvements here will also help with our marketing efforts to sell more licenses. This should be up and running by October.

Planning continues for the Wild Outdoor Expo that will be held September 9th & 10th at the Colliers Mills Wildlife Management Area in Jackson Township.

The Hunting Digest was being delayed because of the delay with the Marine Digest and the Fluke issue. It looks like it will now be on time or close to it. The approved proof must be to the publisher by August 18th. Staff is working hard to do this. The on the shelf date is currently September 7th or 8th. The Bureau is trying to get it moved up to September 1st.

The Bureau just kicked off its first Outdoor Women and Outdoor Families of New Jersey programs on August 5th and 6th on Sedge Island. Things went well with 40 people in each program. Post surveys are being done. This is a part of the R3 effort (recruitment, retention and reactivation.) The Outdoor Women of New Jersey program is similar to the popular Becoming an Outdoors Woman program done in years past. Outdoor Families of New Jersey is a brand-new program. There has been positive feedback and there will be programs coming to Hackettstown and a waterfowl hunting program at Sedge Island this fall. There was good press coverage in both the Atlantic City Press and Philadelphia Inquirer regarding the programs.

The Mobile Conservation Outreach Trailer is developing well. A schematic has been reviewed by the Bureau and the company is catching on to the idea of what we are trying to convey. The trailer will not be ready for the Expo, but when it is complete, it will be bought to the Council meeting so everyone can get a look at it.

The Bureau has approval to have an Instagram account. Currently Parks and Forestry has an Instagram account and we will look at how they manage their account. This will be up and running for the Division soon and linked to our Facebook page. The Division's YouTube channel is on hold due to the Department considering having a YouTube Channel.

Chief Ivany passed around the new bear brochure. He stated it is very comprehensive and goes along with the updated displays taken to various shows. He stated if anyone needs copies to distribute at meetings, request through him.

Chief Ivany attended the Association for Conservation Information Conference in Indiana in July.

Chief Ivany is the New Jersey representative on a National Conservation Outreach Strategy Committee through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). The committee is developing a toolkit for states to use for promoting the work and relevancy of Fish and Wildlife agencies. When complete, all states will have access to this toolkit so there will be a consistent message nationally.

Acting Assistant Director Golden reported on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management. He gave an update on Snickeson Landing Road Boat Ramp as requested at the last Council Meeting. It was a PSE&G owned boat ramp that was closed due to an adjacent property owner complaining. There was another boat ramp for sale which Green Acres reached out to the realtor listed who said they would let the seller know. After a few calls to the realtor again and no response, we will take it as the seller is not interested in selling to the State. Acting Assistant Director Golden asked the Council if they hear of any boat ramps for sale in the area, to please let him know.

Since the last Council meeting there has been an update on the range renovation project. There are six different muzzle loader ranges where there will be covered shooting stations. Enhancement to the berms was put into in the RFP. Bids have come back and they were very high, too high to move forward with the total package. The four bidders will be asked to resubmit without the berm work and hope the cost will come down. We are still interested in doing the berm work, but it will have to be done separately.

In the Game Committee meeting, WMA dog training areas discussed. We stock and maintain 14 dog training areas each year. Over the past two seasons we have been getting some feedback from people who use those dog training areas and suggestions on how we might manage the habitat there. In order to give the users what they want, we are setting up a meeting with different dog training groups and other groups that use the areas to have them offer recommendations on what they would like. There are limitations on what we can do, but we have to get a feel for what the people want and try to put the energy and management in what make the most sense.

Acting Assistant Director Golden e-mailed Woolwich Township regarding the decision that was made at the last council meeting. The Council agreed to allow the multi-use bike path and not put any restrictions on hunting and trapping on that area and have them pursue options for land swap and offer them the opportunity to come to the meeting and make the case on their own. To date he has not heard back since sending the email.

Acting Chief Matthew Brown, Bureau of Law Enforcement reported the five recruits graduated from the Gloucester County Police Academy. Two of them, Alex Sutton and Trevor Anderson, tied for top gun in the academy. Trevor was also nominated for the Top Academy Candidate Directors Award. He also served as the class president. Allison Shepherd served as the vice president of the class. The class started out with 28 candidates and graduated 22.

The Bureau is going through a new round of hiring. We sent out approximately 40 notices to individuals who were on the civil service list, 27 have responded back in time that they are interested in moving forward in the application process. We are due to start taking background packets on August 30th and start the process which would take us through fall to complete in anticipation of make three offers of employment by early to mid-December bringing them on and going through the training process.

We had several officers attend schools this summer. Chris Moscatiello out of Marine Unit Fire Instructors schools and he achieved the top gun award at Monmouth County. Timothy Raker went to Federal Boat School down in Georgia and he received the Top Cop Award.

The offshore patrol vessel which has been previously reported on is due to float down in approximate two weeks. The builder has convinced us the best option for delivery is for them to sail it down on the water. That will give them several days at sea to see if there are any issues and if it breaks down or any damage happens to it, they are responsible until they actually hand the keys over on New Jersey soil. The only downfall is he has to select two people to act as first and second mate. Brett Nicklow will be going along with someone else.

There was one safe harbor request coming to marine unit due to mechanical issue in the Port of Cape May. They were able to get the problem fix and be on their way. It did result in a summer flounder transfer of about 4,000 pounds from North Carolina. We are working with the Commissioner's office and emergency management to remove two abandoned vessels on our Tuckerton WMA. One has been there over a year. At first, marine officers thought the owner was deceased. We have been able to find two living owners in Pennsylvania with the help of the Fish and Boat Commission in Pennsylvania. The Commissioner's office is sending out official notices to remove the vessel. In the worst-case scenario, we do have a vendor that emergency management worked with from Super Storm Sandy that will remove both vessels for about \$8,000 and dispose of them accordingly. We will then go through the process of billing back the owners on record.

There is still a lot of ATV activity occurring on southern WMAs this past weekend. Officers issued 20 specific violations in one day within a three-hour period. Central region activity is dialing back a little. The question is, did we push it from central to down south. A concerted effort will be made to bring it under control down south.

Acting Chief Brown reported on his account of the concrete spill at Spruce Run. He stated in 28 years it was the most egregious event he has seen and it was deplorable what happened in such a short amount of time. The park superintendent from Spruce Run made the call to report the spill. A neighbor who lives near where the discharge occurred, was used to seeing it. He called the concrete company who told him they were on it. The County Hazmat was involved. The Bureau is currently working with Land Use and Water Enforcement on the violation process while the cleanup process is going on.

Councilman Virgilio asked if the three positions that the Bureau is looking to fill designated yet. Acting Chief Brown responded, there are currently lateral transfers going on and will have a better idea in the fall what will be open.

Chief Carole Stanko, Bureau of Wildlife Management, reported a letter is going out to every mayor in the State of New Jersey about black bears. The letter touts the success of recent management efforts and how black bear reporting and complaints have been down this year. It gives the link to our website for advice on bears. It includes the brochures you have in front of you. It also gives the Law Enforcement training contact information, encouraging them to have their local police department take bear aware training so they know how to handle bears that may wander into their neighborhoods. Most of the townships of the northern part of the state have already taken this training, but we have bears wandering further into central Jersey and people are not quite prepared to handle it. We hope they will take us up on this invitation and get more police departments trained. We have a new hire through for phase eight, which will be a wildlife worker for the Rockport Game Farm. It's a young man from Sussex County and hopefully his start date will be August 19th.

At the last meeting Councilman Virgilio suggested we have one number for reporting coyote harvesting. That change has been made and the number is listed in the Digest that it will be a single number going down to the southern region, Nacote Creek Office.

The Council requested having an earlier turkey season in part of the State. Chief Stanko consulted with the turkey biologist. There is good research out as well as research locally in Pennsylvania looking at nest incubation initiation in turkeys and found turkeys at our latitude were still initiating about May 1st. The data from New Jersey is that we nest very late April/early May. We are already starting our season a bit early. Our average start date is April 23rd. The reason we don't start earlier is so that breeding can take place before the beginning of the season, so that hens are on nest already and gobblers are calling to them. The Division tried a week earlier season back in 2002 – 2008 and there was a decline in turkey population so it was pulled back in response.

The Game Code will be a little late. It will probably in the New Jersey Register the third week of September rather than the first. Director Herrigthy, Acting Assistant Director Golden, and Chief Stanko went to Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge and met with the Refuge Manager and staff to discuss hunting and trapping on that facility. The superintendent is very open to our suggestions and willing to work closely with us. The Division is looking forward to a good relationship and look forward to talking to them again on how we can streamline the program and possibly add to it.

Director Herrigthy and Acting Assistant Director Golden reported Chief David Jenkins, Bureau of Endangered Non-Game Species Program. Director Herrigthy stated the plover are flying at Island Beach and the restriction on fishing access has been rescinded as of yesterday. Acting Assistant Director Golden reported the SWAP plan was submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Service and secured \$1 million for FY16. It has not gone through public comment yet. Comments have been received from USFWS and since made revision to the plan based on the comments. The plan needs to be submitted again before September 2018. The Division plans to have the 30-day public comment period starting in October and submit what is needed by January 2018.

Chairman Burke stated in September the Council was supposed to have a joint meeting with ENSAC and since that is not going to happen, he would like to move the meeting back to September 12th. Everyone agreed. A discussion took place on agenda items for the joint meeting which will take place on October 17th.

Director Herrigthy introduced new staff member to Fish and Wildlife, Mary Monteschio, Esq., who transferred from the NHR Assistant Commissioner's office. He announced retired employee, Dr. Roscoe's wife, Dr. Jane Huffman, passed away two weeks ago. Also, Pete Grimbilas, President of New Jersey Outdoor Alliance, lost his daughter to cancer.

Chairman Burke opened the floor for public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT (3MINUTES)

Janet Pizar, Millburn, NJ asked what the current bear population is. It was stated that it is currently 2,400. She wanted to know if the Division was computing New Jersey tagged bears killed in the Pennsylvania and New York Bear hunt, the known poached bears, the Category One bear kills, the road kills and the farmer depredation kills computed in the figure because nothing on the website shows that loss of bear population. Only the harvests are shown. The response was yes. Ms. Pizar asked why was the number not shown on the website. Director Herrigthy offered to speak to Ms.

Pizar after the meeting since her address was to the Council. Ms. Pizar wanted to know, since council members go out to their constituents in the NJ Sportsmen Federation County meetings, what is the easy way to contact Mr. Robert Pollock, so the public can bring their concerns to him to bring to the Council. Councilman Pollock responded there is an e-mail address on the website that will be linked to him. Councilman Virgilio reminded Ms. Pizar about his offer to come out to any meeting her organization had. Director Herrightly stated any letters that come in addressed to the Council gets passed on to them, the Division does not provide e-mail addresses for them.

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ stated she seconded Janet's request for Mr. Pollock to make himself available to the general public. She stated down through the years other public member did not make themselves available to the public. Ms. Sachau stated she has a letter to Mr. Martin and Mr. Herrightly regarding no representation of the public since Mr. Pollock refuses to represent them. There is no member from environmental groups. There are pals. There is no one from the animal rights group. She stated Mr. Golden has closed meetings, with invited guests, where people who don't agree with policy can't come. It is another example of corrupt New Jersey.

Written comments provided by Candace Pankamin, Cliffside Park NJ – "I come here today to introduce myself as a recruit to the fight to prevent the needless hunting and murder of helpless animals. I also come here today to ask this decision making panel to put an immediate stop to the upcoming bear hunt which will cause great pain and suffering not only to the adults Bears and their offspring but will also cause emotional strain and illness to the compassionate humans who are forced to stand by and witness this slaughter with their hands tied. Our morals are under attack by the leaders that we put into office. Leaders that I've expect to do good not harm. I call on your God given humanity to live up to the name human. Stop the hunt now. Thank you."

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman Link to adjourn the meeting at 12:05 pm. Vote taken, all in favor, none-opposed; motion carried.