

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
April 21, 2009

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council was held on the above date. In attendance were:

Acting Chairwoman Jeanette Vreeland
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Dave Burke
Councilman Ed Kertz
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Fred Hough

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Lisa Barno, Tim Cussen, Tony Petrongolo, Jim Sciascia, Dave Jenkins, Paul Castelli, Ted Nichols and Barbara Stoff.

Members of the public included representatives from the Farm Bureau, the United Crossbow Hunters of New Jersey, the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and others.

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland.

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 and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and The Press (Atlantic City) on March 23, 2009.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The minutes of the March 2009 meeting were discussed. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept the minutes as given.** Councilman Burke asked to have additional information added to page 5, where the fish code was discussed, and reviewed his suggestions with the Council. A copy of these additions was given to the secretary to update the minutes before they were finalized (they have been inserted in to the March 2009 minutes as published on the Division's website). **A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to approve the minutes of the March 2009 meeting with additional comments from Councilman Burke included.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reviewed some of her activities this past month. She attended both the open house and opening day of trout season activities at the Pequest Trout Hatchery.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reported that she had participated in bear den survey activities at the Great Gorge. She noted that the den she observed had three cubs, and a second den observed by

another group that day also had three cubs. A den in Jefferson Township was reported to have had four cubs, and Acting Chairwoman Vreeland remarked that on average there are three cubs per den which only increases the population. She added that while they are cuddly at first, she learned from personnel at Space Farms that their temperament changes at about 16 weeks of age and they become more wild.

While at Great Gorge, Acting Chairwoman Vreeland saw the modified trash dumpsters that were being used try to prevent bears getting in to the trash. She described the latch mechanism to the Council, noting that it was just small enough that a bear could not get a paw in to open it.

Assistant Director Herrightly noted that Director Chanda would be arriving shortly. He added that the Game Code hearing would be held this evening. Also, he noted that Councilwoman Brummer would be arriving late to the Council meeting.

At this time, Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries report would be given. Chief Barno addressed the Council, noting that the agenda item listed for today to vote on an addition to the Fish Code would not be necessary, and should be disregarded. She explained that this was regarding the Rock Brook in Mercer County, and at this time would not be making any recommendations for change.

The Fish Code is at the Office of Legislative Services (OLS), and Chief Barno felt that they were on target for publication in the July Register.

Chief Barno reported on the angler counts for the opening day of the trout season, noting that the weather was bad on that day. Counts were done at 31 locations with very varied results for both the amount of fishermen participating and the amount of fish being caught.

The trout stocking program is now in week two, which is the largest stocking following the stocking done for opening day.

Chief Barno noted that despite the recent rains, water levels are still low.

Chief Barno reported that Dahnert's Lake in Garfield, Bergen County has been closed pending further investigation by the Bergen County Health Department. A father and son who had fished there and had consumed trout had become ill. The fish that were due to be stocked at Dahnert's Lake will be held until results of the tests of the water are determined, and if the lake is re-opened, stocking will resume. Chief Barno noted that over 200,000 fish have been stocked Statewide without incident.

Changes to the Fish Code were reviewed for those in attendance at the recent Outdoor Writer's Workshop, and were all well received.

The bonus broodstock collection activities will be ending soon. Chief Barno added that they have reached their quota for muskies, Northern pike and walleyes at the Hackettstown Hatchery. She noted that a 52 inch pure strain musky was taken out of Echo Lake, and is now in the tank at the Hatchery.

A full summary of the opening day angler counts will be given at the next meeting.

Chief Barno noted that Lake Hopatcong had previously been dropped five feet for bulkhead repairs. This is part the plan to drop the lake every five years. The lake had not refilled adequately, and a

permit was given in March to approve a reduction in the release of water from the lake to see if this would allow it to refill faster. They have asked for a further reduction of the flows from the lake, but Chief Barno added that the Division is not supporting this request due to the warmer water temperatures that could occur downstream of the lake. This matter was further discussed.

Councilman Messeroll noted a question that came up at a Federation meeting on the Pequannock water release, which would allow for the temperature to go up to 72 degrees. Chief Barno noted that there were some last minute conditions presented by the Coalition regarding this permit, and she is still waiting for a copy of same. She added that there are some positives to this permit, especially in the area below the Charlottesburg Reservoir. It was discussed that 72 degree temperatures would be borderline, but could be very realistic of what could be expected for trout maintenance water. This was further reviewed by Chief Barno.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland again confirmed with Chief Barno that the agenda item for an addition to the Fish Code was removed from today's agenda.

At this time, the Acting Chairwoman Vreeland opened the public comment period to anyone wishing to comment on the remaining item, discussion on the proposed 2009-2010 waterfowl season dates. Barbara Sachau commented that she did not see it on the agenda, but it was pointed out to her. She then asked to speak, noting that she has an objection to waterfowl killing entirely. She added that she finds that the alleged science that supposedly goes into waterfowl killing is seriously flawed. She went on to say that first of all, there is not sufficient peer review by people who are not biased to hunting and it has serious flaws. She then thanked the Council.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if there were any additional comments. There were none, and the meeting continued.

Councilman Kertz reported for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that it has been very wet in his area, adding that they had had seven inches of rain since the first of April. Councilman Burke added that there was a forest fire on Sunday, which burned 330 acres near his home.

Councilman Puskas reported in the Central Region it has also been wet, having had 2 ½ inches of rain last evening. He also reported that he had attended the Somerset County Board of Agriculture meeting, which the new Secretary of Agriculture also attended. He asked the Secretary to send a letter to try to have a new agriculture representative appointed to this Council, and the Secretary noted he has received this request at all the other Northern meetings he had attended. He will try to see what he can do to move this along.

Councilman Puskas also spoke about an article in the New Jersey Farmer regarding a study on goose damage. He noted that the article documented a loss of 11 to 24 bushels per acre from goose damage, which could result in anywhere from \$40.00 to \$100.00 loss per acre.

Councilman Puskas attended a Black Bear Seminar presented by Principal Biologist Kelcey Burgess in Franklin Township. He noted that Principal Biologist Burgess gave an outstanding program.

The turkey season is yielding many birds in his area. A 26 pound bird was checked in earlier today.

Assistant Director Herrighty advised that he still has to write the letter for the Council to send to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service with regard to the problems being caused by Canada geese.

He has discussed this matter with Research Scientist Paul Castelli, who will bring it up when he attends the meeting of the Atlantic Flyway Technical Committee to see if other states are experiencing the same difficulties. A letter will be sent to the Chair of the Atlantic Flyway Council by Assistant Director Herrighty on behalf of the Fish and Game Council.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted in the Northern Region, farming is about three weeks behind due to the dry weather conditions.

Farm Bureau Representative Liz Thompson was asked if she had anything to add. She noted she had received a call recently from a farmer in Warren County who had a coyote attack a cat. She was asking what number he could call for further information on trappers. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that they call the Wildlife Control Office.

Director Chanda reported to the Council. He has been very busy lately with field work and conferences. He, Paulette Nelson and Dave Golden were all able to attend the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference at staggered times. He noted it was a good conference, with quite a lot happening on the Federal level. Director Chanda has been working with a committee through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on the reauthorization of Wallop Breaux. He reviewed some of the points they are working on for this reauthorization package.

Director Chanda noted the recent Women in Wildlife awards event which recognized Principal Zoologist Amanda Dey who received the Professional Award, and former Councilwoman Jane Morton-Galetto who received the Volunteer Award.

He also reported that the Outdoor Writers Workshop and trout season opening day events at Pequest were both successful.

Marine Fisheries Administrator Tom McCloy and Director Chanda have both been busy presenting the program on the saltwater registry. He noted that the programs are going well, and those in attendance all agree that any monies from this program should stay in New Jersey. Councilman Wolgast noted that the Somerset County Fish and Game Protective Association, who Director Chanda had met with last month, were preparing a draft resolution to support a saltwater license. He added that this would include approximately 1,000 people whose groups were members of the Association.

Councilman Kertz questioned if this was a license or a registry? Director Chanda noted that he is out talking about a registry, noting that a license requires legislation. This matter was further discussed, including costs of implementing this type of program. Councilman Kertz asked if someone who failed to register could receive a summons and Director Chanda reviewed that this would not be a Fish and Wildlife violation, but would be a violation of the National Marine Fisheries Service. There was additional discussion regarding this issue. Councilman Messeroll asked if there was a minimum age requirement, or if all anglers would be required to register. Director Chanda noted he would have to look at the rule further to determine that issue.

Legislative Liaison Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. She noted that the legislature has been busy working on the budget, and things have been quiet lately. The only bills that have been moving are:

A 595
S 976

Changes perimeter for bow and arrow hunting
around occupied building.

The marsh bird surveys are underway. These surveys do include some game species, but are mostly non-game species. The routes are primarily in the Highlands and North Jersey, with some routes in South Jersey.

The inland heron survey is underway. Chief Jenkins described that this is done on a three year cycle, and reviewed the way in which data is determined.

All pre-fencing activities for the beach nesting bird season have been completed. Chief Jenkins noted that they rely heavily on volunteers to assist with this project.

A team of people from various groups have been put together to make the Wildlife Action Plan more user friendly. Portions of the coastal landscape region plan were excerpted to develop a marine wildlife action plan section. Comments were contributed by the Marine and Shellfish Bureaus. This will be part of the submission to the USFWS for review to revise the plan.

The landscape project is working on an on-line landscape ecology presentation. It will be on the Division website when completed. Also, several staff members participated in a Rutgers continuing education class on threatened and endangered species.

Staff are also working on an environmental review project for the re-licensing of the Hook's Creek Nuclear Station, with assistance from Kelly Davis.

Councilman Wolgast commented on some screech owl activity on his property. He noted that he has had screech owls nesting in wood duck boxes that he has put up, and found rabbit parts from game he had harvested and cleaned in those boxes. He added that this shows that screech owls are scavengers, which he did not previously know, and send some photographs to an expert in Texas who was quite interested in this.

Councilman Wolgast also asked about the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program model for feral cats. Chief Jenkins noted that the only place this is being done is in Burlington County, which is part of the Burlington County Feral Cat Initiative. The information they have received does show some reduction in population, but he added that this is not for newly established feral cat colonies, but in existing areas where they are applying feral cat colony rules. He also noted that the groups who are working with these colonies also try to find homes for any cats that may be able to be adopted, and this also reduces the population. Councilman Wolgast also noted that he had seen newspaper articles stating that the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program supports TNR. Chief Jenkins added that is not correct, and explained that their approach is how to minimize the impact of TNR on areas in which it is occurring on threatened and endangered species, not to endorse TNR as an appropriate method of dealing with feral cats. Councilman Wolgast asked why only threatened and endangered species since there are hundreds of known wildlife species that are killed by feral cats. Chief Jenkins added that they are focusing on T & E and other species of conservation. Councilman Wolgast advised Chief Jenkins that this Council will be taking action on Bobwhite quail in the future, noting that research done by the University of Delaware shows that feral cats have a negative impact on this species. There was some further discussion on feral cats.

Councilman Messeroll noted that there is a webcam on an eagle nest at Duke Farms, and can be watched through their website. He also asked Chief Jenkins if Council would be able to attend when

staff does eagle banding. Chief Jenkins asked that anyone interested send him an e-mail so he could check and coordinate with staff on the banding schedule.

Assistant Director Herrighty added one additional item regarding feral cats. He referenced an unauthorized colony at the Round Valley boat ramp, which has been there for seven or eight years. It started with 16 cats, and is now down to five, and he noted there are coyotes and bears in the area. Councilman Wolgast added that People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is also opposed to the TNR program.

Principal Biologist Barbara Stoff reported for the Permit Section. She will provide a full report of the turkey permit sales at the end of the season.

Principal Biologist Stoff explained that there was a problem with the turkey permit sales on the final day to pick up permits that were applied for through the lottery, and described the steps that were taken to correct the problem. She only received a few complaints, and was able to resolve most of those problems. Councilman Wolgast noted that any time he has had a problem, the Permit Section is able to resolve it right away, but questioned that after this amount of time using Automated Licensing Systems (ALS) they should have things straightened out by now. Principal Biologist Stoff agreed, but further explained some of the reasons the problem occurred this year, including personnel changes at ALS. Councilman Wolgast asked about the length of their contract, and was advised that it had just been extended for two years. He suggested that staff talk to other states now to plan for contracts for two years from now, and Assistant Director Herrighty noted that they are. Councilman Puskas added that the farmer permits have caused problems for some individuals every year, and Principal Biologist Stoff noted that there are a few farmer applicants to have had problems in the past, but they had no explanation why. She advised that if a farmer has a problem, they can contact her office directly and the problem will be corrected. He also asked why the farmers had to wait until the over the counter sales date to claim their permits. She explained that this was done to allow those farmers who were claiming their free permit as well as possibly purchasing additional permits to have to make only one trip to the store. Councilman Puskas also noted some transportation tags were coming in to the check station with no zone or hunting period listed. Principal Biologist Stoff was not aware of this, and noted it may have been a printing problem at the agent, but the customers profile would list the permit information for what was purchased.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He noted that they had a meeting Friday night. Among the things discussed were the Trenton boat ramp, where non-residents are now being charged \$250.00 for access to launch. They also made Fish and Game Council nominations for the Northern Region. The nominee is August Gudmunson, who would be replacing Acting Chairwoman Vreeland on Council. They are still working on replacing the position that was held by Councilman Dick Culp. He added there were three people named as candidates for the Mid-Atlantic Marine Council, and they chose Bruce Freeman to be the representative. His name has been sent to the Governor's Office, and will then be sent on to the Federal office.

Also discussed at the meeting was the Absecon boat ramp. Councilman Messeroll explained that there is no one there in the early morning hours to collect ramp fees, and duck hunters have come back to their vehicles to find that they have been issued a \$100.00 parking ticket. He asked if there could be system put in place to allow for them to be able to pay for a permit when the area was not staffed.

Councilman Messeroll noted that bobcats were also discussed. A question came up on bobcat furs that were obtained out of state and brought here for sale, noting it was not allowed even if someone had a

tag for them. It was asked that this be looked in to. Also discussed was if someone shot a bobcat out of state and had it mounted, would it be legal to have it here since it is an endangered species.

He reported that there will be a Central Region sporting clays shoot on June 7 at the Red Wing Sportsmen's Club.

Assistant Director Herrighty added that he would speak with Chief Petrongolo after the meeting about the Absecon Boat Ramp. He also noted that the bobcat issue is being discussed internally.

Councilman Burke noted that in the Southern Region, trout fisherman and turkey hunters are out.

In Cumberland County, the trash hunt was held and was very successful.

In the Northern Region, Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted a fishing derby is scheduled at the fairgrounds for the free fishing days.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He questioned the problem at the Absecon ramp that occurred in duck season, and noting he was just hearing about it now. He noted that he met with representatives from Absecon last week and everything looks good with the improvements that have been made. He added they have been very accommodating regarding the sale of permits, selling over 1,200 daily permits last year, and was not sure how this problem for those arriving early in the morning could be dealt with. Councilman Messeroll noted other areas, who have either on-line permit sales, or a drop box system where you leave your money and vehicle information in an envelope that you fill out. There was additional discussion on this matter.

Chief Petrongolo reported that there were no additional lands assigned to the Division of Fish and Wildlife this past month. He noted that Green Acres is almost out of money, but they are trying to rejuvenate that fund.

Land Management crews have finished up all their late Winter habitat projects. Currently, crews are spending quite a bit of time trout stocking.

Chief Petrongolo referenced a project that is being done with assistance from the Navy at the Manchester WMA. The Division has recently acquired a property that consists of old cranberry bogs that sit at the end of the runway on the Lakehurst Naval Air Station, and the Navy has concerns about bird strikes, since the bogs can draw in waterfowl. They are working with us to restore the bogs to Atlantic white cedar swamps. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will pay for the seedlings, and Lakehurst NAS will be putting up a fence and preparing the area for planting. There are seven or eight bogs that will be restored, and they will be doing one bog each year if the first ones are successful.

In the Northern Region, crews have been busy working toward completing the parking area along the Musconetcong River in Holland Township that has been discussed previously.

The Farm Lease Program is still on track. They are still waiting for personnel from Legal Services to complete the lease. Chief Petrongolo anticipates that it may be June before this is ready to go to bid.

Councilman Messeroll noted that at the last Waterfowl Stamp Committee meeting they discussed if it would be possible to have their logo put on the wooden WMA signs at areas where they assisted with

the purchase of the property. Chief Petrongolo felt this could be done on those areas that were accessible to the public.

Councilman Kertz asked about the cedar that was to be planted, and asked if the plan would allow for the harvest of these trees many years from now. Chief Petrongolo noted that cedar harvest in the Pinelands is difficult for a number of reasons, adding that it could be 50 to 80 years before these trees mature enough to be harvested.

Councilman Van Mater asked about the progress of the timber harvest on wildlife management areas. Chief Petrongolo noted that there are several contracts in place, as well as a number projects being planned for the Pinelands. He added that these projects require a lot of planning, and currently he does not have the necessary staff. Councilman Van Mater also noted that he felt they were burning too much area on Route 539. Chief Petrongolo advised that the Bureau of Forest Fire Management does this to try to thin the canopy area. Councilman Burke asked if during the control burn season, they make an effort to protect the low land areas. Chief Petrongolo noted he did not think they burned the low land areas. There was additional discussion on the control burn program.

Assistant Director Herrightly reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He noted that the turkey season has been successful so far.

Results of the deer season harvest will be presented by the Deer Project next month.

Ted Nichols, Waterfowl Project Leader presented the recommended waterfowl season dates to the Council for review. He noted that they could be voted on today or at a later date, since these are usually presented to the Council in May or June. He added that input is gathered from the New Jersey Waterfowlers Association, Ducks Unlimited, Division staff and other knowledgeable waterfowl hunters, and having this available earlier would allow for hunters to plan time off for their hunting season. A list of the recommended seasons was distributed to the Council and reviewed by Principal Biologist Nichols for each species. After his presentation, questions were answered for the Council on the information given today. Councilman Wolgast asked about the success of this year's recent Conservation Order for snow geese. Principal Biologist Nichols noted that they are still gathering harvest survey data, but are hearing varied success rate information. He noted that at last count, 275 hunters had signed up for these permits.

Councilman Burke asked if some of the special season regulations could be incorporated into the regular snow goose season. Principal Biologist Nichols noted that the Fish and Wildlife is very specific that special tools can only be used when all other migratory bird seasons are closed, which is why the Conservation Order for snow geese starts just after the other goose seasons ends. Councilman Burke also noted that every year Cumberland County asks for a reduction in rails to 15 from 25. Principal Biologist Nichols noted that he had heard of this request many years ago, but added that this is something that could be considered but can not be put in place for this year since these are Flyway wide recommendations.

Councilman Puskas asked who determines how often a special Canada goose season is done, determines the migratory status vs. resident status and where the hunt will be done. Principal Biologist Nichols noted that the Division set this up in the 1990's, and described the information gathered to set up this season and set the boundary lines. After a lengthy description, he noted that since that time Dr. Sue Schaefer, a leading population monitoring biologist for waterfowl in the United States came up with a formula looking at band returns to determine the proportion of the harvest that is made up of

resident and migrant geese. During the regular season about 60 % of the geese harvested are resident, and 40% are migrant at a state level, which is more than double the criteria. Councilman Puskas asked if this meant there was no way to move the boundary lines for the special season, and Principal Biologist Nichols felt he did not believe that there is, explaining why.

Councilman Van Mater referenced the recent Snow goose conservation order season, noting that the geese seemed to disappear after ten days. Principal Biologist Nichols noted that they tried to get the word out that March would be the time to hunt these geese, and added that for next year they were recommending a much earlier season.

Research Biologist Paul Castelli addressed the rail season, as asked about by Councilman Burke. He advised that he has spoken with hunters in the Cumberland County area over the years about this request for a harvest reduction, but sees no biological data to reduce the bag limit. He has advised them to put any social reasons to reduce this season in writing to him or the Council. Councilman Burke noted that he also advised them to put their request in writing.

Assistant Director Herrightly advised the Council that they could vote on these recommendations today, or wait until a later meeting allowing them time to discuss this with their constituents. **A motion was made by Council Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Kertz to postpone voting on these waterfowl season recommendations until May. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Chief Cussen reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He noted that Conservation Officer Jordan Holmes was doing quite well and was due to be graduate from the Morris County Police Academy in mid-June. Conservation Officer Brian Tomlin is currently a month and a half into his training program at the Gloucester County Police Academy, and is also doing very well.

During this reporting period, officers reported a total of 4,393 hours of patrol. This can be further broken down to 1054.5 hours for marine resources, 731 for fishing, 565 for wildlife management areas, 176 for deer hunting and 120 for non-game and endangered species.

A total of 2,109 field inspections were made, resulting in 248 complaints, 26 warnings and 1 criminal arrest. The summonses were further broken down to include 55 for fishing, 52 for deer hunting and 103 for wildlife management areas.

So far, 26 requests have been received from farmers for permits to kill depredating deer. One noise maker permit has also been requested.

Conservation Officers investigated four complaints of black bear feeding this past month, resulting in one written warning being issued.

Councilman Puskas asked what effect ending the Deputy Conservation Program had on the cost of overtime or more hours for the officers. Chief Cussen explained that the main effect was that night patrols now had to be conducted with two conservation officers, or an officer and a supervisor. He added that in calendar year 2008, only 208 hours of deputy time was for night patrols, and that this was a small percentage of the amount of time done on night patrols. He added that it has reduced the training time to a great extent for the amount of time that had been required for deputy training. Also, on days such as the opening day of trout season, it required some planning to have either two officers or an officer and a supervisor in the vehicle while on patrol. Councilman Puskas asked if they receive paid overtime, and Chief Cussen added that the only time paid overtime is received is during the deer

season, all other time is accrued leave time. Councilman Wolgast asked if Division employees who were deputies were no longer able to patrol either, and Chief Cussen advised that was correct, that no commissions had been renewed.

Chief Sciascia reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He noted that they had a great open house at the Pequest Trout Hatchery, despite poor weather on the first day. During the two days, over 1,000 kids were able to experience trout fishing in the education pond.

The opening day of trout season event at Pequest included the winners of the fish art essay contest and their families being invited to attend. Poor weather conditions were experienced on that day as well, but it did not keep people from fishing. He added that he has been making the same trip on opening day to the Pequest Trout Hatchery for the past nine years, and this year saw more anglers on the Pequest River than ever before on Opening Day.

The Bear Education Section has been busy, having done rewriting and reprinting of their literature. This year they had a major addition to the education program, by contracting with a movie chain of 10 theaters to show a slide on bears and directing viewers to the Division website for more information. He estimated that a half-million people may be reached during a 12 week period. A three month run of bear education radio spots will also be done in April, May and June and another 3 month run will air in the Fall.

The Hunter Education Section has been very busy. Compared to last year, the number of students are up by 23%, and the number of certificates issued are up by 20%.

The National Archery in Schools program has seen a lot of activity. At the beginning of the year, there were 19 schools in the program. Right now, there are 24 schools signed up for training, and another eight that are interested. Chief Sciascia expects to have over 50 schools participating by the end of the year.

Staff met with representatives from the Morris County Parks System on the possibility of partnering with them on the proposed archery park. The Morris County Park Commission Executive Director was interested in exploring the potential for incorporating the Archery Park within the recreational complex Morris County is developing on the Greystone property. Chief Sciascia noted we do not know at this point if Greystone could be a potential site but felt it was worth exploring for a number of reasons. The property has good access, is not in a highly residential area and is in close proximity to a number of NASP schools and population centers. An Archery Park within a larger recreational complex would be highly visible and would likely attract much more use than if it were located in a more remote location out of public sight. The planned development of a YMCA on the site could also increase use significantly if archery was added to their program offerings. Chief Sciascia also noted the many hotels and restaurants in the area fit well with the Park's potential to host large regional and national archery events and would benefit from events bringing hundreds of people into the area for three or four days at a time. He also felt this site would be very attractive to the Easton Sports Development Foundation, which is the major potential contributor for the Archery Park project in New Jersey.

Promotions are underway for fishing, especially trout fishing. Chief Sciascia distributed a comparison of this year's sales to last year's sales. He added that he feels they are on track for an overall increase for the year. He reviewed some of the promotions that have been done, including radio advertising that began in March. Also, the license database was used to track those anglers who had purchased fishing licenses and trout stamps in the past, but did not do so in 2008. These people were sent an e-

mail or a post card about trout fishing opportunities in New Jersey. Anglers who reside within a ten-mile radius of the bonus broodstock lakes were also sent an e-mail.

Promotions for all fishing opportunities in New Jersey will continue well into the summer. This includes radio advertising that will run in April and May on 30 stations under the Department contract with the NJ Broadcasters Assoc., a postcard done in partnership with the RBFF to be sent in May and June to 75,000 lapsed anglers and posting information on where the fish are and how to catch them on the Division's website. In addition to the radio ads purchased under the DEP contract, the RBFF also buys 6 weeks of airtime on 5 radio stations.

Chief Sciascia noted that similar promotions will be done to promote hunting opportunities, which started with an e-mail that was sent to potential turkey hunters before the start of the over the counter permit sales. Depending on what happens with the Sunday hunting bill and the Game Code amendment for crossbows, promotions for archery hunting will also be considered.

Chief Sciascia acknowledged the continued support and assistance of Darlene Yuhas and the DEP Communications Office in the development and production of the promotional programs and outreach to the media to bring attention to the increase in fishing participation in New Jersey.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland was asked at a recent county meeting she attended on the status of the bear CD. Chief Sciascia noted that edits and voice overs have been agreed on, as well as the script for the New Jersey portion of the video. This will be sent to the DEP Communications Office next week.

Director Chanda asked if the movie theaters were considered for use in the fishing promotions. Chief Sciascia said they could and the contract for the bear education slide was \$22,000 to run a five-second slot for a three month period. Councilwoman Brummer asked about the effectiveness of the radio advertising that was done. Chief Sciascia noted there was no direct way to monitor sales from radio advertising, but noted that the postcard mailings that were done in such a way that we will be able to identify how many recipients purchased licenses or trout stamps. Control groups were also set aside to measure any difference in license renewal rates, which may be attributable to the promotion. The aim is to estimate a return on investment for each promotion we do and determine which are the most cost effective ways to maintain and increase license sales. Director Chanda noted the many opportunities available through using the information contained in the electronic license sales system, and there was additional discussion on the sales system.

Old and new business was discussed. Councilman Wolgast suggested a second letter be sent to the Commissioner about scheduling a meeting with him to discuss bears since they had not had a response to the letter they sent to him previously. All members were in favor of this. Councilman Kertz asked if anything could be done if no response is received, and Councilman Wolgast noted he could be sued by the Federation and other organizations.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about the possibility of changing the June 16 meeting to June 23. After further discussion, it was agreed to keep the meeting on June 16.

Members were asked to decide if they would like to sit on the stage or in the audience tonight at the Game Code hearing. After some discussion, it was agreed that members would sit in the audience, but a statement would be made at the beginning of the meeting that the members of the Council were present. Assistant Director Herrighty reminded those present that the doors would open at 6 p.m., and the meeting would start at 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Wolgast noted the action plan for Bobwhite quail. Assistant Director Herrighty added that staff is working on the suggestions that were made at the Game Committee meeting. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that she will be attending the quail presentation that is to be made at the University of Delaware on May 1, 2009. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that all members of the Council should have received an e-mail inviting them to attend.

Assistant Director Herrighty also noted that on May 8, Dr. Grace will be at the Duke Farm to talk about forest management on public lands, and those wishing to attend should contact John Rogalo.

At 4:01 the public comment period began. Janet Pizar from Millburn approached the Council. She requested that when a speaker comes forward to make a presentation to the Council, they give their name and bureau information so that if they leave before the end of the meeting, she would be able to follow up with them by letter on any questions there might be.

Ms. Pizar asked about changes to the waterfowl season dates and the difference of these dates being voted on in May compared to what is addressed at the Game Code hearing. Assistant Director Herrighty described that the waterfowl dates are addressed in the Federal Register, and there is a framework given to choose, and Council then submits this through Division staff to the USFWS for publication in the Federal register by the Department of the Interior.

Ms. Pizar noted that she is affiliated with the Essex County Geese Peace program, and this is her second year coordinating the program for Millburn Township. She, along with her teams, are often around the water bodies and nesting sites of geese, and she find it very disturbing to see the inappropriate disposal of fishing lines and hooks. She added that she felt Council would agree that this is a great safety threat for people and children who are around the ponds, and in this short period of time she has seen two waterfowl that were shackled in the monofilament of fishing lines. She was hoping that a note could be made on the Divisions website or when issuing fishing permits about the proper disposal of fishing line.

Ms. Pizar also asked about the Bureau of Wildlife Management's monthly report from February. She referenced page 5, where it listed 16 bear calls from January 21 to February 20 as zero for Category One, zero for Category Two and 16 for Category Three. On page 7, the breakdown of complaints shows all 16 calls as black bear complaints, and she asked if this was accurate since they were noted at Category Three bear calls, and were now noted a bear complaints. Assistant Director Herrighty advised he would have to review this with his staff. She then noted the report from today, which shows a total of 41 bear calls, two as Category One, 13 as Category Two and 26 as Category Three, and then in the number of bear complaints lists all 41 as bear complaints. Assistant Director Herrighty pointed that these are 41 complaints from when citizens call, and they are later categorized as one, two or three. Ms. Pizar also if it the way the way these stats are compiled are considered to be scientific data, and Assistant Herrighty noted that yes since it is consistent from year to year.

Barbara Sachau spoke next. She had questions on Mr. Chanda's report on going to Washington. She felt it was very brief, and if he was there for three days felt that the public was entitled to more know of what he said to the National agencies, and asked if he was intending to prepare a written report on his activities so that they could have a more transparent administration. She added "as you well know, Obama promised, the Federal Government promised, a transparent administration" and she felt that is not what you get with this Council. She went on to say that they were entitled to hear what was said

and felt that a report was necessary, and added that she was requesting he prepare a report on what was said and what he did there.

Ms. Sauchau then referenced the public comment period from the agenda items. She felt that something was lost since she had a lot more to say regarding the agenda than just the waterfowl season, but it was specified that comments could only be made on waterfowl and wanted the time on that back.

Ms. Sauchau also noted the “science, alleged science they are given from this agency has a lot of problems since it does not have the critical portion that it needs to be accurate”, adding that all true science requires criticism. She went on to say that the way your agency works there is no criticism, and you have no one here who has any idea of criticizing anything you are doing, asking why is that and how can you then call it science, how can you pretend that its science when it doesn’t have critical element saying that all true science has criticism and investigation. She added when developing an investigation of what true science involves, one of the steps is who are the experts, how are they selected, and did they represent all views and disciplines. Ms. Sachau then commented that you don’t have that here, it doesn’t exist, and telling her that this is science didn’t make sense to her.

Ms. Sauchau questioned Mr. Nichols on the information he gave today, saying information was taken from Ducks Unlimited and some other organization. He advised Ms. Sauchau that he had referenced the Atlantic Flyway Council, and she asked if it was correct that he had talked to those agencies to make his plan. Mr. Nichols advised Ms. Sauchau he was not clear on what she was asking, and Director Chanda added as a point of clarification for Ms. Sauchau that this was a Fish and Game Council meeting, not a Division of Fish and Wildlife meeting, and if she had questions for the staff she should put them in writing and they would respond to her as they do for all her requests. She went on to say she wanted to comment that he said he talked to the Flyway Council and Ducks Unlimited, and it was her point that he should be talking to the seven million plus New Jersey citizens because all of us, all of us (repeat), own those animals and birds that come here, and for him to come here and say that he talked to the Flyway Council who are known hunters and Ducks Unlimited who are also known hunters doesn’t mean that he is representing New Jersey at all and she finds that absolutely outrageous and he is not representing us, that he should be talking to all New Jersey citizens because they all own the animals and birds.

Ms. Sauchau also referenced a collection of letters from the newspapers that she wanted entered into the record. She noted a study that says that hunting takes away and kills the best and the brightest of the animal species that want to be in our world for our children. Instead, we have hunters going out and leaving us with the weak and the scrawny. She went on to say that’s what they do, they go for the biggest and best examples to shoot and kill to put predominately on their walls. Councilman Wolgast asked who critiqued that data, adding that no reputable scientist critiqued that data. Ms. Sauchau said she would get that for him. She went on to say she wanted them to know that there is a great deal of public comment against the work of this Council and the problem is that you do not keep a record of those who are calling in to complain about their actions. She added that she is very upset by the efforts of this Council, and thanked them when she was done.

Kathleen Meyer from Bergen County spoke next. She credited the Council and biologists for their professionalism regarding the crossbow issue, noting she would not be able to attend the meeting this evening. She felt that they had taken the facts and the research, and hoped that would continue to be the case and that they would not be swayed by emotions and outdated rhetoric and fears. She again

said she felt Council had done an excellent job. Director Chanda reminded those present that written comments on the Game Code would be taken until June 5.

Paul Wells from the United Crossbow Hunters of New Jersey spoke next. He noted that he has become active in attending Council meetings over the last few months, and felt it was a refreshing relief to see a governmental organization that does not just rubber stamp anything that comes across their desk. He noted that you can tell that they have all the facts before making decisions, and while they will not always make everyone happy, they have something to back their decisions up by making them based on facts.

Gwen Sondike spoke next. She noted that many animal control officers around that State have been let go and matters are now being covered by local police officers. She was formerly the Principal Inspector for the State for Animal Welfare and the policy person for that office. She is getting many calls from police officers and residents, and asked if this Council could do anything to address some of these cutbacks of animal control officers and encourage that they are kept on. They are the first line responders in terms of wildlife as well as domestic animals, and if anything is done on the feral cat situation they will be needed. Anything this Council can do would be appreciated, and she noted that just yesterday she was contacted by the Chief of Police in Livingston about a coyote in the area.

Next to speak was James Soden. He noted that he was a hunter, fisherman and a member of the Federation. He comes to these meetings and takes notes, and shares them with committees who share them with the regions, who then share them with the counties. His message gets back to 1,000 hunters, fishermen and trappers in New Jersey, and 2 million members of their families. He objects to the remark that message that things don't go beyond this Council. He added that he didn't feel that his hunting and fishing activities amount to more than one percent of the activities that he puts in the organization, that they are conservationists, in the first place and hunting and fishing is an element that is their final goal. They work with all the elements in game protection, game control, game conservation, non-game and endangered species. They buy land through their licenses, educate youth through school programs, do management, science and biology and are constantly vigilant on working with and asking the Division about things they do not feel are quite right. He added that he gets distressed when members of the public speak and their focus is so narrow. He added that the Council and the Division are a very educational program and department and that the Division is one of the few in the state that is almost self sustaining. He feels that those who criticize are missing the bigger picture, since there is so much done that is great and good. He referenced the monofilament questions, and noted that they teach to people to take out whatever they take in, adding that he carries trash bags with him and other like him self police themselves.

Director Chanda referenced work done by Mark Duda, Phd. in Human Dimensions Research on responsive management. He noted that there are key findings on emotions of people and their emotions related to wildlife, and he noted one area where when it comes to fish and wildlife, who is trusted the most. First were conservation officers, followed closely by wildlife professionals and when you get to conservation organizations that trust dropped. The point here was that the public recognizes the work the professionals do. One other questions that was referenced was what do you think about wildlife management in your state, and while most people could not name the agency responsible for the management of fish and wildlife in their state due to so many states having so many different names, they were all very happy with the job being done for managing wildlife. Director Chanda advised that this information was available on Mark Duda's website.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland distributed a handout from the United Crossbow Hunters of New Jersey.

Councilman Kertz noted that the Atlantic County Federation held their annual youth day in March, and this year they had a record 120 participants.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if the economic system was also affecting angler activity. Director Chanda noted that there is research out there that shows that in poor economic times people turn to outdoor activities, such as hunting and fishing. In times of economic upswing, people who may be working more than one job may not have the time to do such activities.

Councilman Messeroll advised that the animal control officers should write to their Legislators to get monies back in place. He added that in some towns, the ownership of pet is being restricted, and regulations may need to be loosened up to allow people to keep more animals. He added that these officers do a good job, but wasn't sure what ability that Council had to help them.

There were no additional comments. **A motion was made by Councilman Burke, seconded by Councilman Puskas to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.**