

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
January 12, 2010

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 John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Fred Hough
Councilman Ed Kertz

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Tony Petrongolo, Sean Cianciulli and Amanda Dey.

Members of the public included representatives from the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the Star Ledger and others.

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 am.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Roll call was completed.

The minutes of the December 15, 2009 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the minutes as presented.** One spelling error was corrected, and **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland gave a brief review of her activities this past month.

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 December 31, 2009.

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He noted that things were in place for the Garden State Outdoor show that was coming up.

Director Chanda reported that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is in need of a new Executive Director, since Matt Hogan has taken a position elsewhere.

A handout on the saltwater registry with information on how to register was distributed. Director Chanda added that the Federal officials have made it clear that this service will be free to us in 2010, but there will be a fee charged in 2011. This fee is estimated to be from \$15 to \$25 per person. The Marine Fisheries Council met last Thursday and made a motion for a saltwater license Committee to research the options available and send a letter with this information to the incoming Governor, all Legislators, the new Senate president and Speaker of the Assembly, noting that the Council approves the language of the new bill and ask for inclusion during further discussions on this matter. Articles from the Atlantic City Press relative to this matter were distributed. Director Chanda also noted an organization from Cape May that addressed the Marine Fisheries Council at their meeting.

Councilman Wolgast made motion that this Council supports the Marine Fisheries Council with their recommendations. The motion was seconded by Councilman Puskas. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

Director Chanda also suggested that this Council reach out to the members of the Marine Fisheries Council regarding Hunter and Angler account and dedicated funds and how they work since they are not familiar with this type of funding. Councilman Van Mater also noted some of the comments that he hears that these monies will go to the general fund, and felt there was a need to get the word out on where these monies actually go. There was further discussion on this matter, and Director Chanda reviewed how the funding is determined.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland announced that the public comment period on agenda items was opened. The public comment period on agenda items was opened. Barbara Sauchau addressed the Council, wanting to speak on fish. She was advised to hold her comments until the end of the meeting, since this was not an agenda item. Members of the public were reminded the only item that could be commented on at this time was the Executive Session period requested by Law Enforcement to discuss license privilege reinstatement. Ms. Sauchau proceeded on this matter, saying she felt that the licenses were given too freely. She said that the instructors themselves have written to the newspapers saying that people come out of these classes and can't shoot straight. Ms. Sauchau noted several articles she had read regarding incidents where houses were shot. She also stated that Hunterdon County is negatively affected by hunters that aren't shooting straight and that law enforcement is not capable of keeping people safe. Ms. Sauchau added that there are newspaper reports incidents of trespassing on private property, and that hunter education is not working. She added that "gun wackos" are shooting at anything and felt that the quality of who was being authorized to hunt was not of any caliber at all. She stated that these were her comments and asked that they go on record.

Committee reports began. Councilman Puskas noted that the Vegetable Growers Association meeting was underway now in Atlantic City. He added that crop production is slow right now,

and most farmers are working on their equipment for the upcoming season. He also noted that the grain prices dropped this morning, and that farmers will have to reanalyze their crop planting for the Spring.

Councilman Puskas also noted that the Fall production was up, and there are many acres of crop still standing. Dairy prices are rebounding as well, but the cold weather conditions are affecting farming.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted new development on farm acreage in her area. She added that the ground is quite frozen. Councilman Puskas noted that development is occurring in his area as well.

Legislative Liaison Paulette Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. She noted that there was only one item, Senate bill S 713 and companion Assembly bill A 3239, regarding forest stewardship was the only thing in line for voting on at this time. Assistant Director Herrightly added that it had passed in the Assembly, but was not sure if it had in the Senate. Council was reminded that the Legislative Committee would meet at 9 am on February 9 before the start of the Council meeting at 10.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. She reviewed that at last month's meeting questions were asked regarding the Red knot and horseshoe crab situation, and that Principal Zoologist Amanda Dey would be giving a short presentation today on the latest trends.

Councilwoman Brummer noted that if there were any other ENSP topics that the Council would like to hear about to please let her know. She added that she would like to see more cross over information given from the other Bureaus. Councilwoman Brummer also suggested that this Council meet every other month, as the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee does, and asked the other members their opinion on this. Councilman Wolgast advised Councilwoman Brummer that meetings are cancelled if the need to hold them is not necessary. There was additional discussion on this matter, and Director Chanda said he would explore this possibility, but would have to speak with staff. It was also noted that some sportsmen's groups meet monthly and information from this meeting is taken back to them to share with their members.

At this time, Principal Zoologist Dey gave her presentation. She also distributed information to the Council from the surveys that were done, and on the Horseshoe crab moratorium. She explained that there has been no harvest of Horseshoe crabs in New Jersey for the last four years, and that statistical assessments will help to decide when they can be harvested again. The presentation reviewed the current Red knot populations as well as target goals for the future, and how the Horseshoe crabs were a part of this goal. At the conclusion of the presentation, there was some discussion on the information presented today.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. Their website was discussed at their meeting in January, and they are looking for articles to include on it. They are seeking reporters and photographers to cover recent events.

The Federation Convention will be held in the Meadowlands this year, June 11-13, 2010. Additional information will be available soon.

The booth at the Deer Classic is set. They will be showcasing coyote, black bear and youth activities and will be located on the main floor. Also, the Mercer County Federation is sponsoring a bus trip to the Harrisburg Sportsmen's Show on February 10. Those interested should contact Jim Lear.

Marine fishing topics, including www.countryfish.noaa.gov for the saltwater registry were also discussed.

At this time, Principal Biologist Dey re-addressed the Council. She had been approached by a member of the public after her presentation for information on Horseshoe crabs being used for medical purposes. She noted that 350,000 to 375,000 crabs are bled each year. Past mortality rates were 10 to 15%, but there were no controlled studies. In the next two to three years, experiments in other states will be done in other states to look at the mortality from bleeding and tagging the crabs.

It was noted that Chief Barno from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries was at another meeting and would possibly in attendance this afternoon.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife. He noted that last month he reported the contract to begin construction on the new brooder house at the Rockport Game Farm was being held up. The purchase order has been released and the goal is to have the building completed by mid-April.

During an ice storm last month, the hard wire roofs fell in on some of the older pens at the Rockport Game Farm. The newer pens with plastic mesh tops held up, and repair estimates are being developed as a first step in repairing the damage.

A total of 55,940 pheasants were released this year. Additionally, 1,140 were stocked for the youth hunt, and Assistant Director Herrighty noted that the target goal of 55,000 pheasants was met. Councilwoman Brummer inquired as to what species of birds were raised, and Assistant Director Herrighty advised that they were Ring-necked pheasants.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted the bear report would be available this afternoon. He did report that the numbers were similar to last month, with the Category One and Two incidents being down, and the Category Three being up. Overall, 2,984 calls were received as of December 20, 2009. There have been 24 bears euthanized to date, compared to 37 last year. A policy for the new Administration will be forthcoming.

This past Sunday, staff from the Hunter Education Unit, The Spruce Run chapter of the Turkey Federation and the Hunterdon County Parks Department held an orientation for the event for handicapped hunters at the Heron Glen golf course. The Federation of Sportsmen assisted with the purchase of licenses for non-residents. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that this is a good program that he would like to see expanded.

The mid-Winter waterfowl survey is being done at this time. Assistant Director Herrighty described that this is an aerial survey done from small aircraft, noting the recent crash of a helicopter in California that biologists were working from, and added that the safety equipment being used by our personnel meets the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) standards.

It was reported that Principal Biologist Predl should be in attendance next month with an application for a Community Based Deer Management Permit for Union County at the Watchung Reservation.

Staff are working with Chief Sciascia from the Bureau of Information and Education on a Bobwhite quail presentation that can be used for public informational presentations.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that the Division website and the Bureau's monthly report contained information on the regulations for the Light goose conservation order. Season dates are February 16 through April 10, 2010.

Assistant Director Herrighty also noted some cougar photographs that are on the internet. He informed the Council that these photographs were not taken in New Jersey, which is evident from the license plate and vegetation in the photos.

Councilman Burke added that the 2008 tooth collection survey information is now on the Division website. There was further discussion on this matter.

A proposal was developed for the Waterfowl Advisory Committee by Principal Biologist Nichols regarding surveying waterfowl hunters regarding a possible fee increase for waterfowl stamps. Councilman Messeroll will be presenting this information to the Committee at their meeting this evening. Councilman Burke noted that members of the New Jersey Waterfowler's are upset that there may be a fee increase, yet they are no longer receiving an actual paper stamp. It was also noted that the survey should cost approximately \$1,500. Councilman Messeroll noted that the stamp fees help with the purchase of lands, and they would like to see these lands marked that waterfowl stamp fees were used in for the purchase.

Lieutenant Conservation Officer Sean Cianciulli reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He noted that officers recorded 8,071 hours of duty during this reporting period. These hours were further broken down to include 3,770 for deer hunting, 1,011 for marine resources, 116.5 for wildlife management area patrol, 766.5 hunting and 10.5 for non-game and endangered species.

A total of 7,050 inspections were made, resulting in 409 summonses, 31 warnings and three criminal arrests. The summonses issued included 242 for deer hunting violations, 61 for wildlife management area violations, 42 for general and small game hunting violations and 10 for waterfowl hunting violations.

Councilman Messeroll asked if the Bureau was as full staff, with recent retirements that had occurred. Lt. Cianciulli noted that one captain and one detective in the Southern Region retired on July 1, and those positions are still vacant. Assistant Director Herrightly added that staff are currently rotating as the Acting Captain for the Captain's position in the Southern Region.

Councilman Burke commented the monthly report that showed 34 all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders were written in one day, plus other ATV information in that report, and asked if there were any new strategies to prevent this type of activity from occurring on WMA's. Lt. Cianciulli noted that these activities do consume a lot of the officer's time, but many riders have been discouraged from coming back due to the amount of charges against them. There are also more scheduled events occurring for this type of activity. Councilman Burke asked if there was a decrease in the amount of activity, and Lt. Cianciulli noted a drop in activity in South Jersey, and he feels riders there are getting the message.

A motion was made at 11:35 by Councilman Burke, seconded by Councilwoman Brummer, to go to Executive Session as requested by the Bureau of Law Enforcement. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. Those in attendance were advised that the regular meeting would resume after lunch at 12:45 pm.

The meeting resumed at 12:45 pm. Chief Petrongolo from the Bureau of Land Management reported that 255.58 acres were added to the wildlife management area system, bringing the total amount of acreage to over 325,000 acres.

Chief Petrongolo also reported on 600 acres at the former BASF property that was offered this month. This property is along the Delaware River, and Green Acres is in negotiation with the landowners. It is an old industrial site that is being cleaned up, and might go to the Division of Fish and Wildlife, or possibly the Division of Parks. He added that the property almost abuts the Belvidere boat ramp parcel.

The new maintenance building and storage facility at the Colliers Mills WMA is under construction utilizing Corporate Business Tax (CBT) monies. Chief Petrongolo noted that the current facility being used by the Land Management crew is an old mobile home that is in poor condition, and there is currently very little storage for equipment at this area.

Chief Petrongolo reported on the forestry project for early successional habitat at the Flatbrook WMA. The bid monies for the second half of the project are due and the project should be completed by the end of January.

The Berkley Triangle project was also reviewed. Chief Petrongolo noted that this is a landscape level project that will cover almost 20,000 acres, and will restore native pinelands eco-systems and early successional habitats, as well as help with prevention catastrophic wildfires. There are many groups involved in developing this joint plan, which will be sent to Pinelands for their approval. They are meeting today to prepare the proposal.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being worked on with Pinelands which would allow for forest stewardship activity to be conducted as needed.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if the new stewardship bill would be helpful in this area, but Chief Petrongolo was not familiar with it. She asked when the Berkley Triangle work would be underway, and he hoped that it permit approvals would be done in the Spring, and contracts could be developed from there. He noted the need for work to be done, so that it can be maintained, particularly when there is a fire and the damage is in the crown of the trees rather than burning in the understory.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked the status of the contracts from the new Farm Lease Program. Chief Petrongolo noted that one third of them have been returned, and contacts will be made for the outstanding ones. Councilman Messeroll asked what would happen if the successful bidder decided to back out of the agreement, and Chief Petrongolo noted the property would be left fallow and rebid next year. There was additional discussion, and it was noted that the next auction was expected to take place in June or July of this year for new acquisitions and leases that were not bid on last year.

Councilman Messeroll asked about the status of the Rozansky property (which is being included as part of the Prospertown WMA). Chief Petrongolo noted that is now fully owned by the Division, and described that it is 600 plus acres, with smaller additions having been made to the original purchase. The property almost connects the original Prospertown WMA to portions of the Assunpink WMA.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about Mount Paul in Jefferson Township, and Chief Petrongolo reported that it has been closed on and is being managed by the Division of Parks and Forestry, since it connects Sparta Mountain to other Parks property. Hunting at this area was also discussed, and Chief Petrongolo felt that since it was open to hunting now, it would remain that way.

Councilman Van Mater asked how often the Berkley Triangle property would be burned. Chief Petrongolo felt it could be a six, eight, ten or twelve year rotation, but that it still had to be decided on. He added that the goal is to open up the canopy, and reviewed what the benefit would be for wildlife and plant species. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if it would produce good lumber, but Chief Petrongolo felt it would only produce timber pulp, but the values could increase over time.

Assistant Director Herrighty had received, and distributed, the current bear activity report. He noted one call that was received from someone out of state who had seen a bear in Sussex County, and it was reported as such. Calls received and the documentation process were reviewed.

Councilman Wolgast asked about the population study and aversive conditioning reports. Assistant Director Herrighty expected the aversive conditioning report tomorrow, but added that the DNA population study completion date was still unknown. Councilman Wolgast noted a paper in the Journal of Wildlife on aversive conditioning in California. There was additional discussion on this matter.

Councilman Wolgast noted a second article in the Journal of Wildlife on the trap-neuter-release (TNR) program for cats. He briefly reviewed the information, noting that females are much more likely to support this type of program than males, and academically, those without a high school level education showed the most support for TNR.

Assistant Director Herrighty followed up that Chief Barno from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries would not be here in time to report today, but the information was contained in the Bureau's monthly report.

Councilman Messeroll asked about the bear den work program, and Assistant Director Herrighty reported that the schedule would follow and members would be advised when work was to begin.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported that Chief Sciascia from the Bureau of Information and Education was out sick today. Chief Sciascia will be doing a program this Sunday at the Outdoor Sportsmen's Show. He has also been working with staff from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries on a satisfaction survey.

Councilman Messeroll noted that the awards for the Deer Classic would be presented at 2 pm this Sunday, and that there were over 60 deer heads in the contest this year.

Old and new business was discussed. Members were asked what other topics they would like to see for presentations in the future. Topics such as bobcats, and possibly combining the Marine and Fish and Game Councils for a joint meeting were discussed.

The Game Committee will be meeting on March 16, 2010 at 9 am. The April 13, July 13 and October 12, 2010 meetings will begin at 1 pm to accommodate those members who stay for the Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee meeting on those evenings. The November meeting had been discussed previously, but it was decided to keep it on the schedule as shown for November 9, 2010. A call was made to accept the calendar as amended. **A motion was made by Councilwoman Brummer, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept the meeting schedule as amended. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

It was noted that the May 11, 2010 meeting was scheduled for 1 pm. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that historically, this meeting would have been followed by the public hearing on the Game Code in the evening, but there was not a need for that this year with the new two year cycle. **A motion was made by Councilman Burke, seconded by Councilman Puskas to change the start time of the May 11, 2010 meeting to 10 am. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Councilman Messeroll reminded members of the public trout stocking meeting on February 13, 2010 at Pequest.

Councilman Burke noted that members could use search engines such as Google or Yahoo to see reports and plans from other states regarding Northern bobwhite quail. He gave a brief review of the types of information available.

Councilman Wolgast noted that there would be a quail meeting on February 11, 2010 at 7 pm in the meeting room at the PNC Bank Center. Chris Williams and Joe Matter will be speaking. Assistant Director Herrighty added that this information is also on the Federation's web page calendar.

The meeting was opened to public comments. Barbara Sauchau commented to Assistant Director Herrighty about the at the Heron Glen golf course, noting that she has been checking the newspapers as to how acceptable hunting there is to others. She noted that there were several letters of objection in the newspaper. She stated that this kind of project does not go without objection.

Ms. Sauchau also noted the Warren Reporter newspaper, which she says had an article that hunting is not the answer to reducing bear complaints.

Ms. Sauchau noted other newspaper article information on the chaos hunters cause by going into the field and killing endangered species. She referred to a bird in the Great Plains, which she referred to as a "whooper". She reviews some information and added that she finds it very objectionable that people do not pay attention to what they are shooting and that they do not get a strong enough voice here from people who care about endangered species. She also noted Audubon, migratory birds and deer, and referenced an article from the Smithsonian magazine on mountain top removal due to coal mining. She added that this is occurring in places like West Virginia. She said that migrating bird populations were down 82% due to this type of activity, adding that Audubon says to kill the deer because they are killing the birds. She felt that deer and birds have existed together for "eons" but when you take situations such as mountain top mining that is a problem.

Ms. Sauchau noted also felt that information given by Principal Biologist Predl on evaluating deer management options was old and not accurate, and that she (Ms. Sauchau) had put together her own report and wanted Principal Biologist Predl to have the information.

Ms. Sauchau left information, and wanted it noted as part of the record.

Janet Pizar was next to address to address the Council. She asked that the minutes reflect that she had hand delivered letters to Acting Chairwoman Vreeland and Director Chanda.

Ms. Pizar said she was still waiting for the results of the Division of Fish and Wildlife's investigation of the person who was shot in the face while hunting.

Ms. Pizar noted an article in this morning's Star Ledger that talks about Essex County hunting in the Reservation. In the article, Dan Bernier who oversees the hunt at the Watchung Mountain and has is also working for Essex County, as spokesperson for the Essex County Executive, he acknowledges that there is now a deer fertility control drug that has been approved for use by the Environmental Protection Agency, but goes on to say that it is not available. She also said Gonacón had been registered on September 29, 2009. Ms. Pizar added that she felt the Council

should look at this as a tool for use for deer control in community based deer management. She added that this is one of the questions in the letter she submitted today.

Ms. Pizar also felt that most of the New Jersey public would agree that GNRH has a place in community based deer management, especially in urban and suburban closed tight communities that did not have a lot of open space. She also felt that the Community Based Deer Management Permit screening need to examine specific information more closely. She compared information on deer vehicle collisions given by Principal Biologist Predl to information given by the Essex County Executive (Joseph DiVincenzo). Ms. Pizar also reviewed different types of lights installed by Mr. DiVincenzo to help with deer control in what she felt were low impact areas, but felt nothing was done to make improvements to the roadways in high risk areas. She felt that the efforts are misguided, and that Principal Biologist Predl reverted to Essex County statistics last month in the application she presented and Ms. Pizar resents that this is where the focus of attention is being put. She felt that statistics would show long term that there is no ethic to what is being done for the approval of the CBDMP applications.

Ms. Pizar thanked Assistant Director Herrighty for his comments this morning on bear statistics and that they show that educational efforts help. Ms. Pizar asked if they could imagine the positive impact if educational efforts were combined with enforcement of the black bear feeding ban law and diminishing the human provided garbage that is pulling the bears in to the human environment. She felt it was one thing to educate the public with information about not feeding the bears, and another thing to ensure that they are not breaking the law.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland acknowledged to Ms. Pizar that the letter presented to her today would be handled by staff from the Division since her questions were quite detailed and wanted her to be publicly advised of this. Ms. Pizar acknowledged this.

There were no one else requesting to make public comment.

A motion was made by Councilman Burke, seconded by Councilman Messeroll to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 1:43 pm.