

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
November 13, 2012

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The following was read aloud by Acting Chairman Burke: 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 delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on October 24, 2012.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman David Burke
Councilman Philip Brodhecker (arrived at 10:56 a.m.)
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Jeffrey Link
Councilman Robert Puskas

Division personnel included D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, L. Barno, M. Chicketano, and T. Petrongolo.

Members of the public included representatives from the Department of Agriculture, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and others.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that Councilman Brodhecker was en-route to the meeting, and that all official business would be conducted after his arrival.

Acting Chairman Burke gave a review of the Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG) tour on October 12, 2012. There was additional discussion with other members of the Council who were also in attendance.

Also noted by Acting Chairman Burke was information from his recent visits to Louisiana and Wyoming. He returned to New Jersey prior to Hurricane Sandy, and commented on some of the impacts of the storm.

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He noted that Gina Main, from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Management Assistance Team was attending the meeting today. She will be assisting the Division over the next several weeks.

Director Chanda noted the recent Youth Pheasant Hunting events.

A recent meeting of the Non-Game and Endangered Species Habitat Connectivity Project was noted. Director Chanda briefly reviewed this project, and added that Chief Jenkins could be asked to present more information on this in the future.

Director Chanda also commented on the severe impacts that Hurricane Sandy had on New Jersey, including the impact on the marine commercial shell fishing industry. Since the allotted harvest by individuals may not be met, Director Chanda has requested an extension of the season, including allowing harvest activities on Saturday's. He added that this was also done last year as a result of Hurricane Irene. Staff are still trying to ascertain impacts to the commercial fishing industry, including the substantial damage to the ports. The Governor has also sent a letter to the Department of Commerce to petition them to declare New Jersey a Federal fishery disaster area, which would make the commercial fishermen eligible for Federal disaster relief. He further described this for the Council, and there was some additional discussion.

Inland, Director Chanda noted that the two fish hatcheries and the Game Farm all lost power. The Corbin City and Heislerville impoundments were knocked out. He noted the response from staff to work with these problems, despite State agencies being closed. Director Chanda also noted the measures taken at the Rockport Game Farm to prevent any severe damage. All employee hours will be tracked in order to be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) reimbursement.

The status of the Sedge House could take several days to obtain. Director Chanda shared what little information was known at this time, adding that the status of calendar year 2013 programs is unknown. Regional Superintendent Porutski and staff from the Bureau of Information and Education will lead the efforts for how to proceed with restoration.

(Councilman Brodhecker arrived at 10:56 a.m.)

Director Chanda also reported that he had attended the Farm Bureau Convention yesterday.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that with the arrival of Councilman Brodhecker there was now a quorum and issues requiring a vote could now be addressed.

Minutes of the October 9, 2012 meeting were reviewed. One minor change was noted, and **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to approve the minutes as amended. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

The next item to be addressed was a vote on the proposed 2013 Fish and Game Council meeting dates. The public comment period was opened on this. Barbara Sauchau addressed the Council,

inquiring to what the schedule was. Acting Chairman Burke reviewed the tentative schedule that had been sent to members of the Council, noting one change to be made. After review and some additional discussion, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to approve the tentative schedule of Fish and Game Council meetings for 2013. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Committee reports began, with Councilman Brodhecker reporting for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that the bear damage to the corn crop was very noticeable during the harvest. Assistant Director Herrighty suggested the possibility of doing an aerial view in the future, and there was some additional discussion on this matter.

Councilman Brodhecker also commented on the current prices farmers are receiving on their crops, noting the forecasted outlook for the future is hard to predict.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He noted that prior to Hurricane Sandy, he was receiving reports of good fishing activity on the rivers. Currently, outside of bow hunting, he has not heard of too much other activity. There was some additional discussion regarding the impacts of the storm.

There was no report from the Finance Committee. Director Chanda briefed the Council on information from the quarterly budget meeting

There was no report from the Fisheries Committee.

For the Game Committee, Assistant Director Herrighty advised that the Game Code was being reviewed by the Department lawyers. Staff are trying to set up a meeting with the Commissioner and his staff later this month to brief them. Staff are still working toward a February publication date in the Register.

Assistant Director Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. There was only one new bill introduced this past month, ACR-163, which would create an Exotic Species Task Force. She will continue to track this bill.

The Legislative Committee meeting that was previously scheduled for December 11, 2012 has been rescheduled to January 8, 2013 at 11 am.

There was no report from the Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Committee. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that staff was working along with representatives from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service surveying the seashore nesting areas for impacts to shorebirds, and that so far things were in good shape.

There was no report from the Waterfowl Stamp Committee. It was noted that they will possibly be having a meeting in January.

Assistant Director Nelson reported for the Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee. At their last meeting, they focused on bills in the Legislature. They have also made good suggestions for

changes to the existing rehabilitator's policy. One rehabilitator has been added to the approved rehabilitators list, and inspections of existing rehabilitators continue. Their next meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2012.

Division reports began. Chief Barno from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries gave some additional update to the effects of the Hurricane Sandy at the two fish hatcheries, and the time and effort put in by staff.

Chief Barno reviewed some of the inland water areas and the reports they are getting as electric and phone service is being restored. Areas are being checked to make sure that there was no salt water intrusion where Winter trout stocking is to take place, and the Council was updated as to what information is available so far.

The angler telephone survey had been temporarily put on hold, but was restarted yesterday and should be finished today. This will be followed by an on-line survey.

There was some discussion on the past due angler survey books, as noted last month. Chief Barno expressed that she would like to have them returned in time to have the preliminary results for the Freshwater Fisheries Forum on December 1, 2012, and the final results available at the February 16, 2013 Public Trout Meeting.

Chief Barno noted the delay in the Marine Fisheries Council Meeting, where the American Shad and the outcome of the meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Committee Meeting was to be reviewed. She did note that she was advised that the Delaware River was to remain open, with a creel limit of three, and that all other waters were closed. The new date for the meeting will be this Wednesday, and it was discussed that they may have an emergency closure or create an emergency rule on this matter. There was additional lengthy discussion on this matter and ways to plan for future situations of this nature.

Chief Barno reviewed details of the shad video taken of the migration on the Raritan River. She reviewed the numbers for this and other years, adding that this would be the final year of the project. There was additional discussion on this matter.

There was also additional discussion on the storm damage and staff response at the hatcheries, angler surveys, and storm preparedness and staff response.

There was no report from the Bureau of Information and Education Chief Sciascia. Director Chanda addressed a question on the license bundling that is being considered. Director Chanda also briefed the Council on the proposed archery park, and on the Clinton WMA site that is now being considered. The property was originally purchased using Hunter and Angler funds. An environmental assessment is being done. He also noted a site in Blairstown that has been asked to be considered. Additionally, the Assistant Commissioner asked for a study to be done for the return on investment for this project, and may consider the use of CBT funds for same.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. Staff were busy clearing the areas in time for the youth pheasant hunt, which went off successfully. A number of areas had

damaged facilities, with trees and lines down, including the Sedge House as reported earlier today. At the Deal fishing access, the newly installed steps which allow beach access were also washed away.

In the Southern Region, three impoundments were affected. Chief Petrongolo reviewed these areas in detail for the Council, and described the stabilization efforts that have been made. Staff will be working to see what FEMA assistance can be received in order to make further repairs.

This past Saturday was the opening day of the Fall pheasant and quail season. Staff were successful in getting birds out on all the stocked areas. Area usage overall was very similar to previous years, but numbers of cars at each wildlife management areas were not consistent to counts done in the past.

Chief Petrongolo was asked about plans for downed trees, and he advised that they have ecosystem benefits, and may just be left alone. He further explained liability issue concerns in having a firewood harvest program, and why the Division has not considered this.

Chief Petrongolo was also asked about any decision on the access to Lake Success (on the Colliers Mills WMA). He noted that after the major repairs are made, a final decision will be made on whether or not to keep the road as an open access. He added that this is a long term project. Inquiries were also made regarding the Ken Lockwood Gorge road repairs, and Chief Petrongolo advised that there was no new information to report since the storm, and that he was waiting on staff that administer the Corporate Business Tax (CBT) monies to make arrangements for those repairs to be done.

Acting Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He reviewed some of the Bureau highlights from this past month.

Additionally, Acting Chief Chicketano reported that Conservation Officers had been tasked with assisting the New Jersey State Police and the New Jersey Park Police in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, and reviewed some of the work that they had done.

Acting Chief Chicketano was asked about how the newly graduated Conservation Officers, and he was happy to report on their enthusiasm and the hard work they have been doing.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He noted the Game Code which had already been discussed.

There was a brief review of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and the program in Pennsylvania where they have a 600 square mile disease containment area. He gave a detailed review of the Pennsylvania program. Assistant Director Herrighty also advised that our staff has CWD response plans in place, and described this for the Council. The State Federation has been made aware of the CWD issue when they met with them last month.

A meeting has been requested with the Audubon Society relative to a paper that they put out asking communities to adopt a deer management program and the concern that there is little mention of the services available from this agency in order to guide them through this process.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted a meeting with Tony DiNicola from White Buffalo regarding advanced hunter education classes relative to suburban deer hunting. Mr. DiNicola was advised that the Division cannot endorse these classes and why. The Federation has also expressed an interest in doing this type of advanced course, and the Division will speak further to them. There was some additional discussion on this matter.

Black bear activity has been quite, with complaints down by 30%. Staff are preparing for the upcoming season. Assistant Director Herrighty also advised of a relocated check station for this year.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that at last month's meeting, the Council had asked that those towns who usually submit application for Community Based Deer Management Permits be advised of the timeframe in which they are required to apply. Those potential applicants have been advised. Supervising Biologist Predl does have some applications already, and they will be presented at the January, 2013 meeting.

Supervising Biologist Nichols is developing a waterfowl hunter survey, and Principal Biologist Burnett is preparing an e-mail survey to be sent to pheasant stamp purchasers. Both were briefly reviewed for the Council by Assistant Director Herrighty, and there was some additional discussion.

Last month, the use of depredation permits on Sunday was discussed. Assistant Director Herrighty clarified what was in the minutes, where the shooting of deer on depredation permits is allowed, but the shooting of bear on depredation permits is not allowed on Sundays. He further reviewed that the shooting of bear on Sundays would require a statutory change. Also noted was that so far this year, the number of requests for deer depredation permits was 221, down from 271 total permits for the last calendar year. Bear permit requests are currently at 28, with an all-time high being 50 requests.

Assistant Director Herrighty was asked if he had heard of any problems with people applying for bear season permits. He noted some intermittent problems with people getting into the system, and there was some brief review of this.

Old and new business was discussed. The December meeting was reviewed, and there was discussion on cancelling same. **A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman Messeroll to cancel the December 11, 2012 meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

There was additional discussion on the January 8, 2013 meeting, and the pending Council appointments.

At this time, the public comment period was opened.

Janet Pizar, from Millburn, Essex County addressed the Council. She commented on what information she felt should be included when tabulating bear harvest numbers to show a total bear mortality.

Councilman Gudmundsson questioned whether or not deer road kill numbers were included in the final deer season numbers, and was advised that they are not. There was also discussion on changes to the removal of road killed deer from many years ago.

Barbara Sauchau from White House also addressed the Council. She commented that staff are public servants and they are supposed to respond to the public, the meeting minutes, bureau reports that were not available today, the running of the Government, bill paying and funding used by the Division, and information on the Division's website. (Ms. Sauchau expired her three minutes).

Director Chanda noted that less than 15% of monies are from the general Treasury, and that all CBT monies used are posted on the website as to where it goes, as well as in the annual report.

With no one else wishing to address the Council, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.** Meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m.