

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**
Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
September 9 2015

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:14 a.m. by Acting Chairman Burke without a quorum.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State on August 13, 2015 and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press.

Roll call was taken.

In attendance were: Acting Chairman Burke
 Councilman Brodhecker (arrived at 10:40 a.m.)
 Councilwoman Brummer
 Councilman Gudmundsson
 Councilman Van Mater
 Councilman Link
 Councilman DeStephano

Absent:
 Councilwoman Blumig;
 Councilwoman Barbara Brummer (At ENSAC Meeting)
 Councilman Conover;
 Councilman DeMartino

Division employees included D. Chanda, P. Nelson, M. Chicketano, C. Stanko, J. Matthews, D. Golden, L. Barno, A. McBride, and A. Ivany.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Minutes of the August 11, 2015 meeting were reviewed and edited after quorum. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman Link to approve the minutes. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed and Councilwoman Blumig; Councilwoman Brummer, Councilman Conover and Councilman DeMartino were not present at time of vote.**

Acting Chairman Burke mentioned the Wild Expo at Colliers Mills the weekend of September 12 and 13, 2015. The joint meeting of the Council and the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee meeting will take place at 1:00 with three (3) presentations. Acting Chairman Burke advised that Council is looking to get business done by noon due to some members needing to leave early. Once quorum is obtained, the Council will go into executive session to consider a stay on the Game Code pertaining to the enclosed foothold traps for 15 minutes or so. The public comment period will be toward the end of the morning session. Fall/Winter Trout – comment after information presented. The October 13th meeting Council originally scheduled for 1:00 p.m. is being moved

back to the original time of 10:00 a.m. as the Fish Code hearing was canceled for that evening. No vote needed to change the time back. Public hearing for the Fish Code will be at the Conservation Center on the evening of November 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. Acting Chairman Burke changed the meeting schedules as follows: October 13, 2015 to 10:00 a.m. and November 10, 2015 to 1:00 p.m. followed by the Fish Code Hearing that evening. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman VanMater to approve the change in the meeting schedule. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed.**

Director Chanda advised that the staff has been working hard for preparing for the Wild Expo. In addition, he indicated he is looking forward to the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee and Fish and Game Council joint meeting with good presentations.

Acting Chairman Burke mentioned that he read in the Bureau of Land Management's report of personnel changes and that Sue Predl is now working in the North and that Ted Nichols would be working in the South. Assistant Director Nelson advised that Mr. Nichols had changed his mind and that discussions were on-going regarding this position.

Agriculture Committee Report: Councilman Link stated that in short that the southern part of the state needs rain badly. A lot of leaves are falling due to lack of rain. The acorns that are falling are tiny. The white oaks loaded with acorns and they are already falling. The peach orchards have a lot of fruit on the ground. Councilman VanMater advised that farmers in Delaware are picking corn and soy beans now which is generally unheard of and which is early due to weather. He also indicated that the fields are yellow and the soil is like flour.

State Federation Reports: Meetings are starting up after summer. Councilman Gudmundsson attended Warren County meeting and got beat up on some Game Code changes that they are unhappy with. One complaint was that seasons are too long but people would like to go out more often so comments were contradictory. Trappers were well represented and were upset that somethings were pulled from the Game Code. Some were upset that the number of deer in WMA's are down by design and feel that it may be too far down. Some are suspicious that some hunters are not taking the doe first. Some are concerned about baiting and might look to advance a resolution by region. Also may request a senior trapping license but realize that it would require approval by the Legislature.

Councilman DeStephano – stated that Morris County canceled their Federation meeting. He was not able to attend Bergen County's meeting, but he heard guys are upset about bucks shot during bow seasons. They believe too many are being harvested early and they are not taking does. They also believe that the bow hunters have more time out there.

Atlantic/Cumberland County Federation Meeting scheduled for September 10, 2015. And they are expecting a big crowd.

The closure of 2/3 of the 750 roads at Wharton is a major concern of all. The closures started earlier this summer. Parks Superintendent Auermueller is supposed to attend the meeting.

There will be a meeting regarding the Delaware Water Gap at Sussex County College on September 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. John Rogala sent an e-mail to Councilman Gudmundsson that he plans to attend.

Finance Committee: No meeting held.

Fish Committee: Trout Information to be discussed later.

Game Committee: Nothing planned.

Legislative Committee – Assistant Director Nelson reported that the Legislature has been on recess and little has happened. It will probably remain quiet as the Assembly is campaigning before the November elections.

Waterfowl Advisory Stamp Committee: Meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2015 at the Conservation Center.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Committee: Next meeting will be in October at the Northern Region Office.

Councilman Brodhecker arrived at 10:40. Council now has a quorum

A motion was made by Councilman VanMater and seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to go into an Executive Session at 10:40 a.m. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed.

Executive Session ended at 10:51 - Public invited to return after Executive Session.

A motion made by Councilman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman DeStephano to move to reject the request for a stay of the Game Code Sections dealing with enclosed foothold traps. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed (6-0).

A motion made to approve the August 11, 2015 minutes made by Councilman VanMater and seconded by Councilman Brodhecker. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed.

Chief Lisa Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. Fish Code was filed last Thursday, September 3, 2014. Final lawyer reviewed the proposal on September 8, 2015. The proposal will be published in the October 5, 2015 New Jersey Register starting the sixty-day public comment period which will end on December 4, 2015. Paul Tarlowe will post the proposal information on the Division website once it is published in the register. The Governor's Office had a lot of discussion/questions concerning the commercial harvest of snapping turtles. 2015 Fall and Winter Trout Stocking schedules were provided to and reviewed by Council members. Ross Shramko finalized the fall and winter schedules. The numbers are slightly lower than last year as we are back to stocking 20,000 of the two-year old fish compared to the 25,000 one-year old stocked in 2014 as a result of the disease outbreak at the hatchery. Stocking schedules are dependent upon weather holding and stream temperatures dropping. Beginning in 2015, Winter Trout Stocking will be done the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving and not on Wednesday. This preserves Wednesday as an alternate day in case of bad weather. Chief Barno reported Hook's Creek Lake which has not been stocked for the past two years due to salt water intrusion from Hurricane Sandy can once again be stocked as salinity levels have finally dropped sufficiently to allow trout stocking to resume.

Public Comment Period (3 minutes only):

Barbara Sauchau, Whitehouse Station – Opposes stocking trout in streams for Fall and Winter Trout Stocking. Expensive proposition to taxpayers and says fish are diseased.

Motion made by Councilman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman DeStephano to approve stocking schedule and allocations with date changes. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed.

In response to public comment Chief Barno – responded that all fish out of Pequest have been tested by the Fish Pathologist and are healthy. She also added that the Pequest Trout Hatchery operates on Trout Stamp and License sales from anglers and no state tax payers monies are used.

Jeff Matthews reported for the Bureau of Fish Production. Disease Certifications are done every year by pathologist Jan Lovy. The results have been negative on all major pathogens at Hackettstown. Dr. Lovy started the test at Pequest yesterday on September 8, 2015. Stocking locations on monthly report provided. The Fall sorting of fish has been completed to lighten density in the raceway. Outlook for Spring, 2016 is looking good. The eggs being taken now are for 2017 and expect a 60-70% hatch rate. Security cameras and monitors at Pequest have been installed. Hackettstown wiring is completed and cameras will be installed shortly. In regards to the solar project at Pequest, BPU questioned the roof structure over hatchery and we were able to lower roof by 4 feet and still can provide same level of service. Issues with snow load issues was questioned by Councilman Brodhecker. Engineers will be addressing those types of questions. Councilman Gudmundsson had questions about "Trout in the Classroom" and everything is on schedule.

Chief Al Ivany reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. Everything is in order for the WILD Outdoor Expo. There are more than 120 conservation organizations and/or exhibitors confirmed; a news release will be out on September 8, 2015; expecting big crowds if good weather. The new track wheel chairs the Division recently purchased will also be on display at the Expo. The hunter education program is developing a plan of use for the chairs and to increase outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities. Chief Ivany also reported on the most recent personnel actions and introduced Linda DiPiano, who is now supervising education staff and programs in the bureau. Nathan Figley has been promoted and is now supervising all hunter education staff and the overall hunter education program; Katie Ischinger was recently hired to fill the vacant northern region position with the National Archery in Schools Program (NASP), and Kathy Porutski who is now back within the bureau to assist with communications and outreach. Fall Black Bear and Fall Trout stocking news releases have been drafted and will be distributed statewide through the DEP Press office.

Chief David Golden reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He spoke about the large forest fire in Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. Over 1,012 acres burned over a two (2) day period on the southwest side of Rt. 539. The fire is believed to have started from an unattended charcoal fire on private property. Discussion ensued on forest health and ways to improve it. Chief Golden announced that Jason Hearon will be performing the role of Area Supervisor in the Southern Regional Office. He is being reassigned from the Delaware Bay Shellfish Office.

Director Chanda spoke about strategic planning sessions that will shape the agency. The Division will move pieces around, backfilling where we can and cannot. Some bureaus will need to be shored up so that we can move forward as an agency.

Chief Mark Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He reviewed several highlights as listed in the Bureau's monthly report with the Council. Our Wildlife Management Areas have problems, many summons were issued throughout the state. ATVs being operated on Clays Whole – many summons issued; South Jersey hotbed of activity – Winslow WMA over the last month 119 summons for illegal activity issued. Harvest Shellfish Illegally at Muddy Run – Lt. Risher performed a Motor Vehicle stop and found three individuals had harvested 13000 clams in unauthorized waters. Judge assigned Fish and Wildlife the forfeited car. .

Acting Chief Stanko reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. She reported that James Sloan conducted a predator scent post study related to Quail Habitat Restoration in Cumberland County over 4-5 day period. The study will be replicated in October and final study results will be provided to Council in November. USDA APHIS Wildlife is conducting a survey for feral pigs in south New Jersey. They will report back when survey is completed. New Jersey may be the first state able to eradicate feral pigs. Digest out this week.

Endangered and Non-Game Species: No one to give a report as Chief Jenkins was attending the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee meeting being held at the Assunpink Conservation Center.

Public Comment (3 minutes):

Barbara Saushau, Whitehouse Station – read a letter that was published in paper on leghold trap.

Motion made by Acting Chairman Burke and seconded by Councilman VanMater to adjourn for lunch at 11:45 a.m. and return at 1:00 for the Joint Meeting Presentation. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed.

Joint Meeting Resumed at 1:00 at the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area

Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Council and Fish and Game Council – Dr. Brummer asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Three Power-Point presentations given:

Weldon Brook Forest Stewardship - Sharon Petzinger began her presentation at 1:08 p.m. and concluded at 1:42 p.m. Dr. Brummer asked if there were any questions.

Paulinskill River Restoration Project - Lisa Barno began her presentation at 1:43 and concluded at 2:14. Dr. Brummer asked if there were any questions.

Beneficial Re-use of Dredge Material to Restore Coastal Marsh Habitat - David Golden began his presentation at 2:16 and concluded at 2:47. Dr. Brummer asked if there were any questions.

Dr. Brummer thanked all presenters for a job well done.

Formally adjourn:

Councilman Lathrop made a motion to adjourn the ENSAC Meeting seconded by Councilwoman Miller to adjourn their meeting – vote taken; all in favor; no opposition;

Councilman VanMater made a motion to adjourn the Fish and Game Council Meeting and Councilman Gudmundsson seconded – Vote taken; all in favor; no opposition.

Meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.