

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL  
Conservation Center  
Robbinsville, New Jersey  
May 10, 2016**

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Acting Chairman David Burke.

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 April 26, 2016 and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press; published on May 4th.

Roll call was taken.

In attendance were:   Acting Chairman Burke  
                                  Councilwoman Brummer  
                                  Councilman Brodhecker (late arrival at 10:45 a.m.)  
                                  Councilman DeMartino  
                                  Councilman Gudmundsson  
                                  Councilman Link (late arrival at 10:31 a.m.)  
                                  Councilman DeStephano

Absent:  
                                  Councilwoman Blumig  
                                  Councilman Van Mater

Division employees included: D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, D. Golden, A. Ivany, L. Barno, B. Stoff, L. DiPiano, D. Roberts and S. Coltrain

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

**Motion was made by Councilman DeMartino and seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2016 meeting with corrections identified. Vote taken, all were in favor, none opposed.**

Acting Chairman Burke spoke on the recent weather patterns of being wet, damp and rainy. He expressed the good thing with this type of weather is it lessens the threat of forest fire. He reported his area in the south had three inches of rain in one day. Rivers, lakes and ponds are getting up to normal levels. The beginning of turkey season was not too bad in spite of the weather. He also stated in this type of weather, damp and rainy, the pollination of the oak trees

and other trees that are wind pollinated will affect the acorn crop. As reported last month, the weather has not affected the blueberry crop; its predicated only 5-7% of its crop will be lost due to a cold spell. Seventy percent of the peach crop will be lost due to the rainy weather. Fishing season has kicked into gear, saltwater fishing is getting better, blue fish are moving up the coast, hoping they will be there for the Governor's fishing tournament on the 15<sup>th</sup>. There are quite a few HOFNOD events scheduled. Acting Chairman Burke acknowledged Director Chanda's leadership letter in Wildlife Professionals and shared the article with the Council.

Director David Chanda reported the Division is in the middle of eagle banding. This year the Division has taken advantage of getting legislator's out to see what the Division is doing. Assistant Director Nelson went out with Senator Dawn Addiego which went well. It is good to show off the work being done by the Division. The budget is in good shape as we come into the home stretch of the fiscal year. The Bureaus are able to make significant capital purchases, a distribution truck at Pequest, half dozen Law Enforcement vehicles, bureaus will be able to purchase a car or a truck and a tractor for Land Management. Looking forward it may be difficult to purchase these items as the fringe benefits assessments are going up. Every 1% represents about \$100,000, so if there is a 6 or 7% increase, that would be equivalent to the equipment purchase we would normally make. It is very challenging to forecast or manage the budget when you don't know what you are going to be assessed while preparing the budget. Chiefs are working on their program cost with up or down adjustment scenarios in order to apply the assessment treasury designates.

Councilwoman Brummer stated the Council has asked about seeing the budget and how it is distributed out and how the Division is doing against budget. Councilman DeMartino discussed the old handout that was distributed at Council meetings when Marty McHugh was Director which had a significant breakdown of each bureau.

Director Chanda stated he will email a budget two weeks before the next meeting on June 14th for the Council to review. Assistant Director Nelson explained that there is a new system and it will not look the way it used to look.

Director Chanda gave an update on the Blue Ribbon Panel. Congressman Don Young and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell have drafted legislation that is under review now at the federal level and hopefully in the next couple of weeks the bill will drop in and Congress will advance the funding legislation forward.

Acting Chairman Burke stated he was not aware of any council agenda item that will be voted on today and if something comes up, he will allow time for public comments.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilwoman Brummer reported her chicken coop was attacked by a bear. She took blame for not having an electric fence as an addition to the chain link she had to protect her chickens. This attack was reported to Fish and Wildlife.

Agriculture Committee Report:

Dr. Sebastian Reist from New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA), Division of Animal Health reported on a feral hog, *Brucella suis* issue traced into the state of New Jersey which may relate to feral hog exposure in New York. Dr. Reist explained there is not a New Jersey feral hog problem, but it is important to have feral hog management in New Jersey. He also explained that there are *Brucella suis*/brucellosis federal programs to eliminate the diseases. There is a strain in swine and another in cattle. Dr. Reist explained this is a zoonotic disease and that is what concerns people the most. In New York, an elderly lady was diagnosed with *Brucella suis* by culture. It was traced back to a NY farm. That farm had spread animals in the northeast including New Jersey. Feral hogs were also reported in the area in New York where the farm was located. The Ruminant form of the disease is called Undulant fever in Humans. When people contracted it, they waxed and waned with a fever. It was a big problem. The country is free of brucellosis in cattle except a very small portion in Yellowstone area where it is in the bison and/or elk. The country is free of swine brucellosis in the commercial swine population. There is no guarantee the small mom and pop herds don't have it.

Dr. Reist also reported on the avian influenza issue. NJDA has been working on disposal issues on how to get rid of the carcasses if they have animals that have avian influenza. NJDA has been working with DEP's Waste Management to come up with solutions. A couple of choices are burying, composting, landfill and incineration. Burying and composting will tend to happen on places where the birds are, but that may not be an available solution based on time of year, soil type or the availability of material to do the work. Composting is the preferred method. Landfilling is not great. NJDA has been working with DEP to work on commercial incineration options. NJDA have been getting pushback at the local public level with incineration issue. The concern is that incineration of said material will not destroy the virus. The public wants to see research that shows what happens to the virus. It is hard to find research for something that no one has thought to look for when a virus is destroyed at 200 degrees to prove that it is destroyed at 5,000 degrees. NJDA have been trying to do test burns to help out collect some of that information, but based on the fact that companies and municipalities don't want that waste stream in their incinerator, they are having trouble getting a test burn done. NJDA are not looking to have any one place, but looking at various places around the state. Dr. Reist offered to speak to any council member on how incineration works if they so desire.

Acting Chairman Burke reported the Federation Sportsman Club had their convention and asked if any council member attended. None of the council members present attended the convention or monthly meeting. Acting Chairman Burke attend Atlantic County youth day. There were 115 children at the youth sporting clay event. Members of the Federation assisted with the HOFNOD event at Patriot Lake in Galloway Township. Seventy-five children were in attendance. The turnout was low due to the poor weather conditions. On June 11<sup>th</sup> there will be the statewide HOFNOD program in various counties. Atlantic, Cumberland and Gloucester will participate. Acting Chairman Burke said he does not attend Cumberland County Meetings because Frank Fergillio covers the meeting, but he still gets the minutes. Cumberland County collected 14 tons of trash and 6 tons of tires on their clean-up day on state lands; Peasley and Millville. He also noted there is a lot of participation from the sportsmen clubs.

Finance committee will meet at 9:00 June 14th.

Fish Committee:

Councilman Gudmundsson reported the fish committee has not met and will meet when they get more information on the wild trout proposal.

Game Committee:

Acting Chairman Burke reported the game committee will meet on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. The committee will concentrate on deer but other issues will be discussed as well. He noted everyone should have a copy of a letter given out from the federation regarding their request for amendments.

Acting Chairman Burke asked Councilman Jeffery Link if he had anything to report from the agriculture committee in the south. Councilman Link reported it has been very busy and that is why he was late. He also reported that there is enough rain. The ground is cold, but the air needs to be warm in order for the seeds to take root.

Legislative Committee:

Assistant Director Nelson reported there has not been too much activity as the Legislature is preparing for the upcoming budget. New Bills are:

A3668 (companion S2129) – A variation for free fishing, hunting and trapping licenses bill that has been introduced before. It would allow emergency ambulance and firemen to get free licenses. The language that required the Division be reimbursed for those licenses is in this bill. Assistant Director Nelson supports the bill and noted in the past, similar bills never took off once the cost of the reimbursement was realized.

AR-142 Resolution for zika virus which urges the US FDA to add zika virus to the list of qualified tropical disease allowing pharmaceutical companies to work primarily on vaccines or any type of treatment.

S2044 – This is a new introduction, but the bill has been introduced in past sessions. It prohibits certain possession, sale, offering for sale, trade or distribution of shark fins. Assistant Director Nelson noted this would be more of a concern for Marine Fisheries.

S1986 (companion A2448 introduced previously). This bill establishes “Milkweed for Monarchs” program. Volunteers would take care of drainage basin and plant milkweed and whatever plants are needed for butterflies.

S-2126 (companion to A3049 previously introduced) Authorizes free state park admission and free hunting, fishing and trapping licenses for person with certain types of military service.

A3527 (companion S2141) Removes black bear from list of game species.

SR48 (companion AR127) Opposes expansion of black bear hunting season in New Jersey.

S977 and S978 - These two bills were talked about last month and were conditionally vetoed by the Governor. They were voted on May 9<sup>th</sup> and unanimously passed by the Senate for both bills

and it will now go back to the Governor's office for signature. The changes to the bills included the removal of cape buffalo as one of the "Big Five" species, the permit section was taken out and in S978 there was something added about commerce.

Acting Chairman Burke asked about the rule on the terrapins. Director Chanda stated the season was closed by executive order. Assistant Director Nelson noted there is a bill moving through the Legislature to declare the terrapins a native species.

**No position will be taken by the council at this time on the new bills.**

Endangered and Non-game Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC):

Councilwoman Brummer reported there is nothing new and the committee will meet next week, May 18<sup>th</sup> at Parvin State Park to discuss the pine snake and ATV issue. Acting Chairman Burke requested that the minutes be shared with the Council. Councilwoman Brummer suggested the minutes from the Council also be shared with ENSAC and Councilman DeMartino requested Marine Council minutes. Director Chanda stated this can be done by email.

Acting Chairman Burke mentioned an article on eagles banding in Atlantic County and a causeway in Margate where piping and fencing is put along the roadway so the turtles cannot crawl on the highway. A local construction company donates material and boy scouts from Vineland help put it up and maintain it. The Wetlands Institute and Stockton University have been collecting the roadkill turtles, taking the eggs, incubating and hatching them. The two groups have been doing this for years. Some of the turtles will be released soon. It is good public relations and they involve children as well.

Councilwoman Brummer expressed her wish for something like that to be done for salamanders. She suggested getting funding for infrastructure to create tunnels that would allow the salamanders to get to their nesting place.

Councilman Brodhecker reported the bears are active, deer are in the fields and the weather is nice up in his area.

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee:

Acting Chairman Burke and Councilman DeMartino attended the waterfowl meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Sarah Fleming, regional biologist from Ducks Unlimited gave an update presentation on their efforts in the northeast. The Duck Stamp Committee is helping with a project in Quebec which has been mentioned previously. Two properties were reviewed. One was withdrawn and the committee voted to limit involvement to \$600 per acre on the other. The Committee is getting away from outright purchasing properties that cannot be developed or used as a parking lot. The Committee does not have a lot of money and are partnering with other groups. Councilman DeMartino further explained that the Committee is looking for properties that can be developed rather than marshlands where in 20 years down the road may be under water.

Councilwoman Brummer mentioned an ongoing project sponsored by the William Penn Foundation called Blueprint for New Jersey. A huge group of partners coming together to

construct a priority map for New Jersey of what needs to be protected starting now and 30 years from now. Acting Chairman Burke asked that she send information regarding the program.

Five decoys were found in the evidence lock up room that were made by prominent decoy carvers. The decoys can be found on stamps from the 80's/early 90's. A case is being made to display at Pequest. \$1,000 has been allocated to make a case. It was suggested that the casing be made individually in order to display the decoy by the picture.

Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee:

Councilman Brodhecker reported the meeting was canceled and the next regularly scheduled meeting is in July.

## **DIVISION REPORTS**

Barbara Stoff, Licensing and Permits, reported there are still problems with license agents and instructions on selling the fishing buddy licenses. Just under 2,500 have been sold so far. Adding that into the total number of licenses sold we are still 1.9% behind where we were at this time last year. Ms. Stoff stated she is not sure if it is weather related or not. Ms. Stoff is still working with Walmart and has made progress by contacting Walmart's IT Department. One person has been assigned to work on this project. There are 20 Walmarts that are down (not selling licenses) in the state. Letters will be sent to the managers of the Walmarts that are offline giving them contact numbers and instructions on who to contact and the steps to follow to get back online. Sports Authority will be going out of business this year. Sports Authority sells licenses and make up .2%, less than 1% of sales. This will not have an impact on the Division.

Acting Chairman Burke asked for clarification on purchasing turkey permit based on the number shown on the availability line. Ms. Stoff explained that the numbers had to be put in there for juveniles and farmers as a place holder that those who are guaranteed a permit can collect them. She would like to have the line removed but it would cost the section too many hours to do so.

Chief Lisa Barno, Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries, reported that there was a fish kill on West Portal Brook, Bethlehem Township, due to a truck fire on Route 78 that was carrying detergent. The detergent flowed into a storm drain that releases into the brook. West Portal Brook is a trout production stream. It was reported approximately 1,000 gallons of detergent spilled, but on such a small stream, that is all it takes. Detergents have surfactants in them. Surfactants is what keeps stains from sticking to your clothing and it is extremely toxic to fish. It wiped out all the fish within the 2.8 miles of stream that is located downstream of the bridge crossing. Regional biologist, Pat Hamilton responded to the notification. The truck fire happened in the wee hours of Thursday morning our office was notified on Thursday morning. Staff inspected four separate sections each about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. Staff collected approximately 1,100 dead fish; predominately Brown Trout, some Brook Trout and Slimy Sculpin. Sculpin is a small bottom dwelling species but it is more intolerant of environmental degradation than trout There are a number of farms bordering the edge of the stream. Department of Agriculture staff person was present and farmers were told to keep their livestock away from the stream corridor for at least a day or two. The stream is within the Musconetcong Watershed. A private club had just stocked the Musconetcong River at the confluence. No impact to the freshly stocked trout was noted. There

were some dead Blacknose Dace observed in the river, but it is believed that they washed down from the creek. A stream inspection yesterday indicated that the rain from Friday had helped to wash away the toxins. Live traps are being installed for a bioassay test within the brook at the four locations that was checked as well as upstream of the bridge crossing. Basically, a trap, similar to a minnow trap, will be placed within the creek with Rainbow Trout from the Pequest Trout Hatchery to gauge whether the detergent has been flushed out sufficiently as far as repopulation of fish. Chief Barno also indicated they were going to electrofish upstream of the Route 78 Bridge; as there is only a small section of the creek that runs above the bridge. to assess if the fish population is adequate enough to repopulate the lower section of the stream. Once all the information is together, we will decide what the next steps will be. Whether we will have to relocate trout from other streams into the stretch or whether we feel there is enough robust population upstream. The one thing we were also looking at, is depending on the number of Brown Trout we get upstream, it might be a good Brook Trout restoration study; as far as relocating the browns upstream and then transplanting Brook Trout into the stretch, and see if we can restore the Brook Trout population.

Councilman Gudmundsson inquired on the condition of the insect population. Chief Barno responded Beth Styler-Barry was out on Sunday with Musconetcong Watershed Association. She did document some live macro vertebrates on Sunday, which is promising. During the kill it seemed to affect a lot of macro vertebrates, worms and amphibians. It seemed to be a complete kill at that time.

Councilman DeMartino asked do we go after the people who own the truck to make them pay? Chief Barno responded Hazmat was out on site when they received the call about the accident. Typically, they bill the responsible company directly for the clean-up. In this particular kill and response, we don't know yet. We will send this information over to Natural Resource Damages and they will decide next steps as far as damage assessment.

Councilwoman Brummer inquired if we knew if it was a major company or trucking firm. Chief Barno responded we don't have that information. It was not included in the facts through NJEMS. Chief Barno also explained the accident was two-fold. The initial contact caused part of the spill, then the cab and part of the semi-truck had caught fire, which was able to be put out, but compromised the bottles. When the truck was moved with the materials over onto the tow truck, the bottles started to burst and there was a secondary spill. Man hours have been kept and a final report and billing the hours from the bioassay work and any kind of restoration. There is a publication from the American Fishery Society that assigns values to loss of fish. It provides an equation for assessing the value. Trout Unlimited will also be on-site on May 11<sup>th</sup>. They will visit some of the areas that staff did not get to. They will meet with Pat Hamilton to look at the damaged area.

Chief Barno has received a report from South Branch of the Raritan River of Ken Lockwood Gorge of a Rainbow Trout with a large boil-like lesion caught by an angler. This is the second report in two years from this stretch of the river of a Rainbow Trout with a lesion on it. Unfortunately, as it is a catch-and-release stretch, the angler released the fish back into the water. This is exactly what happened the last time. Anglers have been alerted through the fish forums and fish health page, urging them that conservation officers are not going to write them up if they

have a fish that looks like it is in poor health. They have been asked to contact the Fisheries Office immediately and arrange to have the fish picked up. We are not, at this time, going to conduct sampling. We attempted to do that last time, and after several surveys we did not come up with any fish with visible lesions. We will make anglers aware to keep their eyes open and if everyone can help spread the word to their various organizations: Please let us know and please do not throw the fish back in the water if a fish is caught in poor health.

Carnegie Lake also had an on-going fish kill with gizzard shad for several weeks. At first it was believed it was due to *Aeromonas*, which is the cause of some of the kills we had in the past at Carnegie Lake. Gizzard shad are also very sensitive to sudden temperature increases. Carnegie Lake has a very, very high abundance of gizzard shad. Initially, we could not identify the cause. Subsequent samples provided later identified a protozoan that causes ick, one of the most common freshwater fish diseases. Normally it is not problematic in a wild population but when you have spawning stress on top of stress due to sudden temperature changes, on top of a very abundant population of gizzard shad, it was enough to result in the kill which went on for about three weeks. At the same time we were trap netting Carnegie Lake, there were a lot of the gizzard shad ending up in the trap nets (by the thousands) and they were moved off site.

Thousands upon thousands of dead snails also washed up on the shoreline of Lake Hopatcong two weeks ago. This appeared to be an environmental issue. There were no dead snails noted Saturday night but by Sunday morning there were tens of thousands dead along the shoreline. They were banded mystery snails, considered by the Department to be invasive, highly prolific. It was a one-time kill. It has not happened again and there is no evidence of any issues. Unfortunately by the time the Bureau was notified on Monday, Dr. Jan Lovy responded, the samples were too decomposed for additional testing.

Councilwoman Brummer reported on the Columbia Lake Dam Removal. There was a very rigorous community meeting. There was about 70 people who showed up to talk about their feelings about the dam removal. Presentations were made, which the community had asked for, by American Rivers who talked about dams and what they do to springs; presentation by Nature Conservancy on what they are doing and why, how it might benefit the community in terms of recreational opportunities afterwards and increased access. A presentation was also made by Princeton Hydro who are the engineers hired for all the engineering work necessary to submit for a permit from the State for the removal. The State owns the dam. The community meeting was full of people who wanted to know more and TNC is continuing to follow up with individuals from the community to answer their questions. The submission to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to surrender the license for operating the hydropower dam is due to be signed. We are currently, awaiting for clarification information requested from the State Historic Preservation Office within the Department. Once we have the MOU the license surrender will be issued. As soon as the surrender is received, the dam operator will stop the hydropower operation. It's a small amount of hydropower, the equivalent to 156 homes. The energy goes directly into the grid of JCP&L. The amount of energy that will be produced by that solar facility is about 216 homes. It more than compensates for the loss of the hydropower. The project is on schedule to submit for permitting by the end of the summer. The intention is to start the demolition of the dam in the fall of 2017. It will be a slow process as it happens to be a hollow core dam. You cannot make a notch in the dam and let it drain which is the typical



approach for dam removals. If you do that to a hollow core dam it makes the dam buoyant and may uplift the dam and the whole thing will flush. The plan is to have the dam completely removed by 2018.

Councilwoman Brummer indicated one thing this council could get more involved with is the plan from the engineering blueprint to put in a trail. We want to increase the recreational opportunities, increase access for fishing and kayaking. Princeton Hydro has drawn in a tentative trail that will be a loop trail going along the western side of what is now a lake. Councilwoman Brummer would like to see more Fish and Wildlife input on trail and access design. Sue Predl has been a part of all of these meetings and is aware of this. This area can be used as a passive recreational for birding. The trail will be paid for out of the restoration budget. A proposal has also been submitted for a grant from NOAA for the deconstruction in the amount of \$4.95 million. With that money will be an allowance for the trail. We should hear about the grant money by the end of June.

Chief Barno stated the irony of the hydropower is sampling is a lot easier when the running hydropower dam producing electricity because it drops the river down an extra foot for sampling.

Chief Barno also reported the 2016-17 Fish Code is in Governor's office pending review. The Division is still waiting for it to be released and as such we do not have a register date for the adoption of the regulations. Chief Barno will send out an email once the Fish Code gets released. The Bureau is already moving toward the 2018-2019 Fish Code.

At the March 16, 2016 ENSAC meeting 11 species of freshwater fish were approved through the committee for listing in New Jersey. Three of them as endangered. They are Shortnose Sturgeon, Ironcolor Shiner and the Bridle Shiner. On the threatened list is the Slimy Sculpin and of special concern are the Brook Lamprey, Blackbanded Sunfish, Brook Trout, Comely Shiner, Mud Sunfish, Northern Hog Sucker and Shield Darter. Several of the species currently fall under the definition of baitfish. Regulations within the code will be rectified to remove those species from the definition of baitfish. That will be the first step with some of the legal issues associated with assigning these species status.

Councilman Gudmundsson noted that Brook Trout are a game fish. Chief Barno acknowledged the fact and noted that species is of special concern. Chief Barno will work with Chief Dave Jenkins (ENSP) with the best way to move forward due to the issues with the definition of non-game applying to hunting and not fishing.

Chief Barno noted that the Division is in week five of trout stocking

Assistant Director Larry Herrighty reported for Chief Jeff Matthews, Bureau of Fish Production in his absence. As of Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, Pequest has stocked 487,695 trout including 6,425 breeders which brings the stocking of breeders back to what we normally did pre-furunculosis. Hatchery employees are now sorting fish for the 2017 stocking program getting them into the raceways as they become available. The fish on reserve for the fall stocking are at 12 ½ inches.

At the open house you could see the wires had been strung with mylar attached, and the air cannons and scary man to keep the ospreys out of the raceway.

The bureau has not heard anything new on the solar project other than a couple of months ago. Treasury staff were going to go forward with an RFP.

The bureau received 2,000 8-inch landlocked salmon from Massachusetts and in return gave them 20,000 surplus 3-inch northern pike. Staff stocked 800 salmon in 3 water bodies and kept 1,200 until they grow 15 -16 inches in size range.

Hackettstown has given out 53,000 flathead minnows and 53,000 gambusia in a cooperative effort with the Mosquito Control Commission (OMCC) and county mosquito agencies. Bergen and Cumberland counties are scheduled to pick up the fish in the next couple of days. There is a MOU in where OMCC gives the division money to offset the cost of raising the fish. Burlington County was recently stocked with 1,600 10-inch brown bullhead fish and the plan is to stock another 2 – 3 thousand down in the southern part of the state this week. Ron Jacobson, from the Hackettstown crew, participated in a Lake Hopatcong outdoor event on May 7<sup>th</sup> having a display set up and was well received. Staff at Hackettstown are now getting large amounts of smallmouth bass breeders ready to spawn.

Acting Chairman Burke mentioned at the fish HOFNOD event at Patriots Lake, in Galloway Township, the biggest fish caught was a catfish which was probably stocked by the Division. Also in one of the trout ponds in Absecon there was more catfish caught than trout that was stocked. The cormorants are still eating the trout.

Chief Al Ivany and Linda DiPiano from Information and Education were both present to make reports. Chief Ivany reported they are currently checking out display cases for five duck decoys that represent the Retriever series of the NJ Duck Stamp program. The decoys will be used in a display at the Pequest Natural Resource Education center. He will work with Division waterfowl biologist Ted Nichols to get the decoys. Chief Ivany asked for copies of old Duck Stamp prints and he was directed to ask Wendy Swaysland, as she may have some. Councilman DeMartino said the original artwork for the duck stamps should be at Pequest. Councilman Gudmundsson suggested Al check with John Rogallo.

Chief Ivany reported on the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament, which will take place on Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at Island Beach State Park. He stated everything is ready to go. This is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and there are about 400 pre-registrants, which is on track with recent years. There will probably be 200 – 250 more participants on the day of the event which would bring the total to 600 - 650 in attendance. Chief Ivany is still waiting to hear from the Lieutenant Governor's office for final confirmation on her attendance. Two decals have been developed this year in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tournament. One is the logo from the website and the other is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary "I fished the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Surf Fishing tournament." All participants will receive both of the decals.

The Marine digest has gone to the publisher. The "on the shelf" date is May 23<sup>rd</sup> and the digital form will follow soon.

Mrs. DiPiano reported on the HOFNOD Youth Fishing Challenge on June 11<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the informational poster that is on the website was distributed. June 11<sup>th</sup> is also the first of two free fishing days in the state. Free Fishing Day was picked for this event so participating youths are able to fish with their family. The entire family can then enjoy fishing together and they can see how the HOFNOD programs can benefit the youth of the state. Most of the HOFNOD groups are participating June 11<sup>th</sup> and 9 are hosting at 8 of the locations. The Youth Fishing Challenge will be in 14 counties and 19 sites within those counties. The handout from the website lists all the sites along with pictures from the HOFNOD groups having fun fishing. A Wildlife Conservation Corp (WCC) message was sent out asking for volunteers. Volunteers were asked to contact the site directly. Informational packets, signs and brochure holders were sent out to all the licensing agents in the state to help promote the event. The agents can then use the brochure holder to promote HOFNOD in general. A 30 second public service announcement, approved by the Communications Office, is now on the website.

There are now 12 stable (2 or more years) HOFNOD groups in 9 counties. There are 8 developing groups in 6 counties and there are 2 new groups that are just beginning. These groups total 22 in the state and at least 2 of the groups are in schools and some in 4H. Mrs. DiPiano asked that if anyone knew of a license agent or a YMCA that is willing to advertise the poster, please feel free to do so. Mrs. DiPiano also noted the Trout in the Classroom release will be at the FREC next Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Chief Ivany noted the website has a summary of the marine regulations as done every year as well as the bonus striped bass program information.

Chief Dave Golden, Bureau of Land Management, reported last month the bureau was preparing to do the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) user survey. The survey started last weekend, May 7<sup>th</sup>. Surveyors were out at three different WMA, Pequest up north, Point Pleasant boat ramp in central and Heislerville in the south. Stockton University is running the survey on behalf of the division. Surveyors said it went very well and they had no one refuse to take the survey. Surveyors were able to interview about 25 people in a four hour block done in the middle of the day. Coming up on the weekend there will be two days of surveys. From this point forward until this time next year there will be approximately three survey days each week in each region.

In response to the question from the council last meeting of other states' success with habitat stamps, Chief Golden researched and found several states have a habitat stamp associated with license purchases. Any time someone buys a hunting or a fishing license, they are required to get a \$10 habitat stamp. In Colorado it generated about \$6.6 million. Other states that do the same are Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. The requirement is placed only on licenses buyers. One of the goals of the Division's survey is the willingness of non-license buyers to contribute to stewardship. Delaware is in the process of putting something forward like the above and call it a conservation access pass. They are looking at an annual rate of \$32.50 resident, \$65 for non-resident and there will be pricing for a 3 day pass. Delaware estimates it will fill a \$650,000 budget gap. In perspective, Delaware have 20 conservation areas equivalent to our WMAs, approximately 60,000 acres. New Jersey has 121 WMAs equaling 354,000 acres.

Councilman Gudmundsson asked, what is Delaware's population verses New Jersey. Councilman DeMartino responded that they are a lot smaller and that is why we get a lot of their waterfowl in the south. They do not have a WMA structure like we have. Councilman Gudmundsson asked if they were looking for everyone to have a pass or just for people who don't have hunting or fishing license. Chief Golden responded it would be for everyone. Michigan does something similar to Delaware and calls it a recreation passport which includes parks and their equivalent of New Jersey's WMA. Councilman DeMartino asked if New Jersey parks will be tied to the WMA stamp as it would show a unified front if they do. Chief Golden responded not now, but it is a possibility. Other states mentioned above are making it very clear what the funding would go towards which helps with the sale. Chief Golden noted that the bureau is still about a year away from making any decision based on the survey outcome.

Assistant Director Nelson noted that a list serve message went out today informing people of the survey. Chief Golden noted it will also be on Facebook that this is a legitimate survey and would like for people to participate.

Acting Chairman Burke inquired about the federal program where individuals get \$10 pass for anyone 62 or older, good for any federal wildlife refuge or park property. Chief Golden responded he could not find any information on that, but he did look into Forsythe and the donation box. The amount of donations received was tens of thousands of dollars through that single donation box. The box is emptied every day and is in close proximity to their center. Chief Golden stated it works with their layout, but we cannot expect something like that to work with our layout. He said he would look into the federal pass for the next meeting.

Sparta Mountain Forest Stewardship plan is still generating a lot of interest. Chief Golden there is a lot of misinformation about the Sparta Plan being distributed by the press and by parties that oppose the plan. To help offset the misinformation, a website is being developed with Sparta Mountain facts that will go out to the newspaper and other media. Discussions have been going on about the value of the young forest as that is one of the initiatives driving the plan. The bureau is working on the response to comments. As stated in the last meeting, there were over 2,000 comments submitted on the plan. Once completed, a finalized plan will be presented to the public. The Commissioner is still on board with what has been proposed. It is just a matter time to see this through.

A wildlife crossing project is being planned at Assunpink by the old building using CBT money to prevent turtles from being crushed on the road. The bureau is working with Non-game to install culverts and channels.

Crews have been working on habitat management on pheasant stock WMAs. The goal is to make the pheasant stocked fields great for the people that hunt in those areas. Considering the Land Management staff is at 30, including the chief, regionals and support staff, it is difficult to manage all of the 354,000 acres of habitat within the Divisions WMA inventory. Land Management staff will focus on managing the habitat within the pheasant stocked WMAs. This spring in southern region, staff have disced and plowed around 200 acres of fields and it is ready to be planted as soon as the bureau receive their seeds. In the central region, 600 acres of field has been mowed and forest fire has burned 400 acres of field. The northern region has been a

little less productive with habitat initiatives as they have been involved with trout stocking. Having been a regional superintendent, Chief Golden stated he understands the energy that goes into putting the birds out, not counting the energy it takes to raise them. The bureau is doing the best they can to make the Divisions Pheasant Stocking Program as good as it can be.

Salt marsh restoration project previously reported is nearly completed in terms of placement of material. Clean dredge material has been placed on roughly 75 acres of salt marsh. Now we are moving to the monitoring phase of Fortescue WMA and Cape May Coastal Wetlands WMA.

The Tuckahoe empowerment restoration project is a 1,000 acre impoundment complex originally constructed in the 1940's. The bureau is working with Ducks Unlimited in the permitting stage and should move to construction this fall. The funding for this project comes from a \$1 million grant from the Department of Interior. The Division is work with in partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

Chief Golden then spent some time summarizing a number of active restoration project that the Division is currently involved in: 1) he noted that the marsh restoration work described previously is in partnership with Nature Conservancy and that this team reached a \$3.5 million grant for this work; 2) a Wetlands restoration project is being carried out at the Lenape Farms tract (Tuckahoe WMA). This project involves restoring atlantic white cedar tracks and creating vernal pools; 3) the Heislerville WMA, East Point Lighthouse is having a beach replenishment done which will benefit horseshoe crabs and shorebirds; 4) at Greenwood, the Bureau of Land Management is working with ENSP on forest management and creating basking and nesting area for rare snakes; timber rattle, and pine snakes; 5) at the Pequest WMA a 70-acre- wetland restoration project is being carried out in partnership with Amy Green. The project is funding by a \$2 million grant from wetland mitigation council; 6) the Bureau of Land Management is working on project with Ducks Unlimited at the hyper humus portion of Paulinskill WMA. A much larger initiative at this site is being also discussed with the Nature Conservancy. about the project would involve recreating the natural flow that was there before the hyper humus plant was in place. Concept has been vetted with NJDEP Plant and Wildlife bureaus and, in cooperation with the Nature Conservancy; the concept will be brought to a larger stakeholder group; and 7) at the Capoolong Creek WMA the Division received funding from state trails grant to do bank stabilization along the trail that borders the Capoolong Creek. Along with that bank stabilization which will protect the trail, there will be some in-water work to create fish habitat. Capoolong Creek WMA is a long narrow WMA that takes up the riparian zone along the Capoolong Creek south of Clinton.

Chief Golden highlighted the two tiers of habitat work taking place within the Bureau of Land Management: 1) activities where Division staff are used to maintain habitats on WMAs so that habitats don't change (eg. Mowing fields to maintain early successional habitats), and 2) larger restoration projects that use outside funding and outside partners to accomplished large restoration goals. This second type of project is currently being handled by the Area Supervisors.

Councilman DeMartino asked about the volunteer system allowing access to help. Chief Golden explained there is a liability concern. If a group wants to use their own equipment, they must

sign a waiver in case something happens to their equipment or a volunteer. The waiver is a modified version of the one used by Parks approved by a deputy attorney general. The group must become a WCC member and sign a release for a particular project and they will be allowed to work with their equipment; not state owned equipment.

Acting Chairman Burke asked that a copy of the waiver form be sent to him.

### **Lunch – 12:04 – 12:51**

Acting Chief Matt Brown, Bureau of Law Enforcement, reported last week a report of a coyote attacking a horse in South Jersey, Deerfield, Cumberland County, was received. It turned out to be a miniature horse and it was attacked by a very large dog. The horse had to be put down. The homeowner reported there are several large dogs in the area. The offending dog has not been identified yet. No one saw the attack. It is believed to be the interpretation of the veterinarian that a coyote was the attacker.

Acting Chief Brown also reported with the spring season here, there seems to be an increase of dumping on State property. Last week in the north there were three cases of dumping in Sparta Mountain, South Branch WMA, Remington Township, Hunterdon County and Rockaway. There are solid leads in two of the three cases. One officer took a credit card number to loss prevention of a local home store and was able to get a warrant to subpoena the credit card information. It was a bathroom remodel and should be easy to pinpoint the offender.

Striped bass are running up along the Hudson and marine officers have been busy with that. There has been an incident of striped bass being offered for sale in Palisades, Bergen County. Officers were able to get the offending restaurant for the offence. In Non-game, social media helped out with a milk snake reported killed and pictures posted on Facebook. A construction company was doing work on a homeowner's site and scooped up some debris with the milk snake. The homeowner was deathly afraid of snakes. The contractor killed the snake and homeowner posted on Facebook "my hero they saved my life from this milk snake." A complaint came in from Non-game and Law Enforcement charged the individual accordingly for killing the snake. In Roselle, a yellow crown night heron was killed. A tree company was contracted to take down trees and there was a visible nest. A tree fell on the nest and subsequently smashed several of the eggs in the tree. The owner of the tree company admitted they knew the nest was up there and the owner was charged accordingly for the taking of the non-game species. The tree company was located in Manville.

Chief Barno reported on the detergent spill and Law Enforcement officers responded to the initial call out and assisted on Route 78 at the West Portal Brook.

The last report from Law Enforcement is an update from a winter report on the eagles that ingested tainted meat from a deer carcass that was euthanized by animal control in Ocean County. The case is still continuing. The lead officer has contacted US Fish and Wildlife Service. US Fish and Wildlife is going to interview the animal control officer and is in touch with the state drug compliance. They are questioning the vet where the drugs came from because animal control officers are not supposed to have these drugs in their possession, let alone

drive around with them. US Fish and Wildlife may take sanctions against the vet and revoke certification.

Councilman DeMartino asked if Law Enforcement has seen on Facebook a kid on a charter boat called Johnny Bucktail catching bass. Acting Chief Brown responded Law Enforcement and New York deep Sea both interviewed Johnny. He was very apologetic during the interview. Bringing charges will be hard based on law stating "in possession." As a result, he lost some of his sponsorship.

Acting Chairman Burke asked for an update on the conservation officer test a couple of weeks ago. Chief Brown reported there were 90 applicants, not sure of how many passed as of yet. There is a previous list with three individuals still on the list. The new list will not be used until the old list is disposed or expired.

Dan Roberts reported in place of Carole Stanko, Chief of Wildlife Management. Mr. Roberts reported Chief Stanko and Assistant Director Herrighty met with Willis Paine, founder of New Jersey Habitat Restoration Foundation. A non-profit organization dedicated for habitat management geared towards benefitting early successional species. (See paperwork distributed.) looking to discuss possible partnerships with the division, manage properties and the wire goes with for what the foundation is looking to do is raise monies which all will be spent in New Jersey. Assistant Director Herrighty further explained the Commissioner staff put the group in contact with the Division. Mr. Paine was sent contact information for the State Federation Sportsmen Club.

Game committee rules manager, division staff and council should have received the federation's final deer management proposal to be discussed at next week's game committee meeting. Most of deer staff has been spending their time data mining since receiving the information. A quail stakeholders meeting was held at the southern regional office. There was a good turnout, including some farmers and representatives from Audubon, NJOA, South Jersey Quail and Federation. A review of activities was processed, covered by Jimmy Sloan, habitat quail biologist and John Park of the Audubon reviewed the Pine Island Quail Restoration activities which two weeks ago did a second release of wild quail for the project. The division was represented at the federation's annual convention. Chief Stanko made a presentation on deer numbers and bears. Tony McBride made a presentation on wild turkey. Approximately 45 people were in attendance for the presentation.

Acting Chairman Burke asked what was the reception on the deer presentation. Since Chief Stanko did not report anything, Mr. Roberts stated he did not think there was anything out of the ordinary. Assistant Director Herrighty reported that Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania all experienced low deer harvest like New Jersey.

Chief Dave Jenkins, Endangered Nongame Species Program, reported on the ongoing review and revision of the New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The bureau has been in contact with US Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) to update them on our progress and provide a working outline that shows what has been completed and what is still under review and development. ENSP will be continuing discussion with the Service to obtain their getting

feedback on a submission plan. ENSP is restructuring current federal grants to extend several of the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) using (federal) FY 2015 money that has not been obligated. This will result in extension of the time we have to complete the SWAP as the consequences of not submitting the SWAP are with respect to FY 2016 funds. The other benefit of restricting the federal grants is that period for all of the grants will more closely correspond to field season. Currently the grant segment ends at the end of August and in some cases, the annual field work is not completed. The bureau has been continuing to work on culling the threats and actions section of the plan, including using the priority of threats as a way to cull actions that would not address the most critical threats. The culling of threats and actions has been largely internal up to this point and ENSP plans to seek additional partner and stakeholder input after initial submission to USFWS.

In summary, we are behind schedule but it appears that we remain on schedule enough to avoid significant consequences, i.e., impacts on federal funding.

Chief Jenkins also reviewed recent information and implications regarding the Northern Long-eared Bat. US Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern long-eared bat a little over a year ago as a threatened species and more recently issued a “4D rule” which exempted many activities from prohibitions on “take” under the federal Endangered Species Act. The rule also clarified that the same activities are exempt from requiring ESA Section 7 review. At a recent staff meeting, Chief Jenkins cautioned that white nose syndrome is continuing to spread (it has now been documented west of the Rockies). As a result, it is likely that bat species such as the northern long-eared bat and perhaps other bat species will end up being listed as endangered. If they are listed as endangered, the Service will not be able to exempt activities with a 4D rule. That could have implications for things like habitat management in the future. Right now those types of activities that are being exempted are activities that the Division frequently engages in when undertaking habitat management.

McKenzie Hall, ENSP’s bat expert, assisted with a training that offers certification for bat control issues meeting with National Wildlife Control Operators Association. It was a full house with a very large attendance from New Jersey animal control operators interested in learning how to best deal with bats. They were trained on best practices that reduce the likelihood of adverse impacts to the bats.

The next Endangered Non-game Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC) meeting is May 17<sup>th</sup> at Parvin State Park. The main focus of that meeting will be an update on pine snake and timber rattle snake research and monitoring and how ENSP is using the information we are gaining from the monitoring and research in the context of habitat management and in permit and land management review (e.g., enduro events). There are two researchers from outside the division will give an update on their research on pine snakes. Kris Shantz will update the information we have gained more recently on timber rattle snakes.

Chief Jenkins reported that Kris Shantz has been meeting with Law Enforcement to help point out areas where we have concerns about illegal collecting and to work more closely with LE on observing suspicious activity on snake collecting which appears to be on the increase.



Chief Jenkins highlighted the bureau's work on Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ). for which a presentation was given to the Council a couple of years ago. The Bureau is expecting to have the maps and guidance documents produced in the first quarter of 2017. A website may be going live in the next few months. Right now there is a brief description about the project on the Division's website. The emphasis now is on completing the maps and developing a toolkit that will help us work closer with transportation agencies like the metropolitan transportation planning organizations (MPOs) and the state DOT. The toolkit will help during their planning process for transportation projects to integrate information regarding impacts to wildlife and how to reduce those impacts. The CHANJ mapping will work closely with people who are working on the conservation blueprint discussed by Councilwoman Brummer earlier in this meeting. It will form a major cornerstone of that effort.

Eagle banding season is winding down. There are one or two more nests where banding is scheduled for the season. This appears to have been a normal year in terms of productivity. We continue to see growth in the population. One of the consequences of the growing population of eagles is they are competing for territories by fighting one for the other. New Jersey will soon reach the 200 pair mark.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT (3MINUTES)**

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ commented on the thievery and robbery she feels in taking grants from the non-hunting people. Ms. Sachau also stated there ought to be more time to criticize all the different projects the Division has. Ms. Sachau also stated the agenda should have more time than three minutes for comments. Ms. Sachau forfeited the rest of her three minutes.

Janet Pizar, Millburn, NJ expressed her concerned that the monthly deer report does not indicate the number of vehicle/deer collision number. She recommends that the number should be included in the report if addressing the issue of efficacy. Ms. Pizar also recommends that the Bureau of Land Management report include the number of farmers in-kind services on each WMA and how much is cash from the farmers, how much is services in kind and what is the ratio. Ms. Pizar questioned the proposed legislation that will allow free hunting and trapping for emergency response members in order to get clarification as to who will pay for the licenses.

Mark Lanzim, Toms River, NJ commented on big box licensing agencies. He received calls regarding licensing systems being down and how he has personally experienced inadequate service.

Mr. Lanzim requested that the Council reconsider adding or relocating dog training from Colliers Mills to Greenwood Forest because sportsmen like to train dogs on quail. Ms. Lanzim also reported there were a number of individuals at the old quail farm (now Jackson FREC) fishing and were being disruptive throwing rocks and no one had licenses displayed. Mr. Lanzim suggested that more surveillance for that area to prevent such incidents..

Charles Hendrickson, Jackson, NJ Mr. Hendrickson reported on the Federation convention. He stated - presentation from the Division was received well and was much appreciated .

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson and seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to adjourn the meeting. Vote taken; all in favor, none opposed – motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:44 pm