

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2019
Assunpink Central Region Office - Conservation Center**

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Jim Applegate, Joanna Burger, Emile DeVito, David Mizrahi, Howard Geduldig, Erica Miller, Howard Reinert, James Shissias

Absent: Barbara Brummer, Jane Morton-Galetto,

Staff In Attendance: John Heilferty, Kathy Clark, Assistant Director Dave Golden, Assistant Director Paulette Nelson, Gretchen Fowles, Brian Zarate.

Guests: none

Meeting was called to order by Chair Rick Lathrop at 10:05 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by John Heilferty.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the 11/14/2018 meeting was made by J. Burger and seconded by E. Miller. J. Shissias abstained.

Action Items Update

- J. Heilferty has provided a draft memo stating ENSAC concerns relating predator management to benefit beach nesting birds. The memo recaps information provided by C. Davis at the November meeting and asks the Commissioner to support ENSP efforts. J. Heilferty noted we would like to include information that is in the USFWS “FAQ” document on the topic.

Discussion followed. The graphic may not portray the issue well enough. Controlling predators is certainly beneficial to nest success but this needs more explanation of the failure of number of nesting pairs (adults) to increase. Also, the data is not available to fully present the same case for terns and oystercatchers. H. Geduldig suggests we need to present “documentation” and not simply conclusions

J. Burger: Simplify the message: bird pops have not increased here but have in other states, and in other places where predator control is done; this is one of the management tools we need. Present other sites (e.g., Holgate) and other states results where predator control is done. Also note there are sites that have many other negative influences, but this is one negative that we can do something about.

E. DeVito: Present a list of predation events to demonstrate detailed knowledge. Also, note predator populations will not be harmed long term by this action (figuring it may go to a judge’s decision).

Any other comments by ENSAC members to be sent to J. Heilferty in the next two days.

John will work with C. Davis to edit and produce a revised version for ENSAC, and will also distribute the USFWS FAQ document to Committee members.

- Off-Road Vehicle ad-hoc committee has not completed their draft memo to the Commissioner. Remains an action item.
- Horseshoe Crab Lysate: D. Mizrahi reported the memo will be sent to three international pharmacopeias. The NGO community sent letters to the same. NGOs working closely with Jay Bolden who heads up the drug validation process for Eli Lilly. Jim Greenwood, Biotechnology Organization association is firmly behind the transition from HSC lysate to recombinant compound. **Motion to send memo to the three international pharmacopeias made by J. Burger, seconded by H. Geduldig, passed unanimously.**

Director's Report

- Hyper Humus property project will create more natural stream flow for this headwaters of Paulinskill. There is an upcoming public meeting to look at the preferred alternative. Note that this project has been proposed with The Nature Conservancy and publicly reviewed in multiple public meetings.
- New Northern Region Office is being considered for a new property in Clinton that would consolidate many of the northern DFW offices. Scheduled to close on property in November.
- Farm leases are under review. New contracts will be put out to bid, with new requirements to maintain winter cover crop, and a prohibition on use of seeds treated with neonicotinoids. DFW stopped using treated seeds on WMA lands in its own plantings two years ago.
- The hiring announcement for the director's position was posted nationwide.
- DFW is closing the Rockport pheasant farm, and just posted a Request for Interest in Repurposing Property. The new proposed uses will be evaluated for good wildlife habitat and must conform with Highlands regs.
- From E. DeVito: Green Acres has made an offer to purchase the Holly Farm in Millville, augmented by non-profit funds; word is there are other offers. Atlantic Electric is the seller.

Legislative Update

P. Nelson provided the most recent news on legislation:

“Nosey’s Law” that prohibits use of elephants and other wild and exotic animals in traveling animal acts was signed into law.

A2732 and S1391 allows use of propane-powered noise makers on farms as a method of non-lethal wildlife control.

AR-195, a resolution in the Assembly would allow a pilot program seafood gleaning plant in Monmouth Co to make use of seafood byproducts.

In Federal legislation:

Proposed Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) bills ended with last Congress. Need to start over in new Congress and encourage new cosponsors. Bill to be reintroduced, already has 116 supporters in the House.

The proposed Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act was introduced in December (previous Congress), so it must be reintroduced to new Congress.

ENSAC business:

Nominations

J. Heilferty asks Chair to resend ENSAC nominations to move them forward with the new administration. Nominations Committee consists of H. Geduldig, E. Miller, J. Shissias, and R. Lathrop who stepped off. E. DeVito will join the Nominations Committee and J. Shissias offered to chair it. Members who need to update their resume should do so with J. Heilferty.

Ethics Compliance

J. Heilferty recommends everyone takes the full ethics training, and following years just take the refresher update (required annually). Submit the documents showing receipt of ethics guide, and certificates showing each member completed the trainings.

Public Input

None.

New Business

Presentations by ENSP staff

G. Fowles presented on CHANJ and roads as barriers to wildlife movement. Nearly 1/3 of NJ land is publicly-owned, so there is great potential to create wildlife corridors. Benefits: population sustainability, maximizing use of public lands, driver safety, permit transparency in NJDOT. The NJ Science Advisory Board in 2013 reviewed and recommended a statewide strategy for habitat restoration; and CHANJ actions feature prominently in the NJ SWAP.

CHANJ consists of the Full Working Group with 1) Mapping team, 2) Guidance document, and 3) Communications team. A 3-minute video was made and is public now.

Products: set of mapping tools, and guidance document that provides recommendations on habitat protection, management, and road-impact mitigations. The web application will be interactive online and went out last week as a soft-release (will be online and data download); it will eventually be part of NJ GeoWeb.

Guidance document has background, goals and objectives, and guidance that is linked to cores and corridors mapping. Objectives are aimed at 1) land protection, habitat management, and 3) mitigation of road impacts.

New Flood Hazard Area Control Act rules require consideration of fish passage, and we are also applying for semi-dry passage for reptiles/amphibians, and replacement of structures where E&T habitat is documented on both sides.

CHANJ is now under a five-year grant that includes evaluating gene flow in terrestrial mammals.

Lunch break, 12:30-12:45 pm

Brian Zarate presented on the project to build a wildlife-safe connection between wetlands divided by a DFW road on Assunpink Wildlife Management Area. The connection was built by installing two tunnels passable by turtles, and fencing that directs animals safely to the crossing tunnels. Total cost will end up around \$70,000. Monitoring was (and will be) done using telemetry, road transect surveys for road-killed animals, and camera traps. Monitoring from pre- to post-construction will identify all aspects of the success of this project. Final report will be done by early 2020.

Next meeting – possible agenda items

Next regular ENSAC meeting March 20, 2019. The meeting will be held in the Conservation Center at the CRO, Assunpink WMA.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

SUMMARY LIST OF ALL ACTION ITEMS

- J. Heilferty will draft a memo stating concerns relating to off-road motor vehicle use on state parks/forests and WMAs and an ad-hoc committee of J. Burger, E. DeVito, H. Geduldig will help edit and then it will be sent to larger group to finalize. It will then be sent to Commissioner.
- J. Heilferty will work on a re-draft a memo stating ENSAC's support of predator management with ENSAC input.
- R. Lathrop will send the final version of the Lysate-rFC letter to the main international pharmacopeias (US, Europe and Japan).
- Nominating Committee will convene with input from J. Heilferty to prepare a new packet of recommended reappointments for the Commissioner.
- J. Heilferty will provide forms and links for all members to remain in compliance with ethics and outside work.