

Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2019
Forest Resource Education Center, Jackson, NJ

Members in attendance: Barbara Brummer (Acting Chair), Jim Applegate, Joanna Burger, Jane Morton-Galetto, David Mizrahi, Howard Geduldig, Erica Miller, James Shissias.

Absent: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Emile DeVito, Howard Reinert

Staff In Attendance: John Heilferty, Director Larry Herrighty, Assistant Director Dave Golden, Kathy Clark, Sharon Petzinger.

Guests: Russ Furnari, Jason Hafstad (NJDEP ONLM).

Meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Barbara Brummer at 10:15 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by John Heilferty.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the 1/16/2019 meeting was made by E. Miller and seconded by H. Geduldig. Unanimously approved with minor changes, with J. Galetto abstaining.

J. Heilferty announced that this is the last meeting with L. Herrighty as Division Director. Larry announced that D. Golden was nominated and approved as the next director. Members congratulated Dave. B. Brummer requested that D. Golden push for Commissioner's action on committee appointments.

Director's Report

D. Golden attended the North American Wildlife Conference in LH place. AFWA's report "*America's Wildlife Values Report*" was announced, and he forwarded the NJ portion to staff and committees. Traditionalists (dominion), Mutualists, Pluralists, and Distant are four categories of people's feeling about wildlife. Trend is growth in the "mutualists" category, those who feel wildlife is an extension of their social network. "Pluralists" don't object to humans using wildlife but are compassionate to wildlife. NJ percentages presented in the report: 18% Distant; 39% Mutualists; ~20% Traditionalists; ~20% Pluralists. Meaning approx. 1 in 5 people in NJ don't think about wildlife at all.

Public attitudes have implications for funding for wildlife conservation, and how can wildlife agencies remain relevant. The message to agencies is to work on broadening the tent – developing wider interest in wildlife and natural resources, but at the same time increase paying users that fund most of conservation. Committee members requested further analysis of the data and comparisons to other states as well as overall.

Jim Applegate was asked to review this report for a larger discussion of this report and its implications for NJ at the May 15th meeting.

Public Input

None.

Continuing Business:

J. Heilferty requested that all documents needed for reappointments (like CVs) be refreshed if necessary. B. Brummer requests that reappointment request be presented to the Commissioner by next week. J. Shissias of the nominating committee will make sure the appointments request is clear as to terms, and the chair appointment.

J. Heilferty mentioned that all members should document their ethics compliance for the DEP. John will advise members that need additional compliance actions.

J. Heilferty circulated the Off-Road Vehicle on State Lands memo today. The memo from ENSAC to Comm. recognizes this is an important issue with a lot of acreage involved, and requests the DEP to take action to address this threat. Discussion: Members needed more time to review. Some changes were suggested: mention effects on E&T; conflicts with other users and uses. J. Heilferty will have a revision circulated by April 5.

J. Heilferty reported on the draft memo on predator control to protect beach nesting birds. There were a lot of comments on the last draft, which was quite detailed. Discussion. The final suggestions: 1) keep a final version of the more detailed letter for potential future use, 2) send a letter of support (mentioning that predator control is important and effective) that also thanks the Commissioner's office for their support. Due by April 5.

Next meeting on May 15: J. Heilferty will secure a Cape May County meeting location such as TNC office or NJ Audubon office.

Legislative Update

None.

New Business

Presentations by ENSP staff

Sharon Petzinger reported on "Forest Habitat Management for SGCN on State Lands."

Threats to golden-winged warbler, an early succession-dependent endangered species: breeding habitat loss and degradation; wintering habitat loss and degradation (tropical migrants to central and south America); and climate change.

The habitat change analysis for golden-winged warbler (GWWA) in northwestern NJ, loss of shrub, emergent wetland and upland forest habitat types to succession, agriculture, and development.

Examples of bird species range projections (done by USDA Forest Service) in response to climate change and vegetation modeling.

Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area forest age class: 79% of this forest is in the 60-99 years old. The young forest (0-19 yrs) is 5%. By 2025, the remaining 20-59 age class will move into the 60-99 class. GWWA need 0-19 and 20-59 classes. Conclusion: this is predominantly an even-aged forest that continues to become less suitable for early-succession species like GWWA.

Habitat management in the last 10 years in patches of 3-5 acres and up to 13 acres.

The GWWA is an area-sensitive forest bird so management must be done in the forest context. Pre-treatment there were 7-10 species of breeding birds (e.g., pewee, scarlet tanager). Post-treatment year 1 there were 13 species; in year 3-5, there were an average of 26 species.

Sparta Mountain forest management has been extremely time and labor intensive to work with partners and allay the fears and concerns of opposing groups. This kind of work needs more general support and improved policy by the DEP.

Discussion: Use the argument for broader ecological reasons for forest management and how it fits into the recovery of endangered and threatened wildlife.

Lunch break, 12:40-12:50 pm

Discussion continued as follow up Sharon's presentation. Several suggestions: promote forest management for all wildlife to the public and to all conservation organizations.

Letter that expresses encouragement of forest stewardship plans for ecological purposes (and have it reviewed by NJ Forest Service). S. Petzinger will draft a letter for ENSAC to send to the Commissioner that supports ecological forest management for E&T wildlife, and possibly co-signed by the Fish & Game Council. From the statute at NJSA 23:2A-4a: "The commissioner shall conduct investigations concerning wildlife indigenous to the State in order to develop information relating to populations, distribution, habitat needs, limiting factors and other biological and ecological data to determine management measures necessary for their continued ability to sustain themselves successfully. On the basis of such determinations the commissioner shall develop management programs which shall be designed to insure the continued ability of wildlife to perpetuate themselves successfully."

New Business

D. Golden gave a brief presentation on the new NJ Conservation Leadership Program that is based on a national program. The application period is open until March 31 for the 2019 initial session.

J. Galetto brought up issue in the news about change of grassland habitat management on Atlantic City Airport property, and the proposed land substitution for what was positive management for grassland birds. D. Mizrahi: SJTA (South Jersey Transportation Authority) asked Pinelands Commission for relief from the grassland conservation area MOA on the airport (NJ did onsite management from 2004-2011). Habitat for grasshopper sparrows, upland sandpipers, frosted elfin, etc. This is a Pinelands Commission decision (public comment period just closed) whether to allow a land swap for the old mitigation agreement. Once the decision is made ENSAC can review and comment as appropriate.

D. Mizrahi suggested these upcoming topics: 1) Status of Black Rails regionally and NJ. 2) Bird strikes and effects of tall buildings on birds. J. Heilferty suggested new topic of NJ Forest

Service's Atlantic White Cedar Restoration plan. J. Heilferty will make a list of possible topics and discuss with R. Lathrop to prioritize.

Next meeting – possible agenda items

Next regular ENSAC meeting May 15, 2019. The meeting will be held at a location to be determined in Cape May County.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Motion to adjourn by J. Applegate, second by E. Miller.

SUMMARY LIST OF ALL ACTION ITEMS

- J. Applegate will review AFWA's report "America's Wildlife Values Report," and circulate his analysis for a larger discussion of this report and its implications for NJ at the May meeting.
- J. Heilferty will circulate a slightly revised letter regarding the Off-Road Vehicle on State Lands. Changes suggested to include: mention effects on E&T; conflicts with other users and uses. JHH will have a revision circulated by April 5.
- J. Heilferty will lead the memo from ENSAC to Commissioner supporting predator control to protect beach nesting birds. 1) develop a final version of the more detailed January draft, 2) send a letter of support (mentioning that predator control is important and effective) that also thanks the Commissioner's office for their support. Due by April 5.
- S. Petzinger will draft a letter for ENSAC to send to the Commissioner that supports ecological forest management for E&T wildlife, and possibly co-signed by the Fish & Game Council.
- J. Heilferty will compile a list of topics for upcoming meetings and discuss with R. Lathrop to prioritize.