

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2019
Forest Resource Education Center, Jackson, NJ**

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Howard Geduldig, Erica Miller, James Shissias, Howard Reinert, Jim Applegate, Jane Morton-Galetto, David Mizrahi, Emile DeVito.

Absent: Barbara Brummer, David Mizrahi, Joanna Burger

Staff in Attendance: John Heilferty, Sharon Petzinger.

Guests: Russ Furnari, Bill Zipse of SFS, Sam Hensen of SFS, Courtney Compton, SFS

Meeting was called to order by Chair Rick Lathrop at 10:12 am. Quorum was present and the public notice for this meeting was confirmed by John Heilferty.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the 5/15/2019 meeting was made by J. Galetto and seconded by E. Miller. Discussion: H. Geduldig recommends draft minutes be sent out 1-2 weeks after the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Director's Report

No report

Public Input

None.

ENSAC business:

Previous action items: Three memos drafted: predator management, ORVs on state lands, and forest management. ENSAC has reviewed and will discuss memos on predator management and ORVs during this meeting. Because today's agenda revolves around forest management, we will hold off discussing this memo until after the presentation.

J. Heilferty gave an update on ENSP staff changes as a result of the new Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems in DFW.

R. Lathrop mentioned G. Fowles has been nominated for the Women and Wildlife Inspiration Award. Reception will be held on Nov 13, 2019.

Status on appointments: The final recommendations made by the Nominating Committee in May 2019 have been forwarded to Commissioner's Office. Changes to the Committee's by-laws with regard to term limits were also noted. The DFW awaits a response by the Commissioner's Office regarding approvals of all recommended appointments.

Memo on predator management activities: Motion to discuss by J. Galetto, seconded by E. Miller. Discussion: Change “predator management”. Municipal beach mgmt. plans refer to “predator management plans” but this reference is changing over time. Recommended changing “predator management” to “predation abatement” because we’re not trying to get rid of all predators, but to reduce the risk of harm they cause. J. Heilferty will change it throughout document and address other minor edits discussed. Discussion included explanation of trapping BMPS referenced in draft memo. Motion to approve memo with changes by J. Shissias. Unanimously approved.

Memo on illegal ORV use on state lands: Discussion: minor edits suggested. Motion to approve by J. Galetto, second by E. DeVito. Unanimously approved.

Legislative Update

No report.

New Business

Presentations by SFS staff (Bill Zipse, Sam Hansen, Courtney Compton) on Forest Action Plan (FAP)

State Forest Services staff presented on this 10-year strategic plan required by congress under the farm bill. Each 10-year plan has a 5-year interim review. The present FAP was created in 2010, therefore a new/updated FAP is required by June 2020.

The “assessment” portion of plan has been underway and is being conducted based on the Montreal Process (state of the forest). The full Forest Action Plan addresses: forest conditions and trends, issues, threats, opportunities, and identification of priority landscape areas (in state and multi-state). The “strategies” portion of the plan will include goals and priorities, strategies to achieve said goals, implementation, resources, and stakeholder engagement. The State Forest Service has started soliciting stakeholder input on FAP goals and strategies. The plan’s goals and strategies will be broad and statewide. The FAP is required to reference and incorporate, as appropriate, aspects of the SWAP.

Discussion:

J. Galetto - Are there mechanisms in the FAP that can influence lands that are not state forests? Will it bring together forest and wildlife managers to work together?

The FAP assesses forest areas state-wide, understanding that the State only has certain influence over private lands. It will highlight things to help decision-making on trade-offs between resource concerns. The FAP process does bring in wildlife agencies to participate and contribute.

R. Lathrop – For Carbon, is there an agency that’s look at carbon on all lands?

Yes, there is a DEP “Climate and Flood Resilience Program” and the Department is now more engaged across Divisions in considering carbon and climate change generally.

E. DeVito – When FAP is done, will it allow for the assessment of factors to be considered when doing forestry activities. Ex: on Franklin Parker Preserve and burning, will it help address what we are doing carbon-wise? Will the FAP help determine if it’s a good idea to burn or would it recommend do something else?

By design, the FAP is large scale view, but it will give you info and an idea of the tradeoffs associated with site-specific activities.

R. Lathrop - How does this relate back to ENSAC memo supporting active forest management for E&T species?

J. Heilferty noted that managing forests for wildlife is part of ENSP's mission and incorporates choosing certain ecosystem services over others. ENSP would recommend the incorporation of "wildlife habitat management for E&T species" into FAP strategies. We can make it clear that we will try to design projects with consideration of tradeoffs & strategies outlined in FAP.

J. Galetto makes motion to amend proposed memo to take into consideration the FAP and how things can overlap and possibly be in conflict and work out differences in a way that's positive to both organization's goals. Seconded by J. Shissias.

Discussion:

H. Geduldig – should it be a joint memo with SFS?

J. Heilferty noted this letter is for ENSAC to go on record that the Commissioner should support forestry actions in general and actions beneficial to wildlife in particular. E. DeVito noted that he recognized there has been more interactions between agencies due to LMR, but with new data coming in for consideration. As long as all tradeoffs are considered and we're not doing the wrong thing in the wrong place he acknowledged that this process seems ok.

Final edits to memo should reference presentation by S. Petzinger (May) and SFS (Sept). J. Heilferty will incorporate these points prior to next meeting. Unanimously approved.

J. Galetto – On a somewhat separate note, mentioned that at active habitat management sites where there is public visibility, DEP should have signs that explain what's going on. Example – quail habitat management project. J. Heilferty noted standard practice is that Bureau of Lands Management staff do post info at sites, as do the NJ FS staff. Perhaps the referenced project was an anomaly, but the point raised is valid. We should be posting info when doing habitat management work so public is educated about the need and also so they can inquire w/ appropriate office with questions/concerns.

Next meeting – possible agenda items

Next meeting is a joint meeting with Fish and Game Council in the afternoon on Tuesday, October 8, 2019 in the new meeting room in the Assunpink office building. ENSAC can arrive for lunch for afternoon "joint" meeting. Rough agenda items for the "joint" meeting: Assunpink WMA road crossing project and roadkill data, wildlife contraception, habitat work on WMAs. Next formal ENSAC meeting will be on November 13, 2019 at Assunpink. Tentative agenda will be on black rail, possibly a report on state lands ag leases.

E. Miller sent something from NABCI referencing report on the decline of birds. Could be a future agenda item coupled with MBTA.

J. Galetto requested E. Miller report on baits used to kill songbirds on farmland.

E. DeVito recommends future agenda item regarding the DFW's policy on farming activities on state lands. Concerned about using pesticides for farming on state lands.

Future agenda items: J. Heilferty plans on having black rail conservation (including reference to closely-associated "high marsh conservation" and saltmarsh sparrow conservation) on the agenda for the November 13, 2019 meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:04 pm.

Motion to adjourn by H. Geduldig, second by J. Shissias. Unanimous affirmation.

SUMMARY LIST OF ALL ACTION ITEMS

- J. Heilferty will make recommended changes to and finalize the memo regarding predation abatement for submission to the Commissioner.
- J. Heilferty will make recommended changes to and finalize the memo regarding illegal ORV use on state lands for submission to the Commissioner.
- E. Miller will report on baits used to kill songbirds on farmland.
- J. Heilferty will send out copy of SFS's FAP presentation
- J. Heilferty will incorporate edits and points discussed into forest management letter prior to next meeting.