

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2020
Assunpink Wildlife Management Area, Robbinsville, NJ**

Members in attendance: Howard Reinert (acting Chair), Jim Applegate, Barbara Brummer, Emile DeVito, Jane Morton-Galetto, Erica Miller, David Mizrahi, James Shissias

Absent: Joanna Burger, Howard Geduldig, Rick Lathrop

Staff in Attendance: John Heilferty, Kathy Clark.

Guests: Russ Furnari

Meeting was called to order by acting chair H. Reinert at 10:05 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by J. Heilferty.

Approval of minutes

There was a motion to approve the November minutes made by E. Miller, seconded by JS. Minutes approved; B. Brummer and D. Mizrahi abstained.

Status of Action Items

1) J. Heilferty completed the draft of the forestry letter that is available today. J. Heilferty notes that NJ Forest Service has expertise that ENSP can use to manage specific locations for species of concern. Members should send their comments on the draft memo to J. Heilferty.

B. Brummer asked how much stewardship is ongoing under the NJ Forest Service's forest stewardship program. Stewardship plans could expand positive management on private lands. There was discussion on the range of forest plans that have tax-relief incentives for private landowners. Members expressed there is a need to improve the quality of forest management and forest stewardship plans, and whether that be advanced by approaching the professional foresters and educating them about wildlife habitat values. A possible approach is to invite professional foresters who are writing good wildlife/forest stewardship plans to address a professional (Society of American Foresters, SAF) meeting. Further suggestion that foresters trained in holistic plans could be specially certified.

2) J. Heilferty noted that Director Golden talked at the last meeting about the Division's proposed changes to the agricultural lease program. As a result of last meeting, R. Furnari and E. DeVito drafted a letter of support that is available today. Members should review and comment to J. Heilferty for a final version.

E. DeVito noted the NE organic farmers association has a meeting in Feb-March that the DFW staff may be interested in.

Director's Report

J. Heilferty reported that the Director apologized for missing today's meeting. The DFW is actively planning for the NEAFWA meeting in April in Long Branch. The call for papers was

extended until Jan. 20. Assistant Director P. Nelson also could not be here, but reported that the federal bill Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) was introduced, passed the House Natural Resources Committee, and awaits House vote. There are 164 bipartisan House sponsors.

Related to legislation, E. DeVito reported on a bill passed state assembly and senate that makes it easier to obtain a permit to trap beavers. Not sure if the bill will be signed by the Governor. E. DeVito noted NJCF has had success with a Clemson Beaver Deceiver to keep beavers from blocking drainages; however, it cannot be used in every situation thus trapping remains an important tool.

J. Heilferty will ask AD Nelson to provide the legislation report and limit reporting or highlight items to those of interest to ENSAC.

Other business

J. Heilferty advised that the Committee needs to reappoint E. Miller as the Committee's representative to the NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee, and this was done by voice vote consensus.

B. Brummer reported that the corporation Johnson & Johnson has made the commitment to switch to recombinant horseshoe crab lysate, in place of lysate made from horseshoe crab blood. She notes it will take some time to transition, but the commitment is significant.

J. Galetto reported that the Holly Farm land purchase was settled last week, so it's officially in state ownership.

Presentation on the Fish & Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap

J. Heilferty introduced this topic. The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies released the Relevancy Roadmap in September 2019. (available at https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/2515/7547/9977/Fish_Wildlife_Relevancy_Roadmap_Final_12-04-19-lowres.pdf)

The plan recognizes there is a much broader constituency beyond the traditional hunting and fishing community. In Figure 1 in the roadmap, there are five categories of "barriers" that identify the issues that may limit our agency's effectiveness relative to NJ communities. While the Division has relevance, it may vary across constituent groups, particularly those who do not purchase licenses.

Notes from member discussion:

"Broader constituencies" defined: Individuals and groups who are not engaged with conservation/agency.

Funding is the number one issue keeping the agency from a broader, holistic approach.

Leadership of DFW should try to engage with non-consumptive users.

NJ has a large amount of public land in its management authority, much of which was purchased with state Green Acres funds. It's important to remember that state lands have been preserved for the public's use, even if they are under WMA management.

Access to outdoors – need more trails. Need more interaction with all partners who do conservation and education.

Regarding “Culture,” it is not the biggest concern, but change is happening so quickly, and the agency is not as adaptive as it could be or needs to be. Regarding silos, there’s a sense this has improved in recent years (for example, mutual discussion of bird status review).

In green “Agency Capacity” column, putting aside “insufficient funding,” the other highest item is the 4th box, “Agency lacks capacity to create and sustain effective partnerships to serve broader communities,” recognizing that NJ is rich in organizations that provide conservation education in communities.

Purple “Constituent Culture” column: note 3rd box that constituents don’t recognize threats facing wildlife, habitats, humans. Also, 2nd box in yellow “Constituent Capacity” column, broader constituencies do not value the benefits nature provides. D. Mizrahi: how do the DFW and NGOs address these larger issues in the public? J. Heilferty suggested the next step is looking back to the Roadmap document, where the *strategies* already mention working with partners to provide and expand opportunities.

Blue column, “Political & Legal Constraints,” identifies that “governing bodies may not represent nature-based values and outdoor interests,” and this may apply to the councils. However, FGC has improved with leadership. Other barriers relative to upper management represent limitations that wax and wane with administrations.

Members found it significant to have this discussion of relevancy of and with the agency.

Habitat management projects using CBT funding

There was strong support for ENSP taking on any of the habitat projects suggested by ENSP staff. Members noted there are already projects happening on state wildlife management areas, and ENSP could partner on relevant projects. RF recommends that staff consult www.NJCWRP.org to see projects that are happening.

Suggested agenda items

Crab trap terrapin excluder regulations (noting recent occurrence of dead terrapins in Delaware Bay).

J. Burger to present on N. pine snake research.

E. DeVito will inquire about the possibility of ENSAC members attending the snake dig in mid-March.

Update on horseshoe crab conservation initiative.

DFW forester presentation regarding forest stewardship?

Action Items

- Members should send their comments on the Forestry draft memo to J. Heilferty for final version.

- J. Heilferty will ask AD Nelson to provide the legislation report and limit reporting or highlight items to those of interest to ENSAC.
- Staff will see about getting the ENSAC updated Bylaws available on the ENSAC portal.

Motion to adjourn by B. Brummer, second by J. Shissias. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 2:00 PM.