

Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2020
Remote meeting via GoToMeeting

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Jim Applegate, Joanna Burger, Jane Morton Galetto, Howard Geduldig, Erica Miller, Howard Reinert, James Shissias

Absent: Barbara Brummer, David Mizrahi, Emile DeVito

Staff in Attendance: Director Dave Golden, ENSP Chief John Heilferty, Assistant Director Ginger KopKash, biologist Kathy Clark

Guests: Russ Furnari

Meeting was called to order by R. Lathrop at 9:07 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by J. Heilferty.

Approval of minutes

There was a motion to approve the May 20 minutes made by J. Burger, seconded by HR. Minutes approved unanimously.

Director's Report

Director Dave Golden reports the DFW is in month six of the COVID shut down. Field staff is back in the field (except for work on small vessels that don't allow social distancing), so the DFW is making good progress. Assistant Director Ginger Kopkash joined this conference call, and Director Golden invited her to address the Committee. Assistant Director Kopkash expressed her pleasure with working in the DFW.

Director Golden reported the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies semi-annual 5-day meeting was virtual; it ended yesterday. The AFWA meeting typically has 500 participants, but this virtual meeting had 1,200 participants, with many good contributions. The meeting had two themes: 1) the renewed interest in the outdoors in these challenging times, and how agencies can build off of this expanded interest; 2) broadening the "tent" – expanding users of wildlife resources. This year marks the 20th anniversary of State Wildlife Grants, and over \$1 billion has been provided to the states. As required by that federal funding, NJ recently updated the State Wildlife Action Plan, and the next update is required by 2025.

Director Golden has previously presented some of the results of the Wildlife Management Area user surveys, and that information provided the basis for a voluntary WMA user stamp that would help fund habitat management. Roll-out is expected this December for the first-ever annual stamp. Assistant Director Kopkash is working on the marketing plan for the stamp.

A new species of tick, the bat tick (*Carios kelleyi*), and a new species of mosquito (*Aedes tormentor*) were documented this year in NJ.

Director Golden also discussed the management of WMA lands, and in the scope of budget limits and the anticipated

The DFW created a digital Acquisition Boundary Map. J. Galetto asked if it could be reviewed by ENSAC.

Legislative Updates

Director Golden has asked Mary Monteschio to provide legislative updates for the Division and councils/committees.

K. Clark noted recent news that the NJ Senate passed a bill authorizing a new license plate supporting pollinator habitat; the funds generated would go to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ.

Public Input

No public in attendance.

Update from the Nominating Committee

J. Heilferty reported that the letter to the Commissioner for appointments/re-appointments, and staggered terms, was modified and submitted to the Commissioner's office.

The Bylaws amendments drafted to include term limits were forwarded for legal review.

B. Brummer is retired, and J. Heilferty suggested that members consider a retirement gift.

Status of Action Items

Reported in the section above.

Old Business:

Annual Ethics Training is required of all members. The full Ethics course is required every three years, and short briefings are required in the interim years. J. Heilferty will send everyone a copy of the requirements with links, as well as the "outside employment questionnaire." Anyone who works for other state agencies may already be following these requirements, but confirmation of that training may be required for J. Heilferty to document in DEP.

New Business:

Relevancy Roadmap and addressing diversity

J. Heilferty presented on the topic of how the Relevancy Roadmap can be used to communicate with and better serve the residents of NJ, and specifically, to address issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The AFWA's mission of the Relevancy Roadmap is to "enhance conservation through broader engagement."

Because of ENSP's mission, we are positioned to interact and communicate with citizens such as birders, wildlife watchers, those concerned with rare species, outdoor recreationists, and people who value wildlife in their communities (particularly urban areas). The benefits could include increased overall support for species and habitat protection; increased data on species; decreased "take" associated with uniformed actions; and more widespread interest by residents to volunteer or work in the conservation field.

Discussion of the "how to" advance the goals of improving conservation through diversity/equity/inclusion. Tools exist in the State and DEP in various offices. The DFW has the Bureau of I&E that is the communications arm, but ENSP staff need to help create more targeted outreach. Reference was made to the Barriers table in the Roadmap, which was a topic of the January ENSAC meeting. J. Heilferty sought members' input on how the ENSP and DFW could make progress to address these barriers:

Barrier B-ii, "Agency capacity to identify, understand, engage with, and serve the needs of broader communities."

Barrier B-iv: "Agency lacks capacity to create and sustain effective partnerships to serve broader constituencies."

Discussion followed. R. Lathrop identified local nature centers as more engaged with local needs. R. Furnari noted the expected new appointee (Robin Dougherty) will be able to add to this discussion. Also, that West Essex Park serves Essex County school classes, 4-H clubs, etc. Other local centers do the same. J. Burger suggested the diversity goal needs to be "what can we do for you" and that there's a commitment to both conservation and the community in the context of each community. J. Shissias added that new Assistant Commissioner Olivia Glenn is from Camden, and was involved in the Camden Waterfront parks that are still developing.

R. Lathrop suggested that Environmental Justice can be served in the course of the DFW and ENSP agenda of wildlife conservation. D. Golden mentioned the discussion at the AFWA meeting of a larger population of outdoor users this year, and the opportunity for greater engagement, requiring the need to move existing resources from current tasks to new tasks to advance diversity/inclusion and environmental justice. R. Lathrop suggested a survey may be needed to learn more about constituents' interests/desires. Also, urban citizens are often involved in fishing; D. Golden noted DFW plan for increased urban fish stocking was delayed in 2020. Suggestions from members included to look for candidates from urban areas for seasonal jobs; college interns from state colleges or NGOs; urban fishing derbies as outreach opportunities.

J. Applegate, in his days of social sciences, used focus groups conducted by social psychologists, and suggested that would be a way to improve our agency's understanding of diversity/inclusion community needs. R. Furnari suggested roundtable(s) with organizations to get DFW guidance, with O. Glenn's office.

J. Heilferty shared an outline for the "Partnership For Inclusion" Strategic Plan that was presented at AFWA, with goals for a) Internal Enrichment, b) Engage Diverse Audiences, and c) Foster the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals. J. Heilferty and D. Golden are committed to making progress on these goals.

J. Heilferty will post the list of relevant of organizations that ENSP developed for the Wildlife Action Plan, for additions and corrections from members.

Other Business

No other business.

Upcoming:

The November 18 meeting will be online with a 9:00 AM start.

The October Fish & Game Council meeting will include a presentation of the budget, and Director Golden offered that same presentation to ENSAC at the November meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Action Items

- All members need to take the Ethics training required by the State; J. Heilferty will provide the online links.
- Updated bylaws are in review. Once approved, staff will make them available on the ENSAC portal.
- J. Heilferty will provide members with his presentation from this meeting.
- J. Heilferty will provide members with the working list of organizations developed during the NJ Wildlife Action Plan, for members' input.
- Provide access to, or presentation on, the Division's land acquisition boundary map.

Suggested agenda items

Update on horseshoe crab conservation initiative.

DFW forester presentation regarding forest stewardship?

Robert Somes re: ENSP insect work.

NJ Conservation Blueprint by either NJDEP or NGO partner, or John Hasse of Rowan

GoToMeeting Info:

ENSAC Meeting - Wed, Sep 16, 2020 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (EDT)

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<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/628240477>

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