

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

April 21, 2022 to May 20, 2022

Jason Hearon, Bureau Chief
Tyler Kinney, Habitat Planner
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner

HABITAT PLANNING

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the second internal stakeholder meeting for the Lenape and Buckshutem Forest Stewardship Plans. Feedback was received from several Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Agencies. A meeting will be organized with the contracted foresters to adjust the stewardship plans based on internal and external feedback.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney developed bid specifications for rare plant and sensitive ecological community surveys on the Lenape Tract and the Buckshutem Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). These surveys will precede forestry operations to ensure no sensitive ecological communities are harmed. Specifications are currently being reviewed by the Office of Natural Land Management (ONLM).

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney requested a purchase order for the enhancement of aquatic habitat in the Rowands Pond located in the Rowands Pond WMA.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney assisted wildlife worker crews with the replacement of a culvert in the Mad Horse Creek WMA.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney requested a purchase order for the aerial seeding of impoundment Lester located in the Tuckahoe WMA. Seed was delivered to the vendor. Seeding will take place in mid-June on 170 acres.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney reviewed, updated, and created webpages for the new website.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney requested a purchase order for a land clearing operation in the shot fall zone of the Makepeace Lake WMA shotgun range. Operations are expected to begin 07/16/22.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended to several matters regarding the farm lease program, including sending in-kind service packets via certified mail and email, attending to access issues, and posting of signage on properties.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney gave a presentation to Salem County Tech Future Farmers of America (FFA) students on wildlife habitat management at the Salem Inn Earth Day Celebration.

All Regions

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting on the development of the Natural Working Lands Strategy document.

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner, with the assistance of Crew Supervisors Jim Hartobey and Chris Murphy, reviewed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data for WMAs in the northern region, including roads, ranges, and dog training areas. This data will be incorporated into online mapping for public viewing as part of a WMA Planning grant.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been posting riparian areas that have been removed from farm lease fields. To date, 29 signs have been posted in the northern region. These areas will serve as a buffer between agricultural production and waterways to help improve water quality.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner and Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey met with the tenant farmer at the Pequest WMA to discuss issues with some of his leased fields, including access and field conditions.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the monthly meeting of the Barnegat Bay Partnership Estuarine Habitats Working Group meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been posting riparian areas that have been removed from farm lease fields. To date, 88 signs have been posted in the central region. These areas will serve as a buffer between agricultural production and waterways to help improve water quality.

Approximately 6,300 pounds of seed for plantings at the Assunpink, Medford, Manasquan River, and Stafford Forge WMAs was delivered. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff completed planting 24 acres at the Manasquan River in wildlife food plot and native wildflower mixes. BLM Staff are currently planting 75 acres at the Assunpink for wildlife food and cover. Contractors are beginning to plant 20 acres at the Medford WMA and 97 acres at the Assunpink WMA.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner compiled slides about BLM partnership projects for the May Fish and Game Council meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended two meetings to discuss progress for reviewing data for the WMA planning grant.

The advertisement for construction bids for the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration at the Higbee Beach WMA was posted on May 13th. Sealed bids will be opened on June 23rd.

NORTHERN REGION

Vacant, Regional Superintendent

Jim Hartobey, Crew Supervisor
Imre Bene, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Robert Bodnar, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Mark DeVito, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Trevor Hull, Heavy Equipment Operator

Christopher Murphy, Crew Supervisor
Bill DeYoung, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Septembio Garo, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Jonathan Kenney, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Randy Ujvary, Wildlife Worker
Stephen Wilson, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Land Management continues trout stocking throughout the Northern region and the activity is consuming most of the available staff time.

Land Management staff continue to make improvements to the Columbia Dam site, installing additional signage at access points and retrofitting access gates.

Land Management staff continue to make progress with massive habitat improvements throughout the region from pollinator mixes, warm season grasses to forage areas. The transformation has been great to see.

Land Management staff in the Northern Region completed the Black River WMA Pond Project. This restored the access to a once fishable area that has been blocked off in recent years.

Land Management staff continue to regrade parking lots and remove shrubs around lots to open the areas up for users throughout the Northern Region.

Land Management staff were able to reconnect the dock at the Split Rock Reservoir; a bolt was cut causing the dock to float away. This has been a repeated problem for the area over the past couple of years.

Land Management staff posted notifications at the Split Rock Reservoir parking lot notifying users that the lot would be closed for line painting for a short period of time the week of May 23 and will reopen in time for the Holliday weekend.

Land Management staff continue working with the Office of Resource Development and the Bureau of Fresh Water Fisheries on emergency repairs to the Clinton WMA Pond Dam. The pond has been lowered and the final fish salvage will occur prior to the lake for repairs.

Land Management staff continue to reface WMAs with new wooden signs throughout the region. The new signs are dressing up the appearance for all to see.

Land Management staff have been preparing dams throughout the region for annual inspections.

CENTRAL REGION

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent

Wendy Barbuck, Agency Services Rep. 1

Bill Torry, Crew Supervisor WMAs
Timothy Crotchfelt, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Zachary Mahon, Wildlife Worker
Tim Ruth, Wildlife Worker

Mike Haines, Crew Supervisor Equipment Operations
Anthony Carben, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Brian Kubin, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Robert Madden, Heavy Equipment Operator

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the virtual Board of Directors Meeting at the Horse Park of New Jersey and for the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education representing Fish and Wildlife.

Crews continue stocking trout following the 2022 stocking plan.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler has been filling in within the Northern Region since Sue Predl retired.

The project was awarded for the renovation of the Point Pleasant Fishing Access site. Plans for the redesign included updated parking, boat ramp, fishing dock and a living shoreline. A kickoff meeting was conducted on 4/19. The site will be closed for construction starting May 31st and will reopen mid November 2022.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the first pass review of the 2023 Hunting and Trapping Digest.

Crews are completing spring pollinator and food plot plantings.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler gave presentations to the Camden County Vocational High School giving the students an overview of New Jersey Fish and Wildlife.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Forked River Mountain POWWOW.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits consistent with the latest State issued Covid-19 related Executive Orders.

The following groups and activities utilized the Assunpink Conservation Center and the Central Office Meeting Room during this reporting period:

NJSFSC State
Forestry Management
Mercer Co Federation meeting
NJSFSC BOD
Law Enforcement - Conservation Police Officers
Fish and Game Council Meeting
4 – H
Associate Executives of Mosquito Control
NJSFC Federal Meeting
I & E
NJ Forest Service
Deer Project
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
Bureau of Business Administration
OIS
United Bow Hunters of NJ
NJFW Rule Priorities
HPA/Stocking Preparedness

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent

Brad Heffley, Crew Supervisor
Sean Clayton, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Dan Baker, Crew Supervisor
Steve Dobrosky, Heavy Equipment Operator
Jennings Jones, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Erin Peek, Heavy Equipment Operator

Mason Reeves, Crew Supervisor
Nicholas Carros, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Johnnie McGaha, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Jeffrey Wettstein, Sr. Repairer
Rich Ingraldi, Wildlife Worker

Seasonal - Curt Riggins

Southern region crews continue performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs. Same as last month, staff are constantly coming across piles of trash dumped on WMAs. Over 100 car tires were dumped sporadically through the Winslow WMA along Broad Lane Road. Staff contacted County Officials to properly dispose of the tires.

Road Crew staff worked with Winslow staff to install a gate on the Cedar Lake WMA. This area will be part of the summer closure and this fortified gate should discourage misuse of the area.

Road crew staff have been removing large stumps from fields in the Millville WMA.

Staff continue to issue Field Trials and Special Use Permits.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein is working on repairs to multiple docks and viewing platforms. He also fixed fence slats that were broken on multiple portable toilet enclosures.

Staff have cleared roads of downed trees that were inhibiting access to boat ramps and WMA parking areas.

Staff completed the final trout stockings of the season in the Southern Region.

Senior Wildlife Worker Nick Carros met a group of home-schooled students at Ponderlodge Pond to demonstrate how fish are stocked and show students the equipment used to transport fish to stocking locations throughout the state.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley provided monthly report to Dam Safety for the no name dam located on the Salem River WMA.

Salem, Winslow, and Millville Crews spent time preparing fields for planting. With most of the prep work completed, staff have switched gears and are now planting fields throughout the Southern Region.

Windblown sand has been an issue at the Money Island Restoration Project. Land Management staff are working with Township and County Officials to remove this sand. County staff need to place a metal plate across a bridge for heavy equipment to gain access to the area.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley provided comment on the Holly Farm Plan.

Staff responded to a possible oil drum stuck in the spillway at Clark's Pond. Upon closer inspection they found it was a blue 55-gallon drum used as a garbage can (which Fairfield Township maintains) and a large log. Both were removed. There were other large log chunks observed in the water, but do not pose a threat to the spillway.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, Bay Point Meeting, Cumberland County Sportsmen's Federation, WMA Planning Meetings, Website Design Meetings, NWLS Meetings

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

The following lands have been acquired by the State and have been assigned to the Division of Fish and Wildlife during this period.

Nothing to report this period.