

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NEW JERSEY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
May 11, 2010

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council was held on the above date. In attendance were:

Acting Chairwoman Jeanette Vreeland
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Dave Burke
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Fred Hough
Councilman Ed Kertz
Councilman Len Wolgast

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Tim Cussen, Jim Sciascia, Lisa Barno, Tony Petrongolo, Patrick Carr, Ted Nichols, Carole Kandoth, Joe Leskie, Jodi Powers and Dan Roberts.

Members of the public included representatives from the Farm Bureau, the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and others.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that she overlooked the reading of the statement regarding the notice of public meeting announcement at last month's meeting. In order to correct this, the following was read: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with the Office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and The Press (Atlantic City) on March 23, 2010 for the April 13th meeting, and on April 26, 2010 for the meeting today.

Roll call was taken.

The minutes from the April 13, 2010 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept the minutes.** Minor corrections were noted, and **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to accept the minutes as corrected.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reviewed some of her activities for the past month. She has been quite busy, including assisting with the chick count at the Rockport Game Farm the last two Mondays. She also noted that construction of the new brooder house is going well, and briefed the other members of the Council on its progress.

Director Chanda addressed the members of the Council. He noted things were set for the public hearing this evening.

Director Chanda also noted the improvements being made at the Rockport Game Farm, and reminded the Council that these improvements were being done utilizing funds from the Vernon Valley account. He briefly reviewed these account funds for the Council.

The public comment period was opened. Those in attendance were reminded that comments at this time were to be made on the agenda items only.

Janet Pizar from Millburn addressed the Council. She felt that to have a complete and comprehensive deer harvest report it should include information from the Community Based Deer Management Program, as well as “poached” deer information.

There were no other members of the public wishing to make comment.

Principal Biologist Kandoth presented the harvest results from the 2009-2010 Deer Seasons to the Council, and gave a power point presentation of the information provided to them today. Some of the points noted were the harvest total of 52,784 deer this past season, compared to 53,260 deer in the 2008-2009 deer season, for a total of 1.7% down overall from last years harvest. Seasons, regulation sets and permit sales were also reviewed. It was also noted that with the inclusion of Sunday bow hunting this past season, weekend hunting harvests were 9,332 deer, compared to 7,283 deer for Saturday only hunting during the 2008-2009 season.

Principal Biologist Kandoth also reported that two hunter surveys had been produced. One survey was to bow hunters to ascertain how many hunters came back because of crossbow and/or Sunday bow hunting, and the other was to get hunters opinions on the proposed inclusion of five deer management zones in South Jersey into the antler point restriction (APR) program. Additionally, there were three public meetings held to address questions on the APR program. Results from both surveys are being reviewed and the data will be compiled. There was some additional discussion on the information presented today. Principal Biologist Kandoth also noted that the APR power point presentation information was on the Division’s website.

Principal Biologist Nichols was in attendance to answer any questions on the proposed Waterfowl Hunting Season dates that he presented at last month’s meeting. There were no questions from the Council. **A motion was made by Councilman Burke, which was seconded by both Councilman Messeroll and Councilman Van Mater, to accept the proposed Waterfowl Hunting Season dates. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Assistant Director Herrighty reminded members of the Council of the public hearing tonight on the Proposed Bear Management Policy. He noted that Principal Biologist Burgess may not be in

attendance, since he was currently tracking a reported female bear with two cubs in Bergen County. He also noted the current bear activity report would be provided later.

The Agriculture Committee report was given. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reported that temperatures have been cool in her area, but the crops are in and are breaking through. She also noted that Councilman Hough would have liked to be here today, but was not available due to family obligations.

In the Central Region, Councilman Puskas reported that the farmers are all busy planting. He noted the severe temperature changes, with a frost this morning, and 90 degree temperatures just recently, plus days with gusting winds that brought many trees down.

There was no report from the Southern Region.

Liz Thompson from the Farm Bureau was asked if she had anything to add. She noted that most farmers were working at night recently after the winds slowed down. She noted that the Farm Bureau would be attending the public hearing this evening, and also expects some farmer representation to be present. Ms. Thompson added that the deer information presented today would be helpful if it could be posted on the Division's website.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Legislative Committee. He noted that the Committee met this morning, and turned the report over to Legislative Liaison Nelson to review the most recent Legislative activity.

A 2324 (not on summary sheet) Provides discounted trapping licenses for Senior Citizens. The Committee supports this bill.

A 2377 Authorizes free hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and free admission to State parks and forests for individuals with certain types of military service, and their immediate family members. The Committee supports this bill.

A 2559 Clarifies that the Fish and Game Council has sole authority to regulate freshwater fishing, hunting and trapping. The Committee supports this bill.

A 1844 Authorizes Sunday bow hunting on Federal military installations. The Committee supports this bill.

ACR 119
SCR 93 Proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing creation of a State lottery to fund conservation programs. The Committee supports this bill.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland to accept the recommendations of the Committee to support these bills. There was some additional discussion, and a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

An update was given on other bills.

- A 823 Requires DEP to establish free recreational saltwater fishing registry. This has passed the Assembly, and is now in the Senate.

- S 411 Authorizes free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses for certain retired military personnel. This has passed the Senate Environmental Committee, and is now in the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

It was noted that the Legislature has been busy working on the budget as well.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. She noted at their previous Committee meeting, Dr. Erica Miller from the Tri-State Bird Rescue had given a presentation on lead found in birds and concerns about lead poisoning. She asked if the Fish and Game Council had a position on lead used for shot, sinkers, and other recreational uses. Director Chanda advised that other than the steel shot requirement for waterfowl, the Council has no position on this. It was noted that Division Pathologist Dr. Roscoe monitors dead birds of prey for cause of death and lead content. He also noted that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has been working on trying to get all 50 states in-line on the use of non-toxic shot for waterfowl. Director Chanda was not able to participate in their last conference call and he still needed to be updated on this matter. There was additional discussion on this matter, including a request from Councilwoman Brummer for an update report from Dr. Roscoe to the Council.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked when a presentation on bobcats might be given to this Council. Councilwoman Brummer noted that the ENSAC meeting agenda has this listed for their May 19, 2010 meeting, and it can be presented to the Fish and Game Council some time after that.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He reported that the Federation has a redesigned website, and can now accept event fliers for upcoming events.

Details for the upcoming convention are being finalized.

Information for National Rifle Association (NRA) grants for shooting sports can be found on the NRA's website. Applications must be submitted by October 31st, 2010.

On June 4, there will be a meeting and dinner held at the Henry Repeating Arms Factory in Bayonne.

Size changes for striped bass were discussed at the State meeting.

Sporting clays shooting events are also being scheduled at various locations throughout the State.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that the Sussex County Federation is having a fishing contest at the State fairgrounds on May 22, 2010.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. She distributed a handout of the angler survey that was done.

Trout stocking is now in its fifth week. Chief Barno noted that the weather causes changes to fish activity, but now that the cooler temperatures are holding, and should extend fishing for a few more weeks.

The opening day angler count, which was done at 29 water bodies, was reviewed. These waters will continue to be monitored. Chief Barno noted that the volunteers also made notes on fishermen's catches for the opening day.

At the Hackettstown Hatchery, the brood stock collection is completed. Chief Barno reviewed the numbers of eggs collected for the various species of fish.

There was a problem with the Northern pike fish having a bacterial gill disease, and while there was a loss of fish, there will be enough to meet the stocking needs. The problem has been corrected and is now under control.

Chief Barno noted a rescue of fish below the dam at the Wanaque River. There is video footage of this rescue available for viewing at NJ.com.

Small mouth bass have been collected, and will be distributed to Union Lake and Lake Audrey.

Chief Barno also reported on fish kills that occurred in Essex and Bergen Counties. These occurred over one week's time at each waterbody, and affected only sunfish. She explained that this was caused by *Aeromonas*, a common bacteria, which is always present but stress factors such as temperature increases can cause a fish kill.

Principal Biologist Smith has been monitoring the Batsto fish ladder, and there seems to be a significant number of herring moving through for the first time since they have been monitoring this area. Chief Barno further described this for the Council.

In the Research and Management Section, permits applications have begun to slow down.

Staff are also working on a Google link for website maps. Over 300 water bodies throughout the State will be linked to the Division's Places to Fish information. Staff would ultimately like to include all 417 waterways throughout the State to this link..

Results of the five-year angler survey are still being reviewed. This information will be compared to that collected previously, and a summary of the information is to follow.

Chief Barno addressed a question Councilman Messeroll had regarding the sizes and numbers of fingerling fish.

The ice fishing ban at Farrington Lake was also discussed. Councilman Messeroll noted that there is no official ban in place, and it seems that this closure was done by the local police department who felt it was dangerous for fishermen to be on the lake.

Chief Cussen reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He announced that Conservation Officer Chris Petruccelli from the Marine Enforcement Unit has been chosen as the 2009 Northeast Chiefs and Shakar Safari Conservation Officer of the Year. He reviewed that CO Petruccelli has been with the Division for five years, and has always been an excellent officer. He previously had worked within the fisheries industry and his background helps while making his cases. Chief Cussen would like to make the presentation of his awards to him at the June meeting.

During this last reporting period, officers recorded a total of 7,389 hours of duty. These were further broken down to include 2,450 for fishing patrols, 1,359 for marine resources patrols, 360 for wildlife management area patrols and 25 for black bear patrol and investigation.

A total of 8,427 field inspections were completed, resulting in 636 summonses, 32 written warnings and one criminal arrest. The summonses issued included 266 for fishing violations, 216 for wildlife management area violations and 38 for striped bass violations.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He noted that 411 acres were added to the wildlife management area system this past month, and that the total acreage was now 326,800.

Staff have been working with New Jersey Audubon on a management plan for the Sparta Mountain WMA. Chief Petrongolo noted that they own 20% of the property there. A draft plan is in hand, and work should start this Winter. There are golden-winged warblers and ruffed grouse in the area. Ruffed Grouse Society members will be assisting with the survey of grouse drumming counts on this and five other WMAs. Thirty acres of timber will be proposed for harvesting from this area as well.

Chief Petrongolo reported that there was a meeting with staff from the Picatinny Arsenal. They have concerns about the impact area on their property and would like to develop a buffer area where their property abuts WMA property. Chief Petrongolo further reviewed this for the Council.

Several demolition projects were completed this month. One of these included an old mill at the Belvidere boat launch. Chief Petrongolo noted that no one was interested in restoring this property, and it was a safety hazard and had to come down. A house in Holland Township, on property that is part of the Musconectcong WMA, was also taken down.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about a building on Waterloo Road near the Musconectcong River, commonly known as “Elsie’s Place”. It was noted that Parks and Forestry owns this property, and that building may also be slated to be taken down.

Chief Petrongolo also noted that a historic barn on the Clinton WMA property on Van Syclopedia Road collapsed this month.

Chief Sciascia reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He noted that staff have been tracking the sales of fishing licenses, and while the numbers were down prior to the opening day of trout season, sales increased after the season opened. As of this past Monday, sales were about even to what they were this time last year. Chief Sciascia reviewed what may have affected license sales, including weather conditions, but he also noted that the angler survey information results suggest it may have been due to marketing changes. More than 4% of anglers surveyed indicated they were motivated to buy licenses due to marketing or promotion of fishing in New Jersey. The Division was not able to broadcast radio ads this season due to the suspension of the Department’s contract with the NJ Broadcasters Assoc. This was the first year in five years when no radio ads were run prior to the trout season opening day. The fact that it coincides with the first year since 2005 when license and trout stamps have not been ahead of the previous year, it could present a case for the need to re-establish the NJBA radio contract.

Chief Sciascia reported that work is moving ahead with the RBFF lapsed angler promotion for this season the promotion focusing heavily on the information obtained from the lapsed angler survey RBFF performed this winter. That survey revealed lapsed anglers would be more likely to renew their license if they had information on places to fish close to their home. This year’s promotion will focus on the information and has two components. One will send postcards to certain demographic groups who responded at higher rates to last year’s promotion, which direct them to the TakeMeFishing.org website where there is a map search feature for places to fish in NJ. The second component is a place to fish brochure which will be mailed to lapsed anglers in the central part of the state where there is a high concentration of lapsed anglers and many places to fish. Both of these should be ready to go by the beginning of June.

The Bear Education unit has stepped up work with the beginning of the bear activity season. Over 1,800 people attended programs this month. All State parks have been supplied with literature about taking bear precautions for both camping and homeowner use. Municipalities, including West Milford Township and Vernon Township, are requesting and receiving black bear educational literature for distribution to residents.

The National Archery in Schools Program (NASP) is conducting its national shoot in Kentucky this coming weekend. This will be the largest archery shoot in history, with over 8,000 participants. Once again, Oxford was the top school in New Jersey. The NASP Program continues to grow in New Jersey.

Chief Sciascia reported that he has a full-time staff member assigned to training teachers in the use of wildlife and environmental focused curricula like the Project WILD and Aquatic WILD programs. A newer program for pre-schoolers, Growing-Up WILD is being well received by the

NJ educational community and staff has plans to train approximately 200 Head Start Program educators who will use the Growing-Up WILD curriculum with their students.

Hunter Education numbers are back up to where they were at this time last year. Staff has been discussing what to do to train hunters who may want to obtain bear permits if the Bear Management Policy is approved and a season is scheduled. Chief Sciascia noted that this is something that needs to be done in advance, regardless of whether or not the policy is approved, due to the timing and logistics of providing the required training to interested hunters who were not trained previously. The possibility of video and on-line training is being considered.

A meeting with representative from the Morris County Parks System regarding the archery park is scheduled for this Friday. Representatives from the Archery Trade Association and the Easton Foundation are expected to attend. Chief Sciascia reviewed that the Division is looking to partner with the Morris County Parks System on this project.

Councilman Puskas asked if the revenue from fishing license increases in the past several years has surpassed the amount spent on radio advertising and promotion. Chief Sciascia noted that a 4% increase in licenses and stamps generates far more revenue than the cost of promotion, especially when you consider that much of the promotion funding is provided by the RBFF.

Old and new business was discussed. The June Council meeting will be changed to June 25, 2010 to allow time to summarize the comments to the Bear Policy and forward them to the Council members for review. The public comment period closes on June 18, 2010. The Council would also like to meet with the Commissioner on this matter before the June meeting.

The Game Committee meeting scheduled for June 8, 2010 will remain on that date, starting at 9:30 am. The regular Council meeting will start at 10 am on June 25th, 2010. The July Council meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2010 and is scheduled to start at 1:00 pm.

Supervising Biologist Carr gave a quick update on the bear that was being tracked in North Jersey, as reported earlier today. It was a two year old male bear, not a female with two cubs, and has been captured and will be released elsewhere on State land.

He also noted that at the Rockport Game Farm, they have had the third hatch, with a 77% hatch rate. This was the first time the Rockport crew placed day-old chicks in the new brooder house, where two of the rooms are completed, while work continues on the rest of the structure. Staff will still utilize the old brooder house. He noted that they are pleased with the new equipment they are using. Damages caused elsewhere at the Game Farm due to severe winter weather are being repaired.

The public comment period was opened. Janet Pizar from Millburn addressed the Council. She felt that there was some confusion to the bear information given by Supervising Biologist Carr at the March 2010 meeting. Ms. Pizar stated that she has a copy of the power point presentation that was given, and felt that it said New Jersey has a healthy, productive bears and a high bear over population, but she did not feel you could have a healthy bear population without another food source and asked for an explanation. She was reminded that this was a comment period, not

a question period. Ms. Pizar was advised that there was good information in the Bear Management Policy. Assistant Director Herrighty felt that Ms. Pizar was drawing her own conclusions, and that the bear sweeps showed a 98% compliance rate regarding trash storage, and reminded Ms. Pizar that they have advised her several times that the Division can not do anything about trash once it is placed out at the street for pickup. He also advised that she has to take the agricultural element into account for feeding. Ms. Pizar asked if trash put out in front of someone's property could be considered as abandoned property or litter. There was some additional discussion, and Assistant Director Herrighty explained that Ms. Pizar was going from someone putting out their trash to throwing trash around, and was not able to comment. He advised her that the Agency has recommended amendments to the bear feeding law, and that this information was in the policy.

Ms. Pizar also questioned the report that stated a 26 year old sow was a productive bear. She stated that information she had received from an OPRA (Open Public Records Act) request said this bear had "no cubs for the third year in a row" in the paperwork from bear den work. She went on to say that this was conflicting information with the bear population report. Assistant Director Herrighty reminded Ms. Pizar that this has been addressed in many of her OPRA requests, and she again seemed to be drawing her own conclusions.

There was no one else wishing to make public comment.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland advised those members of the Council attending the hearing tonight that they would be seated in the audience.

With no other business to discuss, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 3:07pm.**