

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

February 21, 2025 to March 20, 2025

Pete Winkler, Bureau Chief
Tyler Kinney, Coastal Biologist
Benjamin Keys, Habitat Planner
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner

COASTAL UNIT

Tyler Kinney

Coastal Unit

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several meetings between The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Stockton University, NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to begin project planning for two Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials (BUDM) projects at Boot Island and the Absecon Wildlife Management Area (WMA). NJDOT is collecting non-resource data. Stockton University is ready to begin data collection deployments. The group will reconvene in early April to discuss efforts.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney continues to process a 076 Amendment to the Manahawkin WMA monitoring task order. A meeting was attended to discuss construction efforts and timing in relation to monitoring activities.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several planning meetings for the Lighthouse Camp Restoration Project. Assistance was provided to TNC collecting Assistant Commissioner signature on a Property Owner Certification and Letter of Support for the project permit package. Permits are expected to be submitted April 1st.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several construction meetings for the Pond Creek Restoration Project. The water tower onsite has been demolished. Plug plantings on dunes are ongoing.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney met with NJDOT to discuss upcoming phragmites treatment and monitoring efforts at the Abbotts Meadow WMA BUDM restoration site. Additionally, time was spent analyzing monitoring data at this site and modifying adaptive management practices such as phragmites treatments. A PowerPoint presentation was developed to be presented to the New Jersey Fish and Game Council in the near future.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a TNC Marsh Pipeline team meeting to finalize data collection areas across 5 sites.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several Beneficial Use Restoration Task Force (BURT) planning meetings. BURT will be housed under the New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative. This task force will facilitate and match-make sediment availability to coastal BUDM restoration projects, as well as provide technical assistance to project managers. Additional stakeholder meetings are being planned.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with the USACE and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to learn more about the specifics behind the Corp's "Philly to Sea Dredge Material Scoping Project". We advocated for several areas of interest on the New Jersey Delaware Bay-front to be included as potential restoration areas in the project plan.

Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries restored an eroded section of Moore's Beach Road.

Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries removed a small bamboo stand in the Glassboro WMA.

Upland Habitat & Land Management

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a quarterly meeting with Land Resource Protection (LRP). Several projects were discussed, and no major concerns were raised by LRP staff.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney organized a meeting with staff from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program (ENSP) to discuss vernal pool and wildlife crossing installations at the Holly Farm Tract of the Menantico Ponds WMA.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting to discuss the Organic Farming Program. Logistics were discussed regarding the timing of the agreements and farming seasonality.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney assisted Habitat Planner Ben Keys and Zoologist Rob Somes in developing a habitat plan for frosted elfin management in the Lizard Tail Swamp Preserve. A wetland delineation will be completed soon.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney organized a meeting to discuss the establishment of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in New Jersey Fish & Wildlife (NJFW) waterfowl impoundments. This meeting will take place in late April and include Ducks Unlimited, USFWS, and New Jersey Fish and Wildlife (NJFW) staff.

Other

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended the Conservation Knowledge Exchange. Time was spent networking with colleagues from various conservation organizations in New Jersey, followed by a tour of the Assunpink WMA.

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended three calls for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River WMA: presenting to an international audience at TNC Peat Network monthly meeting and two bi-weekly status calls with the project team.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner conducted site visits with a contractor to the Colliers Mills, Whiting, and Stafford Forge WMAs to establish estimates for spring field maintenance and plantings.

Soil samples were collected from 5 fields in the Greenwood Forest WMA and 4 fields in the Colliers Mills WMA. Samples were sent to Rutgers Agriculture Experimental Station to determine lime and fertilizer recommendations for upcoming spring plantings.

A mini bid for forestry mowing services at the Assunpink WMA was awarded to a state contractor. Approximately 8 acres were mowed with a hydro ax to promote habitat for woodcock and other early successional species.

Two central habitat projects completed the internal Land Management Review process: a Field Maintenance Plan at the Whiting WMA and a Quail Habitat Expansion Plan at the Greenwood Forest WMA.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a call with Rutgers University to discuss monitoring work at the Manahawkin WMA. Rutgers has been conducting pre-restoration bird and vegetation surveys in relation to an upcoming restoration project there.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a quarterly meeting between BLM and Land Resource Protection to discuss permitting needs for upcoming projects.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Wetland Team meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting with NJDEP's Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration, Rutgers University, and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey to discuss the pilot program for a transitional organic farming initiative on WMAs.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner began coursework for a "Hydric Soils" class through Rutgers University. This is the first of three required courses to obtain a Wetland Delineation Certificate.

Ben Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Ben Keys assisted BLM staff in spreading seed at the Winslow CBT-M project site. The rental equipment was cleaned and picked up.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys submitted a purchase order for spring planting operations. The purchase order was approved, and work for the spring planting season has begun.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys completed the spring seed order, and both the food plot seed and pollinator seed have been delivered.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Dennis Creek WMA with the American Woodcock Society (AWS). Ben coordinated with AWS to remove old tree guards and supplementally plant Smooth Alder to bolster failed Bayberry plantings in forestry-mowed areas. A day is scheduled in late April for volunteers to complete the work.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys completed a plan for Mugwort control at the Higbee Beach WMA. The purchase order was approved, and spraying is expected to begin in mid-April.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed literature on submerged aquatic vegetation to reassess impoundment management practices.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed literature on pollinator planting and developed a plan to test different site preparation methods, using both organic techniques and herbicides.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Bog Turtle restoration area at the Salem River WMA.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys is currently attending a wetland delineation course offered by Rutgers.

NORTHERN REGION

Anthony McBride, Regional Superintendent

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

Vacant, Crew Supervisor
Bill DeYoung, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Septembio Garo, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Jonathan Kenney, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Nick Yanuzzelli, Wildlife Worker
Jonathan Kaye, Wildlife Worker

Crews continue with lot clean ups, equipment maintenance, and road maintenance at northern region WMAs.

Staff continue to push forward with habitat improvements: work continues at Columbia, Beaver Brook, Berkshire Valley, Flatbrook/Roy, Clinton, Walpack, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued ordering equipment and seeds for habitat work.

Staff began pre-season spring trout stocking.

Staff worked to clear invasive vegetation from field edges.

Staff continue to work on WMA roads to ensure access for spring. Recent windstorms have caused trees to fall across roads on many WMAs.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride continued to work on the decommissioning of dams, including the Warren Mills Dam in Warren County and Rockafellows Mills Dam in Hunterdon County.

Staff worked to prepare equipment for the upcoming spring habitat work.

Staff have been actively mowing fields in preparation for spring habitat work.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride worked with staff on issues with access to various WMAs in the northern region.

CENTRAL REGION

Vacant, Regional Superintendent

Wendy Barbuck-Jones, Agency Services Rep. 3

Bill Torry, Crew Supervisor WMAs
Vacant, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Zachary Mahon, Wildlife Worker
Vacant, Wildlife Worker

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

Bureau Chief Pete Winkler attended the Board of Directors Meeting at the Horse Park of New Jersey and for the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education representing NJFW.

Central region crews continue performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs.

Crews are preparing fire breaks and conducted prescribed burnings at WMAs throughout the Central Region in coordination with the New Jersey Forest Fire Service.

Plans are being finalized for spring plantings and fieldwork for the coming season.

Crews are preparing for trout stocking season, getting vehicles ready, reviewing the routes and the stops.

Staff conducted the 1st pass review of the 25-26 Hunting and Trapping Digest.

Asset inventory was completed for Central BLM.

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

Assistant Commissioner Dave Golden
Public Meeting Assunpink Watershed
Deer Project
Annual Air Spray Program
Beaver Check
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
OIS
Permits
Conservation Police
Biologists Working Group Meeting
4-H
I & E
Game Committee Meeting (Turkey)
Gov Delivery Training
Budget Meeting
Fish and Game Council Meeting
Migratory Bird Season Setting & Waterfowl Stamp
RHMB Meeting
WRAC

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent

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

Vacant, Crew Supervisor
Steve Jeffries, Heavy Equipment Operator
Jennings Jones, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Erin Peek, Heavy Equipment Operator

Mason Reeves, Crew Supervisor
Nicholas Carros, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Drew McClure, Wildlife Worker
Bobby Murphy, Wildlife Worker
Vacant, Sr. Repairer
Rich Ingraldi, Wildlife Worker

Southern region crews continue performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs.

Staff have frost seeded several fields during the last reporting period and with the recent warm days, we are already seeing a response from the crimson clover and oats that were planted. We will continue to monitor these fields throughout the growing season. This was a pilot project and based on the results may provide us with alternatives to our current planting regiment.

Road Crew Staff completed work on a field reclaim/public access project in the Winslow WMA. The reclaimed field was planted with oats and crimson clover. The final steps of this project will be the installation of a WMA Sign and guard to delineate the parking area. There is a hold up on the guard rail order, but delivery is expected soon.

Road crew staff also completed several smaller jobs including the grading of Lake Audrey, Snowhill Road, berm maintenance on the 200-yd and 50-yd ranges, (these projects were all in the Millville WMA), removed wind-blown sand from a road in the Nantuxent WMA, and removed large amounts of debris that had piled up over the years while unclogging culvert pipes in the Glassboro WMA. While at the Glassboro WMA, staff removed a bamboo clump that appears to have been dumped. Staff will monitor this location to be certain the bamboo does not begin to regrow.

Winslow, Salem, and Millville Crews have completed a variety of jobs; preparing for prescribed burns, plowing and discing fields, removing trees from roadways, receiving seed orders, maintenance of culverts (removing debris placed there by beavers and freeing up flap gates that were stuck open from large logs and ropes/fishing line), hauling material for road crew staff to spread, posting property boundaries, and installing guard rail.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits.

Staff participate in weekly construction meetings regarding the Pond Creek Restoration Project and the Baypoint Shoreline Restoration Project. Both projects are on schedule to be completed within the initially anticipated time constraints. The Baypoint project is now complete, and the final walkthrough will be on March 27th.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has been working with Office of Resource Development staff and Treasury on the Jakes Landing Boat Ramp improvements and the addition of a fueling station at Southern Region Office.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley continues to work on encroachments. Each encroachment presents itself with unique challenges, multiple parties needing to get involved, and are time consuming.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, Bureau of Law Enforcement, NJSFSC, Higbee Beach Project Meeting, Bay Point Project meeting.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

Nothing to report this period.