

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
May 10, 2011

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:17 am by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The following was read aloud by Acting Chairman Burke: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on April 18, 2011.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Dave Burke
Councilman Phillip Brodhecker (10:40 arrival time)
Councilman Jeffrey Link
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Robert Puskas

Division employees included Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Lisa Barno, Mark Chicketano, Tony Petrongolo, Patrick Carr, Kelcey Burgess and Ted Nichols.

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

Acting Chairman Burke noted that there was no quorum at this time, and there would be no voting until a quorum was met. Minutes of the April 2011 meeting would be held until such time.

Acting Chairman Burke commented on the Big Pine Key area of Florida, and the Key deer refuge that is there, noting the deer/vehicle collision problems. He gave a brief summary of the management program in that area for the Key deer. He also noted that a recent newspaper article incorrectly identified Sica deer that are on the barrier islands off of Ventnor and Margate as white-tailed deer.

Also noted was the rumor that the State was stocking snakes to control the turkey population, which was a result of an article that described an incident where someone dropped a bag of snakes off in front of a residence in South Jersey.

Acting Chairman Burke shared a news article of a Hooked On Fishing, Not On Drugs (HOFNOD) event that occurred in Galloway.

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He reported that the Joint Council's meeting for July 20 is moving forward. The Fish and Game Council will meet at 9 a.m. on that day, to be followed by the joint meeting at 10 a.m.

Director Chanda also gave a brief review of the Division's funding.

Also noted was the pending retirement of Division Pathologist Roscoe and plans to cover his job duties.

The public comment period on agenda items was opened, but members of the audience were reminded that the vote on these items may have to be held until the next meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

Barbara Sauchau from Whitehouse commented on the bear season results that were to be given today asking how she was to make comment prior to the report that was to be given. She also commented that she was opposed to killing all migratory birds as noted in the proposed migratory waterfowl season dates.

Committee reports began. Councilman Link reported for the Agriculture Committee. He commented on the April 21 Burlington County Board of Agriculture meeting, where the goose depredation permits were discussed. He added that problems with deer and beaver were also discussed. Councilman Van Mater added that he also attended that meeting, and noted that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was not in attendance, hoped to have them speak on this matter in the future. There was additional discussion on geese.

At 10:40 a.m. Councilman Brodhecker arrived, and it was announced that there were enough members present to have a quorum.

Minutes of the April 12, 2011 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He has attended meetings in many different counties, and all are concerned about the quail project. This matter was further discussed with Assistant Director Herrigty, who reviewed Quail in the Classroom program, and advised that Principal Biologist Burnett would be conducting more outreach programs on the quail project this coming year. There was additional discussion on this matter.

The Community Based Deer Management Program (CBDMP) was also discussed by the Federation. Union County is looking at using sportsmen for their program as a cost saving measure. This matter was further discussed, and Assistant Director Herrighty suggested that they have Principal Biologist Predl attend one of their meetings.

Plans for the Convention dinner are going well, and they are expecting a good attendance.

Sporting clay shoots are being held.

Members of the Federation are also planning on attending the Game Code hearing.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Finance Committee, noting that he and Councilman Link had attended a meeting this morning. Revenue is down by half a million dollars, due in part to a reduction in fishing license sales. Turkey permit sales may also be down, due to shortening the season by one week, which resulted in approximately 5,500 less permits available. Staff are looking for options to close this gap, and it was also reported that there may be no budget carry over into Fiscal Year 2012. There may be a need to ask the Department to help pay for the fringe portion of employee compensation. Position backfills were also reviewed, and while the Division has asked to fill 25 positions, they may get just a few, if any.

There was no report for the Fisheries Committee, but it was noted the Fish Code was pending and was currently with the attorneys for review.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Game Committee. He noted that the four Council members on the Committee stayed after the April 2011 regular Council meeting for an update from staff on Gonacon. There was also discussion on the "sunset provision" for regulations that need re-approval, which has increased from five to seven years. Snapping turtles and plans for studies were discussed as well. Assistant Director Herrighty then gave a briefing to the Council on the Gonacon and indicated that the Division asked that USDA proceed with an application to make it available in New Jersey, noting that there are strict limitations for its use including a permit issued by the Division after application approval by the Council. Division biologists also felt that even with Gonacon, the population would still grow by at least 10% each year, and the likelihood of its use being successful was probably very remote.

Legislative Liaison Nelson had advised Acting Chairman Burke that there was no new Legislative activity to report, since they are currently involved in budget matters. There was some additional discussion on the new saltwater registry.

There was no report for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee. At their April 12 meeting, they recommended the purchase of 66 acres next to a wildlife management area in Maurice River Township, Cumberland County. A second purchase was also discussed, but tabled until more information becomes available. Also discussed was going to Salem County to review some of the wetland areas.

At this time, Acting Chairman Burke noted a change in the agenda, and that Chief Sciascia from the Bureau of Information and Education would be addressing the Council.

Chief Sciascia reported that the number of Hunter Education graduates was now only 100 students less than this same time last year.

Chief Sciascia also gave a summary report of the Black Bear Education unit for 2010. There were approximately 11,000 people addressed through outreach programs, and 220,000 pieces of literature distributed. The black bear DVD has been completed and copies are currently being produced. There will be a showing of this DVD on June 3rd at the Pequest Trout Hatchery at 7 pm. There are a limited amount of copies available, and staff is looking to distribute them to outlets where they will get the most viewing coverage, such as municipalities, community organizations and schools. Chief Sciascia also discussed the Untamed Science organization, who will be working with New Jersey, and their efforts to do fundraising and produce classroom curriculum CD kits that can be distributed to teachers. Director Chanda noted the good work done by Chief Sciascia, Supervising Biologist Carr and Principal Biologist Burgess on this project and congratulated them for their efforts.

The trout season received much pre-season media coverage. Chief Sciascia noted that license sales numbers were down after the first week of the trout season, and have increased some since that time, but are still down compared to the same time last year. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) direct mail campaign will be starting soon and will include the Great Places to Fish brochure. The campaign will also be adding an e-mail component to a sample group of lapsed anglers, and data will be reviewed to see if this effort affects the response rate of these lapsed anglers.

Chief Sciascia reported that the North Branch WMA on Route 22 near Bridgewater in Northern New Jersey is being considered for the archery park. Discussions will be held with potential partners for this facility, and ideas for other types of recreation that are being considered for inclusion in the plans were reviewed for the Council. A sight is also being considered for a second facility in Southern New Jersey, and more information will be given on this in the future.

A license and permit sales study has been contracted and will be conducted by a firm that has done a number of licensing studies for other state fish and wildlife agencies. They will look at New Jersey's license buying patterns for potential packaging and pricing options that provide an incentive for existing license buyers to increase participation in various hunting and fishing seasons and opportunities at licenses and permit costs equal to or slightly more than they are currently paying.

Councilman Messeroll inquired about the call in deer check program. Chief Sciascia is not involved in this program, but Assistant Director Herrighty and Legislative Liaison Nelson gave an update of the progress of this program which is still being developed.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. She updated the Council on the progress of the Fish Code and how it is moving along through the system.

Chief Barno reported that the broodstock egg collection was completed at the Hackettstown Hatchery, and noted some of the species information for the eggs that were collected for the Council.

Recently, a fish kill was reported at Lake Musconectcong. Samples were taken by Principal Biologist Hamilton, who found the bacteria *Pseudomonas* present. Chief Barno described different reasons that may have contributed to this fish kill, which has affected mostly sunfish, bass and some of the chain pickerel.

Chief Barno also noted that an angler count was done at the Big Flat Brook by Principal Biologist Hamilton as a result of the proposal from Trout Unlimited to monitor usage on certain sections of the area. Chief Barno reviewed the types information that was being collected and this program was further discussed with the Council.

A viewing room will be set up to monitor shad fish passage on the Raritan River. Chief Barno explained this program to the Council.

Chief Barno noted that the Spring trout stocking program was now in Week 5, and included mostly holdover waters. Surplus fish, three year old fish and brown trout are going out.

Chief Petrongolo was not present to report for the Bureau of Land Management, but it was noted that the Clinton WMA rifle range would be closing so that maintenance could be done to the berm.

Acting Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He reviewed some of the highlights listed in the Bureau's monthly report for the Council.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that the information requested from last month on harvest results from the Community Based Deer Management Program was being distributed for members to add to their binders.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to break for lunch. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

The meeting resumed, and Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife. He called Principal Biologist Nichols to address the Council on the proposed waterfowl season dates that were discussed last month. There was a brief review of the information previously given, and **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to approve the proposed waterfowl hunting season dates as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Supervising Biologist Carr was in attendance to present the results of the 2010 black bear hunting season. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that staff had met with the Commissioner and presented the season results to him.

A detailed power point presentation was given by Supervising Biologist Carr, which included information on the black bear management plan, public information, garbage management, the black bear feeding ban, police department training, study information, bear complaints and call amounts, population management, harvest information as well as a number of other topics.

Members of the Council received a handout from with woodcock historical harvest information from 1999 through 2009.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted the retirement dinner for Research Scientist Castelli this coming Friday, and the retirement of Division Pathologist Roscoe on June 24.

Council was reminded of the public hearing on the proposed amendments to the Game Code next Tuesday, May 17 at 6:30 pm at the State Museum in Trenton. The final vote on the Game Code is scheduled for the July 20 meeting.

There was no old business to discuss.

New business included the review and discussion of letters that were received from the Chapter President of the New Jersey Wild Turkey Federation, the Union County Federation and Robin Huff. Draft responses will be prepared by Acting Chairman Burke and forwarded to Assistant Director Herrighty.

The June 14, 2011 Council meeting was discussed. It was decided that the June meeting would be cancelled, and the Council would meeting again in July at the Joint Council's Meeting. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker to suspend the June 14, 2011 Fish and Game Council meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

The public comment period was opened.

Barbara Sauchau from Whitehouse was the first to speak. She commented on Gonacon, funding for the archery park, license and permits fees, costs for out of state travel as noted in the Law Enforcement report, the bear season summary report, and New Jersey Audubon representing New Jersey as noted in one of the reports she had. Ms. Sauchau also suggested that Council have only a ½ hour lunch, as not to take up too much of her time.

Janet Pizar from Millburn was next to address the Council. She questioned the summary of the black bear hunting season and related data from the tooth analysis that is to be done. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that the data will be provided to the Council when available. Ms. Pizar next thanked Acting Chairman Burke for the additional information for the Community Based Deer Management Permit program.

Ms. Pizar questioned the cost of the 2010 bear hunt, and was reminded that this was a Council meeting and not a question and answer session. She was advised to send an OPRA request for the information she was requesting. Additionally, she was advised that she was welcome to

share her comments but should put her other bear related questions in writing. There was some additional discussion between Ms. Pizar and Supervising Biologist Carr on bear information.

At this time Assistant Director Herrighty noted that Dr. Reese from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture was in attendance today, and acknowledged him to the Council.

Director Chanda advised those in attendance today that public comments made were to be relative to the Council meeting, and that this was not a public hearing and that they would not take questions, advising that there were other venues available to make requests for information.

Billy Cooper from Lakehurst thanked the Council for their time and energy, as well as Supervising Biologist Carr, Principal Biologist Nichols and the biologists of the Division. He also noted he appreciates the many programs the Division has available.

With no other public commenter's, **a motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.** Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm.