

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
March 13, 2012

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. 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 delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on March 9, 2012.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman David Burke
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman Jeffrey Link
Councilman John Messeroll (arrived at 10:18)
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Philip Brodhecker
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer

Division personnel included L. Herrighty, M. Chicketano, L. Barno, J. Sciascia and A. Petrongolo.

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

Minutes of the February 14, 2012 meeting were reviewed, and several changes noted. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the minutes as corrected. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Acting Chairman Burke reported that the Atlantic sturgeon have been declared an endangered species in the New York bight. This will allow for more protection of habitat, but can inhibit other activities such as dredging and construction on the river.

Acting Chairman Burke commented on the recent Freshwater Fisheries Forum. He also noted a recent article in the Atlantic City Press. There was additional discussion with the Council on antler point restriction (APR) information.

Acting Director Herrighty was sitting in for Director Chanda, and reported that the Division has tightened up on purchasing, and certain items could only be obtained on an emergency basis.

He also noted that the Director and Paulette Nelson were attending the North American Wildlife Conference this week.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that there were no agenda items today, and that public comment would be held until the end of the regular meeting, after which Council would go in to Executive Session.

Committee reports began. Councilman Link, reporting for the Agriculture Committee, noted that weather conditions in the Southern Region have been good, and farmers are moving forward with planting and plowing activities.

Councilman Puskas noted the same in the Central Region, adding that there is a big concern of insects and disease due to the lack of a typical Winter season. He also noted 25 to 30% crop damages from the geese, and that he should have more information in the coming weeks on any yield reduction.

Councilman Brodhecker was not in attendance today, so there was no report for the Northern Region.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. Planning for their convention continues. Trapping activities for pheasants to be relocated to the 6-Mile Run Reservoir area will be completed on March 14 and 15, with assistance from the Pheasants Forever group.

Councilman Messeroll noted that they discussed the deer cull at the Watchung Reservation at their meeting, and added that he went to observe this program, and gave a brief review to the members of the Council.

Also covered at the Federation meeting was a discussion on sporting clays, and nominations for officers. Councilman Messeroll also noted that the Federation's website is up.

There was some additional discussion among the members with Assistant Director Herrighty on the pheasant relocation program.

Councilman Van Mater had no new information to report for the Burlington County Federation.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported that the Morris County Chapter recently held their venison dinner, which had a good participant turn out. He added that Trout Unlimited has done work on channel restoration on the Musconectcong within this last month.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that he had recently attended both the Atlantic and Cumberland County Federations meetings. In Cumberland County, they are preparing for the annual “Trash Hunt” on wildlife management area properties to be held later this month, and in Atlantic County they recently had their venison dinner, and are planning for their annual sporting clays shoot at Red Wing.

Councilman Gudmundsson also noted the fundraising efforts of the Sussex County chapter to obtain funds to have the large bear mounted for display at Pequest.

The Finance Committee met last month, and Acting Chairman Burke reported that there was no new information for today.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Freshwater Fisheries Committee, noting that the signs to advertise the opening day of trout season were out. He added that all members of the Council should have received a letter from the Division inviting them to attend the opening day activities at the Pequest Hatchery, and reminded members of the Pequest Open House on March 31st and April 1st, 2012.

Acting Chairman Burke reported that bass fishing in South Jersey has started. He also recently attended a fishing flea market, and added that this is an activity that will be occurring throughout the area. Also noted was that kayak fishing is becoming more popular, and they are beginning to host tournaments as well.

Acting Chairman Burke reported for the Game Committee, noting that they will be meeting on April 10, 2012. He has received some letters with requests for changes in the next Game Code, but none have been received by Assistant Director Herrigty.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Legislative Committee. They met last month after the regular meeting of the Fish and Game Council, and discussed some bills to track. One specific bill noted was 2039, which he noted could cause problems for dog owners, and he gave a brief review of this bill. Also noted was that the Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) bill came out of the Appropriations Committee yesterday.

Councilwoman Brummer was not in attendance today, so there was no report for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that there was no meeting date set for the Waterfowl Stamp Committee, and currently no new information to report.

Bureau reports began. Chief Barno reported for the Freshwater Fisheries Committee, noting that the pre-season stocking activities would be beginning on Monday. Waters that were previously in question for stocking were reviewed as to their status. Additionally, it was noted that the Diving Mill Pond in Essex County was reported to have low water levels, and staff would be looking in to this matter. The Grenloch Lake diesel oil spill was still causing concerns, and there were no plans to stock it at this time. Fish designated for that water will be distributed to other lakes in the area, and signage is being prepared to alert the sportsmen. Captain Cianciulli from

the Bureau of Law Enforcement continues to work with New Jersey Transit and other officials on this matter.

There were 35 anglers in attendance at the South Jersey Freshwater Fisheries Forum at Batsto, and Chief Barno noted that Principal Biologist Smith did a good job with planning and running this meeting, and that there were some very good discussions that day.

At the Hackettstown Hatchery, staff have been setting trap nets for Northern Pike, which had caused some concern due to the lack of ice. Chief Barno briefly reviewed their progress so far, adding that staff have also been speaking with representatives in New York and Pennsylvania and comparing notes on activity, but also added that our staff have been netting enough fish each day to obtain necessary information as required for the upcoming report deadline.

Building improvements continue at Hackettstown in preparation for the upcoming Centennial event. Participant outreach also continues.

Chief Barno briefly reviewed screen removal and water flow problems that have occurred at Greenwood Lake.

Councilman Messeroll questioned whether or not Tuckerton Lake would be drained, and Chief Barno noted that it was not on the list currently and that the project there had been delayed.

All members of the Council were invited to attend pre-season stocking activities at the Pequest Hatchery this coming Monday, starting at 7:30 a.m.

Chief Sciascia reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He noted that the Garden State Outdoor Show and Deer Classic was a great event, with record participation. There was also a good turnout at the awards ceremony.

Two new biologists have been hired to fill the positions in the Hunter Education Unit. Melissa Craddock, a former employee of the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program who also has teaching experience and Wayne Tonnesson, former Conservation Officer and HOFNOD program coordinator will both be assisting with the National Archery in Schools (NAS) program. Chief Sciascia noted the program's significant growth potential with two full time employees devoted NASP.

Chief Sciascia reported that the draft environmental assessment for the Archery Park that he spoke of the last time he met with the Council has been finalized and sent to the Fish and Wildlife Service for approval. This will be followed by a public meeting. The three proposed sites are Black River, Berkshire Mountain and South Branch WMA in Readington Township. Feasibility studies will follow, and if the infrastructure proves to be adequate, things will move forward from there.

Work continues on the final phase of the permit and license restructuring study. Chief Sciascia has met with representatives from all bureaus to discuss options. He noted that there was a lot of potential for non-residents for license incentives, and a deer permit package is also being looked

at. Proposals are almost ready to be sent to Southwick Associates for them to test with a survey of license buyers. Chief Sciascia reiterated the purpose of this study adding that the financial incentive and discounts offered have the potential to increase hunting participation in the future.

The Black Bear Education Unit has ordered an additional 2,500 “Living with New Jersey’s Black Bears” DVD’s. The first 2,500 were distributed to outlets who could reach a larger audience, but this latest order will be available to the general public. Plans for distribution are still being discussed.

The 2012 trout season opens on April 7th. Notification banners have been posted on WMA signs and the number of locations for them has doubled since last year. There is also an agreement with New Jersey public radio for a 15 second announcement as part of their tower lease agreement in North Jersey. An e-mail message will be sent to lapsed anglers, as well as a media advisory inviting members of the media to cover trout stocking activities.

The direct mail marketing campaign to lapsed anglers through the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) will be implemented differently this year. The RBFF has given States the option of having RBFF do all the work of postcard design, production and mailing. They will spend up to \$25,000 on work for New Jersey.

Chief Sciascia reminded Council of the open house at Pequest on March 31 and April 1. Lobby renovations in the main hall are being worked on, and while they will not be completed before the open house all staff and agency exhibits will be held in that space. Final work on the lobby should be done by late May. Chief Sciascia also noted the opening day event for the fish art and essay contest being held at Pequest.

Lastly, Chief Sciascia reported that he has met with the company who did the phone app for the Division of Parks and Forestry, and he has a tentative agreement for an app for Fish and Wildlife. He gave a brief review of the work to be done, adding that the app could be available to users by late summer.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He noted that the monthly report showed that 500 acres were added to the wildlife management area system in January. Also, last month 1,100 acres that the Division has owned but were not previously assigned were discovered. One parcel was received as a donation through Green Acres, and has added 400 more acres to the Manchester WMA along Route 539. The second piece adds 700 acres to the Greenwood Forest WMA.

Chief Petrongolo reported that a bidder dispute for the lease at the White Oak Branch WMA golf course has been resolved during this past month. The winning bidder will pay \$132,000 per year to the Hunter’ and Anglers’ Fund.

At the Thundergut Pond WMA in Salem County, Conservation Officers received information of someone harvesting timber from that property. Upon investigation, they discovered that a timber contractor who had permission to work on a neighboring property had cut trees on the WMA, claiming that he did not know he was on State property. The logs remain in the field. The

Deputy Attorney General's Office has given the Division permission to sell them, and bids are being received.

Chief Petrongolo gave an update of some projects that are being done using Corporate Business Tax (CBT) funds. Projects included hydro-axing, road restoration, boat launch improvements, forestry work, new exhibits at the Pequest Hatchery, preliminary work on a new office at the Nacote Creek location, work on the archery park and improvements to the Hackettstown and Pequest hatcheries. There was some additional discussion with Chief Petrongolo on the issues covered today.

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

Chief Chicketano also reported that Conservation Officers will be attending Federation meetings throughout the state in the Spring and Fall.

Council was advised that Captain Canale would be addressing them during Executive Session today to review license restoration appeals.

Chief Chicketano updated the Council on the Big Belly Deli case from some time ago. Violations from this case were written in three counties, and all have merged to have the case heard in one county. The case is currently pending.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. Staff attended a meeting with the Bureau of Forestry on S1085. The primary purpose of this bill was for tree harvesting activities, but the essence is forest and wildlife management. The meeting was to make sure that funds received from this bill go back to the appropriate agencies, and this was reviewed for the Council. A new draft of this bill is being drawn up by Senator Smith, and should be available in April.

Assistant Director Herrighty referred to the monthly report, which reported that Principal Biologist Burnett and staff would be sending out a hunter harvest survey.

Also noted was that Principal Biologist Nichols had attended the Atlantic Flyway Technical Meeting, and that Director Chanda was at the Atlantic Flyway Council event as part of the North American Wildlife Conference meeting.

Staff are mid-way through the bear den trapping, and there is still one week remaining for any Council members who may be interested in attending.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) held a meeting with the Department of Agriculture, the Rutgers Extension Service and staff from our Wildlife Services Unit, DEP Pesticide Control and our agency to discuss mutual issues involving wildlife control issues. Rutgers reported that they would be hiring a new Extension Service Biologist in the near future.

A permit was re-issued to the USDA to continue work on eliminating wild pigs in South Jersey. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that no pigs were checked in during the deer season this year.

The Wildlife Services Unit has been busy with trapping nuisance turkeys.

Building of the pens at the Rockport Game Farm is underway, and was described by Assistant Director Herrighty for the Council.

Acting Chairman Burke reminded those in attendance that the public comment period would allow for three minutes for those who wished to address the Council, and would be followed by the Executive Session portion of the meeting.

With no agenda items to discuss for the April 10, 2012 meeting, it was suggested that it could be cancelled. After some additional discussion, it was decided that if the meeting was cancelled, the Game Code Committee be moved to 1 p.m., and if scheduled for that date the Waterfowl Committee could meet in the evening. **A motion was made by Councilman Puskas, seconded by Councilman Link to cancel the April 10, 2012 Fish and Game Council meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

There was no old or new business to discuss.

The public comment period was opened. Members of the audience were again reminded that they would have three minutes to speak, and that the Acting Chairman reserved the right to answer questions. He advised that questions to the Director and Division staff were to be submitted to them in writing, since this was a Fish and Game Council meeting and not a staff meeting.

The first to address the Council was Dr. Sebastian Reis from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. He gave a brief update of the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Title 4 legislation. He noted that the NJDA has concerns similar to those of the Council on this bill, and welcomed the opportunity to work with the Council on this matter.

Barbara Sauchau spoke next. She noted her concerns on the application process for CBDMP's, the three minute time allotment to speak, noted a recent shooting incident that left three people dead, the opportunity for hunters to have license privileges restored, noted her opposition to hydro-axing, commented on S 1085, and stated that she wanted all permits to shoot geese denied.

Next to speak was Janet Pizar. Ms. Pizar presented a handout to members of the Council. She noted a coalition of states to recognize the loss of hunting privileges from one state to another and questioned was New Jersey was not a part of this, felt the text on the Division's website for CBDMP's was conditionally unacceptable, and felt that an OPRA request she had made for information had been deflected.

There was some discussion with Ms. Pizar on her OPRA request, and Assistant Director Herrighty advised that she had been sent several documents. Acting Chairman Burke was advised by Assistant Director Herrighty that what Ms. Pizar was referring to for license

privileges was a Legislative matter, which the Bureau of Law Enforcement has assigned staff to look into.

Ms. Pizar then inquired about approved minutes, and when the public could ask for corrections to be made. She also stated concerns on monthly reports and license restorations.

With no one else wishing to address the Council today, **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Link to break for lunch, and return after for Executive Session. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

The lunch break began at 12:15 p.m., and resumed to Executive Session at 1:12 p.m. At 1:35 p.m. the meeting was concluded, at which time **a motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman Link to adjourn. All were in favor.**