

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
April 10, 2007

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

Acting Chairwoman Jeanette Vreeland
Councilman Dave Burke
Councilman Fred Hough
Councilman Ed Kertz
Councilwoman Jane Morton-Galetto
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Richard Culp

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Larry Herrighty, Mark Dobelbower, Tony Petrongolo, Jim Sciascia, Jeff Matthews, Carole Kandoth, Jodi Powers and Dan Roberts.

There were four members of the public in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

In accordance with P.L. 1975, c231, notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designate newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and The Press (Atlantic City) on March 20, 2007.

Roll call was taken.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept the minutes of the March 13, 2007 minutes. Councilman Burke asked to add his name to the paragraph on Page 4 that talks about the Fish Forum at Batsto, since he too was in attendance that day. It was also noted by Councilman Van Mater that on Page 8, Pemberton Lake is listed as being in Camden County, and it should be corrected to read Burlington County. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that the minutes of the Council meetings were going to be posted on the Division's website once they had been accepted. **A vote was taken to approve the minutes as corrected, with all in favor, and one abstention from Councilman Hough.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that she has been very busy with many different activities since the last Council meeting, including writing a response to the newspapers regarding the anti-hunting public saying that the Council was not at the hearing last month. A copy of her response was distributed.

She noted that she had attended both the open house and the opening day of trout season at the Pequest Trout Hatchery, as well as the Outdoor Writers Workshop at the Central Region Office.

Discussion turned to the May meeting, which is listed as starting at 1:00pm, and the June meeting, which Acting Chairwoman Vreeland requested be moved to June 19th. Further discussion would be held during lunch to finalize these dates and times.

Director Chanda spoke of the success of the Outdoor Writers Workshop and the Pequest Open House. He also noted that the opening day of trout season drew many fishermen, and received some good press coverage.

Director Chanda reported that he, Chief Herrigty and Paulette Nelson had attended the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference last month. While they were there, they were able to meet with Cindy Delaney, who will be hired under contract to serve as the Facilitator for the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference that New Jersey is hosting in 2008. This will take a great deal of time and effort to plan, and the Division currently does not have the staff to do so. In addition to hosting this event, New Jersey is also hosting the Atlantic Flyway Conference and the Federal Aid Workshop, so her involvement in the Northeast Conference will be beneficial. She has already looked into having the workshop in the Brigantine vicinity.

Director Chanda also noted that he had asked Assistant Commissioner Cradic to invite the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency Management Assistance Team (MAT) to New Jersey to review the structure of our agency. There are five members of the team coming to New Jersey to conduct interviews with different members of the staff, and a report of their findings should be ready in July. This type of analysis was last done in 1996.

Director Chanda also reported that the Federal Audit Team was currently here reviewing the accounts. Councilman Kertz had a question on whether this was the audit that found some missing dollars to the Fish and Wildlife account? Director Chanda noted that no, that was Hunter and Angler monies. He explained where the federal monies were used, and what the auditors were looking at.

Councilman Hough reported for the Agricultural Committee that there was very little activity in his area and only one farmer had seeded. Wildlife activity was mainly from turkey. Councilman Kertz reported that things were slow in the Southern region, and they are waiting for the weather to change. Councilman Puskas noted that the deer are back and the goose activity is slowing down. He noted that they have not had much turkey activity.

There was a request to change the course of the meeting to the report from the Bureau of Wildlife, including the presentation of the summary of the deer harvest by zone.

Chief Herrighty noted the recent events in Middletown, Monmouth County where a coyote had attacked a 22 month old child. The child had two puncture wounds at the back of his neck, and is receiving rabies shots. His injuries were minor, and he is currently back at home in Florida. Bureau personnel have a good idea of the trails of the coyote, and snares have been set. Conservation Officer Shannon Martiak has been assisting in checking the traps. This event has received much media attention.

Bear activity has been slower compared to this time last year because of the weather.

The bear in Stillwater known as “Bearzilla” has been euthanized.

There was also a report of a bear being hit by a train in Rockaway Township. Law Enforcement is investigating.

There has been a list of candidates received for the Technician positions. No interviews have been conducted yet. Funds are still in need of being set up for equipment purchases for these positions.

Chief Herrighty spoke of the North American Conference in Oregon. He noted that he was part of the Gonacon task force. The USDA has slowed down their effort to get an EPA label for the use of Gonacon for deer. There is some concern that the data is not sufficient, and that they are moving forward too quickly.

Chief Herrighty also attended that Atlantic Flyway Council Meeting. In years past, there was concern of the lack of compensation to New Jersey woodcock hunters for the lack of Sunday hunting. They are seeking four to five extra days to be added to the season by the USFWS to make up for these days.

There is some concern regarding the USFWS rule on unplugged guns and electronic calls, since they have a time frame of 9/1 to 9/15, and our State rule says that they may be used for the entire season that goes to 9/30. The USFWS has allowed other states to petition this to include their entire season. He further explained that this could only happen if there were no other waterfowl hunting seasons open at this time. The youth waterfowl day would come in before 9/30, and that would end the rule allowance for unplugged guns. Councilman Messeroll questioned whether or not there were statistics showing that more geese could be harvested with an unplugged gun? Chief Herrighty noted that the feeling was that more people may welcome the opportunity to harvest more geese at one time, especially for those who only had a few days in which to hunt.

One other issue Chief Herrighty reported on was a letter he had sent to the USFWS to accept the options for depredation permits for geese. He noted that they needed the Farm Bureau and the Department of Agriculture to get that message out. He further explained that currently you could go to the USFWS web page and get a permit to addle eggs if your farm had problems, and at the end of the year you report in how many eggs you destroyed. New Jersey had notified the USFWS that we require no additional permits for this. Councilwoman Galetto questioned if he knew how many requests for this type of permit had been submitted? Chief Herrighty noted that yes, and the Division can obtain this information, but so far we have not asked for it.

Councilman Messeroll asked if the web page gave information on how to addle the eggs? Chief Herrighty said the method in the rule was to use corn oil or to puncture the egg. There was some additional discussion regarding these permits.

Chief Herrighty also noted that the farmer depredation order which allows farmers to shoot from 4/1 to 8/31. The airports will continue to be allowed to shoot geese on the runways, but the USFWS was advised that we would require a permit for this type of activity so that the airport could shoot off the property, with permission from the neighboring landowners, and we would know who may be conducting this type of activity.

One final order Chief Herrighty reported on was a health order that allows the State to take action on geese either by permit or through an agent if the local, county or state health officials certify that the goose breeding is a threat to health due to fecal coliform. Dr. Roscoe and others have commented that this can be hard to prove as a direct link, however, our Department has shut down areas in the past due to the Division saying that there could be a health risk. Therefore, the Division would like to make it easier to react to a problem by issuing our own permit, rather than have to wait a month or two to receive a permit from the USFWS.

Chief Herrighty passed out copies of the transcript from the hearing of the code re-adoption.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if the Game Committee should plan a meeting to be held before the start of the May Fish and Game Council meeting? This matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

Councilman Burke asked if there had been any report on feral pigs, noting most recently that there were some pigs in the Egg Harbor City/Galloway Township area. He received a report yesterday of six Vietnamese pot bellied piglets that had been caught. They expected that there were still three piglets and the sow loose in the area. Chief Herrighty noted that we are still seeking permission from the Commissioner's Office to act on pigs. They have had some communication from the Department of Agriculture who think they may have some funding next year for this, as Pennsylvania did this year, and he is working with Assistant Commissioner Cradic to get permission to act on pigs. There was some additional discussion on the matter regarding an existing problem at the Glassboro WMA and Chief Herrighty noted that the USDA had provided a pig expert from their staff in Florida to review the situation. This person felt that New Jersey had a unique opportunity to solve the problem before it becomes a permanent one.

Principal Biologist Carole Kandoth presented a power point presentation of information from the last seasons deer harvest, as well as providing Council members with a written report of the information.

There was no report from Paulette Nelson on the Legislative Committee. Councilman Burke noted that people had been asking about the .50 caliber legislation, and Chief Herrighty and Councilman Messeroll noted that nothing was moving on this.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the State Federation. He noted that the meeting last month was cancelled due to the inclement weather. He has been attending many County meetings. On

June 3, 2007, there will be a sporting clays shoot at Redwing, and he will send fliers with this information to the Council. There convention is being discussed.

The resolution regarding dove hunting came up again, and he will try to get the information to Director Chanda or Chief Herrightly. He noted that the feeling was that more youth hunters might be attracted to dove hunting.

Councilman Messeroll added that there were many fishing derbies scheduled for next month.

Councilman Wolgast added that Duke Farms has had deer hunts that were run with the cooperation of the United Bowhunters of New Jersey. Due to a conflict with the UBNJ and the staff of Duke Farms, the Federation has been asked if they would like to take over the deer hunting at Duke Farms. George Howard, Rob Winkel and Councilman Wolgast toured the property and he reported that they would be interested in taking over this hunt. The matter will be brought up at the next State Federation meeting.

The next State Federation will be Friday, April 20, 2007. Councilman Messeroll may be in attendance, Councilman Van Mater will be in attendance, and Acting Chairwoman Vreeland plans to be there as well.

Councilwoman Galetto presented the Endangered and Non-Game Species Report. She noted that there are 64 eagle nests this year.

They have been having Regional meetings to determine what should be priorities on the Wildlife Action Plan since resources will prohibit all the actions being done. Councilwoman Galetto recently attended the Coastal meeting, and other regions have had or will be having meetings soon. At their last meeting, one of the topics of concern was the use of Dimlin, which is used mostly for gypsy months. It is not target specific, and will kill beavers as well as muskrat. The application of BT is the more accepted practice, and the rules adopted by the DEP were not promoting Dimlin, but rather BT and the committee recommended that Dimlin not be used. That message was delivered by some of the conservation members to the Governor's office, and ultimately, DEP decided not to promote the use of Dimlin.

Councilwoman Galetto noted that the next meeting of the Endangered and Non-Game Species Council was scheduled for April 23, 2007.

Director Chanda noted that Acting Chief Jenkins would not be attending the meeting today since they are very busy working on the T & E rule for the Department. He also noted that in the future he may just have staff attend the Council meetings to report on high profile issues.

There was some additional discussion among the members regarding the eagle nests and the Dimlin issue.

Councilman Messeroll gave a brief explanation of the Aquaculture Committee and their activities, and noted that the next meeting would be held at the Cape May Technical High School.

Superintendent Jeff Matthews gave the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries report. He noted that their big event this past month was the opening day of trout season.

Staff is now working on fish for the Fall program, as well as the Spring 2008 program. He noted that there was some holdover of fish from last year, due in part to the new two year cycle program that they have implemented.

There were 181,400 trout stocked Statewide for the opening day this year.

The water temperatures have been cooler this year, and some preliminary angler surveys showed that the bonus brood stock lakes did well with Brown trout. There were 30 fish put in Lake Papaiani, and 11 of those were caught. He gave a summary of some of the other bonus brood stock ponds.

He noted that the Fall Rainbow trout were large fish, 14” to 16” inches in size, and an interesting point that came out of the Musconetcong Trout Conservation Area in Warren County was that they were the only trout caught this year. No Brook trout were caught.

Stocking will continue for the next seven weeks. Staff anticipated putting out another 388,500 trout Statewide.

The production outlook looks good. Some times the fish were so big that additional trucks were necessary to complete the stocking run.

He noted the activities at the Hackettstown Hatchery, including trap netting of Spruce Run Reservoir and Budd Lake. He noted some sampling information of the Northern pike that were netted. To date, they have reached their goal of 500,000 eggs harvested from the female Northern pike, and the fish will be returned to those lakes.

In Swartswood Lake, they trapped 285 Walleyes this year, taking over 6 million eggs.

Musky trap nets are going into Greenwood Lake and Echo Lake Reservoir next week.

The fishing derby season kicked off this past Saturday.

Councilman Messeroll noted the open house at Pequest, commenting that the youths at the fishing pond all seemed to have a good time. Principal Biologist Matthews added that the event received quite a bit of press coverage this year.

Councilman Burke gave the report from the Waterfowl Stamp Committee. Their most recent meeting was last month. Bob Von Suskil was not able to attend, and George Howard who is the alternate from the Federation took his place.

The new acquisition flier was discussed.

The status of the accounts was also discussed, since there were some discrepancy questions in the past.

There was a sketch approval for the 2008 print, which will feature Canvasback ducks.

Updates were received on the Cohansey project and the Petrecca property.

There is a 35 acre tract in Atlantic County called the Smith property, which is adjacent to the existing Pork Island WMA. Don Wilkinson has not had a chance to rate this property, but it is being considered for acquisition since it is up for sale.

The Committee meets again in June.

Director Chanda clarified the past concerns of the Committee regarding the past accounting procedures.

Councilwoman Galetto noted one additional issue regarding fisheries. There is a property known as Willow Grove Lake on the Cumberland and Salem County line. The dam is in disrepair, and she has been contacted by fisherman concerning this issue. She understands that the State has either threatened or brought suit against the Counties to repair the dam. The lake has been in existence for 120 years, and receives much recreational use. She went to see the lake recently, and noted great densities of threatened and endangered species. There are disputes on who should pay for the repairs, and she requested that the Council consider if they would like to be proponents of this issue to help figure who is responsible for what portion of these repairs. Director Chanda noted that he would pose this question to Chiefs Petrongolo and Barno. They had some additional discussion on this matter.

Lunch break was taken at 12:05 pm.

The meeting resumed at 1 pm.

Chief Jim Sciascia gave the Information and Education report. He noted that they had a busy month, with a lot of activities going on.

The recent open house was well attended, with Saturday receiving a great deal of visitors. The weather was not very good for the Sunday session, but still there was a good amount of visitors on that day. Over 700 people went through the introductory shotgun shooting ranges. Additionally, over 800 children between 8 and 16 fished at the trout pond, and another 400 children under 8 at the kiddie trout pool. There were over 50 vendors in attendance offering a variety of items.

The winners of the art essay contest and their families were at the Pequest Hatchery on the opening day of trout season for trout fishing and the award event sponsored by Trout Unlimited.

There was a great deal of work done to promote the opening day of trout season, including a mailing that was sent to over 6,000 Pennsylvania anglers who live near the New Jersey border.

It was hoped that this would help to attract more anglers to New Jersey. There were also 60-second radio ads on five different radio stations. The total promotional costs were \$11,000 to \$12,000.

Staff is looking into doing a warm water promotion approximately 3 weeks before the free fishing days. Due to the expense of mailing information, other types of options are being considered.

Hunter Education class registration is up by 10% compared to this time last year.

Hunter Education staff met with the Archery Trade Association last week. The Division has a memo of understanding with ATA to help get the National Archery in the Schools program started in New Jersey. Chief Sciascia attended their National summit meeting this winter, and states presented information on what they were each doing. New Jersey is amongst the top states in the amount of staff time and resources devoted to developing programs for archery. The Archery Trade Association is willing to work with us to develop a "super range" on either a wildlife management area or state park property. Chief Sciascia further explained other funding possibilities from the ATA for archery development in New Jersey.

Councilman Messeroll questioned how much land would be necessary for this type of range, and were they looking for a donation of property? Chief Sciascia noted that they would probably look into Parks property because of the staffing needed to monitor the range. He still needs to review this matter with Director Chanda.

Many applications have been submitted for the two Assistant Biologist positions in the bear education and wildlife management areas. We currently have an employee from Watershed Management who has temporarily been assigned to us for bear education for six months, however, it will take some time to train him.

Information was sent statewide recently regarding the availability of bear education programs, and requests for presentations are being received.

Biologist Liz Jackson will continue to do many of the programs until the new person is trained, and Chief Herrightly has also offered to have members of his staff assist. Al Ivany will also be assisting with these programs. There is a current employee of the Department who is very interested in transferring over to the Division, and this possibility is being looked into.

A survey is being prepared for use in West Milford prior to the distribution of the bear-resistant garbage cans. The survey was planned for paired communities (those receiving and those not receiving cans) in an attempt to measure bear incident rates and resident attitudes prior to using the cans. A follow-up survey was also planned for the year following use of the garbage cans. The survey and cover letter are currently in the Commissioner's Office for review.

There was some additional conversation regarding the bear seminars and bear information, and some additional ideas were shared on ways to get the word out to the public.

Chief Tony Petrongolo gave the report for the Bureau of Land Management. He noted that 470 acres were added this past month, most notably in the Pequest area south of Jane's Chapel Road. This property goes toward the Rockport Game Farm, which the Division is hopeful to be able to connect to some time in the future.

Much of the staff's time this past month has been spent on trout stocking.

There was quite a bit of controlled burning activity this month. In the Southern Region, 1,500 acres were burned. The Bureau of Forest Fire Management has been very helpful in assisting with these activities. Areas that have been burned recently include the Buckshutem and Beaver Brook WMAs.

A seasonal intern from Rutgers University has been hired to do a forest inventory at the Sparta Mountain WMA. Studies will include species habitat. Mimi Dunne, Senior Biologist with the Bureau is currently working on a management plan for this area. He gave a brief explanation what species are in the area, and why this type of study was necessary before a timber harvest contract could be developed.

Staff removed a pole barn from a newly acquired addition to the Thundergut Pond WMA known as the Love property. This barn will be reassembled at the Southern Region Office. This project is being done with assistance from prisoners from the Department of Corrections.

Work continues with the City of Absecon regarding a boat ramp permit. Ed Markowski from the Federation of Sportsmen has also been involved with this project. A lease has been submitted to the Commissioner's Office for signatures.

Councilman Kertz asked if signs could be put up at Gibson's Landing advising people not to park in front of the boat ramp? He was contacted by some waterfowl hunters who said other recreational users had parked there and blocked their access. Chief Petrongolo noted that this is an informal ramp that has never been established, but signs could be posted.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked how work was going on the Bureau's request for CBT monies. Chief Petrongolo noted that there were a number of project's that could be addressed, and with the assistance of Al Payne's office things are moving along. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that the access road to the Assunpink Lake was talked about at the Outdoor Writer's Workshop, and she hoped that this was one of the projects under consideration. Director Chanda added that a proposal has been submitted to the Assistant Commissioner's Office for this road improvement project.

Councilman Messeroll noted past reports of the possibility of moving the Trenton staff to the Central Region Office, and questioned if CBT monies could be used for this? Director Chanda noted that a feasibility study had been completed, and gave a brief explanation of the results. CBT monies would be used for this improvement project. He added that the Director, Bureau Chief's and their support staff would not be leaving the Trenton facility.

Chief Mark Dobelbower gave the Bureau of Law Enforcement report. He noted that this was a transitional month, going from hunting to fishing season. Staff made 1,156 inspections, resulting in 145 summonses and eight warnings being issued, mostly for wildlife management area violations.

The opening day of trout season showed average fishing pressure. There were some new events noted, including a fishing derby sponsored by the local police in Spring Lake. There were approximately 1,500 people in attendance, and this is a good way for the Division to partner with towns where the Division does not have to do a lot of logistical work to make the event happen. Conservation Officers stopped by at the event, and were able to assist some of the kids who were fishing.

Background checks were completed on the candidates for the new Conservation Officer positions being paid for with bear fund allocations. There are still some candidates left to interview. The approximate start date for these positions is June 1.

The bear sweep was completed and seemed to be a positive event, with most of the people being interested in what the Division had to say. Chief Dobelbower pointed out that Captain Tim Cussen put forth a lot of time and effort to make this event a success.

There was a question from Councilman Wolgast on whether or not any summonses had been issued? Chief Dobelbower noted that he did not have the final report yet. He added that most of the warnings were verbal. In all, over 1,700 homes were visited, and this data was still being compiled.

One last incident to report on was the recent attack on a 22 month old child by a coyote in Middletown Township, Monmouth County. While it has not been confirmed that this is a coyote, residents in the area who have seen this animal feel that it is. Officers have been out speaking with the residents, and permission has been received from local property owners to set snares to trap the animal.

Councilwoman Galetto noted one of the highlights in the Bureau's monthly report of an incident that occurred at the Bevans WMA. Chief Dobelbower gave a brief review of the matter.

The meeting went on to discuss any old or new business. A request was made by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland to have a meeting of the Game Committee on May 8th at 10:00 am, prior to the Council meeting at 1:00pm. It was noted that the public hearing be taken off the Division website for the May 8th meeting. It was also suggested that Bureau reports be kept brief to allow more time to concentrate on the presentation that would be made on Game Code issues. She also requested changing the June 12th meeting to June 19th. All were in favor. The meeting will be at 10:00am.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked that the Bear Sub-Committee have a meeting before the meeting with the Commissioner and the Governor that was requested. She is still waiting for a response to that request. A response from the Attorney General's Office has still not been received for the letter that was sent to them.

Councilman Burke requested an updated list of the Committees.

Councilman Kertz asked for a copy of the bear policy for the new Council members. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that she had distributed those today.

Councilman Wolgast asked if it was requested that the Commissioner point out what was in the Bear Policy that she did not like. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that she had requested that they send a “marked up” copy of the bear policy to the Committee of what issues were not acceptable by their office. The Committee still has not received any correspondence.

Councilman Burke requested that an agenda be available at the Council meetings for the public. It was decided that this could be a generic agenda, but asked that any highlight topics such as a Game Code presentation be listed. There was some additional discussion regarding this matter. Director Chanda noted that this was something the Division could provide.

Councilwoman Galetto noted that she had received a voice mail from Cathy Gandolfo from Channel 6 News, regarding Willow Grove Lake. She added that had not been in touch with her yet, and could speak to her as the President of the local Water Shed Association of the Maurice River, but wanted to know if the Council wanted her to note that they were sympathetic to the recreational users concerns and hoped that those with a stake in Willow Grove could find the financial resources to restore the lake for recreational use. Members felt that it would be alright for her to mention that she was on the Fish and Game Council and they supported this issue.

Members were reminded that at the May meeting they would be reviewing the Game Code issue by issue.

Councilman Messeroll mentioned that he has been invited to attend the Taxidermy Association Conference in Somerset. They have questions about the sale of taxidermy that was brought in to a taxidermist but never claimed. He was hoping to have Chief Herrighty attend with him. Councilman Messeroll will attend to speak about the Council, but he has already advised them to put their concerns in writing to the Council. There was some additional discussion on this matter and how it applies in other states. Councilman Messeroll told them to include any rule changes they would like to see in their request.

There was no additional business. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.