

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
June 16, 2009

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 Ed Kertz
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan VanMater
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Fred Hough

Division employees included: Director Dave Chanda, Assistant Director Larry Herrigthy, Paulette Nelson, Tim Cussen, Lisa Barno, Tony Petrongolo, Paul Ritter and Carole Kandoth.

Members of the public included representatives from the Farm Bureau, the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, the United Crossbow Hunters of New Jersey and others.

The meeting was called to order at 10:14 am by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Roll call was taken.

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 Press (Atlantic City) on May 20, 2009.

The minutes of the May 2009 meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland announced that the proposed changes to the Game Code would be reviewed and voted on first, and then the meeting would continue.

At this time, the public comment period on agenda items was opened. Members of the audience were reminded that if they had previously made comment either in writing or at the public hearing, it was not necessary for them to speak again, but would be their choice. The audience was polled as to how many of those present would be making comment in order to adjust the

allowed speaking time if necessary. There were two responses, so the allowed speaking time remained at three minutes.

First to comment was Barbara Sachau. She felt that independent people were needed to take the comments to the Game Code. She noted that she did not feel the agency represented should be involved, and questioned if it was legal for the Council to be involved in counting the comments to the Game Code. She added that “we know that the comments coming in from the general population opposing all this hunting and authorized murder that goes on in New Jersey, we know that any time the Game Code comes out there are more additions to wildlife species that can be exterminated, we have more venal and vicious instruments of death being promoted against wildlife and we know that this Council itself is constantly biased towards murdering wildlife” adding that independent auditors need to be used for any counting of public comment on the Game Code. She also added that “we” object to the constant wildlife murder that goes on through the agents of these Council members. Ms. Sachau then remarked that “we Pledged of Allegiance to the Constitution” and the Constitution of the United States says we all need an equal voice in government and that she felt that anyone who opposed wildlife murder had any voice at all at any time with this Council, asking “what do we get, two minutes to speak to you?”. Ms. Sachau also noted that when questions are made to the Council, “we do not get answers” and felt that “we are operating in the dark most of the time”. She felt that they did not get current information on what goes on in this Council, and noted that “somehow the public will find out what goes on in this totally biased group and will reject it”. She then thanked the Council.

James Soden was the next speaker. He noted the proposed amendments to the Game Code, speaking out about the change to the boundaries between Zones 19 and 23, and Zones 23 and 25. Mr. Soden reviewed the zones and the current regulation sets they are in, and the proposed changes. He noted that Zone 19 is in a higher zone set, which allows more activity, and felt it was counterproductive to take an area with a higher allowance of opportunity and put it into a zone set with a lower allowance of opportunity.

At this time, Janet Piszar asked a question of Acting Chairwoman Vreeland. She said she was confused by the review of comments, noting that the public comment period on the Game Code was April 6th, 2009 to June 5th, 2009 and asked if today’s comments were being included in with the others. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that today’s comments would be heard and included in the minutes. Ms. Piszar asked if June 5th, 2009 was technically not the official deadline date, and Assistant Director Herrightly noted that June 5th, 2009 is the technical deadline, and today’s speaking opportunity was a courtesy to the public to comment on agenda items, and would not be part of the adoption document which responds to public comments to the Game Code.

The amendments to the Game Code were reviewed. Councilman Wolgast noted he felt there was no need to change anything that was proposed, with the exception to the boundaries in Zones 19 and 23. **A motion was made by Councilman Wolgast, seconded by Councilman Puskas to withdraw the proposal to modify the boundaries between Zones 19 and 23.** Assistant Director Herrightly asked to make a point of clarification to the members of the audience, noting that the Council discussed withdrawing this proposal last month. Based on the summary of oral and written comments to the Game Code, this recommendation had already been made to the Council. Councilman Burke added that the change between Zones 23 and 25 would still remain.

Councilman Burke asked for additional discussion on 7:25-5.22, (Wild Animals: possession, killing). He noted that three agencies, New Jersey Pest Management, USDA APHIS, and the Farm Bureau all had concerns about this proposal. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that the Farm Bureaus concerns echoed those in the letter received from the USDA. The Pest Management Association's concern was that they would be in violation for the transport of materials or devices covered by this rule, and also asked that moles, voles, snakes and chipmunks be removed and made exempt from this rule. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that they are already covered statutorily and are already protected beyond this code. They had also asked the Council to regulate a goose contraceptive and a goose repellent. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that this Council does not regulate repellants since they are not usually applied directly to wildlife, so no handling of the wildlife is necessary. She added that the goose contraceptive that they referred to is banned in New Jersey. Assistant Director Herrightly explained that the Council had already exercised their authority over wildlife fertility in 2001. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that APHIS' concern was that it would place undue administrative burden on their agency any they may not be able to respond to an emergency situation. She noted that the Council and the Division have always maintained a good working relationship with them and that they are usually issued an annual blanket permit that authorizes them to do any work that is necessary in New Jersey. Based on this, the Division does not feel that this will place an undue burden on either agency. Further, they asked for a blanket exemption for all their services, as well as their own beaver and muskrat depredation permits. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that the beaver and muskrat permits are covered by statute and are beyond this code document. Regarding the blanket exemption, it is required that they give this Council and the Division notice of their activities since we are the ones who control wildlife. Since they are given a blanket permit, she did not feel that this would interfere with their ability to respond to emergency situations. The Farm Bureau was concerned that they would not be able to respond to depredation permit complaints, but Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that this should not be an issue. There was some additional discussion on this matter.

After review of the proposals, **a vote was taken on the previous motion, which would withdraw the proposal to modify the boundaries between Zone 19 and 23 as proposed in 7:25-5.29, and let the other portion of this proposal remain. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

A motion was made by Councilman Wolgast, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the remainder of the proposals as given. A roll call vote was taken was taken as follows:

Councilwoman Brummer	in favor
Councilman Burke	in favor
Councilman Kertz	in favor
Councilman Messeroll	in favor
Councilman Puskas	in favor
Councilman Van Mater	in favor
Acting Chairwoman Vreeland	in favor
Councilman Wolgast	in favor

There were no oppositions to the proposed changes. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland also noted that she had been in contact with Councilman Hough, who was not present today, but he too was in favor of these changes.

Assistant Director Herrity thanked Principal Biologist Kandoth for all her work on this, noting that the final document was being prepared for publication in the New Jersey Register.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Wolgast to reject the boundary change proposal between Zones 19 and 23. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that after two years of work, this was a sigh of relief for all involved to have it completed.

The meeting resumed its regular schedule. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reported today was garbage day in her area, and her neighbor called out to her that they had a black bear in their yard. She added that the bears are out and about, noting many newspaper articles being printed about them. In one article, a Councilman from Branchville spoke out, saying that the State had to do something, and needed no more candy-coated talk about bears.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland attended the Convention of the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs banquet. She noted those who were honored, including former Director George Howard, former Assistant Director Pete McLain and President Sonny Bass on behalf of the Square Circle Club. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland was also among those honored, being presented the Keith Griffiths Memorial Award.

Director Chanda also was in attendance at the Convention, and noted he was glad to see those who were recognized.

He and Tom McCloy from Marine Fisheries have continued their work on explaining the Saltwater Registry Program. People are starting to understand the issues and what is at stake.

Assistant Director Herrity and staff have been busy working on the budget. Director Chanda recommended that the Finance Committee may want to meet sometime in July or August. He briefly reviewed some of the things that can be discussed, including the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program being granted an exemption for their fringe benefits. He feels that the Division should be in good shape, only due to the shortage of staff that we currently have. Director Chanda also noted that he had spoken to the Director from Massachusetts, who also is unable to hire personnel or purchase equipment due to a freeze, even though they have a surplus in their dedicated Fish & Wildlife budget.

A letter was received from the Fish and Wildlife Service noting their concerns about each state's reporting responsibilities on monies taken from the dedicated sportsmen's account. Several states have been looking to use the money in ways for which it was not intended, most notably California, and had they taken those monies they would have lost 30 million in federal aid funds.

Director Chanda had nothing else to report, but did note that he may be leaving early today.

The Committee Reports were given. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland had spoken to Councilman Hough from the Agriculture Committee, and in the Northern Region he noted that they had received a lot of moisture. The water levels at Lake Hopatcong are back up. Councilman Hough also has seen turkey and bear in his area, as well as receiving a report of an eagle feeding on road

kill. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that Councilman Hough was sorry he could not be here today, and was concerned for the Council in the delay of his replacement being named.

Councilman Kertz reported for the Southern Region. He noted that some areas are wet, and other areas average, but he had gotten 4 ½ inches of rain in the past two weeks. They have seen deer, turkey and groundhogs on their farm.

Councilman Puskas reported for the Central Region. They also had a lot of rain, and he noted the large amount of insects due to the dampness. Some fields have had a 50% loss due to insect damage, and the muddy conditions made it impossible to get in to the fields to try to prevent further damage. He noted that it was very muddy for June, and that the current conditions seemed more like Spring.

Liz Thompson from the Farm Bureau was present. She noted that she has directed some calls on damage to the farmer hotline. It was also noted that the Farm Bureau echoes Councilman Hough's concerns on new appointments to the Council. They have seen this in other areas as well, but noted this Council's appointments seem to be taking the longest. They have been sending letters to try to push this along.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Legislative Committee, noting that he has not heard much. Legislative Liaison Nelson reported that there was nothing new on existing bills, but reviewed the following new bills for the Council:

A 4001 and companion S 2879	Provides for discounted resident trapping license fees for Senior Citizens.
A 4039	Expands authorization for clamping on Sundays.
A 4040 and companion S 2867	Requires DEP to designate three sites in State park or forest where snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and dirt bikes may be used; regulates operation of those vehicles and certain other off-road vehicles.

All else has been quiet. The Legislature is currently busy working on the budget.

Councilman Wolgast added that he had spoken to the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance. They will support free licenses for servicemen and women as long as the Division receives reimbursement from the general treasury. This will still have to go to the Federation through their representative to the Outdoor Alliance. This, as well as getting the Legislatures support should not be a problem. Legislative Liaison Nelson suggested that they also look at some of the existing bills that are in place, such as A3549, which 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.

Councilman Kertz asked about the ATV bill, and whether or not the three sites would be statewide or could be in one area. Legislative Liaison Nelson noted that they have designated that there be one sight in the Northern, Central and Southern Regions, but there were no further specifications.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. She noted that the White-nosed Bat Syndrome has been confirmed at five main hibernacula's throughout the State, and that there could be more. The samples have been sent to the National Wildlife Health Center and they have confirmed that this is a fungus known as geomyces. There is still no conclusion on how the disease is transmitted, and scientists will not be going in to any of the hibernacula's since there has been some thought that it may be spread by human transport. At the Hibernia Mine, there was an estimated 95% mortality rate. The estimated population at that cave was between 26,000 and 29,000 bats, and the last count only totaled 750 bats. Councilwoman Brummer explained that some of this may be due to the bats leaving earlier in the day to search for food, since some of the bats monitored were emaciated. It is thought that since the fungus is around their mouths, it may be interfering with their ability to eat. The White-nosed Bat Syndrome is now in multiple States, and continues to move South. An experimental treatment has been tried, where a mild vinegar solution is applied to the wings of the bat. There is no conclusion to this experiment yet. Increased attention will be given to the monitoring project. Councilwoman Brummer shared additional information on work being done on this syndrome. Assistant Director Herrigty noted that the vinegar experiment came from a rehabilitator who had tried it on her own hands. Mick Valent from the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program is working with her on a protocol for use, but is not sure if it works or not. Director Chanda added that this is a serious problem that has everyone's attention. There was some further discussion on bats and the bat population.

Councilman Messeroll asked about the status of the Red Knots. There was no data available yet from this year, but it was noted that the horseshoe crab population seemed better. More information will follow on the Red Knots. Councilwoman Brummer recommended that anyone available attend the Horseshoe crab night census, and gave some details of that project. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked that she forward information on the schedule to the other members, however, Councilwoman Brummer noted that it is almost over for the season.

The next meeting of the ENSAC Committee is scheduled for July 15, 2009.

Councilman Messeroll reported for the Federation. He noted their recent Convention, and reviewed some of the activities that were conducted.

There was a sporting clays event held recently, which had 45 participants. A bass tournament will be held this Thursday on the Assumpink Lake.

Councilman Burke reported for the Southern Region. They have held a number of youth fishing tournaments, sponsored by various groups.

There are concerns about the impact of the recent weather on the turkey population.

Councilman Burke also reported that he attended the Cumberland County Federation Meeting, and they are very supportive of the Saltwater Fishing License. Councilman Wolgast added that the Somerset County Fish and Game Protective Association sent a letter to the Federation acknowledging their support of the Saltwater Fishing License. They have also contacted Recreation Fishing Alliance noting the position they are taking on this matter, and requesting to be able to meet and speak to them. Councilman Kertz asked if this was the saltwater license or registry that they were talking on. Director Chanda noted the letter they are referring to talks

about a saltwater license; however, other groups are referring to the registry. He further explained that there is pending legislation that would assign the Division to establish a registry, and there is talk that this should be amended to cover the costs of administration for this Agency. He further explained that if this bill passes as written, it will cost several hundred thousand dollars to administer the program, but when asked if the money would come from the Hunter and Angler fund or another source, Director Chanda noted that was not known. He noted the monies in the Marine Fisheries budget would be almost eliminated if they had to fund this program. The registry program was further discussed.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. The Fish Code should be published in the August 3rd, 2009 Register. The public hearing on the Fish Code is scheduled for September 8, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Region Office. It was discussed that the Council may want to start the September 8, 2009 Council meeting at a later time on that date, which would also allow for committee meetings in the morning.

The Spring trout stocking summary was distributed and reviewed. There were a total of 629,590 trout stocked. This is the second highest amount of fish stocked in the history of the Pequest Hatchery. The sizes of the fish were all higher than the targeted 10.5 inches they were striving for, with the rainbow trout averaging 11.3 inches, brook trout at 11.2 inches and brown trout at 10.8 inches. There was also minimal disease issues reported this season.

On June 5, 2009 a consultant from Environmental Consulting Services, who monitor fish passage at fish ladders constructed by Public Service Electric and Gas confirmed a snake head at the Stewart Lake fish ladder in Woodbury. This was the first time a snake head was documented at inland waters, so far they have only been seen on the Delaware River proper. Only one was found, and it measured over 12 inches in size. Staff is now working with PSE&G to close the fish ladder and only open it during the Spring migration of river herring.

Plans are still being worked on for removal of the swamp eels at Silver Lake in South Jersey. The area was electro fished last week, and one specimen measuring over 3 ½ feet was seen. Chief Barno noted that there is no good access for removal of the fish at this area, which is part of the problem with the eradication program. She further reviewed this area and the access limitations for the Council.

Chief Barno noted a proposal for the Fish Code for 2010 was to move a seasonal trout conservation area on the Point Mountain stretch of the Musconetcong River to a year round area. One area of concern that was previously discussed was there was not enough information on the amount of anglers using bait or artificial bait. Volunteers were able to do a survey of the anglers at this area, and found that 75% of those fishing were using artificial bait at all times. Staff felt that there was no point in making changes to the proposal at this time, and some of those bait fishermen also saw no problem with changing this over to all artificial bait.

Chief Barno noted that phone conferences were held with New York and Pennsylvania concerning river herring. Pennsylvania will see a reduction limit to 10 starting January 1, 2010, which coincides time wise with our 2010 Fish Code. All states feel that they would not be able to acquire enough data to impose a moratorium, and feel that they have a sustainable population harvest overall. Chief Barno added that this should not affect the landlocked populations.

The water level at Lake Hopatcong has risen to 8.4 feet, with over six inches being from last weeks rains. The gates are operating at a reduced rate, and the water temperatures have been holding. Supervising Biologist Pat Hamilton continues to monitor these downstream areas.

Councilman Messeroll noted that he has been hearing nothing but good things about the trout fishing this season, and felt that the staff should be commended. Chief Barno also credited staff from the Bureau of Land Management for their assistance with the stocking program. She added that they have had the fewest number of complaints this year, and license sales are up.

Assistant Director Herrigthy reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He distributed and reviewed the latest bear activity report for the Council. For the period January 1 to May 20, 2009 Category One bear reports were up by 14.5%, Category Two were almost the same, and Category Three were up by 50% compared to last year. He noted that these numbers will probably up even more in next month's report, since the bears have been very active. So far this year, six bears have had to been euthanized.

The June research trapping of bears has started. Information collected helps to establish population models. Last week, Wildlife Technician Heather LeMasters was working on a sow that had been caught in a snare, and there was a large boar in the area. The boar was shot with the tranquilizer gun, and when staff tried to weigh the bear it was too heavy for the scale that they had. A call was made for a larger scale to be brought to the area, and when weighed the boar measured 700 ½ pounds. Assistant Director Herrigthy estimated that this bear should weigh 825 pounds this Fall.

The results of the Spring turkey season are noted in the bureau's monthly report. Overall, it was a good year for hunters.

The pheasant production is ongoing at the Rockport Game Farm. All brooder houses are full, and hatching is now slowing down.

Due to travel restrictions for State employees, Research Scientist Paul Castelli and Principal Biologist Ted Nichols were both denied State funded travel to the Arctic to participate in the Atlantic Flyway Council research on Canada geese. Research Scientist Castelli still attended, paying his own way, and reported that they were also experiencing cold, rainy weather in the Arctic and the Canada geese were slow to show up, and the prediction is that they may have a lower reproduction. Travel has also been denied for Research Scientist Castelli and Assistant Director Herrigthy to attend the Atlantic Flyway Council meeting in July. There will be a proxy representative from another state to bring New Jersey's concerns to that meeting, and Research Scientist Castelli has been working with them. Director Chanda added that it is rather common for employees to pay their own way to conferences when denied travel, because they want to be able to participate in the exchange of information available, and feel it is important to what we do. Travel restrictions were further discussed, with Director Chanda noting that some Federal monies we receive could also be at risk because they are given with condition that they will be used for travel to attend these meetings.

Assistant Director Herrigthy noted that the budget that originally allocated \$4.2 million from the general appropriation was cut to \$2.6 million last year, and with some restrictions being put in place, \$1.9 million was spent. The original bear appropriation of \$850,000 was cut to \$573,000, and just last Thursday the Division was asked if there were any critical needs areas

where this money was going to be spent. Equipment needs will be purchased using these monies. This coming fiscal year again has \$573,000 in the budget for bear activities. Comments were made that this is a long way from one million dollars and eight additional employees that were first discussed with former Commissioner Jackson.

Assistant Director Herrighty was happy to report that employees Mark Leonard and Joe Burke had both returned safely from the National Guard activities overseas.

Councilman Wolgast asked about the bear resistant trash can study that was being done. Assistant Director Herrighty noted it was being done by Rutgers University, and no information has been received from them yet. Information on the aversive conditioning study and new population estimates, both being done by East Stroudsburg University, are also not available yet.

Councilman Wolgast asked if a response had been received from the Commissioner's Office on the two letters sent to him regarding the Comprehensive Bear Management Policy. Assistant Director Herrighty noted he had heard that a draft letter was sent to the Legal Counsel last week. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland added that she had received nothing yet, but would contact those on Council if anything is received.

Councilman Wolgast also asked about the status of the bear DVD. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that this was started three administrations ago when there was a hunting season, and the script needed to be rewritten with current information. Footage will also need to be reshot. There is currently no timeline on when this will be available.

Chief Cussen reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He acknowledged the return of employees Joe Burke and Mark Leonard from Iraq, as previously reported by Assistant Director Herrighty. He noted that Mark Leonard, who works for the Bureau of Law Enforcement has been gone since March, 2008. He will be returning to work on August 1, 2009.

Last week, CO Jordan Holmes graduated from the Morris County Police Academy. He was awarded the Police Training Commission Recruit Award for the 76th class from the Academy. Chief Cussen noted that this award is given to the recruit selected by his or her classmates as most likely to succeed in law enforcement. Conservation Officers Keith Fox and Paul Toppin were prior recipients of this award. CO Holmes also came in second for firearms qualifications. CO Brian Tomlin is scheduled to graduate from the Gloucester County Police Academy in July. CO Holmes will begin the Field Training Officer (FTO) Program by riding with CO Kuechler in the Essex, Hudson and Union County areas.

During this reporting period, officers reported a total of 7,572 hours of duty. These can be further broken down to 2,188 for fishing patrols, 1,472 for marine resources patrols, 378 for hunting patrols, 267 for wildlife management area patrols and 255.5 for endangered and non-game species patrols.

A total of 8,091 field inspections were conducted, resulting in 525 summonses, 25 written warnings and no criminal arrests. The summonses issued were further broken down to include 309 fishing, 36 hunting, 75 wildlife management area, 24 striped bass and 27 marine recreation violations.

Councilman Messeroll asked about a commercial bear sweep that was held, and if it resulted in any violations being written. Chief Cussen noted that one written warning was issued to a business that was not disposing of their trash properly and were intentionally feeding bears. He also noted that 11 or 12 businesses needed assistance in how to best protect their dumpsters. Officers made recommendations, and will be back in two weeks to follow up. Councilman Messeroll asked if the local police departments are contacted for those businesses that will be revisited. Chief Cussen noted that they do not contact the local police departments, since they have not seen a lot of interest in the local police departments enforcing trash violations, adding that Bureau staff like go back to follow through on the recommendations they make, and issue written warnings or summonses if needed. Chief Cussen also noted that since the funds were placed in reserve by the State Treasurer they are limited to the amount of sweeps they can do.

The meeting broke for lunch at 11:55 am, and resumed again at 12:51 pm.

Supervising Biologist Paul Ritter reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He presented two summaries of fishing license and trout stamp sales for two different time periods. The first compared the periods of 12/01/2007 to 6/14/2008 and 12/01/2008 to 6/14/2009. The second showed a smaller range of dates, comparing 06/06/2008 to 06/14/2008 and 06/06/2009 to 06/14/2009. He reviewed the information on these handouts with the Council, noting the postcard mailing done on May 4, 2009 with funding assistance from the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, to reach out to lapsed anglers. Seventy-five thousand cards were mailed out, and out of these, approximately 5,500 anglers returned to purchase licenses. A second postcard was sent to the remaining 69,000 lapsed anglers, and while specific data was not yet available, license sales peaked by almost 18% just after that mailing was done, compared to the same time last year. More specific information on how many lapsed anglers were reached will be available at a later time. Director Chanda noted the various groups involved with this campaign, and the additional work being done by the Division reaching out to anglers in public forums asking for their input. He added that we have invested just over \$100,000 in the last three years, with revenue results of almost \$340,000 dollars. Supervising Biologist Ritter noted that part of this campaign included radio advertising as well. Discussion continued on fishing license and trout stamp advertising and sales.

Supervising Biologist Ritter reported that the Hunter Education Program is up by 300 students compared to this time last year. The archery classes have been updated on the registration site with the recent addition of crossbow hunting in New Jersey. They may use Federal funds to do a postcard mailing to firearms hunters who not currently bow hunters are advising them of the new opportunities available. Councilman Kertz asked when the Fall classes would be starting, and Supervising Biologist Ritter noted that they run continuously March through November. Discussion continued on bow hunter education classes that would be scheduled, and other options available to lapsed bow hunters who may not be able to locate their old bow license.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about the progress of the National Archery in Schools Program. Supervising Biologist Ritter noted it was progressing quite well, with the Mayor of Newark being interested in involving 84 schools. The Mayor of East Orange is also interested, and the City of Orange has adopted the program. He further explained the work done with different schools and school systems to best suit their needs. By the end of next year, Supervising Biologist Ritter estimates that 130 to 140 schools will be participating. New Jersey will have the fastest program growth in the country during that time period.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. While no additional lands have been added to the wildlife management system this past month, there are many proposals being offered. He added that Green Acres funds are running out, and they are not sure of their funding for the future.

The Farm Lease Program is moving forward. The lease proposal has been received back from the Deputy Attorney General's Office, and the bid packages are being put together. The bids should be received in July, so that they may go on the State House Commission agenda for September, and be in place for next season.

In the Northern Region, a preliminary proposal was received from the Tennessee Gas Pipeline to expand their pipeline that runs through the Hamburg Mountain WMA. This would result in compensation, and may also offer the opportunity for a significant habitat project for species such as ruffed grouse and golden winged warbler. Chief Petrongolo stated that one of the hold-ups for the Bureau was getting forest inventories done, and this may be one way of getting this area inventoried. They will also consider having Tennessee Gas do management in exchange for the right-of-way rights and have them maintain the area in a way that would be positive for those species. Chief Petrongolo also noted the projects being done in the nearby areas of the Sparta Mountain WMA and the Newark Watershed.

At the Flatbrook WMA, another timber harvest project is being done with assistance from the Ruffed Grouse Society. A cut is planned in an area where a harvest is done every five years. This will also help to generate funding for other habitat projects. Senior Biologist Mimi Dunne has been coordinating this project.

Senior Biologist Mimi Dunne has also been coordinating ruffed grouse surveys with the Audubon Society and Ruffed Grouse Society using volunteers. Past projects have been reviewed to update ways to collect data in a more scientific way than we do now. Chief Petrongolo added that the areas where birds were heard include the Hamburg Mountain, Sparta Mountain and Hainesville WMAs. While birds were not heard at the Flatbrook, Berkshire Valley or the Rockaway River WMAs, it does not mean that the birds are not there, they just may not have been heard during the survey period.

Several major tree planting projects are also being worked on. Competition dirt bike riders who hold an enduro on the Millville WMA each year have planted 2,500 pitch pines in the gravel pit area on the Winslow WMA. This is part of their permit for using the WMA for their event. Seedlings planted previously have been doing quite well despite the soils in which they are planted. At the Manchester WMA, we have been working with the Lakehurst Naval Air Station and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore Atlantic white cedar in some old cranberry bog areas. This project will be done over a number of years, planting one bog at a time and evaluating their survival as time progresses.

Councilman Burke asked for any updates on boat ramps. At the Salem Canal, things are on hold for now. At the Oyster Creek WMA, Chief Petrongolo noted that the project has been bid out, but there are some concerns with the restroom facilities that are being worked on currently. Chief Petrongolo added that these were minor problems, and he expects things will soon be moving along.

Councilman Kertz asked about the Absecon boat ramp parking lots. Chief Petrongolo noted that the town has their engineers looking at designs, and while it is active, it could be several years before anything is done. The Absecon boat ramp area was further discussed, with other options that have been proposed for the future being reviewed.

Chief Petrongolo also noted that several meetings were attended by staff this past month in the Southern Region coordinating restoration of early successional habitat for a variety of bird species.

Old and new business was discussed. Council members were reminded to submit their travel expense vouchers to the Trenton Office before the end of June.

The Fish Code hearing will be held on September 8, 2009 at 7:00pm at the Central Region Office.

The Finance Committee will meet on September 8, 2009 at 10:30am, and the Legislative Committee will meet from 11:30am to 12 noon, then after lunch, the regular meeting of the Fish and Game Council will begin at 1 pm.

The July meeting of the Fish and Game Council will be held on July 14, 2009 at 1:00pm. Councilman VanMater will not be in attendance, and Councilman Puskas was not sure of his schedule at this time. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked if anyone had any problems with the August meeting at this time, but there were no responses. The October meeting was also noted, but no changes were made at this time.

Councilman Kertz asked about the Comprehensive Bear Management Plan, and Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted she is still waiting for a response from the Acting Commissioner.

The public comment period was opened. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland clarified with Assistant Director Herrigthy that Council would not have to answer questions during the public comment period, and that this was just a time for the public to address the Council.

Janet Piszar addressed the Council. She referenced a discussion from earlier in the meeting during the Game Code review. She said that it was mentioned that goose fertility control was illegal in New Jersey, and asked if that meant ovocontrol was illegal. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that it was not approved for use in New Jersey. Ms. Piszar also commented that the New Jersey Fish and Game Council had asserted its' authority over fertility drugs in New Jersey for wildlife management, and at this time Ms. Piszar was reminded by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland that the Council is in charge of managing the wildlife in New Jersey. Ms. Piszar still referenced that it was mentioned that in 2001 the Fish and Game Council asserted its' authority over fertility control in New Jersey and wondered what document would show this. Assistant Director Herrigthy addressed Ms. Piszar, noting that she may remember that the Mercer County Deer Alliance had sued the Division. Legislation had given this Council the authority that it has, and the Supreme Court decided not to hear the case. There was some additional discussion, and Ms. Piszar said that the staff did provide some information to help her, and felt that she could address Principal Biologist Kandoth as well.

Ms. Piszar next asked to make a comment that earlier today it was mentioned that the \$4 million dollar budget was now down to \$2.6 million dollars. Director Chanda added that this was the

State appropriation. Ms. Piszar asked if it was correct that this came when Acting Governor Cody was in office, and Director Chanda noted that that sounded right.

After thanking Director Chanda for the previous information, Ms. Piszar then referenced one of the wildlife reports from a few months back that stated there was some work with Sanico Garbage Collection, and wondered what the status of that may be. Councilman Wolgast reminded Ms. Piszar that the Council has nothing to do with garbage control.

Ms. Piszar next noted that she wanted to make a comment about the collection of data in reference to bear activity. She felt that when statistics were compared from one year to another, it was not the same if you were adding additional variables and would not be accurate. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland pointed out that she believed that these announcements were about bear safety in bear country.

Next Ms. Piszar distributed a copy of a report that was presented to Governor Corzine and DEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson by Dr. Edward Tavss of Rutgers University to the Council.

Ms. Piszar next referenced a report called the Roll of Habitat Quality in the Natural Regulation of Black Bear Populations. She said she believed it was written in 1993, and was by Dr. Lynn Rogers of Minnesota, and added that as you may know, is the foremost black bear expert in the world. She read an excerpt from this to the Council, noting they could see the chart for themselves. She reviewed the chart information that she presented comparing natural food sources to garbage food sources and how it related to the bears health.

Ms. Piszar was asked by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland if she would kindly finish up. She presented the copy of her report, and thanked Council for their time.

Barbara Sachau was next to speak. She asked to have it go on record that she opposes the nomination of August Goodmanson to this Council. She feels he is coming in with a biased viewpoint that hunting is the only way to co-exist with the wildlife in New Jersey and does not feel his viewpoint will help the people of New Jersey.

Ms. Sachau next referred to the meetings discussed earlier today which staff would need to travel to attend. She added that she would like to suggest to Director Chanda to ask to have software meetings, so that they can help the taxpayers of New Jersey who are coming up with 2.6 million dollars to fund the activities of this Division. She noted that meetings could be done by teleconference and by using computer software, and suggests that he start taking steps to go to those meetings using these methods. She felt that the taxpayers of New Jersey are contributing to the activities of this Council, and are entitled to have their money spent wisely.

Ms. Sachau stated that she objects to all farms being committed in wildlife management areas.

Her next objection was to all the logging and burning that goes on at wildlife management areas. She added that she knows that have impacted Flatbrook, Black River and others.

Ms. Sachau also objects to the New Jersey Trackers Program, which she stated she has just found out about, that was proposed by Leonard Wolgast. She does not approve of sending dogs after wounded deer.

Ms. Sachau next referenced the minutes of the meetings. She stated that she did not feel that the record was correct. She felt that she had spoken about several matters in the past and did not feel that it was correctly reflected and wanted to be sure that future people who read the minutes know that they are written here and the issues that are brought up to the Council. She felt that somehow they were getting lost in the minutes and stated that is not right for the people of the State.

Ms. Sachau also wanted to remind Council that the hunting numbers have gone down in the United States as a whole and in New Jersey, and stated that is good news to us.

Next to speak was Paul Wells, President of the United Crossbow Hunters of New Jersey. He first asked to take time to thank the Council for passing the amendments to allow crossbow hunting in the State of New Jersey. He asked to commend their actions as far as looking at the facts surrounding the topic. He added that they look forward to working with the Council for anything that they may need help with that concern the sportsmen of New Jersey.

Mr. Wells also noted that they look forward to bringing unity back to the bow hunting community. He acknowledge that there was some dissention between several of the bow hunting groups, and they look forward to putting out the olive branch and bringing everyone back together to work as one.

Mr. Wells noted that over the last several months he has attended a variety of meetings, noting that he has never heard any opposition to having an electronic or phone-in check station, adding that the check stations he spoke with were also not opposed to such a system. He further explained how those he spoke with felt this program could be beneficial. Mr. Wells noted he also felt you may receive more accurate information from using a program such as this, and that with all the controversy the Council faces, this was the one area where he has heard no controversy at all. He asked about the status of this program, and Principal Biologist Kandoth remarked that she is working on it, but had to complete Game Code projects first.

Assistant Director Herrigthy relayed to the Council that Arnold Selby, a resident of Millburn who was in attendance earlier today but had to leave, asked him to relay his thanks to the Council for the Community Based Deer Management Permits issued to the town.

There were no other requests for public comment.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilwoman Brummer to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.