

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office  
Robbinsville, NJ  
January 13, 2015

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Acting Chairman Burke.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairman Burke read aloud the following notice: 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 on January 7, 2015.

Roll call was taken. In attendance were:

Acting Chairman Dave Burke  
Councilwoman Blumig (arrived at 10:21 a.m.)  
Councilman DeMartino  
Councilman Gudmundsson  
Councilman Link  
Councilman Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Brodhecker  
Councilwoman Brummer  
Councilman Puskas

Division employees included D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, L. Barno, D. Golden, M. Chicketano, A. Ivany and C. Stanko

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman DeMartino to approve the minutes as given. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Acting Chairman Burke commented that this was the time of year when many outdoor sportsmen shows and various lectures are occurring.

Acting Chairman Burke also commented that snowy owls have been seen at the Forsythe NWR and other areas.

Lastly, he noted that the Bass Pro Shops is building a store in Atlantic City. They are looking to hire staff who have outdoor backgrounds to work at their store and have met with the Federation of Sportsmen regarding this.

Director Chanda addressed the Council. He was in attendance at the outdoor sports show and deer classic this past Sunday. He noted the good turnout of attendees.

Director Chanda noted that he has advised the Council in the past of his being appointed to the Blue Ribbon Panel of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and gave a brief review of the work they will be doing. They are planning to hold their first meeting in late March.

Annual Division staff meetings will be held in three areas throughout the State in February. Any Council members interested in attending were welcome to, and can contact the Director's Office for further information.

In December, Director Chanda, Assistant Director Nelson and B. Longcor attended the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) workshop on marketing, and Director Chanda reviewed suggestions that they had.

Director Chanda commented on a promotion done by the RBFF last year noting the top 100 places in America to boat and fish. There were a number of factors considered when compiling the results, and he advised that Round Valley Reservoir, the Split Run Reservoir and the Bulls Island State Park were listed as number 22, 23 and 26 respectively.

Staff retirements continue to increase. Director Chanda commented specifically on the Bureau of Land Management, where Chief Petrongolo retired on December 31, and Planner M. Dunne and Regional Superintendents L. Pettigrew and B. Olsen are all planning on retiring in the near future. Since the ability to backfill these positions is limited due to the budget being tight and the cost of benefits increasing, he may have to look to move people from within the Division. He added that revenue from the leases being reviewed today would help with balancing the budget. Also, the two Assistant Directors and Bureau Chiefs have been tasked with advising him on the most critical positions to fill and give suggestions on where they may be filled from.

Plans are being made to do a big promotion about the Pequest Trout Hatchery this year. Staff will have 570,000 rainbow trout available for stocking. Director Chanda noted that rainbow trout are resistant to Furunculosis, and for the next several years this is the only variety of trout that will be raised to be stocked.

Acting Chairman Burke noted items on the agenda open to public comment which were the review and vote on three Community Based Deer Management Permits (CDBMP) and the review and vote on lease renewals for Atlantic City Electric and Clarks Pond. He then opened the meeting to public comment on these items.

Janet Pizar addressed the Council, commenting that she was opposed to all the CBDMP applications being reviewed today.

Barbara Sauchau also addressed the Council. She is opposed to the CBDMP applications, as well as to having to make comments before the presentation and vote are completed. Acting Chairman Burke reminded those in attendance that the procedure followed for Fish and Game Council meetings were given by the Deputy Attorney General's Office, and the comments on the applications and information provided for the CBDMP should be made at the local government level.

(Councilwoman Blumig arrived at 10:21 a.m.)

Committee reports were given. Councilman Link reported for the Agriculture Committee that things were moving along in his area, but did comment on the amount of geese being seen. Councilwoman Blumig also noted the very large amount of snow geese seen in Warren County prior to the holidays.

Acting Chairman Burke noted that he was speaking with former agriculture representative Councilman Kertz, who pointed out recent changes in the rules for Farmland Assessment. The amount of income required to be eligible has increased, and Acting Chairman Burke asked Assistant Director Herrighty if this would require a

update to the farmer deer permit applications. There was some discussion on the possible changes. Assistant Director Herrighty responded that this would be something to be decided by the Council, and would then be considered as part of the next Game Code cycle.

Former Councilman Kertz also asked for more flexibility by the Division regarding the issuance of deer depredation permits and the ability use a crossbow. Assistant Director Herrighty noted the concern, specifically related to Mr. Kertz, where deer can only be harvested with a crossbow because of the size safety zone in the surrounding area. In certain cases where there is significant damage but limited safety zone access, the Division can issue special permits for farmers to use bows or crossbows instead of shotguns.

Councilman Van Mater had no information to report for the Federation in his area.

Councilwoman Blumig attended the Middlesex County Federation meeting last week, and advised that they have initiated a process to go before the State Federation and request a committee be created to review and suggest various license and permit sale scenarios as well as other possible means of income for the Division. They requested that Councilwoman Blumig pass this information along today. Assistant Director Nelson asked if they were aware that any changes would have to be done legislatively, and Councilwoman Blumig noted they were and were just in the starting process of this effort.

Councilwoman Blumig advised that she would be attending the Somerset County Federation Meeting tomorrow evening, and they are still requesting credit card license sales at hunter education classes.

Assistant Director Herrighty advised Councilwoman Blumig that he has spoken to Ed Karecki from the Federation on some of these concerns. Assistant Director Nelson asked if the Federation was aware that the Division loses money on credit card sales, to which Councilman Blumig replied they were.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported that the show season and venison dinner season are both starting. He has also received comments on hunters being enthusiastic about the possibility of an earlier bear hunting season as well as other opportunities.

Councilwoman Blumig added information from the State Federation meeting regarding the sale of pheasants at the Rockport Game Farm. Residents from the southern part of the State felt it was too far for them to have to travel and inquired if there could be a way for the Division to have a location available where they could be picked up somewhere closer to them. There was further discussion on having one of the prisons in the southern part of the State raise pheasants, but Assistant Director Herrighty advised that he has looked into this but there was no interest from them to be involved in this type of program since it is not a marketable training program for them.

Acting Chairman Burke attended the Cumberland County meeting. There were only a few members in attendance, but he did receive reports that they had had a good hunting season. Plans are in place for the annual trash hunt on March 21. They also discussed the deer tagging proposal, the Game Code hearing and the former Durand Glass Property (Holly Farms WMA). They were not too receptive to reduced license and permit fees being proposed by other Federation groups.

In Atlantic County, the President's Day venison dinner is planned. Acting Chairman Burke advised that proceeds from this event help to fund activities such as the annual youth sporting clays shoot held at Redwing. He heard mixed results for those who hunted during the six-day firearm season. Lastly, he discussed that the FAA Technical Center in Pomona had granted a 10-year hunting lease to the United Bow Hunters which has now expired. They are no longer interested in this program, so it will be taken over by the Federation of Sportsmen. They have requested to meet with Sr. Deer Biologist J. Leskie for his assistance with the details of this program.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that the Finance Committee would be meeting today after the regular Council meeting.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported for the Freshwater Fisheries Committee. Their next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2015 after the regular Fish and Game Council meeting. Public meetings are scheduled for January 24 at the Hackettstown Hatchery, February 21 at Batsto and February 28 at the Pequest Hatchery.

Councilman Gudmundsson also noted Councilwoman Brummer's efforts on a project she is heading regarding the Columbia Lake Dam, which includes pursuing options for solar power at the Pequest Trout Hatchery. Assistant Director Herrightly added that The Nature Conservancy has hired an alternate energy consultant and they are the ones looking into this. There was some additional discussion on the Columbia Lake Dam and the power source it is now provides.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that the Game Committee will be meeting on January 16. Supervising Biologist Kandoth noted the Game Code hearing is scheduled for March 18 at the State Museum. Further information regarding this as well as public comments and the anticipated publication date in the Register will be listed on the Division's website.

Assistant Director Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. She gave a brief review of the most current bills being tracked, including:

- A-4025                      Creates a "Fishing Buddy License"  
(same as 14:S-2677)
- A-3507                      Amends Law concerning county and municipal stream cleaning activities  
(it was noted the Division is opposed to this bill)

The following bills were heard before the Senate Environmental Committee yesterday, and results should be posted later today:

- S-573                      Establishes apprentice youth firearm hunting license and apprentice bow and arrow hunting license
- S-699                      Authorizes hunting of game animals every day of the week during hunting season
- S-1683                      Authorizes Sunday hunting on federal military installations
- S-2492                      Removes statutory limitations on number of permits that may be issued by Division of Fish and Wildlife for taking of beaver

Councilwoman Blumig advised that A-3598, which would provide discounted hunting and trapping license, permit and stamp fees for senior citizens was discussed at the Middlesex County Federation and shared some comments with the Council.

There was no report for the Endangered and Nongame Species, Waterfowl Stamp Advisory or Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committees.

Chief Barno reported for the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries. Staff have been working on completing Federal reports, and she briefly reviewed some of the work they have been doing, noting that out of the 41,285 fish that were handled last year, 34,000 of those were non-game species. Final information from these reports will be available on the Division's website when completed.

Work continues on the Delphi process for endangered and nongame species.

Chief Barno advised that the Columbia Lake Dam Task Force will meet again next week, and there was some discussion on the work being planned for this area.

A review was given of the information that will be discussed at the upcoming public fish meetings. There was also some discussion on the trout program.

Acting Chairman Burke inquired how anticipated changes in the striped bass regulations might affect the Fish Code, and Chief Barno advised that the marine regulations would be matched. She is working with Marine Fisheries staff and when their regulations are changed she will bring the information before the Freshwater Fisheries Committee for necessary changes.

Acting Chairman Burke also inquired about the feedback on snapping turtles being received from the survey on the Division's website. Chief Barno advised that response was slow over the holidays, but a list serve message was sent asking for participation and the Division will be asking the various Federation representatives to ask their constituents to complete this survey.

Principal Biologist Ivany reported for the Office of Information and Education. At the recent Deer Classic which is part of the Garden State Sportsmen's Show, 58 entrants were received and 53 deer heads were displayed. There were also a number of attendees at the awards ceremony. He added that the Suffern Outdoor Show would be held March 5 – 8.

Staff have been working with the DEP Press Office on ways to promote the upcoming Spring trout season.

The Division's Facebook page has received 2,000 "likes".

Other upcoming events that were noted include the Outdoor Writers Workshop, tentatively scheduled for March 26, the Pequest Open House on March 28 and 29, and the Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament on May 17.

Assistant Director Herrighty reviewed an update he had received from Chief Jenkins of the Endangered and Nongame Species Section. Staff continue with work on revising the Wildlife Action Plan. Information has been posted on the Division's website, and there are seven areas of interest that the public can make comment on. There is also a meeting scheduled next week with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for their comments.

Assistant Director Herrighty also reported for the Bureau of Land Management, noting that 367 acres have been added to the wildlife management area system during this reporting period making the current total acreage 345,938. He added that this did not include the recent 1,500 acre addition of the Split Rock Reservoir property which was just recently acquired and will become part of the Wildcat Ridge WMA.

As listed on the meeting agenda, there were two leases to be reviewed and voted on by the Council today. The first was for an easement for Atlantic City Electric on the Winslow WMA. The annual rent was \$424,676, with an increase of 2.5% annually for the term of the 20 year lease. The second lease was for a private campground for a dock that is adjacent to Clark's Pond. The annual rent proposed is \$1,000 with an annual increase of 2.5%. The leasee also maintains the dock, and have had a lease for use since 1962. Assistant Director Herrighty added that both leases have been approved by the State House Commission. After some minor discussion, **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to approve these two leases as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Chief Chicketano reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He briefly reviewed several highlights as listed in the monthly report.

Chief Chicketano also noted the recent hiring of three new Conservation Officer recruits, who are tentatively scheduled to start employment on February 7. All three are scheduled to attend training at the Gloucester County Police Academy in March.

Councilwoman Blumig inquired as to the average amount of money the Division receives from various violations. Chief Chicketano explained that for Title 23 and Title 50 violations the Division receives the penalty (with the exception of shellfish charges) but not the court costs which is usually \$35,000 to \$40,000 per month. For Title 58 and shellfish violations, the money goes to the general treasury.

Acting Chairman Burke made reference to the monthly report, where there were violations written for the use of slug guns without adjustable sites, asking if the Division needed to do more to get the word out on this now being a requirement. Chief Chicketano advised that this could be listed in the Digest in red, if the Council would like, but noted that most of the violators know they are not in compliance and that there is usually more to the violation as a whole.

Acting Chairman Burke also inquired about the Conservation Officer recruits who recently graduated from the Burlington County Police Academy. Chief Chicketano advised that they are now working with staff as part of the field training officer program.

Chief Golden reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He updated the Council on the Game Code, noting that it was sent to the Governor's Office within the past two days. Staff are hoping for a February 2 publication date in the Register. He did note the loss of one of the proposed changes, per the request of the attorney's reviewing the document. They have asked for more language regarding the discretion to add wildlife management areas to the stocking program with public notice, so for now this proposal has been removed and will be reviewed again for the next Game Code cycle. Staff are hoping for a final adoption of the Game Code in September.

Last month the Council was updated on revisions to the Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy. The Game Committee will be meeting on it again this Friday, and staff hope to present the full policy and have a vote on it at the next Council meeting.

Estimated results of the deer season harvest were distributed for review.

The pheasant stocking program produced 63,663 birds this past year, which is the highest number produced by the Division in the past 24 years. Credit for this was given to the staff. Chief Golden gave a brief review of the program and the changes and research that have been done. He also advised that the sportsmen need to know that we may not have these types of numbers next year since the target is to be more in line with what they have seen previously.

The number of pheasant and quail stamp purchasers also increased this past year, and noted various Division efforts that may have contributed to this.

Chief Golden has asked staff at the Rockport Game Farm to look into the potential of selling the surplus eggs that they have, which up until now have been disposed of.

Director Chanda commented on the snowstorm that came in at Thanksgiving, and the amount of work done by at the Game Farm to protect the pens and the birds being raised there.

Lastly, it was noted that 60,590 pheasants were stocked, with an additional 2,100 being stocked for the youth pheasant hunt. Of the surplus birds offered for sale, 973 were purchased, resulting in \$10,839 in revenue. There was some minor discussion on the pheasant program.

Supervising Biologist Stanko was in attendance to review the three Community Based Deer Management Permits listed on the agenda today.

The first application was for Bernards Township, who were looking to reduce the number of deer/vehicle collisions in their area. Based on the information provided their application, the Division was recommending that the Council approve this permit. Exceptions to the Game Code would be: 7:25-5.26, 7:25-5.28 and 7:25-5.29, which would allow extensions of the hunting seasons. There was some minor discussion, after which **a motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilwoman Blumig to approve the application as recommended. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

The second application was for the Essex County Parks System. The basis for their application was the significant amount of damage to the forest understory caused by an overabundance of deer. It was also noted that the amount of deer/vehicle collisions is down, so the program is working. It was recommended to the Council that this application be approved as presented. Exceptions to the N.J.S.A. would be 23:4-45 hunting by daylight and at designated times only (hunting beyond season dates), 23:4-24.1a transport or possession of firearm in motor vehicle, 23:4-13.1 outer garment of fluorescent hunter's orange. Exception to the Game Code would be 7:25-5.29(c) white-tailed deer shotgun permit season bag limit. There was some minor discussion, after which **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman Link to approve the application as recommended. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

The last application to be reviewed was for Princeton Township. The basis for this application is to maintain the amount of deer-vehicle collisions below 60-70 per year (in 2014 there were 104). They are requesting the same exceptions as they have in past years, including the use of .22 rim-fire rifles, which the Division recommends the Council not approve. If approved as suggested, exceptions to N.J.S.A. would be 23:4-13 regulations concerning guns, 23:4-44 weapons authorized for hunting deer, 23:4-45 hunting by daylight and at designated times only, and 23:4-13.1 outer garment of fluorescent hunter's orange. **A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilman DeMartino to approve the application as recommended. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Members were reminded that there would be a brief Finance Committee meeting following the conclusion of this meeting today.

At this time, the public comment period was opened.

Joel Riotto from Demarest presented and reviewed his written proposal to adopt an archery only black bear hunting season. He suggested that the safety zone restriction of 150 feet for bow hunters would allow more focus in urban areas troubled with bear nuisance complaints.

Janet Pizar also submitted in writing and read aloud her comments. She questioned proposed Game Code amendments for the bear population reduction as discussed at the December 16, 2014 meeting, and that it was admitted at that time that there was no current estimated bear population.

Barbara Sauchau questioned why the October, 2014 Fish and Game Council minutes were not yet posted on the Division's website. Assistant Director Nelson advised she was not aware that they were not posted.

Ms. Sauchau also stated her opposition to the leases reviewed today, to the public having to make comment on the CBDM permit applications before they were reviewed, commented on deer/vehicle collisions and drivers

who speed, and commented that giving deer meat to poor people is doing them no favor because it has lead in it.

Lou Valucchi from Mahwah commented on the structure of the Council, adding that less than 1% of New Jersey residents are hunters and he was here for the thousands of people who are against the bear hunt. He shared additional comments on the bear rankings, why it was called a harvest, that the use of snares was unethical and on species that need protection. He asked that the Council not rush in with a 2015 plan, and also requested bios on all the Council members.

Mark Lanzim from Toms River commented on the pheasant hunting at Colliers Mills and the method and location the birds were being stocked. He suggested utilizing more of the Colliers Mills WMA, as well as a late morning stocking time. Mr. Lanzim also commented on the scarcity of quail at the Greenwood WMA, and suggested a 1 p.m. stocking time. He also suggested that the Council consider waiving the necessity to have a pheasant and quail stamp for the last two stocking days of every year.

Mr. Lanzim spoke of the turkey hunting program, particularly in zone 14. He also noted the over-the-counter sales program, and felt that those hunters who did not have computer access and had to stand in line at a sports shop to purchase permits were not receiving the same opportunity for permits, and suggested changes that might be made.

Lastly, April Stearns from West Milford addressed the Council. She questioned that if this was a State Council, why was there a sub-committee of a private entity formed by the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, and if so, why was there not someone to represent conservation and preservation. Acting Chairman Burke advised that there is a statute which shows the basis that establishes the Council, and that information is available. Ms. Stearns also asked if there was a way to have non-hunting input, and was advised by Acting Chairman Burke that there are two seats on the Council representing non-hunting interests, one for an endangered and non-game representative and one for a public-at-large position, currently not filled. He also noted that the public does have the opportunity for input at various times, including the public hearing for the Game Code.

With no additional business for today, **a motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson, seconded by Councilwoman Blumig to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.**