BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MONTHLY REPORT

November 21, 2020 to December 20, 2020

Jason Hearon, Bureau Chief
Lisa Carben, Senior Management Assistant
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner
Tyler Kinney, Habitat Planner

HABITAT PLANNING

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney developed a proposal for the restoration of the Sheppards Mill Pond parking lot in the Cohansey River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This project will involve the regrading of the lot access road and pond boat ramp, clearing of vegetation along the access road, and installation of a new parking area. A CBT-M request will be submitted to fund this project. This project has cleared land management review and is expected to begin in January 2021.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney updated southern region habitat management GIS shapefiles with fall planting data. Between Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) staff and contract farmers, a total of 202.8 acres were planted with winter rye. This is an increase of 39.3 acres from the previous year's fall planting operation.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney met with Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley and staff from the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program (ENSP) to discuss rare snake habitat management at the Holly Farm site. Areas were identified for brush cover piles as well as sandy berms to be used as nesting habitat.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney completed Farm Lease Program in-kind service assignments for the 2021 growing season. Copies of maps were provided to Crew Supervisors to ensure no overlap of management will occur. Once reviewed, packages will be mailed to tenants.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney organized a meeting for DFW biologists conducting habitat work on southern region WMAs. At this meeting, biologists will update the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the previous year's management, as well as the planned management for the coming year.

All Regions

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended SOA/Landscape Project/Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) data training provided by ENSP.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with DFW staff regarding bike paths on WMAs.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with BLM staff regarding small game habitat management.

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a virtual meeting regarding timing of field management activities and efforts to better accommodate various public constituent groups.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner submitted an updated Action Plan Form through Land Management Review (LMR) for a forestry management project at the Pequest WMA.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed 2021 in-kind assignments for tenant farmers in the northern region.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner verified that in-kind work was completed at the Prospertown WMA. NJ Fish and Wildlife is partnering with a local chapter of the American Woodcock Society to improve habitat for woodcocks there. Tenant farmer was assigned to plant rye in the field to help reclaim it and prepare it for future alder plantings.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed 2021 in-kind assignments for tenant farmers and agricultural Special Use Permit holders in the central region.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a virtual meeting hosted by the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture to discuss forestry management issues.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a virtual meeting regarding the Camden County Bike Path and related discussions regarding appropriate use of Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration funds (WSFR) on state lands.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a virtual meeting between BLM and ENSP to learn more about Species Occurrence Area data, the Landscape Project, and the CHANJ project and how they can be used in land management decisions.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been working with the Office of Natural Resource Restoration to obtain invoices for the Pond Creek marsh restoration project that will qualify as match for a restoration monitoring grant.

NORTHERN REGION

Susan Predl, Regional Superintendent
Jim Hartobey, Crew Supervisor
Christopher Murphy, Crew Supervisor

Repairs have been competed at the wooden handicapped access platform at the Ken Lockwood Gorge. Recent storms have washed away repairs to the dirt road through Ken Lockwood Gorge, again. River Road from the north to the middle parking area has been closed. The road is typically closed at this time of year, since the single lane dirt road can't be properly plowed and maintained through the winter months.

Lines designating boat trailer parking lanes have been painted at the Rieglesville Boat Launch and at the Round Valley boat launch.

Pheasants ordered from Mahantongo are being delivered on schedule to the Rockport WMA where staff unload the boxes, sort the boxes of hens and cock birds and load the appropriate number of boxes on each truck. Staff then distribute the pheasants after dark on the WMAs. Pheasant stocking will continue five days through December.

Sealed bids were obtained, and a Purchase Order was set up for a contractor to install paved walkways and pads for handicapped archers at the Clinton, Black River, Pequest and Flatbrook Archery Ranges.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl was interviewed by the National Park Service for an article that will be written about the designation of the Musconetcong River as a wild and scenic river and WMA property providing public access to the river.

Letters informing neighboring property owners of upcoming demolitions were mailed to Knowlton and White Township residents regarding a demolition on the Beaver Brook WMA, and to Hampton Township residents informing them of a demolition on the Bear Swamp WMA.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a conference call regarding mowing schedules and habitat management plans for the South Branch WMA. Bureau Chief Jason Hearon reiterated the need to provide habitat for sportsmen throughout the small game season, and delay mowing on WMA properties for as long as possible.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a call on WSFR funds and the impacts of federal funding on projects such as the Camden Trail.

Several inner tube companies have requested Special Use Permits to allow the tubing companies to launch and/or land on WMA property. A standard response was drafted to the companies. Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a conference call regarding Special Use Permits and concession leases on DEP and WMA properties.

Heating oil was obtained for the Clinton WMA office. The office has a small, temporary heating oil tank, which must be refilled often, until a new oil tank can be installed.

Two seasonal job applications were mailed out to persons interested in assisting with trout stocking this coming spring.

A Special Use Permit was prepared providing access through the Flatbrook WMA to an adjacent private property owner for timber harvesting activities.

Due to snow conditions, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area closed Old Mine Road between Millbrook Village and Worthington State Forest. Pheasant were stocked elsewhere in the Recreation Area. A ListServe message was drafted.

Staff are cleaning out a barn on the Rockport WMA, in preparation for leasing the building to the Township.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in an online meeting with ENSP staff to learn more about Species Occurrence Areas and the Landscape Project.

The Division was asked to investigate the need to fence or restrict access to the southern entrance of the Oxford Tunnel in Washington Township. The tunnel entrance is on the Pequest WMA. The northern entrance to the tunnel is fenced.

CENTRAL REGION

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent
Mike Haines, Crew Supervisor Equipment Operations
Bill Torry, Crew Supervisor WMAs

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the virtual online Board of Directors Meeting at the Horse Park of New Jersey representing the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

The Stafford Forge and Colliers Mills Rifle and shotgun ranges were closed to start the projects for upgrading the ranges. Upgrades include new covered shooting stations, parking access and handicap access. The project is on schedule for completion by the end of February 2021.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits consistent with the latest State issued Covid-19 related Executive Orders.

Crews are stocking Pheasant and Quail according to the published schedule.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the NJDEP GIS Users meeting.

Bids are being acquired to decommission the well for a structure demolition on the Assunpink WMA.

The dam projects are completed at Rising Sun and Stone Tavern lakes at Assunpink WMA. Water levels are returning to normal. The concrete ramps and docks were not installed due to delays in acquiring the permits. Permits were secured and these projects will be completed later. Permits are good for 5 years.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Joint Permit Processing meeting for the upgrades to the Point Pleasant Fishing Access and Boat Ramp Project. Schematic Design review will take place later this month.

The dam project at Imlaystown Lake is 90% completed. The work will be finished in spring. No water lowering is needed to complete the work.

Crews continue to work on 3 CBT-M access projects to improve parking areas, ramps and roads at Swam Bay, Manahawkin and Great Bay Blvd WMAs.

Central Region Offices were outfitted with supplies to be compliant with EO 192 including an online COVID 19 screening form that all staff and visitors must complete when visiting a DFW facility.

Crews performed snow removal to ensure access to the WMAs for the 12/17 snowstorm.

The following groups and activities utilized the Assunpink Conservation Center and the Central Office Meeting Room during this reporting period:

NA – COVID 19

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent
Brad Heffley, Crew Supervisor
Dan Baker, Crew Supervisor
Mason Reeves, Crew Supervisor

During the reporting period, staff have been stocking pheasant throughout the region. Staff also routinely drive stocking area roadways after windy and/or rainy conditions to make sure roadways are clear of downed trees.

Southern region crews have continued performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs.

The road crew have specked out multiple projects (Union Lake, Cohansey River, Menantico Ponds WMAs and Holly Farm (yet to be assigned a name) and Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has submitted purchase order requests for materials needed. Crew also worked with mechanics to perform various maintenance concerns on the loader, backhoe, and grader.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein reported that after the most recent rain event, water once again infiltrated the Tuckahoe Office. Regional Superintendent submitted a request for the Division of Property Mgmt. (DPMC) and Construction to hire an architect to develop a plan to eliminate this issue. This course of action was recommended by DPMC staff.

The electrical permit for Eagle Manor was received and work is slated to begin after the Christmas Holiday.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley met with Defranco Contractors at the Millville WMA Archery Range. The contractor will be installing a paved shooting lane so individuals with mobility issues can easily access the target for arrow retrieval.

Staff submitted a request for the demolition of a dwelling on the Tuckahoe WMA—Lenape Farms Section.

Staff have taken many inquiries about state lands legal for hunting. The NJ Hunting and Trapping Viewer has been a great resource to point them to.

Meetings Attended: Camden County Bike Trail, NJ/DE Tidal Marsh Working Group, BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, ENSP/BLM, ALS Delaware Bay Projects, Holly Farm (ENSP/Contractors) Habitat Development

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Senior Management Assistant

The following lands have been acquired by the State and have been assigned to the Division of Fish and Wildlife during this period.

WMA	COUNTY	TOWNSHIP	NAME	ACRES
Makepeace Lake	Atlantic	Mullica	Robert Underwood	2.21
Nantuxent	Cumberland	Lawrence	Christopher & Patricia Macken	0.176
Hammonton Creek	Atlantic	Mullica	Andrea C Forte Executrix	51

Acres assigned during this period: 53