



BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

MONTHLY REPORT

December 16, 2020 – January 15, 2021

HUNTER EDUCATION/NASP/R3

Hunter Education (Keith Griglak, Sam Forlenza)

Currently there are no classes being offered, as this is the traditional off-peak season for the Hunter Education Program.

- Duplicate requests processed this reporting period: 64 (appears to be on par or slightly down from this period last year)
- Non-resident unlocks: 104 (high number; many waterfowl hunters)
- Rifle permit unlocks: 47 (number decreased)

Spring hunter education schedules were submitted to several private clubs. Classes will be finalized, and registration will open in mid-February.

Students from two high schools are taking the online hunter education course from their virtual classroom settings. Individuals who would like to get certified will still need to complete the range portion in person on their own time this spring. However, even if the students don't complete the range portion of the class, they will still have an excellent introduction to firearms safety, and how hunters and conservation go hand in hand.

Staff offered an ice fishing presentation to the Fish and Game Council. The discussion covered ice safety and basic techniques/tactics.

NASP® (Katie Paey)

An email was sent to NASP schools that traditionally participate in the annual state tournament to find out if an event would be feasible this year. A majority of the schools responded that they are not offering NASP in their school curriculum this year due to physical education class restrictions.

R3 (Ryan Risher)

Staff attended a Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation webinar entitled *Identifying New Anglers and Boaters and Determining Tactics for Retention*.

Staff began to update spreadsheets on license purchasing proclivity among various segments of the hunting population (apprentice hunters, regular license buyers, etc.).

Unfortunately, a deer butchering workshop scheduled at the Garden State Archers archery club in Wrightstown had to be postponed until the fall of 2021. A second workshop will also be held simultaneously in the northern region at that time.

One youth was hosted for a waterfowl hunt at the Wading River WMA.

Staff finalized a summary of metrics as related to a targeted communication project designed to increase pheasant and quail hunting participation during the 2020 season.

AQUATIC EDUCATION (Karen Byrne)

Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

Staff continues to maintain the facilities and island.

Sedge Island internship applications are currently being received and processed.

A COVID-19 event planning document was prepared to allow for one-day programs during the summer of 2021.

The solar system is still not operating properly. Electricians visited the island to inspect the system and test the batteries. Apparently, some of the batteries are faulty which means the entire battery bank will likely need to be replaced in the spring.

Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament

A Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament committee meeting was attended. The 30th annual tournament will be held on May 23, 2021 at Island Beach State Park. The brochure, poster and

high school category information sheet were updated. Staff forwarded the brochure and poster to the printer.

Other Activities

A meeting was held to explore the possibility of offering a mentored turkey hunt for women in the spring.

Staff is also preparing a virtual ice fishing informative workshop for women.

Efforts to work with DoIT on obtaining permission to utilize the software platform *Thinkific* for online courses continue. DoIT staff is currently developing protocols for these types of software platforms so that DEP employees can take advantage of them in the future.

Staff continues to provide support and help for the Support NJ Seafood story map.

WEB SITE (Paul Tarlowe)

New or Updated Pages, Images, and Documents

Three (3) new pages were posted, including those for the 2021 Freshwater Digest and the “feature article” *Flipping the Switch on Ecosystem Management*. In addition, one (1) “News” page was posted.

Approximately seventy-seven (77) pages were revised/updated during the report period. This included a major revision of the Places to Fish page, essentially rendering it as a new page.

Nineteen (19) images were edited and posted, including those for the feature article (12), fishing (3), hunting (2), and Tax Check-off (2). Additionally, one e-mail header was created.

Approximately forty-six (46) documents were edited in or converted to PDF format. These included: Freshwater Digest and Regulations (14); Minutes/Agendas/Presentations/Reports (13); and nineteen (19) miscellaneous documents. In addition, deer regulations were edited multiple times and twelve (12) WMA maps (6 topo, 6 roads) were posted.

Listserv Messages

Seventeen (17) messages were drafted and sent to various e-mail lists and outdoor writers.

Analytics

The number of hits on the homepage in December was 27,591; an average of 890 hits per day. It is a decrease of 8,820 hits from December 2019.

The ten most visited pages in December were: License Information – 19,988; Deer Information – 16,184; Hunting – 13,590; Hunting License Information – 13,035; Bear Season Information – 8,952; Hunting Digest – 8,055; Hunter Education – 7,545; Regulations – 7,306; Fishing License Information – 5,441; and Wildlife Management Areas – 5,201.

Other popular pages were: Ranges – 4,235; License Agents – 3,796; Public Hunting Land – 3,758; Contact Us – 3,750; Permit Information – 3,309; Small Game Information – 3,159; Deer Hunting Land – 3,119; Fishing Information – 2,904; Automated Harvest Reporting System – 2,833; Bear Facts – 2,534; Saltwater Fishing – 2,526; Waterfowl Information – 2,520; and Pheasant Stocking Maps – 2,422.

The most requested PDFs this report period in descending order were: Hunting Digest; Firearm Deer Hunting Regulations; Bow Deer Hunting Regulations; Pheasant Stocking Schedule; Snakes of New Jersey; Small Game Seasons Summary; Bear Recipe Guide; Deer Management Zone Boundary Descriptions; Marine Regulations Summary; Wildlife Rehabilitators; Air Gun FAQs; and Saltwater Fishing Guide.

Responses to the Public

Responses were made to approximately 455 e-mail messages, many concerning hunting regulations, hunter education and licensing. Additionally, responses were sent to twenty (20) referrals from the Assistant Commissioner's Office and fifteen (15) messages from the DEP Public Access Center phone line.

Additional Activities

Additional activities included virtual meetings with staff and with a vendor for our revised website, weekly social media Teams meetings with co-workers and attending the Commissioner's Weekly Updates Teams meetings.

For more information about the Division's website contact Paul Tarlowe at 908-637-4125 x114 or via e-mail at Paul.Tarlowe@dep.nj.gov.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION/DIGEST EDITOR - TRENTON (Cindy Kuenstner)

Digest Production

The 2021 *Freshwater Fishing Digest* was at license agents and other outlets on or around January 6.

Production continues on the 2021 *Marine Digest*, due out in May.

For the 2021 *Hunting & Trapping Digest*, the PDF template was distributed with a Feb. 17 deadline for submitting all revisions, new materials, regulation updates and article previews including graphics, images and credits. Photo-article materials were preliminarily recommended

to be planned in November 2020 while seasonal hunting and habitat conditions were prime for photo opportunities.

Outstanding Deer Program

Staff responded to, and has been contacting, hunters who entered the program about the sport show cancellation and the to-be-determined path for honoring the entries.

Fish and Wildlife's Facebook and Instagram Pages

Staff monitors posts that generate considerable follower comments. Photos are provided to accompany posts as requested. Confirmed status of freshwater *Digests* at license agents prior to announcing its availability in a post.

Other work completed during this reporting period: observed DEP Commissioner McCabe's weekly broadcasts; cataloged wildlife and scenic photos; confirmed the marine *Digest* shelf date; filed several revision suggestions for next year's freshwater and hunting *Digests*; provided a PDF of the freshwater *Digest* cover for a Facebook post to announce availability at license agents; contacted multiple license agents statewide to confirm if freshwater *Digests* had arrived; responded to inquiries about visual accessibility for *Digest* issues and collaborated with colleagues on *Digest*-related matters including recommended revisions for next year.

WILDLIFE INFORMATION - TRENTON (Kathy Porutski)

Internal Communication (IC) topics that were *written or edited* and sent out this month include:

- Division of Pensions and Benefits Hosts Retirement Series of Webinars
- Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of December 14, 2020
- REMINDER: Alice Panichello's Retirement
- Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of December 21, 2020
- Division of Land Resource Protection (Watershed and Land Management Program) NOVs
- Work Options for DEP Staff Under Quarantine Due to COVID and/or Facing Child-Care Issues
- December Bureau Reports
- NOV Posting – Division of Land Resource Protection (Environmental Services Trainee)
- Available to All Staff – Employee Advisory Service
- Please Confirm Attendance at DEP Teams Broadcast Meeting on Jan. 13
- Be Sure to Use Current Logos
- Division of Fish and Wildlife Updates – Week of January 11, 2021
- NOV Postings - Division of Coastal Engineering

NOV Posting -- Manager 4, Environmental Protection,
Technical/Scientific/Engineering

Spotlight *Announcements* Created w/ Images:

Happy New Year
So Long 2020
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Also, during this reporting period: Bureau of Information and Education's Monthly Report for December was compiled; Commissioner McCabe's Team Meetings were remotely attended; a virtual meeting for Alice Panichello's retirement was attended at SRO on 12/22; and an issue regarding a replacement ink cartridge for the Division of Dam Safety and Flood Engineering was resolved.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Jonathan Carlucci)

Publications/Graphics/Social Media

- Photos manipulated and uploaded to share with I&E staff
- Logos provided to NHR staff
- One staff business card layout created
- Documents reviewed for public communication
- Governor's Surf Fishing Tournament poster modified several times for 2021
- Places to Fish publication modified

Photography/Videography

- WMA site photography and video uploaded to I&E OneDrive
- Winter/snow aerial images and video taken
- I&E video reviewed
- UAV maintained
- UAV research completed for applications in thermal imaging
- Video of hiking in the snow and related photography uploaded to I&E OneDrive
- Footage taken of a beach nesting habitat restoration project in Cape May
- UAV footage of a Heislerville WMA pre-restoration project taken
- Photo library searched to fulfill requests

Meetings

- UAV team meeting attended
- Virtual meetings with I&E attended

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND DIGITAL MEDIA (Matt Hencheck)

- *Black Bear Educational Video* – Plans to finish editing the second draft will be completed in late January.
- *2020 Staff Holiday Slideshow* – The annual holiday/year-in-review slideshow of accomplishments was produced.
- *Fall Brant Migration Video* – A video on the 2020 Atlantic brant fall migration is currently being produced with Ted Nichols. This video will highlight tracking the brant migration via Google maps. The project is part of a collaborative effort between the Division, New York Department of Environmental Conservation and Canadian Wildlife Services.

SOCIAL MEDIA (Katie Paey)

Facebook

The DFW Facebook (FB) page had **37,918 followers** and **36,002 likes** at the end of this reporting period.

Twenty (**20**) Facebook posts were posted. Posts are comprised of photographs and video taken by staff, graphic pieces created for special promotions and shared posts from other pages.

Posts with the most reach and engagement this period – **Reach** is the number of unique people who have seen content associated with our Facebook page. **Engagement** is post clicks, likes, comments and shares (any action someone takes on the page or post):

12/17 - Hunters Helping the Hungry - reached **37,803** people; **2,922** engagements

1/8 - Bald Eagles Reach New Milestone - reached **27,707** people; **3,050** engagements

Staff continues to like and respond to comments and other questions on our FB page in post comment threads, direct messages to the page, event postings and outside timeline posts.

Instagram

The DFW Instagram page had **9,082 followers** at the end of this reporting period.

Seventeen (**17**) Instagram posts were posted this period. Posts include photographs and video taken by staff as well as graphic pieces created for promotions.

Instagram posts with the most reach this period –

1/13 - WMA Wednesday (Pequest Profile) - reached **5,559** people

12/29 - New Year's Resolution - reached **5,426** people

Staff monitored and responded to comments and private messages.

Graphics and Photography

The Pequest and Musconetcong WMAs were photographed for the WMA Wednesday social media campaign.

Other Activities

- Participated in weekly Social Media/GovDelivery Planning Meetings 12/18, 1/8 and 1/15
- Participated in Outreach Group Meeting on 1/7
- Prepared two WMA Wednesday PowerPoint slides for I&E Bureau Chief Al Ivany for presentation at the Fish and Game Council Meeting on January 12
- Edits were made to the draft Range Brochure

Content for Facebook and Instagram is continuously needed. *If you have ideas for a Social Media post, please contact Katie.Paey@dep.nj.gov.*

WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Pequest Natural Resource Education Program (Linda DiPiano, Jessica Griglak, Chris Lido, Alexandra Clark, Steve Verdi and Tom Hill)

Pequest Trout Hatchery & Natural Resource Education Center

There were no program requests for summer or fall.

Refunds were granted for all cancelled programs.

The Pequest calendar, group schedule and volunteer schedule continue to be maintained.

Staff continues to check the voicemail remotely. Calls are returned or messages sent as needed.

A Request for Information (RFI) document was developed for building and installation of pre-designed exhibits. The RFI was sent to nine exhibit design companies of which three responded. Next steps are being discussed with the Department of Treasury.

The water line replacement project continues to move forward.

The roof replacement project is now ready to be sent out for the bidding process. A pre-bid meeting was scheduled.

Grounds continue to be maintained.

Trout in the Classroom

Communication with teachers continues as school instruction toggles between in-person and virtual lessons.

A monthly newsletter was developed and is regularly sent to teachers.

Mobile Education Trailer

J. Griglak is developing hands-on activities that can be used to accompany the trailer.

Other

Work on the Record Fish Program continues.

Hooked on Fishing - Not on Drugs (HOFNOD) Program (Liz Jackson, Alanna Newmark)

Filming for a virtual HOFNOD team leader weekend training program was completed, and the footage is now ready to be edited. Staff is currently waiting for approval to utilize *Thinkific*, an online course platform, to host the virtual training. Other options are being explored in case the necessary approval is not given prior to the training date.

The HOFNOD Evaluation Report prepared by the Rutgers University Bloustein Center for Survey Research is currently being reviewed by staff.

The 2020 Annual Report for Hooked on Fishing activities is currently being prepared.

Team plans are being assessed for 2021.

The 6th Annual Youth Fishing Challenge will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2021 (a Free Fishing Day). Registration materials are currently being prepared.

Thirteen (13) logo submissions were received for the HOFNOD logo contest. Staff has reviewed each entry to ensure contest requirements were met. The logos will be virtually judged by a select panel of individuals associated with the HOFNOD program.

The Spanish version of the HOFNOD brochure is completed and currently awaiting distribution.

BLACK BEAR EDUCATION PROGRAM (Michelle Smith)

Black Bear Education Program

Audio tracks on black bear biology and safety recommendations were recorded for the education and public safety video which will be finalized and placed on the DEP's YouTube page to increase awareness about safely coexisting with black bears. In addition to safety guidelines, the production includes information on biology and current Division research/management efforts.

Black Bear Education Program (BBEP) statistics were compiled for the time period 2007-2020 for an article being produced. Staff also assembled recommendations for BBEP efforts for the 2021 calendar year. At this time, the Division will focus mainly on web-based and social media educational approaches to reach the maximum number of residents and visitors, including those in urban areas and southern counties.

Wildlife Habitat Supporter Program

Permission was received from the Governor's office to move forward with development and implementation of the *Wildlife Habitat Supporter* program. The new program will allow our agency to accept donations from both constituents and the general public interested in helping protect wildlife and their habitats.

Division Website Redesign

A meeting was attended to discuss options for redesigning the Division website. A proposal was created and sent to all website development contract vendors to solicit bids for this project.

Outreach Publications

The range brochure was reviewed, and an Outreach Group Project Request form was developed. When finalized, the form will be used by Division staff to request bureau assistance with tasks like videography, photography, drone work and graphic design.

Other

An Outreach Group meeting was held. Weekly bureau recap and social media post meetings were attended.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CORPS (Linda DiPiano)

The Wildlife Conservation Corps now has 4,214 members.

No volunteer opportunities were offered this reporting period.