

# **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

January 21, 2021 to February 20, 2021

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 sent Farm Lease Program in-kind service packages to all tenants that signed and returned their calendar year 2021 holdover term.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order for contract vendor Downtown Airport to conduct the aerial seeding of waterfowl impoundments Lester and Yellow-Legs in the Tuckahoe WMA. The impoundments will be seeded with a 94% Japanese Millet / 6% Redtop Panic Grass seed mixture, ordered through vendor Ernst Conservation Seeds. This operation is scheduled for mid-June and will cover a total of 255 acres of impoundment.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed purchase orders for spring forage and cover plot seed and well as pollinator mix.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order for contract vendor Solitude Lake Management to renew the aquatic weed management contract at Rowand's Pond.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney requested quotes for the purchase of lime and fertilizer. Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) staff and a contract farmer will work together to spread lime and fertilizer in the new fields in the Winslow WMA for a total of 10 acres.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is coordinating with New Jersey Audubon to complete invasive vegetation management in the Cox Hall Creek WMA. New Jersey Audubon has submitted their special use permit. This project will be submitted to land management review.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with southern region Crew Supervisors to discuss spring planting plans.

### **All Regions**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with the Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture (AMJV) to discuss forestry efforts conducted by DFW. A list of forestry activities was compiled, which AMJV can use to provide better support for our forestry efforts.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the Pheasant Stocking Program follow-up meeting.  
Melissa Woerner

### **Northern Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner coordinated with northern region staff to widen an access road to fields at the Pequest WMA so the tenant farmer can access them for upcoming in-kind work.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed updates to the GIS shapefile and maps showing fields that will be leased and used as in-kind work in the next round of farm leases.

## **Central Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a CRO worksite meeting for CWA members.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner submitted a funding request and purchase order for seed for upcoming plantings at Assunpink, Stafford Forge, and Manasquan WMAs. As part of the process, Melissa Woerner coordinated with Ernst Conservation Seeds, Inc to update DPA paperwork.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner began working with a vendor on the farm services contract to plant approximately 90 acres of fields at the Assunpink WMA.

## **All Regions/Miscellaneous**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the kick-off meeting of DEP's Invasive Species Management Team. The Team seeks to coordinate efforts and monitoring activities among DEP programs and create a networked plan for a Department-wide strategy to combating invasive plant and animal species.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting to review issues from the 2020 pheasant stocking season and identify tasks for the upcoming season.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended DEP's "What's Happening in New Jersey's Wetlands" webinar.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting hosted by the (AMJV) to discuss issues facing forestry management in New Jersey.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner summarized in-kind work for 2019 and 2020 farm leases for the northern and central regions as requested for federal financial forms.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner submitted a justification to amend the source of state match for the Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Evaluation grant.

## **NORTHERN REGION**

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

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a DEP Teams meeting on GIS Mapping and Attaching Acquisition Documents.

Information was gathered on sound barriers (materials and placement) for outdoor shooting ranges, in response to several complaints of excessive noise at the Clinton Rifle Range.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl provided comments on proposed Assembly Bill A4845 concerning Prescribed Burns and Bill A4843 concerning Forest Stewardship Plans.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a Pheasant follow up meeting to better plan for the 2021 pheasant season.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a 2021 Trout Stocking meeting to discuss stocking dates, and personnel needs.

A report of graffiti painted on rocks in the Wildcat Ridge WMA was located and spray paint purchased to cover the graffiti. The graffiti will be covered when weather allows.

Two Special Use Permits (SUPs) were issued during this period. One SUP was issued to the New York New Jersey Trail Conference, allowing their volunteers to maintain trails in WMAs and one was issued granting access to the Hamburg Mountain WMA to stage logging equipment for access to an adjoining private property.

An inquiry was received from the New York New Jersey Trail Conference regarding the potential to close one trail to mountain biking in the Wildcat Ridge WMA due to the proximity of the trail to a rare / threatened plant. The Office of Natural Lands Management was contacted, and they will re-survey the area for rare plants and the proximity of rare plants to the trail.

Land Management crews spent two weeks plowing snow from parking lots, boat ramps, office roads and sidewalks throughout the northern region. Three feet of snow fell in many parts of northern New Jersey. Some parking lots and boat ramps remain inaccessible to the public. Regional Superintendent Susan Predl viewed the status of plowing operations at Amwell Lake, Rieglesville, Lebanon, Clinton WMA, Pequest WMA and the Round Valley boat ramp. The number of hours each employee spent snow plowing was tabulated by county and with what equipment was used, for possible reimbursement of FEMA funds.

A decision by the NJ Water Supply Authority, the Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife to close the Round Valley Boat Ramp, not due to the icy conditions of the parking lot and boat ramp, but the muddy layer between the reservoir and the ramp in which trucks and trailers could get stuck, and the inability of Emergency Response staff to access the reservoir when the reservoir ices over. News releases were prepared by I&E staff for ListServe messages and Facebook posts regarding WMA and boat ramp closures.

Crews inspected dead and dying ash trees on private properties near the Capoolong Creek and Pequest WMAs. PNJ funds exist for the removal of hazardous ash trees that might pose a hazard to property.

Numerous Activity Report Forms were submitted for Land Management Review (LMR). Land Management Review requests were submitted so that fields in Pequest, Honey Run, Trout Brook, Black River, Berkshire Valley, Rockaway River, Whittingham and Ken Lockwood Gorge WMAs could be reclaimed by plowing, planting seed and utilizing herbicide to kill invasive plant species. LMRs were also submitted for tree planting at Black River, the use of herbicide to control invasives at Hainesville WMA and to tar and chip a gravel parking lot in the Wildcat Ridge WMA near the Split Rock Reservoir.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a Teams meeting on the proposed new Northern Region Division office. A questionnaire was completed regarding the Bureau of Lands Management office needs in the proposed new office.

To move ahead with the demolition of unused buildings on the Rockport WMA and shut off natural gas to certain buildings, the deeds to the property and a \$600 check was obtained and forwarded to Elizabethtown Gas Company.

NJ DEP Telecommunications was contacted regarding a fax line at the Black River Office that does not work and a telephone extension at Pequest that does not work. Staff provided access to these offices so that the problems could be resolved.

Drivers and helpers' names were added to the 2021 Trout stocking list to ensure that there was adequate coverage.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl attended an online presentation by Dan Duran of Rowan University on the ecological importance of early successional habitats and young forests provided by the New Jersey Native Plant Society.

## **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 remain closed for upgrading the ranges. Upgrades include new covered shooting stations, parking access and handicap access. The project is potentially delayed 2-4 weeks due to COVID complications with staff and supply of materials. There was also a burglary of the contractors' tools and supplies. It is now on schedule for completion by the beginning of March 2021.

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

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended a meeting to review the stocking of Pheasant and Quail for the 2021 season.

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

Snow removal has taken up a significant amount of staff time during the reporting period. Crews are working to maintain access at Central WMAs.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended a meeting to review the site plan for a redesign of the Point Pleasant boat ramp.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler and Crew Supervisors William Torry and Michael Haines conducted interviews for a Wildlife Worker position.

Crews worked on the removal of a deer exclosure fence at an Atlantic White Cedar restoration project at Manchester WMA.

Central staff are reviewing the Trout schedule for the upcoming stocking season.

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

Staff removed snow from offices, Hunter Training Ranges, and boat ramps. Road crew staff needed to grade the Millville Hunter Training Range, which was heavily rutted after vehicles spun donuts in the parking lot.

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

Road crew staff began work on a CBT-M project at Sheppard's Mill Pond. This project will improve boating access by removing metal posts at the entrance to accommodate egress and ingress for vehicles towing trailers, create a parking area to accommodate a vehicle and trailer, improve the road leading to the ramp/parking area, and install a floating dock for boaters to tie off to after launching and before hauling boat. The floating dock will also provide additional opportunities for shore-based anglers.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein received quotes for gutters to be installed on the pole barn at the Union Lake WMA, worked with a security company to install a security system in Holly Farm, worked with an electrician to replace the main breaker at Holly Farm, worked with an electrician to install a new panel and lighting at the Eagle Manor barn (passed inspection and is now operational), refurbished a trash can holder to be placed on the Higbee Beach WMA (previously installed receptacle was burned), and removed trees that fell across a road on the Tuckahoe WMA.

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

Staff mowed and prepped field edges for controlled burning (to be completed by NJ Forest Fire Service) that will begin when the weather and site conditions improve.

Staff installed new WMA signs throughout the southern region.

Field reclaim work was completed on the Tuckahoe WMA. The area is slated for planting this spring.

Staff will work with a watershed ambassador for Salem County to conduct a trash cleanup at the DOD Ponds WMA.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, pheasant stocking meeting, WMA Regulations, Cumberland County Sportsmen's Federation, Money Island Restoration, Trout Stocking, and American Littoral Society project updates.

## **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
Assunpink	Monmouth	Upper Freehold	Valerie Palluzzi	20
Berkshire Valley	Morris	Jefferson	Garden Homes	83

Cape May Coastal Wetlands	Cape May	Middle	Dunkelberger-Tompkins	52
Hamburg Mountain	Sussex	Hardyston	Barbara Wood	48
Nantuxent	Cumberland	Downe	Shirley Koch	.1
Nantuxent	Cumberland	Downe	Donald & Natalie Fisch	.1
Trout Brook	Sussex	Stillwater	Anne Wronka	38

Acres assigned during this period: 241.20