

# **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

February 21, 2021 to March 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 is coordinating with farm service contractors and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff to conduct grassland restoration efforts at the Holly Farm site. Uprooted nursery stock has been placed in piles to be burnt by State Forest Fire Service staff. Pollinator seed has arrived and is ready to be planted at the pollinator demonstration site. Time was spent assisting BLM staff chip excess material.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is in the process of applying for a \$ 500,000.00 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant for the restoration of the boat ramp at Jake's Landing located in the Dennis Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Time was spent running a GIS analysis to strengthen the grant proposal. The spending plan is currently awaiting signature by the Assistant Commissioner.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed purchase orders for spring forage and cover plot seed and well as pollinator mix. Forage and cover plot mix is expected to arrive on 03/22/2021.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order and saw the delivery of 220 bags of 10-10-10 fertilizer to be spread in the new fields in the Winslow WMA. A purchase order will be placed for 12 tons of lime to be spread on the same fields as soon as the vendor submits DPA paperwork.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting between BLM and the Bureau of Wildlife Management staff to discuss quail habitat management in the Dix WMA.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney applied for a Threatened & Endangered Species report from the Pinelands Commission. This report will assist contracted foresters in developing the forest stewardship plan for the Lenape Tract. Management prescriptions are currently being developed for this tract. Management prescriptions for the Buckshtem WMA are in hand and have been reviewed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney calculated soil rates for several farm leases to be bid out in the upcoming farm lease auction.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to work with Rutgers University to develop a 070 Habitat Monitoring Contract. We are in the process of negotiating contract terms after there was a miscommunication between University staff.

### **All Regions**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney applied for a card to the state library. Access to research collections in the library will assist in developing future project proposals.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the 86<sup>th</sup> North American and Natural Resources Conference held from a virtual setting.

### **Northern Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner responded to an inquiry by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to include the removal of Reynold's Lake dam in the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River WMA. TNC was considering applying for a NFWF Delaware Watershed Conservation grant for the dam removal but due to a lack of current data on the waterbody and its existing fishery, the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) decided against the dam removal at this time.

### **Central Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner scouted points for a barred owl survey at the Colliers Mills WMA. The first of four rounds of surveys were conducted, resulting in three barred owl calls out of 18 points. Surveys are being conducted in preparation for an upcoming Atlantic White Cedar restoration project.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner collaborated with the Jersey Shore chapter of the American Woodcock Society to work out details for an upcoming volunteer day at the Prospertown Lake WMA. Volunteers will plant approximately 160 alder trees to improve habitat for American woodcock. The order for alder seedlings was placed through Pinelands Nursery.

A NAWCA grant for \$96,025 was awarded to Ducks Unlimited for the Manahawkin WMA Coastal Wetland Restoration project. DFW and NJ Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Council will be partners on the project, which aims to convert tidal open-water lakes back to shallow coastal emergent wetlands by replacing damaged water control structures.

A contract purchase order was secured for fertilizer for the new early successional fields at the Stafford Forge WMA.

Nearly 6,000 pounds of seed was ordered and delivered for upcoming plantings at the Assunpink, Manasquan, and Stafford Forge WMAs. The order includes seed for wildlife food plots, warm season grass, and pollinator plantings.

### **All Regions/Miscellaneous**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the second session of DEP's Wetland series webinar.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner virtually attended the North American Wildlife Conference.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a webinar on basic chainsaw safety.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the first session of USFWS' Forest for the Birds webinar series, titled "Loss and Recovery of Forest Birds".

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner created power point slides for an upcoming DEP Wetlands webinar. The slides highlight three wetland restoration projects being conducted on WMAs.

## **NORTHERN REGION**

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

Staff repaired winter plowing damage to the Roy Bridge on the Flatbrook WMA. Old boards are breaking off. Sealed bid requests for the total replacement of wood boards on the bridge were emailed to three vendors.

Several fields at the Trout Brook WMA were mowed in preparation for herbicide application and planting of native grass and wildflower seeds this spring.

The trout stocking list with drivers and helper names was finalized and distributed to staff. Five seasonal employees were hired to assist with trout distribution. Raingear and boots were purchased for all those employees involved with trout stocking. As a safety measure, extra vehicles were borrowed so that staff could drive in separate vehicles, while going to trout stocking locations. Spring trout stocking began on March 15th.

A collapsed culvert pipe was replaced on the road into Ryker Lake. QP was spread over the road repair.

The northern region Law Enforcement office has numerous requests for signs and gates. These requests were discussed on a conference call. An order for signs was placed with Voss Signs and Staples. Another request from Law Enforcement was received for gates and a guard shack at the Round Valley Boat Ramp. Bills for equipment rental will be handled by Land Management. Moving a structure set for demolition to serve as the guard shack and borrowing chain link fence sections from Parks and Forestry was investigated.

Prescribed burn plans were signed for the Black River and Whittingham WMAs. Deep snow throughout February prevented annual mowing by staff. Prescribed burns on our WMAs will go a long way in maintaining field habitat.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a virtual meeting with Green Acres regarding acquisitions.

The Bureau of Law Enforcement requested that the parking lot at Split Rock Reservoir be tarred and chipped so that lines delineating parking spots could be drawn on the surface. Currently there is a dirt and gravel parking lot at Split Rock. An Activity Request Form was submitted for Land Management Review. The State Historic Preservation Office requested that the Division submit a Project Authorization application since the parking lot is in a designated historic site. The application to tar and chip the parking lot was submitted to the Historic Preservation Office.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a conference call regarding the new proposed Northern Region Office. Bureau floor space needs in the new office were discussed.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a site visit to the Columbia Dam removal site with the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Princeton Hydro employees, Bureau of Dam Safety employees and American Rivers employees to discuss the bank stabilization of the Paulinskill River above the dam removal site and closing out the dam removal permit. There was some concern that the banks of the river drop off too quickly and may pose a safety hazard since they are subject to collapse. Some remediation options were discussed, and there is a plan to implement those options on a trial basis.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl participated in a conference call regarding trails through the Rockaway River WMA, with New York - New Jersey Trail Conference, the Ridge and Valley Conservancy and Township trail maintenance volunteers. The Division would support marking, mapping, and maintaining existing trails through the WMA, but would not want trails to be created or widened. The illegal use of ATVs and off-road vehicles on this WMA was discussed.

An Activity Review form was submitted for Land Management Review to apply herbicide to recently mowed fields on the Rockport WMA.

An Activity Review form was submitted for Land Management Review to hydroax Bradford Pear trees on a portion of the South Branch WMA, so that herbicide could be applied to the invasive tree sprouts this spring or fall.

## **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 range upgrades have been completed. They are scheduled to be opened 3/22/2021. Upgrades include new covered shooting stations, parking access and handicap access.

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

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.

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

Field creation was started at the Stafford Forge WMA.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Green Acres quarterly acquisition meeting.

Staff attended the Freshwater Fisheries forum and the Freshwater Fisheries Trout Stocking virtual meetings.

Crews are working with the Forest Fire Service to prepare areas for prescribed burning and conducting prescribed burns with Forest Fire. Due to the wet field conditions areas that cannot be burned will be mowed.

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

Crews began stocking trout following the condensed stocking plan.

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

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

Staff are close to finishing the Sheppards Mill Pond boating/angler access project. Grading of the area is almost complete. Once that is finished guard rail and a floating dock will be installed.

Spicers Creek boat ramp: shell was added to the parking lot and graded. A contractor will be removing a hazardous tree from Rainbow Lake Boat Ramp, the contractor is expected to be on site in the next couple of weeks.

Ranges: Millville Hunter Training Archery Range was improved to provide access to shooters with disabilities. The range now has a paved parking spot, walkway to shooting station, and walkway from shooting station (30 yards) to target to allow for arrow retrieval. Winslow WMA Hunter Training Archery Range will receive the same upgrade (contractor has already been on site and expects to complete project in April).

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

Staff completed mowing operations and have turned to preparing fields for planting.

Field reclaim work is nearly complete at Holly Farm. The reclaim area will have three prescriptions 1) pollinator habitat 2) wildlife food plot 3) grassland habitat.

Staff removed trash from DOD ponds and road crew has started road repairs.

Staff are preparing for trout stocking runs which will take place during the week of March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, Tuckahoe Boat Ramp, GA/BLM, Cumberland County Federation Meeting, State Federation Game Committee meeting

## **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION**

### **LAND ACQUISITIONS**

Lisa Carben, Senior Management Assistant

Nothing to report this period.