

# **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

April 21, 2021 to May 20, 2021

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

## **HABITAT PLANNING**

Melissa Woerner

### **Northern Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner coordinated with the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program's (ENSP) Sharon Petzinger regarding the second year of grassland bird surveys at the Merck tract on the South Branch Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner ordered and received seed for in-kind plantings at the Merck tract on the South Branch WMA. Approximately 20 acres of fields will be converted from agricultural row crops to warm season grass/pollinator habitat in the spring of 2021.

### **Central Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner submitted barred owl data from recent surveys at the Colliers Mills WMA to ENSP via the Biotics survey template.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a field visit to the Manahawkin WMA and Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) with representatives from New Jersey Fish and Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, and Assemblyman Houghtaling to tour restoration projects benefiting from the Waterfowl Stamp.

Approximately 90 acres of fields at the Assunpink WMA were planted by a contract farmer. These fields were planted with seed that will serve as wildlife food plots. The fields were also planted to prepare them for enrollment in the 2022 farm leases.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner and 20 volunteers from the American Woodcock Society partnered to plant 134 smooth alder trees at the Prospertown Lake WMA to improve habitat for woodcocks.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner finalized assembly of the internal stakeholder group for the Greenwood Forest WMA Forest Stewardship Plan. Next steps will be to hold a virtual meeting and develop management goals based on forest stand inventory data.

### **All Regions/Miscellaneous**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) virtual conference.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a virtual meeting for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Invasive Species Team Steering Committee.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner participated in a virtual Beneficial Reuse Workshop.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner picked up an order of Global Positioning System accessories from Trenton.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner updated the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) habitat project spreadsheet with current project status and helped prioritize the top five projects for the state.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner provided edits for the press release for the Pond Creek Marsh/Higbee Beach WMA restoration bid solicitation.

Tyler Kinney

### **Southern Region**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney oversaw the completion of spring planting operations on southern region WMAs. A total of 316 acres were planted. 10 acres were treated with lime and fertilizer.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to work with DEP staff and Rutgers University to develop a habitat monitoring contract. This contract was signed by Rutgers and submitted for signature by the Assistant Commissioner.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney created several maps for upcoming activities at the Menantico Ponds WMA, including an event map for the Green Acres press event and contractor maps for habitat work on this tract. A request for Adobe Photoshop was submitted for the purpose of creating and editing several signs, including habitat signs and event signs for the upcoming press event. An order for these signs was subsequently placed. A habitat proposal poster was created which will give event attendees an idea of potential habitat projects on this tract.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney calculated soil acres for several farm leases for the upcoming farm lease auction. Acreage reports were compiled and submitted to the Regional Superintendents for review.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney drafted writes ups for the Division website regarding the management of the Heislerville WMA impoundments and aerial seeding operations in the Tuckahoe impoundments. Thus far, the Heislerville write up was posted to the site, with the Tuckahoe write up to be submitted in the coming week.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to work to coordinate aerial seeding operations in the Tuckahoe WMA impoundments. Shapefiles are to be converted for use in the contractor's planes. Vendor Ernst Conservation Seeds is expected to deliver seeds to the airport in early June.

### **All Regions**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the NEAFWA virtual conference from a virtual setting.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a "Climate Change, Adaptation, and Impacts on Forest Bird Recovery" webinar.

## **NORTHERN REGION**

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

Staff continued stocking trout May 10 through May 14.

Staff pruned approximately 20 old apple trees located in the Buckhorn Creek WMA, to provide a source of food for wildlife from an existing source.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl met with a contractor at the Lockatong WMA to discuss field restoration options. The fields are not too wet, nor is the thatch too thick to herbicide and plant warm season grasses. The removal of a hedgerow would improve habitat for grassland birds at this site. Land Management Review applications were submitted for the herbicide and planting of the fields and for the hedgerow removal.

A Land Management Review application was submitted on behalf of the Musconetcong Watershed Association to plant trees in areas along the river where storms knocked down large trees. No application was submitted to plant trees in the Conservation Easement Area until the Easement could be located and reviewed.

A Land Management Review application was submitted for the demolition of a barn on the Clinton WMA. The barn may have historic significance, but the barn is in danger of collapsing.

Staff are assisting the ENSP by raking up turtle nesting habitat near the Flatbrook River. Estimates were obtained for removing several Ailanthus trees in the area, so that the turtle nesting site could be enlarged.

Trail maintenance volunteers requested that the Division purchase fencing materials so that deep drop-offs near a historic furnace site on the Black River WMA could be fenced. We asked the Trail Maintenance volunteer to consider fencing the Barnes mine, but he felt it was a bigger job than his crew could handle.

Informational signs warning the public about black bears were posted in WMA Parking lots.

At the request of the Bureau of Law Enforcement, the Split Rock parking lot was tarred and chipped. Lines delineating parking and no-parking areas will be painted.

The Columbia dam site was locked and re-secured twice during this time period to allow for site visits by DEP Administration.

A local resident complained of graffiti located on a steep cliff in the Wildcat Ridge WMA. The site was visited, and photos of the graffiti were taken.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl was contacted by Forest Legacy Program personnel with the US Forest Service about a Management Agreement regarding federal property that adjoins the Berkshire Valley WMA. The Agreement would have allowed hunting by the public on this parcel of land if a forest management plan were in place. The management agreement was never signed, nor was a Forest Management plan enacted. The most recent draft of the Management Agreement was located so that discussions could continue.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl assisted the Bureau of Law Enforcement to secure the items needed to establish a booth at the entrance to the Round Valley Boat Ramp.

A Land Management Review was submitted for the removal of debris from the Black River WMA by Hercules Simmonds Precision as part of remediation activities on adjoining property. Hercules Simmonds Precision is applying for a Land Resource Protection permit for debris removal activities in wetlands onsite and extending into the Black River WMA. They were also asked to complete a DEP Land Access form. We requested that they complete a DEP Request to Use State Lands form.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl met with the Northeast Organic Farming Association, NJ Conservation Foundation, Fields Without Fences, and United States Department of Agriculture at the Whittingham WMA to

show them potential fields that could be used to farm grains. A Special Use Permit could be issued to the organic farmers for this purpose.

Bids were obtained and a Purchase Order was set up for the repair of the Roy Bridge in the Flatbrook WMA.

## **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 and for the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education representing the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

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 the Swan Bay, Manahawkin, and Great Bay Boulevard WMAs.

Crews continue stocking trout following the condensed stocking plan.

Coordinating with Law Enforcement, BLM is cleaning up many illegal dumping incidents within the Central Region WMAs.

Crews are working on completing spring plantings for food plots and pollinators at the Stafford Forge, Manasquan River and Assunpink WMAs.

BLM staff are working with Wildlife Management to trap beavers at the Greenwood WMA, Webs Mill Bog section. The site contains a few rare plants which are being impacted by flooding from a nuisance beaver dam. We are working with Forest Fire and the Office of Natural Lands Management to design a more permanent solution for this ongoing issue.

DEP's General Services Unit installed a Camera System at the Central Region Office (CRO) Conference room located at the Assunpink WMA. The camera will enable Council Meetings to be broadcast from the CRO.

Road improvements were performed by a contract vendor at the Assunpink WMA. Two parking lots were also paved at Assunpink through funding from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended 2 meetings with the Divisions Office of GIS (OGIS) staff for the WMA planning Grant and creation of a universal patch file.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended a meeting with Bureau of Law Enforcement staff to review surveillance cameras for the newly upgraded Central Region ranges.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended a workshop on the beneficial use of dredge material.

The Division is in the final design phase for an upgrade to the Point Pleasant Boat Ramp and Fishing Access site.

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

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

The Sheppards Mill boating/fishing access is complete, a new WMA is being made and will be installed to cap off the project.

Road Crew staff completed work at the DOD Ponds WMA. In addition to grading roads and parking areas, they worked with the Bureau of Law Enforcement to strategically place material to make patrolling the area easier and reduce illegal activities.

Road Crew staff have moved on to the Tuckahoe WMA and are expected to be here for 2-3 weeks, during which time they will grade the roads, dikes, and boat ramps in the Corbin City, Tuckahoe, and Lenape Farms sections. Upon completion they will move to Lake Audrey.

Hunter Training Ranges: A concrete parking pad and shooting lane was installed at the Winslow WMA. All archery ranges in the southern region now have one shooting lane accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The deteriorating split rail fence was replaced with guard rail at the Tuckahoe WMA range.

The next range project will be to improve the parking areas. Crushed concrete or DGA will be placed in the parking areas of the Winslow, Millville, and Tuckahoe WMAs.

Staff met with a paving contractor to discuss the possibility of paving or tar and chipping the Millville Range. The contractor did not feel it would be a good fit for the location and that crushed concrete, or stone would be better suited.

Staff met with a paving contractor at the Holly Farm section of the Menantico Ponds WMA, Jakes Landing, and Millville WMA to discuss road improvement options.

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

Staff continue to prepare fields for planting. Seed has arrived and was distributed among the three crews.

Staff completed trout stocking.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein constructed two new garbage can holders and refurbished two older can holders for the Higbee Beach WMA. One receptacle was burned along with portable toilets in this area. He also made repairs to the observation platform.

The Harrionville Lake Dam water control structure hydraulic system was repaired, and a new hasp and lock were installed on the control box.

Staff unloaded and temporarily placed blinds to be used for the R3 Managed Waterfowl Hunt at the Tuckahoe WMA. Blinds will be installed to floating docks and placed in the impoundments.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, Holly Farm Architect, 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.