

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

MARCH 14, 2018 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

Commissioners Present: R. Phillipson, T. Baldwin, E. Millette, W. Morse, B. Temple, C. Hodgdon, & D. Patch.

Commissioners absent/excused: F. Clews, J. Ryan, B. Carr, & E. Stohl

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chair reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Hodgdon moved to approve the February 14, 2018 Commission Minutes as written, and Morse seconded. The motion was unanimous in the affirmative.

At this time, Director Normandeau read aloud the following resolution honoring the retirement of Jane Vachon, Information Officer, after 15 years of dedicated service to the NH Fish & Game Department.

Honoring Jane Vachon

Whereas, Jane Vachon worked for 15 years for the State of New Hampshire at the Fish and Game Department in the Public Affairs Division as a Public Information Officer and a Programs Information Officer;

Whereas, Jane Vachon has been the Editor of the New Hampshire Wildlife Journal, coordinating content, writing, editing, proofreading, coordinating assignments, and managing contracts;

Whereas, Jane Vachon has been a media liaison throughout her tenure, providing them with information, creating and issuing press releases, writing responses, and assigning calls; In addition, she has been a supervisor to the webmaster, publications manager, and graphic designer as Programs Information Officer;

Whereas, Jane Vachon was instrumental in coordinating and promoting various activities during the year-long celebration of the Agency's 150th anniversary;

Whereas, Jane Vachon has been a willing volunteer with many Department initiatives including the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program, the Wild Game Culinary Adventure

Weekend at the Barry Conservation Camp, the New England Outdoor Writers Association, and Discover WILD New Hampshire Day and has acted as the photographer at many events, including Commission meetings, Law Enforcement promotions, celebrations, and volunteer programs;

Whereas, Jane Vachon has always been happy to help in any situation, enthusiastically engages with the public about all the work at Fish and Game and answers their questions, and willingly dives into any project with interest, dedication, and commitment;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved that the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission hereby honors and congratulates Jane Vachon on her retirement from service to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and expresses its sincere gratitude for her numerous contributions to fish and wildlife conservation in the Granite State and offers its best wishes for many years of enjoyment in New Hampshire's great outdoors.

*Glenn Normandeau, Executive Director
NH Fish & Game Department*

*Robert Phillipson, Jr., Chair
NH Fish & Game Commission*

Jane thanked the Director and Commission and stated, "I'm floored and honored by this, it means a great deal to me."

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and were noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. The Commission voted to approve these matters as presented. Commission members may remove certain items if further public input or discussion is deemed necessary.

Commissioner Patch moved to approve the below consent agenda items as presented and Commissioner Baldwin seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$2,500.00 from the Meredith Rotary Club, to be utilized for inland fisheries management, specifically the large lakes program.

2b.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$1,507.00 from the Great Bay Stewards, to be utilized by the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Program.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of a set of oyster tongs, valued at \$200.00, from Dennis Abbott, to be utilized by the Marine Division.

3.) Commissioner Morse moved to approve the expenditure of \$6,800 from the Game Management Account to fund a biological aid for up to 15 weeks (mid-May through mid-August), who will work under the supervision of the department's bear biologist, to educate and provide technical assistance to the public and to prevent and mitigate bear/human conflicts, Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reviewed the monthly financial statement dated February 28, 2018.

Director Normandeau reported that in the past, he & Kathy LaBonte have reviewed the budget process with the Commission in order to get a better understanding of how things work and offered to do that again if there was a desire for it.

2.) Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission and provided an update on the Bass Fishing Tournament lottery process informational meeting held on February 15, 2018.

He reported that due to increasing popularity in black bass fishing, specifically fishing tournaments, Inland Fisheries staff feels it is prudent to review the bass tournament permit issuance process. The current system was enacted when there were far fewer tournament permits being issued. Staff feel that some adjustments may be helpful to serve our constituents more effectively and efficiently.

He further reported that a public informational meeting was held last month to discuss some recommended changes to the bass tournament lottery process with various tournament directors and bass club members.

Current Lottery process:

1. Receive applications w/fee from Oct. 1 thru Dec 1 for lottery
2. Review applications for accuracy
3. Verify reporting obligation fulfilled by club
4. Run Lottery
5. Run lottery (again for alternate waterbodies)
6. Notify clubs of lottery results (often involves sending checks back and forth)
7. Verify "club level events" are ≤ 12 events for single \$49 fee. ("club level events"= 15 boats or less)
8. process fees (if correct) and issue permits
9. Start first come first serve process for applications that are received after the lottery
10. Address any changes that the clubs request

Proposed Lottery Process:

1. Receive applications from Oct. 1 thru Dec 1 for lottery
2. Review applications for accuracy
3. Verify reporting obligation fulfilled by club
4. Run Lottery
5. Notify clubs of lottery results with fee included
6. Receive fees and issue permits
7. Start first come first serve process for applications that are received after the lottery

Proposed Fee Structure:

Fishing tournament/bass tournament: \$49
Catch, measure & release bass tournaments: \$10

“Club level events”: (2017 ave. was \$4.97 per club) \$10
NHIAA affiliated events: Free

In closing, Jason reported that 11 people attended the informational meeting. He reported that some of the proposed changes would involve rulemaking in the future.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Phillipson thanked Jason for the update.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Clews, Chair: Commissioners Carr, Millette & Temple. Commissioner Clews was absent from the meeting.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Commissioner Morse, Chair; Commissioners Stohl, Hodgdon, Patch, & Baldwin.

Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, reported on the attached legislation. (See attached).

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Ryan was absent from the meeting.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Commissioner Clews was absent from the meeting.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Patch reported that there was no meeting, however, anticipates having a meeting in the near future with an update for the handbook.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Chairman Phillipson reported that he wanted to re-establish this committee. He appointed Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair: Commissioners Temple & Baldwin.

He charged the committee with reviewing recent decisions made relative to the Sunapee Boat Access Site and how & when to proceed from this point.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the meeting was cancelled and rescheduled to February 21, 2018.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Baldwin, Chair; Commissioners Carr & Millette. Tanya reported that the Commission Awards of Excellence have been ordered and will be presented to the recipients at the April 18, 2018 Commission Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Baldwin had questions pertaining to the reduced registration rate for OHRV's. He further inquired as to why the Fish & Game Department does not receive any money from that.

He was informed that in order to obtain the reduced registration rate for OHRV's you must have proof of membership (each time) in a non-profit snowmobile club that is a member of the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association. He was also informed that in order to change that it would require legislation to do so.

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Commissioner Carr was absent.

COMMISSIONER TEMPLE: Commissioner Temple had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER RYAN: Commissioner Ryan was absent.

COMMISSIONER PATCH: Commissioner Patch had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER MILLETTE: Commissioner Millette had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER CLEWS: Commissioner Clews was absent.

COMMISSIONER HODGDON: Commissioner Hodgdon had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER STOHL: Commissioner Stohl was absent.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that he would be attending a meeting in Wisconsin on March 19 - 20, 2018, with Secretary of the Interior, Zinke, for a public relations event regarding Pittman Robertson funding.

He further reported that he would be attending the North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference from March 26 – 30, 2018, in Norfolk, VA, where there is a great deal of interaction with federal agencies.

In addition, he reported that he would be attending the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Conference in Burlington, VT, from April 15 – 17, 2018, to discuss topics of mutual interest with counterparts from around the Northeast.

In closing, Director Normandeau reported that since 2001 the Department has owned property on Great Bay known as the Emery Farm, which is part of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The property had a life estate on it in favor of the daughter of a previous owner who has recently passed away. All interests in the property now belong to the Department. He reported that he looked at the property last Friday and stated, "It is surrounded by fields and it appears to be a nice piece of land."

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Christina Snyder, audience member, inquired as to whether the Wildlife Rule Hearings were still taking place as scheduled. She further inquired as to whether public comments

received at the hearing would be taken into consideration, as she felt the coyote comments were disregarded without review.

Chairman Phillipson responded that he could not guarantee that the comments/suggestions received from the public would be granted, however, encouraged everyone who has comments to attend the hearings.

Julia Sinclair, audience member, inquired as to how the hiking season was to date. Colonel Jordan responded that the number of rescues was up, mostly from unpreparedness.

Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, reported that there would be a public informational meeting relative to bait fish dealers on March 29, 2018, at 6:30 p.m., at Fish & Game HQ, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

At this time, 2:58 p.m., Commissioner Morse moved to adjourn and Commissioner Millette seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Carr, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman