

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

APRIL 18, 2018 COMMISSION MEETING

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

Commissioners Present: R. Phillipson, T. Baldwin, E. Millette, P. McInnis, B. Temple, C. Hodgdon, B. Carr, D. Patch & E. Stohl.

Commissioners absent/excused: W. Morse, J. Ryan

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 Patch moved to approve the March 14, 2018 Commission Minutes, with the following amendment, and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The motion carried 7 in favor, 1 abstention (E. Stohl).

Amendment: Page 4, Wildlife Heritage Foundation – Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the meeting was cancelled and rescheduled and should read: ~~February 21, 2018~~ March 21, 2018.

2.) Chairman Phillipson announced that this was the 13th year of the Commission's Annual Awards of Excellence. He reported that the Awards Committee was very pleased to have had so many nominations this year. He stated, "On behalf of the Commission, and the Department, we would like to thank everyone who took the time and made the effort to nominate the many deserving people. After much consideration and deliberations, it is our pleasure to present the following 2017 Commission Awards of Excellence."

At this time, the Fish & Game Commission presented the 2017 Commission Awards of Excellence as follows:

Commissioner Baldwin presented Janice Boynton with the **Volunteer Award of Excellence**.

Commissioner Baldwin reported that Janice has been involved with the NH Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program since the 1990s. Over the years she has been a consistent and dedicated supporter, quietly working behind the scenes. Janice has been a volunteer committee member, has served on the merchandise committee, and has handled the finances for BOW, Barry Camp, and the BOW Scholarship fund.



Letters of support describe her as having “excellent communication and organizational skills that have made her a real asset and joy to work with.” “She is a team player and is always friendly, compassionate, and respectful of others.”

“Being a volunteer herself is admirable, but one thing that is unique about Janice is her amazing ability to gather others and encourage them to work for a common cause,” said Fish and Game Commissioner, Todd Baldwin. “It has been said she is the happiest when she is volunteering and sharing her passion with others.”

Janice thanked everyone for supporting her for this award and stated, “I am very dedicated to the sportsmen & women of New Hampshire.”

Commissioner Baldwin presented Larry Barker with the **Conservation Organization Award of Excellence -University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension, Lancaster, NH.**

Commissioner Baldwin reported that since 1984, the University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension has partnered with NH Fish and Game for the joint purpose of conducting a conservation camp for kids. The Barry Conservation Camp is located on the grounds of the Berlin State Fish Hatchery and U.S. Forest Service lands. It consists of six rustic cabins, a multipurpose building with gathering space, a dining hall, and restroom facilities; as well as fishing, swimming, hiking, and shooting areas.

UNH has taken on the primary role of administering the camp, from hiring camp counselors to juggling the logistics of camper registrations and everything else that is needed to run a conservation camp. Over the years, thousands of kids have benefitted from Barry Conservation Camp.

“Without the partnership with UNH in this conservation effort,” said Fish and Game Commissioner, Todd Baldwin, “we would not have had the success in reaching so many youth and teaching them about conservation, nor would we be able to continue to do so for future generations.”

Larry Barker and Jamie Welch, Director of the camp, accepted on behalf of the University of New Hampshire. Barker said, “We would like to recognize Jamie Welch for his 12 years as Director, and as a former camper himself, his professionalism is unparalleled.”



Commissioner Carr presented Daniel Kern, **Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, with the Habitat Stewardship Award of Excellence.**

Commissioner Carr reported that Bear-Paw Regional Greenways is a nonprofit land trust that works to permanently conserve land throughout southeastern New Hampshire to protect the region's water, wildlife habitat, forests, and farmland. Bear-Paw has successfully worked with the Department, local communities, and local landowners to protect 8,000 acres across 11 towns. These lands expand and enhance conserved habitats around Bear Brook State Park and Pawtuckaway State Park and contribute to connections between them.



“The partnership between Bear-Paw Regional Greenways and the NH Fish and Game Department is a key example of the type of partnerships needed for successful conservation of our natural resources,” said Fish and Game Commissioner, Barry Carr.

Because of their efforts, these lands are open to the public for outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing, and will be for all future generations to come.

“We really appreciate the support and recognition and are looking forward to the next 8,000 acres we get to conserve,” said Dan Kern, who accepted the award on behalf of Bear-Paw.

Commissioner Millette presented Jeff Traynor with the **Communications Award of Excellence.**



Commissioner Millette reported that since 2014, Jeff has led an effort to advocate for regulated trapping and science-based wildlife management. He has created a top-notch website, maintains a blog where he writes well researched articles, and he effectively uses social media to create awareness and to educate the public on the importance of trapping.

Jeff spends countless hours researching topics, deciphering scientific articles and data, and then writing and publishing that information in a way for all to understand. It is all part of his tireless pursuit of communicating to the world about wildlife conservation.

“Jeff is a true conservationist at heart, with a gifted talent for writing and communication,” said Fish and Game Commissioner, Ernest Millette. “We thank Jeff for his efforts and look forward to more good work to come.”

Chairman Phillipson stated, “Our final award means a great deal to all of us, and is not given lightly. Former Commissioner, Ellis Hatch, was the first recipient of this award and it now bears his name. Ellis Hatch is an extraordinary man of vision who made great contributions to

the Fish and Game mission, so it is a fitting tribute that this honor goes to someone who has made exceptional contributions in all aspects of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's mission to conserve, manage and protect natural resources; to inform and educate the public about these resources; and to provide opportunities for the public to use and appreciate these resources."

Chairman Phillipson presented Daniel "Dan" Dockham with the **Ellis R. Hatch Jr., Commission Award of Excellence.**

The Commission's highest honor, the Ellis R. Hatch Junior Award of Excellence, was awarded to Dan Dockham, an avid New Hampshire sportsman. Dan has been an advocate for sportsmen's rights for over 5 decades and has been committed to preserving the heritage of hunting and trapping. He has also been an advocate for science-based management of the state's wildlife and natural resources.

Chairman Phillipson reported that he has been a longtime and very active member of various sportsmen's groups in New Hampshire and has served as a liaison to the NH Fish and Game Department. Dan has served as a voice for sportsmen both in New Hampshire and beyond. He has attended and testified at countless legislative hearings and Department rulemaking hearings. He has served as a "watchdog" on legislation that would have adverse impacts on hunters and trappers rights and resource management.

Dan has spent countless hours volunteering on Department projects and research initiatives. In the 1980s, he assisted with capturing bears for tagging. This work was instrumental in developing our early knowledge of the vulnerability of bears as it relates to hunter harvest.

More recently, Dan volunteered on the bobcat research project and assisted biologists in live-capturing bobcats that were fitted with radio telemetry and GPS units as part of a collaborative study between the Department and the University of New Hampshire.

"Dan truly exemplifies the definition of a sportsman and is one who puts the state's wildlife and natural resources above all else," said Fish and Game Commissioner, Robert Phillipson.

Dan thanked everyone that supported and nominated him for the award. He thanked his family for their continued support as well.

3.) 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 Carr moved to approve the below consent agenda items as presented and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.



- 3a.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$100.00 from Kerry & Linda Wisner, Charlestown, NH, to be utilized by the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center.
- 3b.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$500.00 from the Pointer Fish & Game Club, Inc., in memory of Steven Courchesne, to be utilized by the “Let’s Go Fishing” Program.
- 3c.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$18.42 from Thomas McAllister, Bow, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.
- 3d.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$25.00 from Lawrence & Christie LaPierre, Gonic, NH, in memory of John Tarmey, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.
- 3e.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$30.00 from the Woodland Heights School, Laconia, NH, in memory of Charlie Dwinal, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.
- 3f.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$50.00 from Matt Gill, Bedford, NH, in memory of Martin “Bobby” Bernard, to be utilized by the Wildlife Division’s Game Management Program.
- 4.) Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, and Project Leaders came before the Commission to review the Game Management Final Rule proposals.

Mark thanked the Project Leaders & Kent Gustafson, Wildlife Programs Supervisor, for all their hard work on the Game Management Proposals.

DEER PROPOSAL

Commissioner Stohl stated, “There are a lot of deer up North. The most I have ever seen in the spring season in units A, B & C2. I’d like to see another day of doe hunting during the firearm season of either sex. I’m not sure the rest of the county can support it. My concern is that if the hunters don’t take the deer, the winter may, and I prefer to see hunters take the deer.”

Dan Bergeron, Deer Project Leader, responded, “We are at the lower end for our objectives in those units. It was a stretch even maintaining the 1 day for firearm & muzzleloader. We do account for winter mortality when setting either sex days. The department had issues in the past of being very liberal with the doe harvest, and then when you do get a severe winter you lose additional deer.”

Commissioner Baldwin stated, “It seems department staff in the North Country has seen first-hand the considerable amount of deer up there.”

At this time, Commissioner Stohl moved to approve the deer proposals as presented with the addition of 1 day to the firearm season in Units A & B, leaving C2 the same, and Commissioner Baldwin seconded.

Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner Millette reported that he was seeing more deer than ever in J2. He questioned whether it could be related to the mild weather.

Dan reported that adequate weather conditions allow deer to move around more freely, potentially the reason you could be seeing more.

A vote was taken on the above motion and defeated 4 in favor, 5 opposed.

Commissioner Stohl thanked everyone for the discussion.

Commissioner McInnis moved to approve the deer proposals as presented and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

MOOSE PROPOSAL

Commissioner Carr moved to approve the moose season proposal as presented and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

BEAR PROPOSAL

Commissioner Stohl moved to approve the bear season proposal as presented and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

TURKEY PROPOSAL

After much discussion, Commissioner McInnis moved to approve the turkey season as presented and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

FURBEARER PROPOSAL

Commissioner Carr moved to approve the furbearer proposal as presented and Commissioner Millette seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

SMALL GAME & PHEASANT PROPOSAL

Commissioner Carr moved to approve the small game & pheasant proposal as presented and Commissioner Baldwin seconded. The vote carried with 6 in favor and 2 opposed (E. Stohl & C. Hodgdon)

WILDLIFE CONTROL OPERATOR PROPOSAL

Commissioner Hodgdon moved to approve the WCO proposal as presented and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

To clarify some confusion relative to the vote on the deer proposal, Chairman Phillipson called for a revote on the motion made by Commissioner Stohl and seconded by Commissioner Baldwin, to add 1 additional day of firearm hunting in Units A&B.

The vote was defeated with 3 in favor and 5 opposed.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Phillipson welcomed Paul McInnis, representing the coastal community.

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reviewed the monthly financial statement dated March 31, 2018.
- 2.) Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission and provided some background information on a future request to expend up to \$10,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account for seasonal employees, who will be performing work related to the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture's conservation strategies in the Androscoggin River Watershed.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Carr, Chair; Commissioners Millette & Temple. Commissioner Carr reported that the committee did not meet.

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: To be appointed at the May 9, 2018 Commission Meeting.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Patch reported that there would be a new Commission handbook distributed next month.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners Temple & Baldwin.

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee was not able to meet, however, would be meeting in the near future.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon reported there was a meeting of the Wildlife Heritage Foundation on March 21, 2018, where they discussed/worked on the Durant Funds. He reported that the Foundation is a co-sponsor of Discover Wild New Hampshire Day and would have a booth at that event. He further reported that the Foundation held a "Friends of Wildlife Heritage Foundation" luncheon, which was well attended.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Baldwin, Chair; Commissioners Carr & Millette. Chairman Phillipson thanked the Awards Committee for their work in reviewing and selecting the award recipients.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: Chairman Phillipson reported that there was a handout left for the Commission to review relative to using a .410 shotgun for turkey hunting. He reported that the Commission may study & look into this further.

Chairman Philipson reported that last year a few Commissioners worked at Barry Conservation Camp on the covered archery range, which still needs a shooting platform built. He stated that he would like to get together with a few willing Commissioners & go up on a weekend & finish the project. He reported that he would coordinate with Mark Beauchesne, Advertising & Promotions Coordinator, to select a weekend that works with his schedule also, possibly in May or the first weekend in June.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin reported that he attended a public hearing on the Fis.1500 rules, OHRV.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Commissioner Carr had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER TEMPLE: Commissioner Temple had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse was absent.

COMMISSIONER RYAN: Commissioner Ryan was absent.

COMMISSIONER PATCH: Commissioner Patch reported he attended the “Carroll County Friends of NRA” Dinner on March 30, 2018, and raised \$12,300 in profit. He reported that the money raised goes toward shooting ranges in NH.

COMMISSIONER MILLETTE: Commissioner Millette had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER MCINNIS: Commissioner McInnis reported that he attended the Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries and a few public hearings on the coast.

COMMISSIONER HODGDON: Commissioner Hodgdon had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER STOHL: Commissioner Stohl had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that since 2001 the Department has owned property on Great Bay known as the Emery Farm/Sunset 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. He reported that he has spent a considerable amount of time on this, as there is a farm house on the property and chicken coops that were converted into apartments. The Department is in the process of addressing the tenants and hopes to have it resolved within the next few months.

He reported that Discover Wild NH Day would be held on Saturday, April 21, 2018, and he welcomed every to attend!

He further reported that he would like to have the June 13, 2018 Commission Meeting at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center in Holderness, NH. He reported that he & Kathy

LaBonte would be providing an overview of the budget process with the Commission at 10:00 a.m., prior to the 1:00 p.m., Commission Meeting.

In addition, he reported that SB-48, relative to establishing a commission to study the efficiency and effectiveness of the fish and game department operations, should be having its first meeting in the very near future (within 45 days of the effective date). Chairman Phillipson reported that he would be representing the Fish & Game Commission on the SB-48 commission.

Director Normandeau reported that the Sullivan County Sportsmen's Club Appeal relative to the decision on the Sunapee boat access proposal was not granted. He further reported that the disposition of the property was still up in the air. It was recommended to turn it over to the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources; however, it has not made the Council of Resources & Development's agenda to date.

In closing, he reported that he was currently the Vice President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and would become President in September, which will require a little more traveling.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Julia Sinclair, audience member, inquired as to whether the Commission understood studies, as it previously seemed that studies referred to weren't taken into consideration at times.

Chairman Phillipson responded that the Commission does take studies into consideration that apply to our geographic region and thanked her for her comment.

Christina Snyder, audience member, spoke to the difficulty she had in obtaining an event permit to conduct a demonstration at Discover Wild NH Day.

Commissioner Baldwin stated, "I have never objected to other people's opinion and I will continue to do so. I highly respect other people's opinions." He reported that he read all the comments relative to the wildlife rule proposals, pros and cons. He reported that there were considerable comments against the current rules regarding the management of wildlife. Many of those comments/suggestions are made by people who are involved in managing animals, other than wildlife/non-wildlife (breeding parameters, leash laws, control enclosures, rabies, distemper shots, etc.). He stated, "The department's wildlife management team has proven that their management of rules over the years is based on biological and scientific studies. I believe this shows that they know what they are doing, and although they do not use the same control suggested by those of non-wildlife management, I suggest we do not tell them how to manage their non-wildlife critters and ask that they respect the professionals that protect our wildlife critters."

Steve Angers, North Country Angler, thanked Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries, for his presentation today. He stated, "It's very important for groups like Trout Unlimited to get the missing data filled in for the Eastern Brook Trout Venture so we can write grants and get habitat restored and get our Eastern Brook Trout protected."

At this time, 4:14 p.m., Commissioner Carr moved to adjourn and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Carr, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman