

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

MAY 9, 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 W. Morse & E. Stohl.

Commissioners absent/excused: J. Ryan

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:00 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 Stohl moved to approve the April 18, 2018 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Millette seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.
- 2.) Colonel Jordan presented the 2017 Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chief's Association Officer of the Year Award and the 2017 Shikar Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year Award as follows:

Conservation Officer Joseph Canfield, of Sandwich, NH, was named the 2017 Shikar-Safari International Wildlife Officer of the Year.

Colonel Jordan reported that Conservation Officer Canfield began his career with New Hampshire Fish and Game in 2013. In 2014, Officer Canfield volunteered to become a member of the Advanced Search and Rescue Team and has helped in complicated rescues including clearing a specific location on the side of a steep mountain to allow the Army National Guard helicopter to lower a cable to extricate a critically injured patient. In 2015, he was asked to be the team leader of the newly acquired Side Scan Sonar and an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle. This past year he was successful in securing an additional Homeland Security grant to allow the purchase of an updated Side Scan Sonar and improved Remotely Operated Vehicle.

After successful completion of his first training year as a Conservation Officer, Joe was assigned to the 26-patrol area within District 2 covering the Towns of Sandwich, Moultonborough, Ossipee, Effingham, Meredith, Center Harbor, Holderness and Tamworth.

Colonel Jordan stated, "Throughout his tenure, Joe has consistently exhibited a strong work ethic and a level of professionalism that exemplifies what today's Wildlife Officer should strive to be. Joe has worked consistently to integrate himself into the various communities within his patrol area in a manner that has made him a well-known and respected member of those communities."

Conservation Officer James Benvenuti of Strafford, NH, and his K-9 partner Cora, were honored with the 2017 Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association of the Year Award.

Colonel Jordan stated, "Conservation Officer Benvenuti has been patrolling in District 6, on the Seacoast, since he joined the Department in 2011. He is one of the newest members of the Fish and Game Department's Dive Team and has made significant contributions in this work already." He reported that Officer Benvenuti and K-9 Cora went through a rigorous and extensive training program and proved to be an exceptional team. Officer Benvenuti continues to maintain a vigorous training schedule along with the regular responsibilities of a Conservation Officer. He is also a Field Training Officer, helping to train new recruits in their first year.

Colonel Jordan stated, "The coastline of our state places unique demands on the officers tasked with enforcing the myriad of laws that exist along our coast. Commercial fisheries enforcement is a completely different and complicated challenge when compared to other officer initiatives. James understands the complexities of addressing professional fishermen and their livelihoods and is seen as a resource to other officers when working on the coast. His consistent hard work and dedication to the job and the people we serve have earned him the respect of his law enforcement peers and the general public in his patrol."

2b.) Director Normandeau presented Randy Curtis, Federal Aid Coordinator, with the William T. Hesselton Memorial Award.

Director Normandeau reported that New Hampshire is very fortunate to have an extraordinary Federal Aid Coordinator, Randy Curtis, whose dedication, knowledge and professionalism is critical to the successful management of wildlife in New Hampshire.

He reported that since 2001, Randy Curtis has administered over 200 Federal Aid Grants totaling more than \$101,193,578.00 in federal aid revenue. These grants include: Wildlife Restoration Grants; Sport Fish Restoration Grants; State Wildlife Grants/Competitive State Wildlife Grants; and Endangered Wildlife Section 6 Grants. Randy also administers federal aid grants from other programs such as NOAA; USFS; and USDA (APHIS and NRCS); all of which are in addition to the federal aid revenue referenced above. Since Randy became the Federal Aid Coordinator, the annual apportionments of Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Funding for New Hampshire have more than doubled from \$3,600,000 in 2001 to \$7,700,000 in 2017. During Randy's tenure as Federal Aid Coordinator, the State Wildlife Grants Program and Competitive State Wildlife Grants Program have grown tremendously in capacity and complexity. Randy has also worked directly with NHFG staff and partners from other states to effectively develop and administer New Hampshire's role in 10 Competitive State Wildlife Grants with total project values over \$2,588,000. Species and habitats across 8 northeastern states have benefitted from these efforts.

During his time as the Hunter Education Coordinator, Randy Curtis was directly involved with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA). While in the Federal Aid Coordinator position, Randy has served as the Northeast Representative to the National Federal Aid Coordinators Working Group, which pertains to national implementation of the WSRF program.

In closing, Director Normandeau reported that the The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Division of Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration, describes Randy as follows: "*Randy Curtis exemplifies the finest qualities of a state federal aid coordinator. His knowledge of base agency programs, federal laws and regulations and fiscal business practices ensuring compliance with millions of dollars in funding is quite remarkable. Randy is well versed in the myriad of regulatory and compliance information that is crucial to achieving on-the-ground management and operation of a state agency. Randy's approach is always well researched and he has examined and analyzed all options in order to make sound decisions. Randy's level of knowledge has not gone unnoticed beyond New Hampshire when he was asked to serve as the Northeast representative to the National Federal Aid Coordinators Working Group. This group addresses implementation of the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration program nationally. Randy is highly regarded by his peers and WSFR staff both regionally and nationally for his knowledge, approach and professionalism.*"

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Phillipson congratulated the award recipients for their hard work & dedication.

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

3a.) Commission accepted the donation of one laptop computer, valued at \$881.00, from the Great Bay Stewards, to be utilized by the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

3b.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$25.00 from Evelyn Barrett, given in honor of Alpha Delta Kappa, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

3c.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$50.00 from Bonnie Draper, in memory of David Hill, to be utilized by the "Let's Go Fishing" program.

3d.) Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$250.00 from Island Services Company LLC, Meredith, NH, to be utilized by the "Let's Go Fishing" program.

4.) Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission and requested 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.

Jason reported that the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Fish Habitat Partnership (EBTJV-FHP) is a nationally recognized partnership among state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and academic institutions. The EBTJV partners have agreed that a range-wide conservation strategy is necessary to reverse brook trout declines, improve technology transfer, and effectively prioritize funds and projects to restore this recreationally and

culturally important species. This range-wide strategy is most effective when it is informed by brook trout status assessments conducted at the local watershed level.

Jason reported that Fish Community information will be stored in the NH Fish & Game Department's Fish Database and used by multiple state and local agencies, academia and conservation commissions. He indicated that there was \$10,000 per year appropriated in the FY' 18/19 biennial budget for seasonal labor for projects of this nature.

Commissioner Baldwin moved to approve the expenditure of 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 and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5. Doug Grout, Chief, Marine Division, came before the Commission seeking approval to readopt a variety of existing marine rules that are about to expire; to amend certain rules pertaining to Berry's Brook, the tending of lobster gear and the marine aquaculture license application process. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Morse moved to approve readopt the above as presented and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reviewed the monthly financial statement dated April 30, 2018.

2.) Doug Grout provided an overview of marine rules relative to rule changes for menhaden to comply with the Amendment 3 of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden; proposed modifications to the rules for striped bass to allow possession of striped bass fillets under certain conditions. Doug reported that the Department has had requests from charter boat business and recreational anglers to allow filleting of striped bass on the water or at shore. He reported that the proposed changes would provide that opportunity while continuing to allow for strict enforcement of the minimum size.

Doug reported that this would be brought to public hearing for input.

Director Normandeau reported that he & Kathy LaBonte would be providing an overview of the budget process with the Commission on June 13, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center, 387 Perch Pond Rd, Holderness, NH, prior to the 1:00 p.m., Commission Meeting.

3.) Corey Riley, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Program Supervisor, came before the Commission and gave an overview of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. She reported that the Reserve is part of a national network of protected areas and promotes long-term research, education and stewardship throughout the Great Bay estuary. Created under the Coastal Zone Management Act, the National Estuarine Research Reserve partnership program between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

and the coastal states protects more than one million acres of the nation's most important coastal resources.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department manages the Great Bay Reserve, which was designated in 1989. The Reserve is also supported by the Great Bay Stewards, a non-profit friends group. Visitors are encouraged to explore the natural beauty of the Great Bay Estuary and discover New Hampshire's hidden coast.

She reported that The Great Bay Reserve is part of the Great Bay Estuary, a complex embayment and New Hampshire's largest estuarine system. Fed by the tidal waters of the Piscataqua River that forms the boundary between Maine and New Hampshire, the estuary offers a variety of diverse habitats including eelgrass beds, mudflats, salt marsh, rocky intertidal, and upland forest and fields.

The Reserve begins at the General Sullivan Bridge at Dover Point, seven miles from the mouth of the Piscataqua River and the Gulf of Maine. The Reserve encompasses 10,235 acres, including approximately 7,300 acres of open water and wetlands. All of Great Bay and Little Bay are contained within the Reserve boundary as well as the tidal portions of five major river systems - Bellamy, Oyster, Lamprey, Squamscott and Winnicut.

In addition, she reported that in 1993, the Great Bay Discovery Center (formerly known as Sandy Point) was constructed on the shores of Great Bay, Greenland, NH, it serves as the education headquarters of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Inside the Discovery Center, visitors are treated to interpretive exhibits about the Great Bay Estuary and the amazing creatures that call it home. Children can get their hands wet in an estuarine discovery tank as they learn about horseshoe crabs, oysters, mud snails and more! Interactive displays about salt marsh farming, plankton, tides and research on the Bay, allow children and adults alike to learn about the Estuary.

The center is open to the public May-September 10am-4pm, Wednesdays through Sundays. We are open weekends only in October, and closed November through April. The grounds are open year round, dawn to dusk.

She encouraged anyone that has not been to the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to visit and experience what it has to offer.

She welcomed the Commission to hold a meeting there in the future.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Carr, Chair: Commissioners Millette & Temple. Commissioner Carr reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting to discuss a resolution as it relates to biennial hearing dates. He reported that the recommendation was to add a policy in the Commission Handbook that dictates that the Biennial Hearings will take place the evening of the December Commission Meeting and the Lancaster Hearing to be held the following evening. Commissioner Carr moved that the Biennial Hearings take place as stated above and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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

Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, reported that SB-48, establishing a commission to study the efficiency and effectiveness of Fish and Game operations, has not met as of yet.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Ryan was absent from the meeting.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Chairman Phillipson reported that Commissioner Millette volunteered to serve on this committee. Tanya reported that she would submit the nomination paperwork to the Governor's Office for Commissioner Millette's appointment to the Lakes Committee and report on its status.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Patch reported that the committee did not meet. He reported that the committee was working on updating some historical information for the handbook and hoped to have the insert for the handbook in the near future.

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

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee met and reviewed various recommendations regarding Lake Sunapee Boat Access. The committee discussed history, investments, etc. He stated, "The feeling is that the Department should not release the Wild Good site at this time, doing anything now would be premature."

Director Normandeau reported that this topic would be on the CORD (Council on Resources & Development) agenda for discussion. He stated, "If the property would be reassigned, it would happen there."

Director Normandeau further reported that at the recent Public Water Access Advisory Board Meeting, the board took a vote to reaffirm that the Wild Goose property stay under Fish & Game ownership until an alternative arises. He stated that he would like to see the Commission support the retention of ownership of that site until a resolution is found on Lake Sunapee.

At this time, Commissioner Stohl moved to retain ownership of the Wild Goose property on Lake Sunapee until an alternative is found and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chairman Phillipson stated, "It makes no sense to give it up without an alternative."

Chairman Phillipson reported that he received word that there are posted property signs at the Wild Goose site and inquired if someone from the Department could look into that.

Director Normandeau responded that he would look into that.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee has not met. He reported that the Foundation recently did a press release relative to

the Durant Funds. He reported that in 2018 to date, over \$48,000 in grants were dispersed for approximately 10 separate projects. In closing, he stated, "The Foundation has an excellent process for dispersing these funds."

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Baldwin, Chair; Commissioners Carr & Millette. Committee is sunset at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: 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 reported that some of the Commissioners would be going to Barry Conservation Camp the weekend of June 9th & 10th to work on miscellaneous projects that have not been addressed yet.

NEW BUSINESS: Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, spoke to the compilation of minutes. He reported that the minutes belong to the Commission and are a record of what was discussed. Minutes are controlled by the Right-to-know law. In order for minutes to be lawful, they must contain the names of members, persons appearing before the board, brief description of subject matter discussed and final decisions. The board can choose to have other materials in the minutes; however, that choice is made by the board. They are not meant to be a transcript, however an overview of the meeting.

Commissioner Patch stated, "Our minutes are taped here. The actual minutes are a general overview of the meeting, which contains the subjects discussed and decisions made."

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Commissioner Carr had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER TEMPLE: Commissioner Temple reported that Sullivan County Sportsmen's Club would be hosting a kids fishing derby on Saturday, June 2, 2018, at Donald Clarke's house in Claremont, NH, and all are invited. Refreshments will be served! Prizes to win!

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 MCINNIS: Commissioner McInnis had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER HODGDON: Commissioner Hodgdon had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER STOHL: Commissioner Stohl had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that he was at Barry Conservation Camp recently and saw that the foundation for the dining hall addition was in. He reported the department still has to secure some necessary permits to proceed.

Director Normandeau reported that Discover Wild NH Day was held on April 21, 2018 and had a record turnout of just under 10,000 people in attendance.

He reported that he attended the Connectivity meeting recently held. Director Normandeau requested that the Commission be copied on public hearings/public meeting dates in order to keep the Commission informed so they may attend if they so wish.

He further reported that there are some valve and gate issues on the Murphy Dam that need to be addressed by the Department of Environmental Services. He reported that he spoke with Jim Gallagher of the Dams Bureau, who indicated that those issues would not be addressed until November.

In closing, he reported that he attended the CT Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee Meeting. He reported that Bing Judd of Pittsburg, NH, recently retired from the committee and Gail Hanson (former President of NH Snowmobile Association), was elected as the new Chair.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Kristina Snyder, audience member, spoke to the increase in ticks and the advantages of the opossum. She reported that the opossum has been extensively researched and shown to be a prolific killer of ticks. She reported that they also have an incredible immunity to disease and are resistant to rabies. She further reported that they are not a threat to livestock, children or pets nor do they dig burrows. In closing, she stated, "Please consider this information carefully."

Julia Sinclair, audience member, inquired as to when the Wildlife Rule Package would be heard before JLCAR (Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules). Paul Sanderson responded that they would be heard on June 15, 2018.

At this time, 3:02 p.m., Commissioner Patch moved to adjourn and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Carr, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman