

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JUNE 13, 2018 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: Owl Brook Hunter Education Center, 387 Perch Pond Rd, Holderness, NH 03245

Commissioners Present: R. Phillipson, E. Millette, P. McInnis, B. Temple, C. Hodgdon, B. Carr, W. Morse & E. Stohl.

Commissioners absent/excused: D. Patch, J. Ryan & T. Baldwin

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Phillipson asked all in attendance to pause for a moment of silence in memory of former long term Commissioner, Ellis Hatch, who recently passed away.

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 Carr moved to approve the May 9, 2018 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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

2a.) Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 in memory of their Uncle, Russell Mardin Sr., from Linda Mrozinski, Carol Sparks, Lori-An Cyr, Andrea Harrington, all from the State of Massachusetts, to be utilized by the Twin Mountain Fish Hatchery.

2b.) Commission accepted two donations, totaling \$205.00, to be utilized by the Hunter Education Program, from the following:

Proctor Academy -	\$200.00
Sarah & Michael Proulx -	\$5.00

2c.) Commission accepted the donation of \$400.00 from Mary-Anne Irish, Hooksett, NH, in memory of Richard May, to be utilized by the Let's Go Fishing Program.

2d.) Commission accepted the donation of \$35.00 from Paul & Joanne Ouellette, Windham,

NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2e.) Commission accepted the donation of 6 metal detectors with headphones, 1 per Law Enforcement District, from the nonprofit Operation Game Thief, valued at approximately \$2,350.00.

2f.) Commission accepted two donations totaling \$300.00, in memory of Albert Midgley, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account, from the following:

Reeds Ferry Small Building, Inc., Hudson, NH - \$250.00

Steven & Laurie Blanchette, Hudson, NH – \$50.00

3.) Commissioner Carr moved to accept the donation of up to \$2,000 from the Basil W. Woods, Jr., Chapter of Trout Unlimited, to hire a seasonal laborer to perform brook trout habitat surveys and population assessments on various streams in the Warner River Watershed and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

4.) Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission and provided a power point presentation relative to changing the fee structure for fishing tournaments.

Commissioner Stohl moved to approve going forward with changing the fee structure for fishing tournaments as presented and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Commissioner Morse moved to approve the Commission's slate of officers as follows below and Commissioner Millette seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Phillipson, Chairman

Commissioner Patch, Vice Chairman

Commissioner Carr, Secretary/Treasurer

Nicola Whitley, Chief, Public Affairs Division, provided a brief overview of the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center. She reported that Owl Brook hosts workshops, group programs and special events conducted by Fish and Game staff, Hunter Education and center volunteers, often in partnership with organizations such as the NH Trappers Association and the National Wild Turkey Federation. These activities allow individuals and families to start the lifelong journey of becoming safe and responsible hunters and trappers. As much as possible, the "hands-on" and "learn by participation" approach is used at the center.

She further reported that the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center relies upon volunteer assistance from the state's sporting community to accomplish our mission. The center offers basic, advanced and special opportunity classes and workshops on hunting, trapping, shooting, outdoors skills and wildlife management. The center's classroom building, shooting ranges, and

interpretive trails and courses are important tools helping the department pass on the heritage of hunting and trapping to future generations.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reviewed the monthly financial statement dated May 31, 2018.
- 2.) Jim Oehler, Habitat Biologist, came before the Commission and provided an overview of a request to expend up to \$500,000 from the Wildlife Habitat Account for the purchase of 3,181 acres referred to as the Ruger Properties, located in Sullivan County.

Jim reported that if approved, this project would protect 3,181 acres of forestland in Sullivan County consisting of diverse wildlife habitat and cold water streams, and secure hunting, trapping, and angling access for all to enjoy. The Ruger property consists of two parcels known as the Brighton Forest and Loverin Hill, which are part of a large unfragmented block of woodlands that totals 48,750 acres. This block is considered New Hampshire's largest block of unfragmented woodlands south of the White Mountain National Forest.

He further reported that the total purchase price of the Ruger property is expected to exceed \$3,000,000. The financial package is expected to include Wildlife Habitat Account funds, Federal Pitman Robertson funds and Department of Environmental Services Aquatic Mitigation funds.

In closing, he stated, "If approved, this property will be designated as Fish & Game's newest Wildlife Management Area."

Director Normandeau reminded the Commission that if the Department does not spend the Pitman Robertson funds, they get reverted back to U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

He further stated, "We could take a trip over to the property for all Commissioners to see if you'd like."

Chairman Phillipson stated, "I think this project falls into the goals of the Department and Commission perfectly."

Commissioner Morse moved to waive the \$7,500 Commission Policy on voting on items over \$7,500 the same day as presented and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Jim Oehler reported that the Department was working with the Conservation Fund, as they are purchasing the property and the Department is buying it from them.

Commissioner Carr moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$500,000 from the Wildlife Habitat Account for the purchase of 3,181 acres referred to as the Ruger Properties located in Sullivan County and Commissioner Millette seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hodgdon moved to cancel the July Commission Meeting and Commissioner Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

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

Commissioner Carr moved to reaffirm the following resolution as it relates to the structure & duties of the Fish & Game Commission and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission has been in existence since 1935; and

Whereas, the current structure of the Commission and the Fish and Game Department affords an opportunity for the public to have access to the Commission's members and the Executive Director at each monthly public meeting; and

Whereas, this amount of public access is more extensive than in any other department of New Hampshire state government; and

Whereas, the Commission believes that the current structure, qualifications, and duties of the Commission and its members as set forth in RSA 206:2, 206:2-a, and 206:3 provides the best way for all citizens of this state to assure that the fish, game, and wildlife resources of the state will be protected and preserved;

Now, therefore the Fish and Game Commission resolves and states that it will advocate for the preservation of the structure, qualifications, duties and membership of the Commission, as expressed in current RSA 206:2, 206:2-a, and 206:3, in any proposal for change that may be brought to the New Hampshire Court.

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

Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, reported that the legislative session had ended. He provided a brief update on certain bills & their status (see attached).

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Ryan was absent from the meeting.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Tanya reported that she submitted the nomination paperwork to the Governor's Office for Commissioner Millette's appointment to the Lakes Committee and has not yet received confirmation. She was informed that it would be voted on at the July 27, 2018 Governor & Council Meeting.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Carr reported that there was an update to the handbook, clarifying the day the Fish & Game Commission meets every month.

Commissioner Carr moved to update the Commission Handbook to reflect that the Fish & Game Commission meets the second Wednesday of every month vs. the third Wednesday, as currently stated, with certain exceptions, and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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

Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee did not meet this month. He reported that CORD (Council on Resources & Development) met, where the recommendations of the Lake Sunapee Boat Access Commission were briefly heard. The Chairman of CORD scheduled a public hearing to be held in July.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the Wildlife Heritage Foundation was in the process of updating/adopting a new strategic plan, in an effort to diversify fundraising and look at new sources to grow fundraising sales. He reported that starting July 1st in New Hampshire, Beam Suntory (a spirits distillery) will donate \$1.00 from every sale of Maker's Mark to the Wildlife Heritage Foundation. He reported that the distiller is very interested in water quality.

He further reported that the Wildlife Heritage Foundation would like to improve communication with the Department and possibly try to align fundraising efforts around Department needs.

In closing, he stated, "They are doing a lot of great work!"

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

OLD BUSINESS: Nothing heard at this time.

NEW BUSINESS: Chairman Phillipson stated, "I'd like to hold the August 8, 2018 Commission Meeting at Barry Conservation Camp, Berlin, NH."

Commissioner Stohl moved to hold the August 8, 2018 Commission Meeting at Barry Conservation Camp and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Commissioner Carr had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER TEMPLE: Commissioner Temple had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson reported that he, along with Commissioner's Millette, Carr, and former Coos County Commissioner, Ted Tichy & Wife, Mary, spent time finishing the archery range at Barry Conservation Camp. He thanked Wayne Pascal, Superintendent, Berlin Fish Hatchery, Mary Tichy, for all she did, including providing an excellent breakfast, and thanked all Commissioners who assisted as well.

He stated, "The Commission felt it was important for them to alleviate any burden on the department to finish this project."

He further reported that camp registration was full within the first hour of registration opening, which shows a very high interest in the desire to attend camp & the various programs.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER RYAN: Commissioner Ryan was absent.

COMMISSIONER PATCH: Commissioner Patch was absent.

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 reported that he attended a retirement celebration honoring Lieutenant Wayne Saunders and stated, "It was a nice evening."

At this time, Chairman Phillipson thanked Commissioner Morse for his long tenure (15+ years) on the Fish & Game Commission. He reported that Commissioner Morse has served on the Legislative Committee most of that time and has gone to numerous legislative hearings.

He stated, "He was very helpful in any way possible and we thank him for his dedication & service."

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that he would provide an overview of the budget process after the meeting and reported that all were welcome to stay for that.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Much discussion ensued relative to the wildlife rule package as it relates to trapping and bag limits on fox.

Paul Debow, President, Trappers Association, spoke to the displeasure of the bag limit on fox. He reported that he does not understand the reasoning.

Commissioner Stohl reported that he was unaware of a bag limit on fox until he received a call from a constituent asking about a 3 fox bag limit. He reported that he contacted Kent Gustafson, Biometrician/Program Supervisor, who reported that there was a bag limit put in place at the last minute.

He stated, "I feel there should have been another public hearing on this subject to address the change. The process is the issue with me. This should have been addressed earlier in the process. The process needs to be more transparent."

In closing, he stated, "You will get trappers out of the woods and will have problems in the future."

Director Normandeau stated, "The fox population has been decreasing rapidly and the department has an obligation to address it. We took input from trappers and looked at data & felt it was necessary to put a bag limit in play based on that data."

Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, stated, "We partnered very closely with trappers and value their input, as we have a shared interest."

At this time, 2:43 p.m., Commissioner Stohl moved to adjourn and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Carr, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman