

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department's Region 4 Office, 15 Ash Brook Ct., Keene, NH 03431.

Commissioners Present: P. McInnis, J. Caveney, M. Hodgson, A.J. DeRosa, P. DeBow, R. Green, & B. Temple.

Commissioners absent/excused: M. Lachance, E. Stohl, C. Hodgdon, & S. Price

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Green called the meeting to order at 1:06 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 DeBow moved to approve the August 9, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes and Commissioner DeRosa seconded.

Commissioner Hodgson recommended an edit on Page 5 of the August 9, 2022 Commission Minutes, under the Sustainability & Strategic Planning Report.

Should read: He reported that he believed it was Commissioner ~~Hodgson's~~ Hodgdon's intention to bring them before the Commission at today's meeting asking for Commission input, as well as staff input.

The motion carried with 6 in favor, 1 abstention (P. McInnis).

- 1a.) Chairman Green presented the below resolution to former Cheshire County Commissioner, Robert "Moose" Phillipson.

Honoring Robert Phillipson, Jr.

Whereas, Robert "Moose" Phillipson Jr., served the citizens of New Hampshire and Cheshire County on the Fish and Game Commission from 2001 through 2020 with great passion, dignity & dedication, as well as receiving strong endorsements from sporting clubs and constituents; and,

Whereas, Commissioner Phillipson assisted with numerous projects at Barry Conservation Camp, donating his time and equipment to construct the archery range and improve facilities in an effort for young people to have the opportunity to enjoy outdoor experiences and learn about conservation in New Hampshire; and,

Whereas, Commissioner Phillipson served many years as Chair of the Commission and during his tenure guided the selection of two Executive Directors and dedicated many hours at the State House advocating for legislative actions that served the best interest of the resources and people of the Granite State; and,

Whereas, Commissioner Phillipson advocated for strong relations between sportsmen and landowners and issues relative to access for the pursuit of fish and game, including furbearer populations deemed fit for harvest by credible scientific methodologies.

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Fish and Game Department and Commission hereby express its sincere gratitude to Moose Phillipson for his many contributions to fish and wildlife conservation and offer their good wishes for many years of enjoyment in New Hampshire's great outdoors.

Unanimously adopted by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission this thirteenth day of September, Two Thousand and Twenty Two.

*Scott R. Mason, Executive Director
NH Fish & Game Department*

*Ray Green, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission*

Robert "Moose" Phillipson thanked the Commission and stated, "I am honored to receive this recognition. When I came on the Commission, I was a bit out of my comfort zone, however, I stepped up to the plate and could not have done it without the support of my wife, Debbie, and Daughter, Harley." He also thanked the staff from the Region 4 Office, as he received a great deal of assistance from them, as well. He further thanked his constituents and Department employees for working with him over his 20- year tenure as Cheshire County Commissioner.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and 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 consent agenda items 2a-2e, as presented below, and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$1,743.00 from Cathy & Wayne Macdonald, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account for the purchase of two ballistic safety vests.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$2,400.00 from Whitetails Unlimited (NE States/NY Chapter) made to the Wildlife Division to support the deer project.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$38.50 from Justin Garksnis & Frances Leitgeb, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account. Mr. Garksnis qualifies for a free over 68 Trapping License & appreciatively donated to the Department.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$40.00 from Susan Williams, Plainfield, NH, in memory of Leo Duranleau, avid hunter & angler from Enfield, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2e.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$20.00 from Patrick & Penelope Eggleston, Amherst, NH, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

LATE ITEMS:

The following late agenda items came before the Commission:

2f.) The Law Enforcement Division requested The Commission's approval to accept the donation of three (3) Custom Robotic Wildlife Decoys (for Law Enforcement Districts 1-3), valued at 8,370. From the New Hampshire Operation Game Thief.

2g.) The Wildlife Division came before the Commission and respectfully requested their approval to accept the six prize donations (listed below) generously provided by Sturm, Ruger & Company, Woodman Arms, Prime Archery, Morse Sporting Goods, The Ruffed Grouse Society, and the NH State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Explanatory Information:

The below are prizes for participants in the 2021 Deer Hunter Mail Survey, 2021 Bow Hunter Survey, the 2021/22 Small Game Hunter Survey, 2021 Ruffed Grouse Wing & Tail Survey, and 2022 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey and will be awarded via random computerized drawings. Surveys and associated prizes described below:

2021 Deer Hunter Mail Survey (2 prizes)

Ruger American Rifle with Vortex Crossfire II Riflescope (Model #16934)
Valued at \$769.00, generously donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company

Woodman Arms Patriot Muzzleloader Valued at \$799.00, generously donated by
Woodman Arms, Fremont, NH.

2021 Bow Hunter Survey (1 prize)

Prime Nexus Compound bow valued at \$999.00, generously donated by Prime Archery and Morse Sporting Goods of Hillsboro, NH.

2021-22 Small Game Hunter Survey (1 prize)

Ruger American Rifle with Vortex Crossfire II Rifle Scope (Model #16931)
Valued at \$769.00, generously donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company.

2021 Ruffed Grouse Wing and Tail Survey (1 prize)

Escort M87 Pump 20-Gauge shotgun valued at \$329.00, generously donated by The Ruffed Grouse Society.

2022 Spring Turkey Hunter Survey (1 prize)

Mossberg Maverick 88 Field Bottomlands Camo 12-Gauge shotgun valued at \$279.00, graciously donated by The NH State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Commissioner Hodgson moved to accept late agenda items 2g & 2f, as presented above, and Commissioner DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) No financial statement reviewed this month.

2.) Dianne Timmins, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission and provided an overview of a future action item requesting to spend \$50,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to purchase four backpack electrofishing unit & accessories.

Dianne reported that each unit now costs approximately \$10,000 each. She reported that the devices are used to assess habitat and fish populations in the water, and to determine whether habitat restoration is required. In addition, she reported that the devices help to determine whether a habitat project has been successful or not. If the number of fish increases in a restored habitat, that is a good sign.

Many questions arose from the Commission.

Commissioner DeRosa inquired as to the balance in the Fisheries Habitat Account.

Dianne responded that there is over \$1million dollars in the fund, however, would confirm the exact amount with Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, and get back to the Commission with that amount.

Commission Green inquired as to the warranty on the devices.

Dianne responded that she did not believe there was a warranty on these devices. She reported that she has had them repaired in the past at a cost of \$150.00 for evaluation.

Commissioner DeRosa inquired as to whether device insurance was available to purchase.

Dianne responded that she would look further into that and get back to the Commission with the answer.

Commissioner Hodgson reported that she was somewhat familiar with backpack electrofishing. She asked Dianne to explain the process and suggested that she provide a specification/device data sheet to the Commission, as it may help the Commission understand the devices better. She further recommended that she include a brief overview on backpack electrofishing procedures for the next meeting.

Commissioner DeRosa inquired as to whether this request was time-sensitive or not.

Dianne responded that it was not, and that she would provide additional technical information and warranty information to the Commission prior to the next meeting.

Commissioner Hodgson requested that the Commission receive the balance in the Fisheries Habitat Account and the balance after this potential purchase.

Steve Angers, Audience member, Conway, NH, reported that after looking on the vendor's website, it appears there is a one or three year option to extend the warranty on the devices.

In closing, Dianne reported that she would provide a specification/device data informational sheet, warranty information, and the backpack electrofishing procedures to the Commission, prior to the next Commission Meeting.

3.) Mark Beauchesne, Landowner Relations Coordinator, came before the Commission and provided an overview of the Landowner Relations Program.

Mark reported that in July of 2020, he took on the additional duties of the Landowner Relations Coordinator, in addition to his current position of Marketing & Program Coordinator. He reported that it has been a good fit, as he was already interacting quite a bit with landowners & sportsmen. He reported that he collected all the signs from the Regional Offices, took inventory & reached out to the participants currently in the Landowner Relations Program to verify if they still had the property and whether or not they wished to remain in the program.

He further reported that he updated the Landowner Relations brochure, related forms, as well as the website, to include more resources for landowners, as far as duty of care, landowner responsibility, liability, etc. He reported that he also shares the Landowner Relations database with the Fish & Game Lieutenants on a quarterly basis, so they are aware of individuals in the program.

In addition, he reported that he has done some public outreach & promotions on the program, with the goal to increase and preserve private property, public access, strengthen relationships with landowners, serve and recognize cooperating landowners, and lessen landowner /hunter, angler conflicts.

He stated that the agency provides signage to address different needs (16 different signs) at no charge to landowners, provided the landowner keeps a significant amount of their property open for hunting access.

In closing, he reported that as a thank you to the landowners in the program, the department sends a Fish & Game calendar, along with a letter from himself & Director Mason thanking them for their participation in the program.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Green thanked Mark for the informative presentation.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:

Public policy development & recommendations, as well as Commission advocacy before legislature.

Commissioner Price, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney, DeBow, Hodgson & Stohl.

Staff members: Kevin Jordan & Marty Mobley.

Commissioner Hodgson reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting and reviewed proposed impending legislation. As a cycle of improvement, the committee is working on a procedure with DOP (Department of Personnel) to have the Commission review proposed impending legislation & engage with stakeholders and constituents before the Commission takes a vote.

She further reported that the committee reviewed everything presented in their packets and directed anyone with any questions, to please ask somebody on the Legislative Committee or

staff. She reported that the committee plans to have a recommendation on that at the next Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Hodgson moved to approve Fis. 608:03, as proposed, relative to shellfish reports, and Commissioner DeBow seconded. Commissioner Hodgson reported that there were no changes to the language. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: Commission professional development, education & policy recommendations related to Commission conduct & activities.

Commissioner Caveney, Chair; Commissioners: Lachance & Temple.
Staff member: Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner Caveney reported that the committee did not meet due to the lack of a quorum.

SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGIC PLANNING: Agency funding, development & oversight of strategic plan.

Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa, Hodgson & Stohl.
Staff member: Scott Mason.

Commissioner DeRosa stated that there was nothing new to report this month.

RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE: Policy recommendations related to agency infrastructure; including facilities, public access, habitat & wildlife.

Commissioner Temple, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa, McInnis & Lachance.
Staff member: Dianne Timmins.

Commissioner Temple stated that there was nothing new to report this month.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION: Engagement, partnership, awards, public recognition & education strategies for the public & interest groups.

Commissioner DeRosa Chair; Commissioners: DeBow, Hodgdon & Price.
Staff members: Dan Bergeron, Kevin Jordan & Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner DeRosa reported that the committee plans to schedule a meeting before the October 11, 2022 Commission Meeting.

Commissioner DeBow reported that the 2021 Commission Awards of Excellence would be presented at the December Commission Meeting.

LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Price.

NH RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon

OLD BUSINESS: Chairman Green reported that the Commission Identification cards have been distributed and recommended that any Commissioners absent today see Colonel Jordan to retrieve theirs.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner DeRosa reported that he & Commissioner Price attended the Becoming an Outdoor Weekend held at Geneva Point in Moultonborough, NH. He stated, “We are both were proud of the program and believe it plays an important role in continuing the longevity of our hunting & fishing traditions.” He reported that staff & instructors did an excellent job & further stated that he would like the Public Engagement & Education Committee to assist in pursuing alternative funding avenues to assure the program can continue to grow.

Commissioner Hodgson reported that she was participating on the HBPAC (Hampton Beach Pier Advisory Committee, SB 346-FN-A). She reported that there has been \$150,000 allocated for a feasibility study to investigate the impacts of constructing and maintaining a pier directly south of Boar's Head in the town of Hampton, NH. She reported that Mike Marchand, Nongame Program Supervisor & Brendan Clifford, Nongame Biologist, were able to join her at a meeting and offered feedback regarding piping plovers & terns. In addition, she reported that the feedback received from The Marine Division & Law Enforcement Division have been submitted to the Advisory Committee, as well. In closing, she reported that she would keep the Commission updated and stated that the committee was still receiving feedback. The study committee will report its findings and any recommendations for proposed legislation to the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, House Clerk, Senate Clerk, the Governor, and the State Library on or before November 1, 2022.

Commissioner McInnis reported that he attended a Marine Advisory Committee Meeting last week regarding Offshore Wind Development and inquired as to whether the Commission should take a position on that or not?

Cheri Patterson, Chief, Marine Division, reported that it is early on, however, there is a RFI (Request for Information) from the public. She reported that she would be responding in regards to any sort of effects on habitat, as it relates to recreational & commercial fisheries.

Commissioner Hodgson moved that Cheri Patterson, Chief, Maine Division, provide a presentation before the Commission within the next month or two relative to Offshore Wind Development, to include a timeline of events and Commissioner DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chairman Green mentioned having each committee select a Vice Chairman who could take over if the Chairman was absent. He stated that he would like each committee to appoint their own Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Hodgson stated that she appreciates Chairman Green’s comments & does not disagree, however, stated that the that the Legislative Committee has time constraints & deadlines, while other committees may not require such back-up or have deadline situations, thus, may not require a Vice Chairman.

Commissioner Hodgson moved that the Chairman of the Legislative Committee identify a Vice Chairman, amongst members of the Legislative Committee, and Commissioner DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS: Commissioners will report on their recent activities as it relates to Fish & Game Commission duties and responsibilities. This is an informational item only.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: The Director will report on recent department activities. This is an information item only.

Director Mason reported that The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has announced new provisions allowing the importation of hunter-harvested waterfowl from Canada into the United States, amending the recent declaration that effectively banned all import of birds.

He reported that it was the 85th Anniversary of the creation of the Pitman-Robertson Act. He reported that the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus is planning celebration events nationwide relative to hunter-backed conservation.

In addition, he thanked the Commissioners who attended the tour of the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery in New Durham, NH, who had a chance to review the bio-testing process. He reported that HDR is the Engineering Firm that is comparing the different methodologies in wastewater treatment, which will be key to some of the decisions that Director Mason will be making, as it relates to the future of the hatcheries.

He further reported that the department was in the negotiation phase of the Merrymeeting Watershed Study, which was part of the settlement agreement with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) & CLF (Conservation Law Foundation). He reported that the department is also in the process of working with the Bureau of Public Works to select the design team for the Hatchery Modernization Project.

He reported that he attended the Congressional Sportsmen's Shoot at Sig Sauer last month.

Further, he reported that he & Mike Marchand, Nongame Supervisor, met with staff of U.S. Senators to obtain input on RAWA (Recovering Americas Wildlife Act). He reported that they do not anticipate seeing a vote taken on that right away.

He attended the New Hampshire Trappers Association Annual Rendezvous held on the Sandwich Fair Grounds on August 27, 2022.

He reported that the department had booths at both the Hopkinton & Lancaster Fairs. He reported that he worked at the Lancaster Fair booth, with the Law Enforcement Division.

He reported that that the B.O.W. Fall Workshop was very successful, with 117 participants in attendance. He reported that this was the first three-day weekend workshop held since COVID. He further reported that the department is trying to change the part-time B.O.W. Coordinator position into a full-time position.

In closing, he reported that the department was in the final stages of putting together the budget proposal for the Governor.

Commissioner Hodgson asked that Chairman Green & Director Mason have discussion on what future presentations to come before the Commission will consist of.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Bill, Acworth, NH, spoke relative to the importance for the Commission to hear/have a presentation about all hounds, not just coyotes.

At this time, 2:45 p.m., Commissioner Hodgson moved to adjourn and Commissioner DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Ray Green, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission