

## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

### DECEMBER 20, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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

Commissioners Present: P. DeBow, J. Caveney, A.J. DeRosa, R. Green, B. Temple, M. Lachance, E. Stohl, C. Hodgdon, & S. Price.

Seacoast Commissioner: Vacant

Commissioners absent/excused: M. Hodgson

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Green called the meeting to order at 1:00p.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 Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Commissioner E. Stohl moved to approve the November 25, 2022 Commission Minutes and Commissioner M. Lachance seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

1a.) Presentation of the Commission Award of Excellence.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa presented Richard Hutchins of Dover, NH, with the Ellis Hatch Jr., Commission Award of Excellence. Numerous letters expressing Richard's contributions to the community and his dedication to protecting our valued natural resources supported Richard's nomination.

The following award recipients were not able to attend the awards ceremony; therefore, an additional presentation of two awards will take place at a future Commission Meeting.

- Habitat Stewardship Award, David Roby Sr., of Lyme, NH.
- Youth Conservationist Award, Jack Dalton, of Manchester, NH.

At this time, Colonel Jordan introduced three (3) new Conservation Officers:

Ryan Harris  
Austin Valladares  
Ted Malagodi

In addition, Dan Bergeron, Chief, Wildlife Division, announced that Andrew Timmins was recently promoted to the Game Program Supervisor. He reported that Andy had been the Bear Project Leader for approximately 28 years, and has worked out of both the Region 1 and Region 4 Offices.

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 B. Temple moved to approve consent agenda items 2a – 2i, as presented below, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of a locked antler deer mount, valued at \$750.00 and a bobcat mount, valued at \$500.00 from Simon Thomson, Orford, NH, to be on display at Department facilities.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from Crystal Weyers-Leuchtner, honoring NH Conservation Officers who risk their lives assisting others in need, for deposit into the Search & Rescue Account.

2c.) The Commission accepted two donations totaling \$135.00 from the following individuals, in memory of Emily Sotelo, who perished while hiking Mount Lafayette in Franconia, NH, on November 23, 2022, for deposit into the Search & Rescue Account:

- Denise Stark - \$100.00
  - Peter Marshall - \$35.00
- \$135.00

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of five USB rechargeable LED reflective vests from Tom Walz, valued at \$100.00, for use by the Advanced Search & Rescue Team.

2e.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 from William & Holly Reynolds, Fitchburg, MA, in memory of Jack Miller, Gilmanton, NH, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2f.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from the Plymouth Fireman's Association, Plymouth, NH, in memory of Randy Morrison, Wentworth, NH, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2g.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$75.00 from Ronna Worth, Amherst, NH, in memory of Richard Demanche, Candia, NH, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2h.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from the Grantham Garden Club, Grantham, NH, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account & utilized for conservation education.

2i.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 from Carla Rautenberg, in memory of John "Jack" Holden, who passed away on December 25, 2017, on Mt. Bond Cliff. This donation is for equipment and required safety training for the Department's Specialized Search & Rescue Team.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, offered to answer any questions relative to the financial statement.
- 2.) Kathy LaBonte came before the Commission and provided an informative presentation on Lifetime Licenses. (See attached presentation)

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman R. Green thanked Kathy for the presentation and fielding questions relative to the different license types.

### **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 S. Price reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting. She reported that the committee voted 5-0 in favor of compiling a welcome/orientation letter to the incoming Representatives.

At this time, Commissioner E. Stohl moved that the Commission compile an introduction letter to the incoming Legislators and Commissioner P. DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner S. Price further reported that she would most likely schedule a Legislative Committee Meeting in early January to review LSR's (Legislative Service Requests).

In closing, she reported that the Commission has concerns over the poaching of wildlife. She inquired as to whether there was a way to increase fines & penalties, to deter individuals from doing so.

Colonel Jordan stated, "I agree something needs to be done, as fines mean nothing to these individuals, as they would rather pay fines than lose their license."

Chairman R. Green stated, "This cannot happen overnight, as any change would result in rulemaking & legislation." He suggested that a possibly a point system be implemented to track habitual offenders, showing the public that the Department is aware that heightened penalties need to be put in place.

He stated that he would like to see a committee formed of staff & commissioners to research the subject further, and to gather data for discussion amongst the full Commission.

Commissioner J. Caveney recommended allowing the full Commission to review the data provided by the Law Enforcement Division and decide at that time who will serve on said committee by who expresses an interest.

Director Mason reminded the Commission to go through him to seek any desired data/research from the various Divisions. He reported that he would have discussions with staff and report back to the Commission next month.

At this time, Commissioner S. Price moved that Director Mason have discussion with staff as to a reasonable timeframe for research to be conducted relative to poaching violations and to provide that information to the Commission, with a follow up discussion amongst the board for the potential increase in fines & penalties, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Director Mason will provide an update on the subject at the January 17, 2023 Commission Meeting.

Due to schedule constraints, The Director's Report was heard at this time.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Mason reported that RAWA (Recovering America's Wildlife Act) will not be accomplished this legislative session.

He reported that there were some changes made to the Executive Council Districts. He reported that he has been touring some of the department facilities with Councilor Kenney & Councilor Warmington over the last few weeks, as their Districts had significant changes.

He reported that the Inland Fisheries Division is working on reviewing their rules with Marty Mobley, Legislative Coordinator, and fisheries staff.

Further, he reported that the HDR study was ending soon and that staff would be reviewing the results and working on a hatchery rebuild plan based on those results.

He reported that the Business Division was in the process of updating the licensing software and the event planner, which will make it easier to manage attendees who are registering for classes & programs. The software will allow individuals to sign up online and if the class selected is full, it will direct you to a class that is not.

In closing, he reported that he, as well as several other divisions, have been working with the Department of Information Technology to upgrade databases, which is big task & long overdue.

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

**Commissioner Caveney, Chair;** Commissioners: Lachance & Temple.

**Staff member:** Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner J. Caveney had nothing to report this month.

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

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

Commissioner C. Hodgdon had nothing new to report this month and stated that the committee would be meeting again in early January of 2023.

**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 B. Temple had nothing to report this month and stated that the committee would be meeting again next 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 A.J. DeRosa reported the he engaged in conversation with three different non- profit organizations regarding the potential of funding an R3 position for the agency. He reported that two of them expressed an interest and stated that he hoped to have further discussion with them.

**LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Price.

Commissioner S. Price reported that there would be a joint meeting with the Rivers Management Advisory Committee on January 18, 2023.

**NH RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hodgdon.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that there would be a joint meeting with the Lakes Management Advisory Committee on January 18, 2023.

**OLD BUSINESS:** N/A

**NEW BUSINESS:** Dan Bergeron updated the Commission on two recent cases of Echinococcus granulosus, a tapeworm that is associated with moose and canid species. Two NH hunters recently tested positive for the parasite, which is considered rare in humans. Dan provided the life cycle of the parasite, the risk to hunters, and precautions people can take to prevent infection.

Dan reported that humans typically pick it up through the feces of the dog. He reported that dogs get infected when they feed on raw meat and organs, then humans become infected through ingestion of fecal material with contaminated with viable eggs (i.e. contaminated surfaces or food sources).

In closing, Dan reported the importance of not allowing dogs to feed on raw game (particularly organs) and keeping dogs updated on their deworming schedule.

**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.

Commissioner J. Caveney reported that he had a lengthy discussion with an individual relative to the possibility of recovering wildlife/game with the use of drones. Colonel Jordan replied, "It's tricky & you have to very careful about privacy issues. I think it will be a challenge moving forward with drones and we aren't there yet." He stated that as technology advances, we will be exploring there use.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Weldon Bosworth, Gilford, NH, inquired as to whether the department was aware of a project underway by the Department of Transportation in conjunction with Plymouth State University, with a goal of minimizing wildlife-vehicle collisions. He inquired if the Fish & Game Department had any interest in trying to bring any of our objectives into their project.

Dan Bergeron, Chief, Wildlife Division, responded that the Department is aware of the project and in fact has a staff member who is participating in the initiative. He also reiterated that the Department would like to conclude the current study on indexing furbearing populations before engaging in another effort. He also indicated the Department is open to considering other methods in the future if deemed appropriate.

Chairman R. Green reported that the Commission & Department does not have the authority to tell/make DOT (Department of Transportation) count roadkill. He stated, "I understand what you are saying, that this is another method to gather data and I agree."

Chairman R. Green further suggested that Weldon approach the study committee and see if they are willing to share their data with the Fish & Game Department.

Tyson Morrill, Gilmanon, NH, reported that he was familiar with the study and reassured the Commission that there was a solid basis behind the study being conducted by Plymouth State University & the Department of Transportation.

At this time, 2:35 p.m., Commissioner E. Stohl moved to adjourn and Commissioner S. Price seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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Ray Green, Chairman  
NH Fish & Game Commission