

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 21, 2009 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301.

Commissioners Present: E. Orff, R. Phillipson, M. Kalter R. Rowan, T. Tichy, S. Guaraldi, P. Costa, T. Hubert and W. Morse.

Commissioners absent: J. Ryan

Coastal Commissioner: vacant

Executive Director Normandeau - present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:03 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, may speak on any item on the agenda.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Hubert moved to approve the December 17, 2008 Commission minutes with the following revisions and Commissioner Kalter seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Page 1 – Action Item #1 - should read: November 19, 2008, ~~December 17, 2008~~.

Page 2 – Action Item #7 - should read: January 21, 2009, ~~January 21, 2008~~.

Page 4 – Third paragraph – should read: January 21, 2009, ~~January 21, 2008~~.

Page 6 - COMMISSIONER COSTA: - should read: Treasurers Report, ~~Treasure²s~~.

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.

Commissioner Costa moved to approve items 2a – 2e as presented below and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) \$128.71 donation from Adam Salzer for search & rescue charges, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. (M. Garabedian)

2b.) \$100.00 donation from Brian Obert for search & recovery charges incurred by Alex Obert and Steven McCay. (M. Garabedian)

2c.) \$75.00 donation from Jane Banquer in memory of Laurence Frederickson, Jr., to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. (M. Garabedian)

2d.) \$50.00 donation from Huiqing Hou for search & rescue charges, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. (M. Garabedian)

2e.) \$10.00 donation from David & Patty Aragona of Malden, Massachusetts, to be utilized by the OHRV Program. (M. Garabedian)

3.) Commissioner Orff moved to approve the expenditure of \$9,775 from the Fisheries Habitat Fund to cover the cost of the 2009 dam registration fees assessed by the Department of Environmental Services and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Steve Perry, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, distributed a copy of the Fisheries Habitat Account 2009 Dam Registration Fees List. (See Attached)

4.) Commissioner Hubert moved to approve the purchase of 13,500 pheasants from the Dedicated Pheasant Management Account for the 2009 hunting season and Commissioner Tichy seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Steve Weber, Chief, Wildlife Division, stated that once the total pheasant license sales are final for 2008, it is almost certain that the department will need to look at the account in more detail and map out a strategy for the future.

5.) After an informational presentation by John Magee, Department's Fisheries Biologist, Gregg Caporossi, Trust For Public Land, and Phil Auger, University of New Hampshire's Cooperative Extension, Commissioner Kalter moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$30,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to protect approximately 250 acres around Stonehouse Pond in Barrington and Commissioner Orff seconded. Commissioner Orff stated that there was excellent fishing in the area. Commissioner Tichy inquired as to whether there would be hunting and trapping allowed on the property. Gregg responded that he did not see that as being a problem. Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner Tichy moved to amend the motion to include language stating "Contingent upon hunting and trapping being allowed on the property" and Commissioner Guaraldi seconded. The vote to amend the motion was unanimous in the affirmative. The vote to approve the expenditure was unanimous in the affirmative. John Magee distributed a handout entitled, "Fisheries Habitat Account Project Rating Criteria" and a Fisheries Habitat Account Pending Project Expenses list to the Commission.

LATE ACTION ITEM:

1.) After a presentation by Steve Weber, Commissioner Costa moved to accept the donation of up to 100 acres of land in exchange for providing easements for water withdrawal and conveyance of the Danbury Bog Dam to Ragged Mountain Ski Area and Commissioner Guaraldi seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Steve reported that the property was mostly wetland acres that provide outstanding woodcock habitat on parts and provides travel corridors between existing protected lands in the area. In exchange, the ski area would be accepting ownership of the dam, and would manage water levels through a water withdrawal

agreement to provide water for snowmaking on the mountain. Director Normandeau reported that the property housed significant wildlife. He reported that when he visited the property with other wildlife staff the golf course was already turning into good woodcock habitat. In closing, he stated, "It's a win, win situation".

2.) Commissioner Hubert moved to approve the final proposal for marine rules relative to haddock length and commercial lobster helper license and Commissioner Rowan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Doug Grout, Chief, Marine Division, reported that a public hearing was held on December 2, 2008 in Portsmouth, NH.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Support Services, read the monthly Financial Statement dated December 31, 2008. (See attached statement)

2.) Judy Stokes, Chief, Public Affairs Division, provided a presentation relative to the costs and methods of producing regulation digests (Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Saltwater Fishing) for the Department and an alternative available to the Department. Judy distributed various types and sizes of other State's digests for the Commission to review and asked for their input. Judy reported that it cost approximately \$31,000 to print the current digests and that the department raises approximately \$15,000 in ad revenue to defray those costs, with a final cost of \$16,000. She stated that as an effort to save money, the department has been considering other options such as working with an outside vendor to produce an 8 x 11, 4- color regulation digest, costing the department approximately \$9,000. Director Normandeau reported that he asked Judy to look into this as a cost savings measure. He stated that fundamentally, it comes down to the question as to whether we want to save approximately \$7,000 or do we want to continue to print the small booklets.

Commissioner Costa suggested that the Commission take the concept to their constituents at their liaison meetings and share the responses at the February Commission Meeting. Chairman Phillipson stated that he would take the idea to his liaison meeting, however, felt strongly that his constituents would want the small digests over the larger version. Judy asked the Commission to bring the digest suggestions to their constituents and to let them provide input. Commissioner Tichy stated that he had no problem with the concept and that it goes with printing costs. He suggested having the printable version on the department's website in PDF form for anyone to access anytime or to print a duplicate copy.

3.) Karen Bordeau, Pheasant Project Leader, provided a brief presentation to review the initial proposal for rulemaking to establish a "Sporting Club Youth Pheasant Event Permit". She reported that the program has been under development for about a year and includes a review of the proposal from numerous clubs around the state. This process once completed would result in these events occurring at cooperating clubs beginning this fall. Karen reviewed the rules pertaining to the proposal to include; the hunter shall be 12-15 years of age and shall have a hunter education certificate of completion, the youth event shall be held on club property or on another person's property for which written permission has been obtained, and size of acreage shall be at least 25 acres in size were just a few regulations discussed. Commissioner Phillipson reported that this topic dominated his recent liaison meeting.

4.) Steve Weber, Chief, Wildlife Division, distributed a copy of the Dedicated Account Financial Reports to the Commission. (See attached)

LATE INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kris Rines, Moose Project Leader, provided an update on moose management in the Connecticut Lakes Region. Kris reported that the department was re-evaluating moose permit issuance in the Connecticut Lakes Region as required in the Big Game Management Plan. She reported that the department held a public hearing last summer in Pittsburg to discuss the issue with the public and collected data this past fall to determine current population levels. The decision was made to move forward with implementing the plan, which called for reducing the population by approximately 10% more than the level measured by the following data collection in 2007. Based on the data collected this fall, the population is continuing to decline at a pace that is consistent with the desired level of reduction. She stated that based on that, the department is not moving forward with any changes to the moose permit allocation in that region this year. Permit numbers will be re-evaluated following the 2009 season, and recommendations will be made for necessary changes in conjunction with the normal biennial season setting process for all game species.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Commissioner Guaraldi, Chair; Commissioners Tichy, Rowan and Morse. Commissioner Guaraldi reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support HB-58, designating segments of the Cocheco River as protected under the rivers management and protection program, and Commissioner Kalter seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support HB-292, relative to an exemption for the requirement of volunteers filing a financial disclosure form, and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support HB-398, relative to the unauthorized use of firearms in the compact part of a city or town, and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support HB-452, designating segments of the Ammonoosuc River into the rivers management and protection program, and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Commissioner Morse reported that this was in line with earlier protection taken on the lower part and stated that it only made sense to have protection on the upper part as well. Commissioner Kalter stated, "This will ensure that there is a management plan".

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support an amendment to HB-612, relative to Revocations and Suspensions by amending RSA 214:19, 211:21 and 211:64, and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to oppose HB-466-FN-A, establishing a safari fee on owners of big game hunting preserves and Commissioner Rowan seconded. The vote carried with 7 in favor and 1 opposed (W. Morse)

Commissioner Guaraldi stated that there would be a committee meeting the morning of the February Commission Meeting, time to be announced.

In closing, Commissioner Guaraldi asked the Chairman to appoint another member to the Legislative Committee. She stated that when emergency voting is required it would allow for another member to participate in case other committee members are not able to participate on short notice. Much discussion ensued regarding emergency voting on legislative issues.

Chairman Phillipson requested that Tanya Haskell, Administrative Assistant, contact Peter Roth, Department's legal counsel, and invite him to a meeting the morning of the February 18, 2009 Commission Meeting to discuss options relative to a legal solution to the emergency voting issue.

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner T. Hubert, Chair; Commissioners; Kalter, Orff, Costa, and Ryan. Commissioner Hubert reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting to discuss the Free Flowing Stream Policy. He reported that the group found a few policies that were similar in nature and combined them into 1 resolution. The names of the two policies joined were: "Free Flowing Streams Policy", and "Fish and Wildlife Habitat Policy". (See attached)

Commissioner Hubert moved to accept the following policy and rescind the Free Flowing Stream Policy and the existing Fish and Wildlife Habitat Policy and Commissioner Rowan seconded. Discussion ensued.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT POLICY

Recognizing that all species of fish and wildlife are dependent upon the quantity and quality of their habitats and without these habitats they cannot survive.

Whereas, fish and wildlife habitat is defined as providing the physical, chemical, and biological needs necessary for their survival; and

Whereas, the State's free flowing rivers and streams provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife species; and

Whereas, impounded waters behind existing dams may also provide important habitat for fish and wildlife species; and

Whereas, the state's fish and wildlife provide many thousands of hours of outdoor recreation for the public; and

Whereas, participants in outdoor leisure activities spend millions of dollars annually in pursuits of recreation provided by free flowing rivers, streams, as well as impoundments;

Whereas, the legal responsibility of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is to “preserve, protect and propagate the fish and wildlife resources of the state” pursuant to RSA 206:9 and RSA 206:10;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Fish and Game Department will conserve, restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitats to improve their productive capacity for the benefit of present and future generations;

Further Be It Resolved, the Fish and Game Department will actively promote this policy at the state and federal level regarding impacts to the state’s fish and wildlife habitat, striving toward no net loss of habitat.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to amend the above policy, changing the last paragraph to read: “Further Be it Resolved, the Fish and Game Department will actively promote this policy at the state and federal level regarding impacts to the state’s fish and wildlife habitat, striving toward no net loss of habitat,” and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote to amend the language was unanimous in the affirmative. The vote to accept the policy was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Hubert moved to accept the following “Adapting To Change Resolution” and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Adapting To Change Resolution

Whereas, New Hampshire’s wildlife resources are deeply ingrained in its rich heritage and are highly valued by both the State’s residents and its visitors; and,

Whereas, there is a need to have a fully functional state agency focused on sustaining the health of New Hampshire’s wildlife resources for the benefits they provide to all; and,

Whereas, an organization has to be adaptive and resilient, rather than rigid and resistant, if it wants to remain viable in a fast-paced world where change is the new norm; and,

Whereas, the presence of a clear identity and vision makes an organization less vulnerable to shifts in its environment since it provides the basis for deciding how the organization will respond to change; and

Whereas, open communication and exchange of information is crucial to an organization’s ability to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues, thereby allowing it to be better positioned to respond to the relevant impacts; and,

Whereas, the strength of an organization is determined by its capacity to work within a broad network of inter-dependent relationships because it forms the basis for connecting with people;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Fish and Game Commission directs by policy that the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department facilitate, and engage in, processes that: 1) develop a clear identity for the agency; 2) create greater access and flow of information; 3) build support by fostering strong relationships among diverse groups; 4) establish a set of shared values within the agency; and 5) embrace inclusive participation in management decisions.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Morse; Commissioner Morse reported that there was a combined meeting with the Lakes Committee. He deferred to Commissioner Kalter for report.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Commissioner Kalter; Commissioner Kalter reported that there was a combined meeting with the River's Committee. He reported that Commissioner Burack provided an overview of the Department of Environmental Services Strategic Planning Process. He stated that he felt that a great deal of work went into the plan and found that he did not object to any of the contents in the plan.

HANDBOOK COMMITTEE: Commissioner Rowan, Chair; Commissioner's Kalter and Orff. Commissioner Rowan reported that the committee was not able to meet on the mornings of the Commission Meetings as many Handbook Committee members serve on other committees that are meeting simultaneously on Commission Day. He reported that the committee was charged with coming up with a Commission Reimbursement Policy, detailing what types of expenses Commissioners are authorized for reimbursement.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER HUBERT: Commissioner Hubert reported that there would be a "Wild Game Supper" held on January 31, 2009 at the Veteran's Club in Claremont. He reported that he read an article entitled, "Fish or Cut Bait" which referred to a disease called "Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia". He reported that it was found in Lake Ontario and was curious if we in New Hampshire should be concerned. He inquired whether the Inland Fisheries Division could provide a brief presentation on the topic at the February Commission Meeting.

COMMISSIONER KALTER: Commissioner Kalter reported that he recently visited the Hackle & Tackle Club. He stated that they are realizing that it may be unlikely that the dam will be rebuilt. He reported that the funds are in the process of being returned to the donors. He reported that he attended the first "Guiding Coalition Meeting". He stated that he was excited to see how things unfold.

COMMISSIONER ORFF: Commissioner Orff reported that things were relatively quiet other than a few deer calls. He reported that he did get a call from former employee Walter Stevens, reporting that he has been receiving complaints regarding the Brentwood Farm and the lack of upkeep there.

COMMISSIONER COSTA: Commissioner Costa reported that she distributed the Treasurer's report to the Commission. She reported that she attended Denise Richard's retirement party and read her resolution on behalf of the Commission. She further reported that she and Commissioner Rowan met with Barnstead-Alton Republican Committee and gave a presentation on what the Department and the Commission does. She reported that she attended the "Hunt of a Lifetime" Video and was able to meet the young man who participated in the hunt. In closing, she reported that she attended the Belknap Sportsmen's Dinner in Gilford.

COMMISSIONER GUARALDI: Commissioner Guaraldi reported that she attended the Wildlife Federation's Annual Meeting and was pleased to see that Executive Director Glenn Normandeau was the guest speaker. She announced that the Winter Becoming an Outdoor Woman workshop would be held on February 21, 2009 and believed that there was already a waiting list. She announced that the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation's Annual Banquet would be held on April 4, 2009.

In closing, she reported that she distributed a blue folder to each of the Award's Committee members and asked them to review the material inside as there would be a meeting in the near future.

COMMISSIONER ROWAN: Commissioner Rowan reported that he attended the Barnstead Function with Commissioner Costa and stated that he received the routine monthly calls.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse reported that he has received favorable comments regarding the department moving forward with the Wild Goose Site on Lake Sunapee. He reported that he received a negative comment regarding the possibility of an increase in boat registrations.

COMMISSIONER RYAN: Commissioner Ryan was absent, therefore no report.

COMMISSIONER TICHY: Commissioner Tichy suggested that the Furbearer Committee look into taking the marten off the threatened and endangered species list and to look at potentially closing the fisher season as there are not many. He reported that Emerson's Sporting Goods would be closing their doors in February due to economic times, the mill closing, and hard times in general. He reported that the moose population appeared to be healthy in Coos County, as many have been seen near roadsides. He reported that they still had their antlers and that their coats looked good.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson reported that he recently held a liaison meeting and discussed the "Youth Pheasant Event Permit". He announced that there would be a "Woman-on-Target" event held on May 16, 2009 with 60 women in attendance. He reported that he thought that the class was already ½ full. He suggested that any employee interested to contact him through Tanya in the Director's Office.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS: Director Normandeau reported that he met with Governor Lynch last week regarding the department's budget. He stated that there was nothing to report from that meeting at this time, however, that he would keep the Commission informed. He

reported that Governor Lynch stated that the department would have a chance to review and comment on the final version of the budget. He reported that the department was in the process of getting the Saltwater Transaction Fee activated.

He further reported that he received a letter from the Newbury Selectmen voicing their displeasure with the Wild Goose Site at Lake Sunapee. He reported that he would respond to the letter. He reported that this was a controversial issue and that the Governor's Office has informed him that they are receiving calls as well as Representatives. He stated that the final decision will come down to the Executive Council's vote on whether a permit will be issued and suggested getting forces together and to get people to attend the public hearing.

In addition, he reported that the issues at the Brentwood Farm and the Connor Farm continue to be an issue. He stated the he has been talking with the Seacoast Housing Partnership to ask them to assist with reconstruction funding and to take over some of the buildings.

In closing, he stated that the department needs to get through this budget and to really focus on remaking the department and find ways to finance ourselves in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments.

At this time, 5:15 p.m., Commissioner Orff moved to adjourn and Commissioner Guaraldi seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Costa, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman

Date: _____