

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 18, 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, and P. Costa .

Commissioners absent: J. Ryan, T. Hubert, and W. Morse

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 Orff moved to approve the January 21, 2009 Commission minutes with the following revisions and Commissioner Kalter seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Page 6, 4th paragraph should read: *Further be it resolved, the Fish and Game Department will actively promote this policy at the state and federal level for any project which directly or indirectly impacts the state's fish and wildlife habitat, striving toward no net loss of habitat.*

Page 7, COMMISSIONER KALTER, 3RD sentence should read: He reported that club members were in agreement that funds should be returned to perspective donors.

Page 9, 1st paragraph, last sentence should read: He reported that the department was in the process of getting the Saltwater License implemented.

2.) Commissioner Costa moved to accept the donation of \$73.69 from Ms. Nan Yang and a \$73.69 donation from Ms. Chiistie Hou, as reimbursement for a search and rescue mission they were involved in, and Commissioner Guaraldi seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

3.) After a brief presentation by John Magee, Fisheries Biologist, Commissioner Rowan moved to approve the expenditure of \$18,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to hire three seasonal employees in 2009 and Commissioner Kalter seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

John reported that the seasonal employees would provide support for three projects, the Nash Stream Restoration Project, the Upper Connecticut River Home Rivers Initiative of Trout Unlimited, and the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture.

Due to time constraints in the Director's schedule, he provided his report at this time.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that he recently attended the Governor's Budget Address and stated that the next step was to get through the Legislative budget process. He reported that the department has not had to resort to employee layoffs, which has been less painful than many other state agencies.

He further reported that he would be departing the Commission Meeting early to attend an Agency Head Meeting where they would be discussing the Stimulus Plan and what funding would be available to certain agencies. He stated that there could possibly be some funding for energy efficiency, which the department could use at hatcheries, etc.

Director Normandeau stated that he has heard much discussion amongst employees regarding the potential for the department to be merged with other agencies. He stated that it was important to remember that Governor Lynch is looking to see if there would be efficiencies gained by merging agencies together. Further, he stated, "This is something he would be exploring in the future".

He reported that HB-559, relative to the composition and duties, and appointment to the Fish and Game Commission, was inexpedient to legislate 15-0.

In closing, he reported that the Saltwater License proposal was recommended to pass and would now go before the House Ways & Means Committee. He stated that there was much opinion and comment being heard on the subject.

LATE ITEM:

1) Commissioner Costa moved to accept donations totaling \$360.00 to the "Let's Go Fishing Program from the following donors and Commissioner Kalter seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Morse Sporting Goods:	\$50.00
Granite State Rod:	\$25.00
A.J.'s Bait & Tackle:	\$50.00
North Country Angler:	\$50.00
Mountain Road Trading Post:	\$35.00
Corey's Sport Shop:	\$40.00

Place in the Woods Trading Post: \$50.00
Grand Fish Whole Sale Bait: \$60.00
\$360.00

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Support Services, read the monthly Financial Statement dated January 31, 2009. (See attached statement)

- 2.) Dr. Joel Bader, Fisheries Biologist III, provided an excellent presentation relative to Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS). He reported that the virus is a highly contagious viral disease of fresh and saltwater fish that is not curable and there are no vaccines to prevent it. He reported that to date, the virus has moved as far East as the New York border with Vermont and as far north as Quebec. He reported that Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River remain free of the virus. Reported infected states are: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Additionally, two provinces in Canada are also VHS positive, Quebec and Ontario.

Further, he reported that the virus could be transmitted by urine, feces, and reproductive fluids of infected fish. He stated that the virus likely enters the fish through the gills or through wounds; oral transmission is unlikely. He reported that signs of the virus may include bulging eyes, pale gills, or darkening of overall color. He stated that most die of internal organ failure.

In addition, he reported that the department's Fish Pathologist was working in concert with Vermont Fish and Wildlife to test for positive fish in the Connecticut River bordering the states. He stated that anglers and boaters can help stop the spread of the virus and other aquatic threats by cleaning boats, trailers, and other equipment between fishing trips to keep from transporting fish pathogens and other organisms from one water body to another. He suggested using hot soapy water, or a light bleach (1 cup for 10 gallons of water), and to limit the use of wild caught bait to the water body where it was collected. He further suggested not disposing of fish parts by throwing them into the water and never into a different water body than where it originated. These were just a few suggestions made.

In closing, he stated that the next step was to review and improve existing bait fish monitoring protocols and improve lines of communication with other states. He stated that the department needs to plan for the future and recommended better diagnostic testing equipment and lab facilities.

The Commission thanked Dr. Bader for his informative presentation.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner T. Hubert, Chair; Commissioners; Kalter, Orff, Costa, and Ryan.

In Commissioner Hubert's absence, Commissioner Kalter reported that the committee met the morning of the January Commission Meeting. He reported that he distributed an updated version of "Current Policies & Resolutions" to all Commissioners.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Commissioner Guaraldi, Chair; Commissioners Tichy, Rowan and Morse.

Commissioner Guaraldi reported that the committee met the morning of the February Commission Meeting and further reported that the committee would be meeting the morning of the March Commission Meeting as well, time to be announced.

Commissioner Guaraldi moved to support HB-41, with an amendment to add fishing and turkey licenses to the bill allowing the Executive Director of Fish and Game to donate certain hunting and fishing permits to the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire, and Commissioner Rowan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Phillipson reported that HB -559 was heard yesterday and was found inexpedient to Legislate 15-0.

He stated that there was a great turnout of supporters and petitions with over 3000 signatures to kill the bill. He thanked everyone for their support and thanked the Commissioners for their efforts.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Morse; Commissioner Morse was absent, therefore, no report.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Commissioner Kalter; Commissioner Kalter reported that the committee has not met since January. He reported that the next scheduled meeting would take place sometime after the March Commission Meeting, therefore, stated that he would report back to the Commission at the April Meeting.

HANDBOOK COMMITTEE: Commissioner Rowan, Chair; Commissioner's Kalter and Orff. Commissioner Rowan reported that the committee did meet the week prior to the Commission Meeting to follow up on their charge to identify and compile a list of acceptance reimbursement expenses for the Commission. Commissioner Rowan asked that this be put as an item on the March Commission Agenda for a vote of the full Commission.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioners Guaraldi, Tichy, Orff, Kalter, and staff members: Colonel Garabedian, Judy Stokes, Chief, Public Affairs Division, and Donna Preve, Administrative Secretary. Commissioner Guaraldi reported that the Committee met briefly the morning of the Commission Meeting and would be meeting again in the near future.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Rowan reported that the final version of the Commission Handbook was complete and has provided all Commissioners with a copy. He requested that this be put on the March agenda for a full vote of the Commission. He stated that a great deal of work went into updating the book and felt it was time to finalize the product to ensure the smooth functioning of the Commission. He further requested that the committee review and develop a procedure to properly keep the book updated. He reported that Commissioner Kalter has provided copies of the Handbook to Sandy Falicon, Legislative/Rules Coordinator, to deliver to the House Fish and Game Committee.

Commissioner Rowan suggested offering a free subscription to the Wildlife Journal Magazine to members of the Fish, Game & Marine Resource Committee as an educational tool and to keep them informed of what the department is doing.

After much discussion, Commissioner Rowan suggested that Chairman Phillipson make contact with the proper person at the State House to schedule an inquire about scheduling a joint breakfast meeting of the Commission and the Fish, Game & Marine Resource Committee on March 12, 2009, at Fish and Game Headquarters.

Chairman Phillipson stated that there was some confusion as to the requirement for a bear license as stated in the law book. He reported that the language indicates that the Executive Director shall issue bear licenses on an annual basis to all hunters. He reported that the Director does not issue any bear licenses, however, reported that your license is the tag on one of the back pages of the hunting digest. He suggested the department change the language to clarify the issuance of the license.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER HUBERT: Commissioner Hubert was absent, therefore no report.

COMMISSIONER KALTER: Commissioner Kalter reported that he was overwhelmed with constituent support regarding HB-559. He reported that he attended a working group meeting regarding “Adapting to Change”. Further, he reported that he was reading an interesting book called “Boards That Make A Difference”, written by John Carver. In closing, he reported that he would not be staying for the Public Hearing tonight on the Special Deer Permits for Governor’s Island and the Long Island Deer Permits, as he would be representing the Commission at the Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONER ORFF: Commissioner Orff reported that he received calls regarding HB-559. In addition, he reported that he received e-mails regarding the house bill relative to snapping turtles. In closing, he reported that he attended the Sunset Mountain Fish & Game Club Meeting where a local land-trust protected approximately 300 acres in Deerfield, which protects acreage near Fish and Game lands.

COMMISSIONER COSTA: Commissioner Costa reported that she attended the initial meeting of “Adapting to Change”. She further reported that she received comments regarding the Governor’s Budget Address. She reported that she received a call from a woman from Hudson looking for a hunter education class, calls regarding HB-559, and the bill relative to snapping turtles. In addition, she reported that she would be attending the Winter Becoming An Outdoor Woman Workshop and the public hearing regarding Special Deer Permits for Governor’s Island & Long Island tonight.

COMMISSIONER GUARALDI: Commissioner Guaraldi reported that she met with the Enfield Outing Club. She reported that she would be attending the upcoming Winter Becoming an Outdoor Woman Workshop and was happy to report that Commissioner Costa would be in attendance. She reported that she attended the “Adapting to Change” meeting at the department

and stated that she felt it went well. In closing she reported that the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation Banquet would be held on April 4th and asked anyone interested in tickets to contact her directly.

COMMISSIONER ROWAN: Commissioner Rowan reported that he attended a winter trails meeting where Conservation Officer Brad Morse was in attendance and reviewed the snowmobile rules. He stated that constituents were very pleased to get a better understanding of the laws and regulations. He further reported that he attended the Winni Derby and was well fed by the fishermen after making the rounds around the lake. He stated that he did hear comments relative to the lack of portable toilets and littering around access points of the lake. Steve Perry, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, suggested contacting the Meredith Rotary Club, as they would most likely correct the issue for next year. He reported that he was able to view a Northern Hawk Owl in Belknap County. In closing, he reported that he attended the hearing for HB-559, relative to the Fish and Game Commission, which was a very beneficial event and step in the right direction.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse was absent, therefore no report.

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

COMMISSIONER TICHY: Commissioner Tichy reported that he received calls relative to HB-559, relative to the Fish and Game Commission. He further reported that he attended the “Adapting to Change” Meeting held at HQ and thought there were some good ideas floating around.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson reported that he received calls relative to HB-559 and comments regarding the budget address. He further reported that he received a call of a penguin sighting on Dublin Lake. He stated that after further research, it appeared to be a replica of a penguin and not real. In closing, he reported that there were some women from the Cheshire County Fish and Game Club interested in becoming hunter education instructors and would like to run women safety courses. Judy Stokes, Chief, Public Affairs Division, requested that he contact Laura Ryder, Administrator, Hunter & Aquatic Education Programs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Judy Stokes asked for input from the Commission regarding the potential changes to the regulation digests.

Chairman Phillipson reported that he did not have a liaison meeting this month, therefore, was not able to poll the club as to their thoughts on the digest. He reported that he did very little soliciting and from the comments he received, it appeared that constituents do like the smaller digests better.

Commissioner Tichy reported that he received positive feedback from constituents, as people that hunt in other states have been introduced to the large size digests before and are fine with them.

Commissioner Rowan reported that he did not receive real negative feedback on the digests, however, stated that he only spoke with a small group of people.

Commissioner Guaraldi reported that she received a mixture of comments. She stated that it seemed most people were comfortable with the current size of the digests. She further reported that Vermont has their hunting and fishing regulations in one book.

Commissioner Costa reported that she expected more resistance, however, once informed of the cost saving measure constituents seemed to be in favor of the change.

In closing, Commissioner Guaraldi reported that Vermont is considering allowing reciprocity for youth hunting.

At this time, 3:20 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: _____