

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

APRIL 18, 2019 COMMISSION MEETING

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

Commissioners Present: R. Phillipson, T. Baldwin, P. McInnis, D. Patch, R. Green, B. Carr, B. Temple C. Luppi & E. Stohl.

Commissioners absent/excused: C. Hodgdon

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Phillipson called the meeting to order at 1:02 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.

Chairman Phillipson called for a moment of silence honoring the passing of former Conservation Officer, Scott LaCrosse.

At this time, Chairman Phillipson presented former Hillsborough County Commissioner, Walter Morse, with a resolution honoring his retirement from the Fish & Game Commission. It read as follows:

Honoring Walter Morse

Whereas, Walter Morse served the citizens of New Hampshire and Hillsborough County on the Fish and Game Commission for over 15 years with great passion, dignity and dedication; and

Whereas, his 40+ years of prior law enforcement experience made him a valuable asset regarding legislative initiatives on behalf of the Commission and;

Whereas, his active participation on the Legislative Subcommittee of the Commission was critical in reviewing draft legislation and preparing Commission positions for Department testimony; and,

Whereas, he was known for his commitment to the recruitment of new hunters through volunteering for the Women On Target Program; and,

Whereas, he was devoted to a fair and reasoned approach to the Commission's responsibilities, demonstrated by his willingness to listen to the perspectives of sportsmen and women within the context of the science of wildlife management; and

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission hereby honors and congratulates Walter Morse on his retirement from service as Hillsborough County Fish and Game Commissioner.

Be It Further Resolved that the Fish and Game Department and Commission hereby express their sincere gratitude to Walter Morse for his contributions to wildlife conservation and wish him many years of enjoyment in New Hampshire's great outdoors.

Unanimously adopted by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission this Eighteenth day of April, Two Thousand and Nineteen.

*Glenn Normandeau
Executive Director*

*Robert Phillipson Jr., Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission*

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Stohl moved to approve the March 13, 2019 Commission Minutes and Commissioner Patch seconded. The motion carried with 6 in favor, 2 abstentions (C. Luppi & B. Temple).

Chairman Phillipson recognized the following audience members; William Gardner, Secretary of State, Marc Lachance, newly appointed Belknap County Fish & Game Commissioner, Cathryn Harvey, Chair, House Fish, Game & Marine Resources Committee, and Timothy Buzinski, recently hired Chief of the Facilities & Lands Division at F&G.

1a.) The Fish & Game Commission presented the 2018 Commission Awards of Excellence as follows:

Commissioner Baldwin presented the **VOLUNTEER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE** to the family of Ronald Sowa, of Manchester, NH.

Ron was nominated by his daughter posthumously, Ron Sowa was a volunteer who was passionate about organizations that furthered his love of the outdoors and wildlife. A fishing guide and avid angler, Ron served as president of the Merrimack River Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited and on their Board of Directors, and as Vice President of Fly Fishers International North Eastern Council. He was the coordinator of the Fly Fish NH Show and was also an instructor at Trout Unlimited's Kids Camp.

A longtime friend of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Ron volunteered in the Department's Watershed Education Program, was a board member of Operation Game Thief, and assisted on fish stocking days and at Discover WILD NH Day events.

Being a volunteer is admirable enough, but Ron also had the ability to excite others in the area of volunteerism. Ron served as Executive Director of the NH Wildlife Federation until he fell ill. His close colleague, Janice Boynton, was quoted in the nomination as saying, "New Hampshire's sportspeople lost one of their greatest advocates," when describing Ron.

An inspiring quote from his nomination was that, "Ron was absolutely dedicated to making the world a better place—something he has roundly accomplished many times over...we were fortunate enough to know him."

Commissioner Luppi presented the **CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE** to the Town of Londonderry Conservation Commission, Londonderry, NH.

Since 2011, the Londonderry Conservation Commission has been promoting sustainable forestry and ecologically based habitat management for state-endangered species, nongame species as well as game species, including ruffed grouse, moose, whitetail deer, wild turkeys, and the American woodcock.

Most recently, the Londonderry Conservation Commission partnered with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to manage approximately 75 acres of shrubland and young forest to benefit the New England cottontail and other shrubland species. They have also supported the Department's efforts in regional conservation programs focused on the monitoring of turtle populations and the design of habitat improvement campaigns.

Through cooperation with the Department, private landowners, and others, the Londonderry Conservation Commission has also preserved an additional 150 acres of natural open space adjacent to their 1,500 acre Musquash Conservation Area. The Musquash Conservation Area is widely recognized as providing protection for critical wildlife, as well as wetland and forest resources for mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

The Londonderry Conservation Commission has promoted recreational opportunities on these parcels, such as hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. They also support educational opportunities at the annual Musquash Field Day for anglers, hunters, and wildlife watchers.

Marge Badois, who accepted the award on behalf of the Conservation Commission said, "Of course we are honored, and I feel like I should turn around and give the award for all the help Fish and Game has given us including with education and identifying special species within our town. It was definitely a collaborative effort and a great partnership."

Commissioner Carr presented the **HABITAT STEWARDSHIP AWARD OF EXCELLENCE** to Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, Exeter, NH

The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire's mission is to protect and sustain the significant lands in our communities for clean water, outdoor recreation, fresh food, wildlife, and healthy forests. As a testament to their commitment and attention to detail, Southeast Land Trust is certified as a land trust at the national level by the Land Trust Alliance, which is no easy task. Dedicated efforts have enabled the Trust to conserve, with easements, 13,770 acres while parcels that they own outright total 5,610 acres. Accepting the award on behalf of Southeast Land Trust were Debbie Goard and Phil Auger.

One of their most recent acquisitions was accomplished in partnership with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and includes over 1,500 acres in the town of Barrington named Stonehouse Forest. This property provides tremendous wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities including fantastic fly fishing. There is also substantial future forest management planned to improve the health of the forest and create successional habitat.

In 2018, The Southeast Land Trust partnered with both the Merrymeeting Lake Association and Moose Mountain Regional Greenways to help in an ongoing effort to conserve over 2,000 acres in New Durham called Birch Ridge Community Forest. The Trust has also executed improvements on such properties as Piscassic Greenway in Newfields and Newmarket, and the Burley Farms property in Epping, which included logging and brontosaurus work to make wildlife openings for birds, reptiles, and other small and large animals.

The Southeast Land Trust has actively promoted making its conserved lands available to the public for outdoor recreation such as wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, hiking, and more.

Chairman Phillipson presented the **ELLIS R. HATCH COMMISSION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE** to The Kilham Bear Center, Lyme, NH

The Commission's highest honor, the Ellis R. Hatch Award of Excellence, was awarded to Ben Kilham, the founder of the Kilham Bear Center. Ben founded the Center for orphaned bear cubs in 1993 and is now known as a worldwide expert on bear rehabilitation. The Kilham Bear Center serves as a model for wildlife rehabilitation centers throughout the United States and beyond. Ben was recently asked to help the Chinese government with their National Panda Recovery Program.

Ben became interested in bears when he encountered an injured and orphaned cub in 1992. Over 25 years of studying black bears has contributed greatly to his knowledge of their behavior, and he has worked cooperatively with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department on research projects related to the ecology, reproductive success, survival, social behavior, and rehabilitative success of black bears. He also works to educate the public on how to co-exist with bears while promoting bear conservation worldwide.

The Kilham Bear Center initially worked with only one or two cubs annually, but by 2012 the Center received 30 cubs, including some from Vermont and Massachusetts. Ben is the only licensed bear rehabilitator in New Hampshire. Currently, the Kilham Center is caring for 63 cubs, most of which arrived this past fall.

Ben Kilham accepted the award with his wife, Debbie, and said, "We appreciate the award. I got started when Don Normandeau, former Director of the Fish & Game Department, gave me my first permit and Jim Paine, former NH Fish and Game Commissioner and a veterinarian, gave me the opportunity to study bear behavior that wouldn't have taken place otherwise. Fish and Game at the time was interested in home ranges and populations of bears, but my approach was to find out how they behave."

Ben is helped in his mission by his sister Phoebe and his wife Debbie.

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 Carr moved to approve the consent agenda items 2a.-2c., as presented below, and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of aluminum signs, valued at approximately \$600.00, from the NH Trout Unlimited Council.

2b.) The Commission accepted the following donations made to the Hunter Education Program, in memory of Robert Palmer, Jr., of Manchester, NH:

Manchester Press Club, Manchester, NH -	\$150.00
Robert & Suzanne Young, Sarasota, FL -	\$ 25.00
Madeline Marceau, Bow, NH -	\$ 25.00
Joyce Turner, Bedford, NH-	\$ <u>30.00</u>
Total:	\$230.00

2c.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$50.00 from The Marston Farm, Pittsfield, NH, in memory of former Conservation Officer, Scott LaCrosse, to be utilized for the promotion of the game-bird stocking programs in Merrimack County.

3.) Commissioner Stohl moved to accept a donation in the amount of \$558.51 from the NH Charitable Foundation, to support monitoring the Department's conservation easements and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

4.) Commissioner Green moved to expend up to \$1,250.00 from the Wildlife Habitat Account to purchase a replacement trailer for use by the Habitat Program and Commissioner Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Commissioner Stohl moved to approve the 2019 Moose Season Allocation recommendations made by the Wildlife Division and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reviewed the monthly financial statement dated March 31, 2019.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Carr, Chair: Commissioners Luppi & Temple.
Chairman Carr reported that the Policy Committee did not meet this month.

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

Chairman Stohl reported that the committee met briefly the morning of the Commission Meeting to review legislation status on a few bills.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon was absent from the meeting.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Tanya Haskell, Administrative Assistant, reported that Commissioner Temple was now the Commission's official representative on the Lakes Committee.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Carr. Commissioner Patch reported that the committee did not meet. He reported that the committee has a few additions for insertion into the handbook, which will be distributed at the May 8, 2019 Commission Meeting.

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

Commissioner Hodgdon was absent from the meeting.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon was absent from the meeting.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Baldwin, Chair; Commissioners Carr & Luppi. Staff Members: Colonel Kevin Jordan, Nicola Whitley, Chief, Public Affairs Division & Allison Keating, Federal Aid Specialist.

Chairman Baldwin thanked the Awards Committee and everyone involved in making the awards process and ceremony a success.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Stohl reported that he received a letter from a hunter informing him of an Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Study being done by the University of Maine and inquired as to why New Hampshire was not participating? Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, reported that the Wildlife Division did consider participating & discussed it internally, however, decided against doing so due to cost and staff logistics. He stated that he would be pleased to revisit that decision for clarity purposes if Commissioner Stohl wished.

Commissioner Stohl moved that Mark Ellingwood further research this study & determine if it is worth participating in. Mark responded that a formal vote was not necessary and that he would look into the details & keep the Commission updated on his follow up.

Commissioner Stohl withdrew his motion.

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:

COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Commissioner Carr encouraged everyone to get the word out about the Commission Awards of Excellence & the importance of nominating youth groups and the many deserving organizations and people who support the Department's mission. He reported that there were no nominations received for certain Commission Award categories this year and encouraged everyone to check out the Department's website for a complete list of awards.

COMMISSIONER TEMPLE: Commissioner Temple had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson reported that he recently attended the camping show, where the department had a booth. He reported that there seemed to be a large crowd, however, little traffic at the Department's booth. He suggested selling various licenses & merchandise, to promote sales & encourage visitors to the booth.

Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, reported that there has been some internal discussion relative to what the department is actually benefiting from attending certain shows. She reported that the Rockingham Show is a success & very popular with the public and the department certainly benefits being there.

Nicola Whitley, Chief, Public Affairs Division, responded that certain licenses can only be sold at F&G HQ in Concord, NH, as certain documents & certificates are required in order to purchase certain license. She reported that she would have a discussion with Mark Beauchesne, Outreach Coordinator, about the specifics of the shows and get back to the Commission with those details.

COMMISSIONER GREEN: Commissioner Green reported that he received a complaint regarding Deering Reservoir & parking issues. Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division, agreed to have further discussion with the Town & Commissioner Green on the issue.

COMMISSIONER HODGDON: Commissioner Hodgdon was absent.

COMMISSIONER LUPPI: Commissioner Luppi had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER PATCH: Commissioner Patch had nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER MCINNIS: Commissioner McInnis reported that he attended the New England Fisheries Management Council Meeting, where there was discussion on instituting limited access for the ground-fishing charter/party boat industry.

COMMISSIONER STOHL: Commissioner Stohl had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Normandeau reported that he recently attended the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Meeting in Groton, CT, as did other staff members from the Department. He reported that he learned of the west Nile virus studies being conducted on woodcock & grouse, as the virus is killing 80% of poults and could affect turkeys as well.

He reported last month that House Finance voted to approve the Governor's proposed budget for the Fish & Game Department, which included \$2,000,000 + each year of general funds that would allow the Department to refund 5 of the 14 unfunded positions, 2 of which were Conservation Officers. Currently, \$500,000 was removed from the Department's budget, per year, out of those general funds, which will greatly impact the Law Enforcement Division. He stated, "We will try to address this before the Senate."

Director Normandeau reported that there was a bill to increase the usefulness of the boat ramp at Lake Sunapee. He reported that the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources was granted a capital budget request for \$750,000 to do the necessary modifications to the boat ramp at Lake Sunapee. He reported that \$340,000 of that is to be paid back from the Fish & Game Department's Statewide Boat Access Account, leaving a payment of \$25,000 per year, for the next 20 years.

He reported that he plans to comment on this at the May 10, 2019 Capital Budget Hearing before the Senate.

In closing, he encouraged everyone to attend Discover Wild New Hampshire Day on Saturday, April 20, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. He stated, "It's a great day for all!"

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Representative Cathryn Harvey, Chesterfield, NH, stated, “Young people are very important. Now that I know these Commission Awards of Excellence exist, I will bring the details & criteria relative to the awards to the Harris Center, so they are aware of the awards and could possibly nominate worthy children & children’s groups when applicable.”

Ruth Tanner, Salem, NH, inquired as to why so many bear cubs were abandoned this past year. Director Normandeau reported that it was due to a failure of mast crop, which made it difficult to find food, leading to sows leaving cubs abandoned & malnourished.

Kristina Snyder, Chester, NH, spoke highly of a presentation that Andy Timmins, Bear Project Leader, provided to the Chester Conservation Commission relative to nuisance bear issues & how to protect livestock & bee hives. She stated, “He did a wonderful job & it was well received!”

Dan Dockham, Gilmanton, NH, reminded folks that the NH Bear Hunter’s Association has kits to assist with nuisance bear issues that they lend out to the public for a period of one month, after that time it can purchased if the landowner wishes.

Commissioner Stohl wished to recognize Major James Juneau for his upcoming retirement from the Fish & Game Department. The Commission & audience applauded Jim for his service & accomplishments.

At this time, 3:07 p.m., Commissioner Baldwin moved to adjourn and Commissioner Green seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Carr, Secretary

Approved: _____
Robert Phillipson, Chairman