

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

DECEMBER 9, 2020 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: There was no physical meeting location, as this meeting took place via teleconference & Microsoft Teams.

Chairman Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He informed everyone that the public is entitled to listen in by following the conference call instructions below. He reported that no public comment would be taken during the meeting, as public comment would be accepted for 3 consecutive days after the Commission Meeting, via e-mail @ comments@wildlife.nh.gov, or by sending comments to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, N.H., 03301. Comments received within the comment period will be compiled into the December 9, 2020 Commission Minutes.

Conference call instructions:

*1-800-356-8278

*Conference Code:461125

You will be asked to state your name, once you do that, you will be entered into the call.

Governor Sununu's below Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency was read aloud:

“As Executive Director of the Fish and Game Department, and Chairman of the NH Fish and Game Commission, we find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 as extended pursuant to Executive Order 2020-05, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional possibilities to submit comments via e-mail to: comments@wildlife.nh.gov, or mailing comments to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH, 03301. Comments will be accepted for 3 consecutive days after the December 9, 2020 Commission Meeting. All comments received within the comment period will be compiled into the December 9, 2020 Commission Minutes.

We are utilizing **Vast Conference** for this electronic meeting. All members of the **Fish and Game Commission** and the staff of the Fish and Game Department have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and submit comments as indicated in the above paragraph.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the Fish and Game website and have been posted in the lobby of the Fish and Game headquarters, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please email **nheoc@dos.nh.gov**.

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote.**”

At this time, Commissioner Green took a roll call of Commission members participating on the call: P. DeBow, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, D. Patch, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes” and P. Caveney, “Yes”.

Commissioners absent: F. Bird, C. Luppi

Executive Director Mason – Present on the call.

At this time, Chairman Stohl asked that everyone remotely join in the pledge of allegiance.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Patch moved to approve the October 14, 2020 Commission Minutes with the below amendment in ***bold italics*** and Commissioner Hodgdon seconded.

AMENDMENT: Commissioner Green moved to allow/designate Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, Kevin Jordan, Colonel, Law Enforcement Division, ***or Executive Director, Scott Mason***, to act on the Commission’s behalf relative to legislative situations and/or when not possible to contact the Commission to obtain a position, Commissioner Patch seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, D. Patch, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, and P. McInnis, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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 DeBow moved to approve consent agenda items 2a – 2f, as presented below, and Commissioner Green seconded.

2a.) The Commission accepted a \$50.00 donation from Megan Williams to be deposited into the Search and Rescue Fund. Ms. Williams made this donation in honor of New Hampshire's Conservation Officers who risk their lives on a daily basis assisting others in need.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of 1 Spartan GoCam 4G/LTE Verizon camera with batteries and 2 large capacity SD cards valued at \$341.98, via Operation Game Thief from Redmond Thayer.

2c.) The Commission accepted a \$250.00 donation from Mr. Chris Clarke, Middleton, RI, to be deposited into the Search and Rescue Account. This donation was made for assistance provided to him by Conservation Officers in escorting him to safety after becoming stranded by a brook on the Basic Cascade in Lincoln, NH.

2d.) The Commission accepted a \$50.00 donation from Teresa McAloon to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. Ms. McAloon made this donation in honor of New Hampshire's Conservation Officers who risk their lives on a daily basis assisting others in need.

2e.) The Commission accepted a \$300.00 donation from Jill Schmidt, in memory of Phil Roux, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. Jill received assistance in getting off the Moat Mountain Trail in Albany, NH, from Conservation Officers after sustaining an ankle injury and wished to make this donation.

2f.) The Commission accepted a \$500.00 donation from Judith Thompson to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account. Ms. Thompson made this donation in honor of New Hampshire's Conservation Officers who risk their lives on a daily basis assisting others in need.

3.) Commissioner Green moved to accept the below donations made to the Hunter Education Program totaling \$110.00 and Commissioner McInnis seconded.

*Al & Lorrie Menard, New Boston, NH - \$10.00.

*Fred Grudak, Marble, NC - \$100.00. (This donation was made in memory of Donald R. Charbono, Enfield, NH). Both donations are eligible for Federal Aid match.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", M. Lachance, "Yes", D. Patch, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", and P. McInnis, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

4.) Commissioner Patch moved to accept the following memorial donations totaling \$1,415.00, made in memory of Gregory Sevinsky, to be utilized by the Fisheries Habitat Account and Commissioner Lachance seconded.

*Alice & Frederick Furman, Coudersport, PA -	\$35.00
*Paula Fronckowiak, Warren MI -	\$50.00
*Alex O'Donnell, Raymond, NH -	\$50.00
*Everett & Rita Blass, Coudersport, PA -	\$100.00
*Richard & Barbara Cullin, East Stroudsburg, PA -	\$100.00
*Arnold & Aimee Wykoff, Kunkletown, PA -	\$100.00
*Lori Sevinsky, Chester, NH -	\$180.00

*Joni & Tim Montroy, Palmyra, NY - \$300.00
*Ronald & Kristine Nelson, Coudersport, PA - \$500.00
Total: \$1,415.00

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes, B. Temple, "Yes, M. Lachance, "Yes", D. Patch, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes, and P. McInnis, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Commissioner DeBow moved to accept a \$500.00 donation from the New Hampshire Bass Hunters, in memory of Tracy Gerbert, Pembroke, NH, and Commissioner McInnis seconded. The Club would like the donation to be utilized by the Inland Fisheries & used towards bass fishing initiatives.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes, B. Temple, "Yes, M. Lachance, "Yes", D. Patch, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes, and P. McInnis, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

6.) Commissioner Green moved to accept the below memorial donations totaling \$90.00, made in memory of Ralph Reitsma, to be deposited into the Small Gifts & Donations Account and Commissioner Patch seconded.

*Chuck & Susan Bowie, Campton, NH - \$40.00
*Paul & Nancy Reitsma, Littleton, NH - \$50.00
Total: \$90.00

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", C. Hodgdon, "Yes, B. Temple, "Yes, M. Lachance, "Yes", D. Patch, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes, and P. McInnis, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, provided a friendly reminder to the Commission that the Wildlife Division aspires to enter into rulemaking beginning in January, 2021. He reported that the Division as entered approximately 23,000 lines of data, are half way through, and hope to be completed by late December, 2020. He reported on the next steps:

*Analysis of data.

*Present draft proposals to the Commission at January, 2021, Commission Meeting.

*Present refined proposals to the Commission at the February, 2021, Commission Meeting to obtain approval to initiate rulemaking.

*Hold 2 or 3 public hearings in late March, 2021.

*Deliberate on public input following that and bring final proposal for approval to the Commission at April, 2021, Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Green inquired as to the status of the approved beagle club language. Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, reported that the approved beagle language is currently seeking a fiscal impact statement. Paul reported that he wanted to work on this one item via virtual means to

“work out the bugs”, so to speak, on how to conduct a public hearing, as the upcoming legislative season will most likely operate via virtual means.

Paul reported that this package is very complex with approximately 40 pages of text, as there are several goals trying to be met, such as; readopting rules that expire after 10 years, definitions of Wildlife Management Areas, as well as Wildlife Control Operators, and extending the rule relations to Chronic Wasting Disease. He reported that clarification of some items, such as turkey, baiting, fisher, form improvements, and electronic reporting of turkeys would also be included in the package.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Luppi, Chair; Commissioners: Temple, Lachance & Bird. Commissioner Temple reported that the committee did not meet.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Commissioner Green, Chair; Commissioners: Hodgdon, Patch & DeBow. Commissioner Green reported that the committee has not met, as legislation is still in the LSR stages. He reported that as soon as bill language becomes available, he would schedule a meeting.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Lachance, Chair; Commissioners: Bird, Luppi & Caveney. Chairman Stohl reported that he was removing Commissioner Luppi from being Chair of this committee and that Commissioner Lachance has agreed to take over as Chairman. Commissioner Lachance reported that the committee has not met. Chairman Stohl asked that he coordinate with Tanya regarding the awards submissions.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee met last week and discussed a DOT proposal to dispose of a rest area on Rte 9 in Antrim, NH. He reported that the committee supports the proposal. He further reported that DOT does not believe they need to receive compensation for the property. He stated that it seemed like an opportunity to conserve this piece of property and that there may be more to come on this.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Commissioner Temple. Commissioner Temple reported that the next meeting was scheduled for January 11, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., via teleconference.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Green & Caveney. Commissioner Patch reported that he expects to have updates for the manual in January, 2021.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners Temple, Stohl & DeBow. Commissioner Hodgdon reported that the committee met yesterday, December 8, 2020, at the Region 3 Office in Durham, NH, (zoom participation was available as well) to review the existing commission committee structure. He reported that they received some good thoughts and comments. He further reported that the committee discussed the creation of a Seacoast Committee, as well. The consensus was that the focus of all committees should be the long-term general policy of the department. He stated, “It is a way to build consensus, committees are good ways to hash out our ideas, understand emerging issues and be well versed before a

decision making point.” In closing, he reported that the committee spent time reviewing the Commission statute, the following committees & structure:

New Committee structure for consideration and comment

Legislative Committee (Policy setting and Commission advocacy at legislature)

Governance Committee (Commission professional development and education and policy related to Commission conduct and activities)

Sustainability and Strategic Planning (Agency funding and development of strategic plan)

Resources and Infrastructure (Policy related to agency infrastructure including facilities, habitat and wildlife)

Public Engagement and Education (Engagement, partnership, and education strategies for the public and interest groups).

Chairman Stohl thanked the committee for all the work they have done.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon. Commissioner Hodgdon reported that Henry Jones, Moose Project Leader, provided the same presentation that he gave before the Commission at the October Commission meeting, and with as much enthusiasm. He thanked Henry for taking the time to give the presentation and reported that it was well received and greatly appreciated by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of NH.

OLD BUSINESS: Chairman Stohl reported on the creation of a “Coastal Committee”, which Commissioner McInnis would serve on. (See attached description).

Chairman Stohl reported that he was not able to find any evidence of a vote taken by the Commission to create 2 new Commission Award of Excellence Award Categories in prior Commission Minutes (Search & Rescue Award & Outdoor Recreation Ambassador Award).

Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner Lachance thought it would be good for the Awards Committee to meet and discuss the Outdoor Recreation Ambassador Award further and get back to the Commission with the committee’s thoughts.

Commissioner Green moved to add a “Search & Rescue Award” to the Commission Awards of Excellence Categories and Commissioner Patch seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, D. Patch, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, and P. McInnis, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

NEW BUSINESS:

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 Patch reported that the pheasant hunters he spoke with were very pleased with the attention given by the Conservation Officers and Biologists to ensure the good condition of the birds stocked.

Commissioner McInnis reported that Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries met and had requests from the hospitality industry to do away with the retail lobster/crap licenses. He reported that the Committee would be against that legislation if/when it comes out.

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

Director Mason thanked the staff, the Fish and Game Commission & public for their patience with these virtual meetings. He reported that the department needs to get more familiar with "Teams Platform", which will allow us to conduct online meetings and address legislative matters this year.

He reported that the department has been fairly lucky with its overall COVID cases and have been successful in keeping it to a minimum. No clusters to report and staff are following social distancing guideline.

He announced that the department has returned to selling license out of its Regional Offices, those being (Region 1 Office, Lancaster, NH, Region 2 Office, New Hampton, NH, and the Keene Regional Office in Keene, NH). License sales remain open at Fish & Game HQ, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH.

He further reported that he is currently working with Commissioner Sarah Stewart, DNCR (Department of Natural & Cultural Resources), as both agencies share similar missions. He reported that outdoor activities have increased overall, such as boating, state park activities, hunting, and both agencies have seen an increase in ATV issues.

Director Mason reported that he participated in his first Northeast Regional Director's Meeting. He reported that it was a virtual meeting, as most are these days due to the COVID 19 pandemic. He reported that he looks forward to working with his counterparts from around the Northeast and discussing topics of mutual interest.

A topic of discussion was a request to import reindeer into New Hampshire. The importation of this species is a major risk factor in the spread of CWD (Chronic Wasting Disease). He reported that the Fish & Game Department, along with the Department Agriculture, and our Legal Coordinator, are currently reviewing what authorities we have right now & how to address it, as it could require the need for future legislation.

He further reported that the Nongame Program continues to work with DES (Department of Environmental Services) on the AOT (Alteration of Terrain) permit process. He reported that there are approximately 200 applicants that go through this process each year, with the assistance of the Nongame staff.

In addition, Director Mason reported that the Wildlife database and Moose Lottery databases both need updating and are no longer supported by the current software. He reported that we have

evaluated our options with DOIT and will come back before the Commission with more information in the near future.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: Public comment was not heard, as comments were taken electronically via e-mail to Tanya.haskell@wildlife.nh.gov, and by mail to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301, for 3 consecutive days after the meeting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ITEMS:

Immediately following the teleconference portion of the meeting, Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries provided a presentation via Microsoft Teams (participation link below) on the Evaluation of Trophy Bass Regulations. (See attached presentation)

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

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Commissioner Patch moved to adjourn at 3:14 p.m., and Commissioner Green seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: P. DeBow, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, C. Hodgdon, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, D. Patch, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, and P. McInnis, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission