

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

AUGUST 10, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: Horse Pond F&G Club, 13 Horse Pond Avenue, Nashua, NH

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

Commissioners absent/excused: F. Bird

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Stohl called the meeting to order at 6:03 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, 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.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Green moved to approve the July 13, 2021 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner Caveney seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Chairman Stohl announced that Executive Councilor, David Wheeler, was in attendance and welcomed him to the meeting.

Councilor Wheeler stated, “I’m pleased to be here and support the Fish & Game Commission & staff. Each and every one of these Commissioners before you were appointed by the Governor & Executive Council and I am proud of them all.”

At this time, Commissioner Lachance announced that the 2020 Commission Awards of Excellence would be presented as follows:

COMMUNICATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - Gary Moore, Bradford, VT

The 2020 Communication Award of Excellence was presented to Gary Moore by Commissioner Paul DeBow of Grafton County. Commissioner DeBow reported that Gary is a prolific outdoor writer who has written a weekly column championing New Hampshire and Vermont’s natural world for 44 years. He also contributes to regional outdoor magazines. He is a life member, past president, and Director emeritus of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, a board member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, a member of the Outdoor Writers of Canada, and a member of the New England Travel Writers Network. He is a frequent speaker at Fish and Game Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, and Lions Clubs in the twin states on hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities which he is passionate about.

He reported that Gary also served on the Vermont Fish and Game Board in the late 1970s and was Vermont Commissioner of Fish and Game in the early 1980s. He understands

the issues and writes about them in a way that readers can appreciate. He is a strong supporter of scientific game management and sound forestry practices as well as conservation law enforcement.

VOLUNTEER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE -Mark Parmenter, Somersworth, NH

Mark has been a “Let’s Go Fishing” Program instructor for the past 14 years, has set new standards for instructors and gone above and beyond by providing instructor training and mentorship. Over 7 years ago, he stepped in and developed a mentoring program for LGF instructors, which established clear expectations for the new instructors and matched them with veteran instructors. The new program has been very successful. Mark has also helped coordinate Gear Repair Day, where all of the fishing equipment is inspected and repaired. Each year he heads up the spin fishing repairs by forming a team of volunteers who work one entire Saturday to accomplish this.

For the past 14 years, Mark has also volunteered as an instructor at Barry Conservation Camp’s Fish Camp week. He has overseen the activities and every year 40+ campers walk away with knowledge on how to tie knots, be an ethical angler, catch and release fish, and more. Nominated by Scott Biron, who said of Parmenter, “Often when I leave a program or leave camp the first call I get is from Mark asking if I have ideas to make what we did better. Mark is what every program wants in a volunteer.”

VOLUNTEER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - Scott Biron, New London, NH

Scott has an extensive history of volunteering and helping New Hampshire Fish and Game over many years. He has worked with the Let’s Go Fishing Program for 6 years helping to teach people how to fish, he is on the Board of Directors for New Hampshire Operation Game Thief, he is Past Executive Director of the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation, and has been a volunteer at NH Fish and Game’s Barry Conservation Camp, which is run by 4H and the University of New Hampshire, helping with the fishing week. He is also a frequent contributor to the Department’s *New Hampshire Wildlife Journal*.

Nominated by Major Dave Walsh, Scott is also a renowned fly tier and fly tying instructor throughout New Hampshire, never hesitating to help out when asked. According to Walsh, “Scott works closely with NH Fish and Game Law Enforcement as a Director with NH Operation Game Thief and has breathed new life into OGT. He is always striving to come up with new ways to raise funds for rewards as well as ways to assist our Conservation Officers in their job to fight poaching.”

ELLIS R. HATCH JR. COMMISSION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE -Ritchie White, Rye, NH

The 2020 Ellis Hatch Award of Excellence was presented to Ritchie White by Commissioner Paul McInnis, Seacoast Commissioner. Ritchie White has been an active saltwater angler for over 40 years. As a result of his passions, Ritchie has been actively involved in fisheries and wildlife policy since the 1990s. He spent 13 years as the Coastal Commissioner for the NH Fish and Game Commission, he has been a 20-year Governor's appointee to the New Hampshire Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries, he has been a member of the Board of Directors of Ducks Unlimited, the American Bluefin Tuna Association, and was also a founding member of the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire and a board member since its inception. Since 2004, Ritchie has also been the Coordinator of NH's Revolving Loan Fund which provides low-interest loans for New Hampshire's commercial fishing industry.

In addition, Ritchie has also been involved with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission since the 1990s where he began as New Hampshire's representative to the Striped Bass Advisory Panel. He has served for 21 years as an ASMFC Commissioner. He is also a strong supporter of clean water, taking an active role in advocating for reductions in point sources of nitrogen at treatment plants, as well as educating the public regarding ways they can reduce non-point-source nitrogen pollution. In addition, he is also a founding member of Rescue Great Bay, which promotes the importance of clean water in estuarine habitats and its importance to the marine resources that utilize it. Ritchie also advocated for the passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, which seeks to support and encourage the development, implementation, and enforcement of effective interstate conservation and management of Atlantic coastal fishery resources.

Nominated by Fish and Game Commissioner, Paul McInnis, Marine Division Chief, Cheri Patterson, and NH Port Authority Director, Geno Marconi, who said of Ritchie, "New Hampshire Fish and Game has been very fortunate to have such an active and staunch supporter of New Hampshire's natural resources and habitats and the constituency that utilize the natural resources with his understanding of the fishing community, the science and policy of management, and the fortitude to continue to represent New Hampshire on so many levels."

There are eight award categories for New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission Awards of Excellence for 2021. If you are aware of a worthy individual or organization, please consider nominating them for the 2021 awards. Nominations must be submitted by December 31st each year. For a description of the award categories and a nomination form or to see past winners, visit <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/about/commission-awards.html>

On behalf of the Commission, Commissioner Lachance thanked everyone for attending the meeting and supporting the award recipients.

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

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$2,150.00 made to the Search & Rescue Account:

*Mary Beth Sanford -	\$2,000.00
*John & Kathy O'Donnell -	\$ 100.00
*Danielle Rathbun -	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
Total:	\$2,150.00

2b.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$75.00 in memory of K-9 Ruby:

*Barbara Austin -	\$50.00
*Margaret Poole -	<u>\$25.00</u>
Total:	\$75.00

2c.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$3,255.00 made to the "Let's Go Fishing" Program:

- *Wendy Bodensatz, Canton, OH, donated \$500.00 in memory of Merrill Boston.
- *Frank Dubisz, Volunteer "Let's Go Fishing" Instructor, Manchester, NH, donated \$200.00.
- *Michelle Angers & Tom Dooley, Contoocook, NH, donated \$55.00 in memory of Raymond Angers.
- * Ann Wider, Barrington, NH, donated \$2,500.00 worth of materials in memory of Gregory Wieder.

2d.) The Commission accepted the following memorial donations totaling \$350.00 made to the Inland Fisheries Account:

Donations made in memory of Richard A. Knapp:

*Patricia Hayford -	\$25.00
*Ronald & Joanne Edwards -	\$30.00
*Debra Crowther & Kenneth Crowther -	<u>\$50.00</u>
Total:	\$105.00

Donations made in memory of Dennis Croteau:

*Broni Plucas, Renee Smith & Family -	\$50.00
*Tim & Callie Goulet -	\$25.00
* Mr. & Mrs. Richard Lafleur -	\$20.00
* Nancy Spaulding -	\$50.00
*Paula Houwen -	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total:	\$245.00

2e.) The Commission accepted a donation in the amount of \$48.56 to the Hunter Education Program from Wayne Clafin, Enfield, NH, to be utilized to purchase materials for Bear Brook State Park.

2f.) The Commission accepted the following memorial donations totaling \$220.00 made to the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

Donations made in memory of Alfred Hebert, Jr.:

*James & Barbara Whipple & Family -	\$25.00
*Gloria Chandler-	<u>\$45.00</u>
Total:	\$70.00

Donations made in memory of Arthur Card:

*Heidi Currier -	\$50.00
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Donations made in memory of Walter Rothe:

*Gloria Rothe -	\$100.00
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INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) Financial Statement was not discussed aloud.
- 2.) Jim Oehler, Habitat Program Supervisor, was absent from the meeting, therefore, the Overview of the Wildlife Division's Habitat Program will be heard at the September 14, 2021 Commission Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Green announced that the date to start filing LSR's was September 13, 2021. He stated, "This is a good opportunity to start contacting your Representatives & Senators to support pertinent legislation."

NEW BUSINESS:

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Public policy development & recommendations, as well as Commission advocacy before legislature.

Commissioner Green, Chair; Commissioners: DeBow, Price & Hodgson.

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

Commissioner Lachance, Chair; Commissioners: Green & Temple.

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

Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney & Hodgson.

RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: Policy recommendations related to agency infrastructure; including facilities, public access, habitat & wildlife.

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

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Engagement, partnership, awards, public recognition & education strategies for the public & interest groups.

Commissioner DeBow, Chair; Commissioners: Hodgdon & Price.

Chairman Stohl reported that the Rockingham & Carroll County Commissioners recently underwent “Commission Orientation”

He further reported that any Commissioners who have questions for staff should contact the respective Division Chief in order to do so. If there is a request for action, Commissioners should contact Director Mason to seek approval.

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 Caveney spoke to the volunteer pheasant stocking program, coordinated out of the Region 4 Office in Keene, NH, by Allison Keating, Turkey Project Leader. He reported that it was a great experience and enlightening to see children involved with parents & mentors. He reminded everyone of the importance of private landowners keeping their property open for hunting & recreational activities. He spoke of a large dairy farm in Cheshire County, owned by the Adams Family, that does just that and the large role they play in the pheasant stocking program.

At this time, Commissioner Hodgdon thanked Fish & Game staff, Department of Environmental Services staff, along with other partners that served on the Hatchery Advisory Committee, as there were many meetings and an enormous amount of work that went into getting the final report/recommendations to Director Mason. He reported that he would get the final version of the report out to everyone as soon as possible.

Chairman Stohl thanked Commissioner Hodgdon for his time & effort serving on the Hatchery Advisory Committee and stated, “You, yourself put in an enormous amount of work and on behalf of the Commission, I thank you.”

Chairman Stohl thanked Ray Smith, President, & The Board of Directors, Horse Pond Fish & Game Club, for hosting the Commission Meeting.

Ray thanked the Commission for coming and stated that the club was glad to see how the Commission works.

He reported that the September 14, 2021 Commission Meeting would take place at the Bridgewater Meeting Place, 297 Mayhew Turnpike, Bridgewater, NH, at 1:00 p.m.

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

Director Mason reported that the Hatchery Advisory Report was complete. He further reported that there was a new permit at the Powder Mill Fish Hatchery, with the goal to reduce

phosphorous discharged into the water. He reported that staff have met with 4 engineering companies and negotiations were underway with the first choice company to do the work/upgrades at that hatchery. The capital budget item sought out for this project is approximately \$4.6 million dollars.

In addition, he reported that with more people recreating, it has led to some fishing access issues, where property owners are trying to control where vehicles are parked, etc. He reported that department staff would be working with the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources to talk about issues due to this increase and how to best address it. He reported that there haven't been any new state parks developed in 20 years.

He introduced Dianne Timmins, the new Inland Fisheries Division Chief, and stated, "Dianne's doing a great job."

He further reported that AOT (Alteration of Terrain) permits continue to keep staff busy conducting endangered species review for the Department of Environmental Services. He reported that with the ARPA funds, there will be 3 fulltime/temporary positions created to assist with the review process, as staff currently conducting the review are not able to keep up with the demand.

Director Mason reported that he has had discussions with the AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club), to try to increase the sale of hike safe cards. He reported that Conservation Officers are still very active in search & rescue issues, and although sales have increased, it is still not at point where it's self-sustaining.

He reported that he would be attending the Androscoggin Valley Fish & Game Club Annual Banquet later in September.

In closing, he reported that the Exotic Aquatic Weeds Species Committee meets monthly, with representatives from different organizations, such as lake property owners, legislators, and the Department of Environmental Services, to discuss and work on some of the issues at hand. He reported that the boat registration monies go to this group, along with the out of state sticker monies, with none of the funding coming to the Fish & Game Department.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Chris Schadler, Webster, NH, & member of the NH Wildlife Coalition, inquired as to laws pertaining to accessing land for bear hounding. She reported that there were trespassing issues with hunters not obtaining landowners permission to utilize their property for running their dogs.

Commissioner Price reported that as she understands it, the hunter or party in question is no longer bear hunting, as landowners did not see the individual last season.

Keith Gaudet, Board of Director's, Horse Pond Fish & Game Club, stated that he would like to see New Hampshire open up to crossbow hunting for all. He stated, "It's a humane way to take game and a great deal of people enjoy it."

Ray Smith, President, Horse Pond Fish & Game Club, and Hunter Education Instructor, spoke to the concern of online field days and felt it was not the same experience as live fire practice.

At this time, 7:35 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission