

## NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

### NOVEMBER 15, 2022 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: Society for the Protection of NH Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301.

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

Commissioners absent/excused: P. DeBow

Executive Director Mason – Present

Chairman Green called the meeting to order at 1:00p.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 Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Commissioner E. Stohl moved to approve the October 11 2022 Commission Minutes and Commissioner M. Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and 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 E. Stohl moved to approve consent agenda items 2a & 2d, as presented below, and Commissioner M. Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) The Commission accepted the donation of a full size mounted black bear from Ruth Machos of Nottingham, NH, to be on display at the Region 1 Office in Lancaster, NH.

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 made to the “Let’s Go Fishing” Program from Robert Sweeney of Belmont, NH, in memory of Richard C. Demanche.

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$20.00 from Janet Boisvert of Manchester, NH, in memory of Richard C. Demanche, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 from Ann & Bruce Smith of Strafford, NH, in memory of Ted Spurr, for deposit into the Nongame & Endangered Species Account.

#### **LATE ITEM:**

1. Commissioner B. Temple moved to approve the donation of \$50,000 from George Wells of Walpole, NH, which will cover the purchase of all related equipment and accessories for new duty pistols for the Law Enforcement Division:

- Glock 45 pistols
- Aimpoint Acro PII Reflex Sights
- Night Stick TCM-550XL Compact Weapon Lights
- Aker Leather Dress Holders
- Safariland Duty Holsters
- 9mm Practice Ammunition
- 9mm Duty Ammunition

A few questions arose about the above donation. Major Dave Walsh responded that he could provide a detailed breakdown of how the funds would be spent.

Commissioner Temple thanked him for that.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1.) No financial statement reviewed this month.

Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, offered to answer any questions relative to the financial information recently sent to the Commission.

2.) At this time, Mark Beauchesne, Foundation Liaison, reported that the Wildlife Heritage Foundation would need to reschedule their presentation and apologized for the inconvenience.

3.) Matt Leahy, Policy Director, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, thanked the Commission & staff for holding a meeting at their facility. He reported that in 2009 the Forest Society presented the Fish & Game Department with their “Partner of the Year Award” simply because of the major support the Department has given the Forest Society for conservation projects all around the state. He stated that the Forest Society cherishes the relationship with the Department, as we having similar goals and missions, to protect land, habitat and wildlife.

In closing, he thanked everyone for coming.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman R. Green thanked Matt for hosting the meeting today.

**COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:**

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:**

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

**Commissioner Price, Chair;** Commissioners: Caveney, DeBow, Hodgson & Stohl.

**Staff members:** Kevin Jordan & Marty Mobley.

Commissioner S. Price reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting. She reported that she initiated discussion on RSA 207:57 - Harassment. “*No person shall purposely obstruct or impede the participation of any individual in the lawful activity of hunting, fishing or trapping.*” She reported that Marty Mobley, Legislative Coordinator, assured her that there would be rulemaking reflecting the statute itself. Major Walsh weighed in and

reported that he felt the statute has been effective. In closing, Commissioner S. Price reported that she did not anticipate any changes at this time.

Commissioner S. Price moved that she, as well as Commissioner P. DeBow, Commissioner A.J. DeRosa & Marty Mobley, Legal Coordinator, provide a House Freshmen Orientation for the incoming Legislators, after scheduling with the clerk, on what the Commission's role is and is not, and Commissioner B. Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner S Price moved to support the amendment to RSA 212:10-b, III, Seasonal Camp Program to add the language; "*Such leases shall be exempt from the provisions of RSA 4:40*", Commissioner B. Temple second. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

In closing, Commissioner S. Price reported that there has not been any LSR (Legislative Service Request) updates out of the House and the Senate does not have out at this time. Marty Mobley reported that she would keep the Commission updated weekly.

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

**Commissioner Caveney, Chair;** Commissioners: Lachance & Temple.  
**Staff member:** Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner J. Caveney reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting. He reported that the committee continues to work through the Commission Handbook. He stated that he hoped the committee could meet again in the very near future, as his goal is to bring an outline of the committee's discussions before he full Commission in December, however, the review of the handbook may not be completed by then.

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

**Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair;** Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa, Hodgson & Stohl.  
**Staff member:** Scott Mason.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that the committee met on October 18, 2022, @ 4pm, at F&G HQ. He reported that the committee reviewed the feedback received on the draft survey questions and spent the majority of the meeting discussing what the right mechanism was for collecting this information. He further reported that the committee would further discuss this at the next meeting, as it was still an unsettled issue.

He further reported that the Commission had requested each Division provide a matrix of their major activities, in an effort to get the Division Chiefs to think about what's coming their way in the next five years, how they spend their time now & what issues are affecting their ability to undertake major initiatives. He further reported that the committee reviewed them and agreed to break the committee up and individually meet with Division Chiefs to solicit more information and get a more standardized summary from each. In closing, he reported that he hoped to do that prior to the next committee meeting.

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

**Commissioner Temple, Chair;** Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa, McInnis & Lachance.  
**Staff member:** Dianne Timmins.

Commissioner B. Temple stated that he had nothing to report this month.

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

**Commissioner DeRosa Chair;** Commissioners: DeBow, Hodgdon & Price.  
**Staff members:** Dan Bergeron, Kevin Jordan & Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa reported the committee has been trying to figure out the possibility of finding an alternative funding source for an R3 position for the agency, as they feel it would be beneficial.

**LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Price.

Chairman R. Green announced that the Commissioner S. Price had been nominated at the last Governor & Council Meeting to serve as the Commission's representative on this committee and should be confirmed within the next month.

Commissioner S. Price reported that she attended her first meeting and discussion took place relative to \$30,000 of funding earmarked to help create a cyanobacteria strategy to deal with the growing issue around the state and stated, "It is welcome funding."

She further reported that they had an excellent report on loons and contaminants.

She reported that the committee was able to see the new LMAC website and heard grumbling about the problems they are having with it. She stated that it was more like a billboard and hoped Fish & Game did not end up with the same type of platform, as she felt it would accommodate Fish & Game's needs.

**NH RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hodgdon.

Chairman R. Green reported the Commission's representative has not been formally approved by The Governor & Council as of yet.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Commissioner J. Caveney inquired about past conversation relative to putting a calendar on the Department's website containing events, public meetings, legislative discussions, etc., for the public to be able to see what is happening for the month ahead. He stated that he has seen it done in other states and felt it was very informative & found it helpful.

Nicola Whitley, Chief, Public Affairs, stated that she would be happy to do so.

**NEW BUSINESS:** There was no new business heard.

**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 E. Stohl reported that the CT Lakes Headwaters Citizen's Advisory Committee had an annual meeting a few weeks ago, where discussion took place relative to ATV trails. He reported that on that tract there are only 11 miles of ATV trails, most of them on roads. He reported that ATV's on gravel roads create a lot of dust, shooting pebbles & rocks up in the air. He further reported that it was costly to go through with a crusher to crush up the rocks. He further reported that the ATV clubs have requested an additional 70 miles of trails in that tract and that there was a great deal of resistance toward the idea. In closing, he reported that Lyme Timber, Landowner, felt the clubs could not take care of 11 miles and was doubtful they could manage the additional 70 miles properly.

Commissioner M. Hodgson reported that the last month she attended a coyote presentation in Concord, NH, hosted by Kristina Snyder and presented by Chris Schadler.

She further reported that she visited a deer check station on the opening day of muzzleloader season and observed biological samples being taken, partnering with USDA & UNH students.

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

- Director Mason reported that he attended the North Country Safety Foundation Annual Meeting, where Lieutenant James Kneeland received the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Jim currently is the Senior Officer in the Law Enforcement Division.
- Attended the Annual Farm Bureau Meeting in Concord, NH.
- Attended the NEAFWA (Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies) Director's Conference in Freeport, ME, where discussion on topics of mutual interest took place throughout the three-day conference.
- F&G Department received a 1.2 million dollar GOFERR (Governor's Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery) Grant to rebuild some of the agencies ailing databases. He reported that 12 databases would expire at the end of 2022.
- F&G Department is moving forward with an amended contract with S3 (Licensing Software Company) to offer online deer registration, online OHRV registration, improvements to our events service package, and to bring NH in compliance with the interstate wildlife compact.
- Department's website redesign project is moving forward.
- Department is working with DoIT (Department of Information Technology), to create an I.T. Lead Position, a part time position, to share with the NH Veterans Home.

- Director Mason reported that it is getting harder and harder to fill vacant positions within the agency.

Commissioner M. Hodgson inquired as to whether the issues the department was having with the licensing software had been resolved.

Kathy LaBonte responded that there is constant communication with vendor and the Business Office on a bi-weekly basis to tweak the system to accommodate our changing needs.

**CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Weldon Bosworth, Gilford, NH, inquired if the relevancy road map that AFWA endorsed was discussed at the recent NEAFWA Director's meeting. Director Mason responded that was at the National level, not the Northeast level, therefore, there was no discussion.

Weldon further inquired if there had been any informal discussion with DOT (Department of Transportation) to quantify road kill.

Director Mason responded that the biologists do not feel that is a good method to estimate populations and would like to complete their existing research project prior to adding any additional methods.

In addition, Weldon inquired as to how much the Society for the Protection of NH Forests have benefited from grants from the Fish & Game Department over the years.

Director Mason responded that he was not aware of any grants that the Society for the Protection of NH Forests would have received.

Lionel "Buck" Mercier, Pointer Fish & Game Club, Manchester, NH, reported that he, and fellow North Country hunters, would like to see antler point restrictions reinstated.

Buck further reported that he would like to see a method in place for injured or ill hunters who miss the moose lottery deadline due to such illness or injury, be allowed to keep their moose points.

At this time, 3:02 p.m., Commissioner M. Hodgson moved to adjourn and Commissioner E. Stohl seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

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Ray Green, Chairman  
NH Fish & Game Commission