

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2009
Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium
89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware, 19901
Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair (Absent)
2. J. Richard Berry, Vice Chair
3. Ted Palmer
4. Wayne G. Steele
5. Al Townsend
6. Raymond F. Burriss
7. Robert C. Nichols
8. Neal Dukes
9. Garrett Grier, Jr.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. Greg Moore
2. Pat Emory
3. Joe Rogerson
4. Rob Hossler
5. Karen Kennedy
6. Matt DiBona
7. Carla Cassell-Carter
8. Candace Dunning
9. Bill Meredith
10. Ken Reynolds
11. Karen Bennett
12. Kevin Kalasz
13. Aaron Hurd

PUBLIC

17 Visitors

DNREC Secretary Collin P. O'Mara was also in attendance at this meeting.

Taped micro-cassettes of this meeting are available for listening at the Richardson & Robbins Building in Dover. For further information contact the Wildlife Section. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Vice Chair Berry.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Vice Chair Berry).

A motion was made and voted unanimously to approve the August 11, 2009 minutes as written.

Wildlife Administrator Greg Moore introduced the new Department Secretary Collin P. O'Mara and welcomed him to the meeting.

Agenda Item 2. Recognition of Former Council Members (Vice Chair Berry).

Past Council Chairman David Healey was presented with a plaque from the Division of Fish and Wildlife recognizing his 22 years of serving on the Council. Vice Chair Berry along with Secretary O'Mara, Director Emory, and Wildlife Administrator Greg Moore presented the plaque and congratulated him. Mr. Healey thanked the Council members and the Division and photographs were taken.

Plaques were also available for past Council members Terry Higgins and Garrett Arai; however they were unable to attend this meeting. Mr. Arai is working out of the country and Mr. Higgins had a prior commitment. Both of these members also served on the Council for many years. Mr. Moore stated that he would make sure they received their plaques.

Introductory Remarks by Secretary O'Mara

Secretary O'Mara thanked the Advisory Council and the Division for inviting him to the meeting and proceeded with a few introductory remarks. He reported that he had come from the State of California and was here tonight to learn more about Delaware and was looking forward to listening to the presentations.

Agenda Item 3. Division Reports.

The following Section reports were given:

Wildlife Section – Greg Moore.

Greg Moore provided a brief overview of the Wildlife Section highlighting the core functions and introduced some key administrative personnel. Key personnel that were introduced were Karen Bennett (Program Manager) of Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and the Private Lands Program, Ken Reynolds (Program Manager) who is in charge of wildlife and fisheries management and game research and Karen Kennedy (Administrative Specialist II) who provides all of the administrative/secretarial services. Mr. Moore summarized the number of acres and areas under the Division management authority and also outlined major funding sources.

Karen Bennett, Program Manager for the Wildlife Section's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and Private Lands Programs (PLP), provided an overview of program functions, and highlighted examples of our work to conserve habitats, plants and animals. Ten full-time positions (state and contractual) and one seasonal position comprise these two programs. Funding sources for these programs are primarily federal grants through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Environmental Scientists in the NHESP conduct surveys to locate and monitor species and habitats throughout the state on public lands and on private lands. This information is used to track the conservation status of species and habitats, which in turn is used to help focus conservation actions. Conservation actions may include management and restoration of habitat on public and private lands, protection of habitat through acquisition and easements, and technical assistance to private landowners and public agencies interested in improving conditions for, or avoiding impacts to, habitat, plants and animals. We also provide environmental review services by assisting other agencies and environmental consultants with evaluation of potential impacts of proposed projects, for example development and transportation-related projects, and wetlands and other permits.

The *Delaware Wildlife Action Plan* (DEWAP) and *The Flora of Delaware* (FOD) are two important documents developed in recent years by the NHESP. The DEWAP lists more than 450 animal species of conservation concern, more than 50 habitats of conservation concern, nearly 90 conservation issues and more than 230 conservation actions. The FOD is an annotated checklist of all plants known to occur in Delaware; it lists more than 1,500 native species of plants, of which 40% are of conservation concern (FOD was published in 2001 and is currently being updated).

A brochure and website developed by the PLP helps landowners navigate through options provided through a variety of habitat incentive programs; the PLP brochure is currently being updated. Environmental Scientists and a Regional Manager provide technical and financial assistance to landowners seeking to improve habitat on their lands. Some highlights of work with private landowners to restore and protect plant, animal and habitats of concern include: 565 landowners enrolled between 2003-2008, including wetlands restored/enhanced = 37,957 acres, early successional habitat established = 662 acres and reforestation = 709 acres. Our Phragmites Cost-Share Program has been an effective tool for assisting private landowners with restoring thousands of acres of coastal marshes - restoration that individual landowners could not accomplish alone.

Ken Reynolds then provided an overview of Wildlife Section activities related to Wildlife Area Management, Fishing Area Maintenance, Hunter Safety and Game Research. It was noted that the Wildlife Section manages 19 areas totaling approximately 60,000 acres. The Section also maintains 24 marine fishing sites and 34 freshwater sites where the Section mows grass, picks up trash, and maintains signs and ramps. The Hunter Safety program has approximately 100 volunteer instructors and teaches about 2,000 students per year in various courses. Game Research conducts various wildlife population surveys, disease surveillance, harvest data collection and analysis, waterfowl banding, species restoration and research.

Mr. Moore concluded by stating the Wildlife Section has implemented measures to evaluate and enhance program effectiveness. These actions included the development of a new mission statement, implementation of a Wildlife Section review and a public use survey contracted to Responsive Management.

Fisheries Section – Craig Shirey

Craig Shirey of the Fisheries Section gave the Advisory Council a very brief summary of the programs and responsibilities of the Fisheries Section in regards to freshwater programs. There are a total of four Advisory Councils that the Fisheries Section reports to and this is the one that deals with freshwater fishing issues.

The Fisheries Section prepares the Fishing Guide which is the primary outreach to the anglers of the State. The Guide is prepared beginning in December and is printed in February in hopes of being distributed prior to the freshwater trout season. The Council was asked to review the fishing guide and provide any feedback for consideration in future guides.

Trout stocking season includes stocking freshwater trout (rainbows and browns) beginning in March at Tidbury Pond in Kent County and Newton Pond in Sussex County. The main trout stocking program occurs in late-March or early April prior to the season opener, with stocking of approximately 32,000 fish in the six designated trout streams. White Clay receives the lion's share due to size and access. There are nine or ten stocking dates that occur throughout the season. A fall stocking occurs in mid-October. The trout are paid for with trout stamp dollars and supplemented by license dollars if necessary.

We also manage 35 freshwater state-owned ponds totaling 1,700 acres. All support populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, with many having populations of yellow perch and chain pickerel as well. The Fisheries Section samples six or seven ponds per year on a rotating basis in order to evaluate the fish community. Due to the high rates of catch and release fishing little 'active' management is required. In some cases the Division will stock if necessary or develop new regulations.

The Fisheries and Wildlife Sections are also responsible for aquatic weed control in the state ponds. Weed control is in the form of chemical or mechanical control. Most chemical control is directed towards hydrilla. Mechanical harvesters remove floating mats of algae.

Tidal bass populations are supplemented by stocking advanced fingerlings. These fingerlings have great survival and they can be followed as they grow in the population and are recruited into the fishery. We also monitor the bass club tournament reports and catch rates to help validate our sampling efforts. Anglers should be receiving a mail-out questionnaire this fall. Technical assistance to private pond owners is also conducted. The Fisheries Section also responds to freshwater fish kill events.

Mosquito Control – William Meredith

Bill Meredith, Mosquito Control Section Administrator, gave a 20 minute overview presentation regarding operations of the Delaware Mosquito Control Section. Topics briefly reviewed included why mosquito control is performed and the challenges to do such in Delaware; mosquito biology/ecology; mosquito population and arboviral disease surveillance-and-monitoring programs; chemical/insecticide control practices; source reduction practices including water management projects; wetland habitat management/restoration activities to protect or enhance fish and wildlife populations; why mosquito control is located in a state fish and wildlife management agency; the public's involvement with and access to our services; and how the Mosquito Control Section interacts with many other federal and state programs in conducting both longer term planning/coordination and for carrying out our daily operations.

Enforcement – Aaron Hurd

Captain Aaron Hurd presented the duties of the Enforcement Section through a power point presentation. It reviewed the Sections Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Goals and Objectives. Each of the six points of the Goals

and Objectives were then expounded upon through statistics, operational information, and photographs of Section assets in operation.

Under Services in Law Enforcement and Public Safety, the Boating Safety, Fisheries Enforcement, Wildlife Enforcement, Boat Registration, Fisheries Licensing, Homeland Security, K-9, equipment programs were reviewed.

Under Accreditation, the recent change from CALEA Accreditation to DE State Accreditation was reviewed.

Under Professional Development, training requirements and opportunities were reviewed.

Under Preventing, Investigating, and Prosecuting Illegal Activity, Casework statistics, Top Violations, Special Operations, Boat Accident Investigations, and Special Enforcement Duties were reviewed.

Under Promoting the Public Image, activities such as the Section's Youth giveaways, Youth Fishing Tournament, School Presentations, Exhibits, Job Fairs, Inland Bays Clean-up, Operation Game Theft and Crab Pot Clean-up were reviewed.

Under Providing Educational Opportunities to the Public, the Boating Safety Education, Hunter Safety Education, Camp Awareness, and Complimentary Vessel Safety Check Programs were reviewed.

Coordination – Carla Cassell-Carter

Carla Cassell-Carter, Acting Program Manager II for the Coordination Section, reported that her Section is responsible for the aquatic education programs, duck stamp and trout stamp programs, fiscal and grant management and the recreational licensing program.

Delaware's Aquatic Resource Education Programs (AREC) is provided from the Center in Smyrna and the DuPont Nature Center in Milford. These Centers provide hands on experience through science-based educational activities and provide numerous research, recreational and eco-tourism opportunities. These programs serve thousands of grade school students, teachers and visitors to the facilities each year. Funding for the ARE Programs is provided through a federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) which is matched from more than 8,000 volunteer service hours each year. Additionally, the Centers provide internship opportunities to Delaware high school and college students.

The Duck Stamp and Trout Stamp Programs are supported annually through the sale of stamps which are required of hunters and anglers and also collected by stamp enthusiasts. The Division of Fish & Wildlife, in partnership with Delaware Ducks Unlimited, began the duck stamp program in 1980 to raise funds for waterfowl conservation. To date, more than \$2.5 million has been raised. Delaware's freshwater trout program is a self-supporting fishery program that is funded from fees derived from the state's trout stamp program in conjunction with federal grant funds provided through the USFWS.

The funds managed by the Coordination Section for the Division are received from a variety of private, state and Federal programs. General funds (GF) represent approximately 40% of the Division's budget. GF funds are those revenues which are supported by the state's tax base. Appropriated Special Funds (ASF) represents approximately 23% of the Division's budget. ASF funds are those which are received as a result of licenses and fees, such as hunting, recreational/commercial fishing licenses, boat registrations, etc. Of major significance to the Division and to constituents who pay these fees is that these funds are dedicated and must be spent on activities which support wildlife, fishing and boating resources and activities. Additional ASF funding results from legal settlement escrows and penalty proceeds dedicated largely to wildlife/fisheries restoration activities. Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF) represents 37% of the Division's budget. NSF funds received from federal partners primarily supporting the Wildlife/Fisheries and Enforcement/Boating Sections are underwritten in 60+ new/continuing annual grants and are funded from the following government agencies:

- Department of Interior –U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Department of Commerce – National Marine Fisheries Service

- Department of Commerce – United States Coast Guard
- United States Army – Corps of Engineers
- United States Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- Environmental Protection Agency

One of the largest programs managed by the Coordination Section is the Recreational Licensing Program. This program generates revenues in excess of \$2,500,000 annually to support wildlife and fishing resources and recreational opportunities in Delaware. The License Program serves more than 100,000 constituents through direct sales at Division facilities and through retail sales at over 150 licensing agents statewide.

Since 2002, the Division has been a part of the Delaware's E-Government Initiative. Though this process has been long in implementation, this year will be the final year of transitioning from manual to automated licensing. Cost efficiencies will be immediate and in excess of \$110,000 annually. Environmental efficiencies will be instantaneous by eliminating the need to print more than 200,000 individual licenses and permits. Additional efficiencies that will be recognized are cash collection and interest earnings, reduced legal costs, reduced administrative efforts to manage dual systems, minimizing compliance deficiencies, savings for our retail agents, increased customer service and protection of the personal and sensitive information for our constituency.

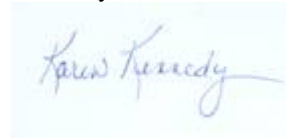
Vice Chair Berry thanked everyone for their presentations and then asked for any October agenda items. They are as follows:

AGENDA FOR THE 10/27/09 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).
2. Air Rifles for Squirrel Hunting (Dave Darone).
3. Ommelanden Fees (Michael Friel).
4. Deer Plan and Survey (Joe Rogerson).
5. New Legislation Initiatives (Pat Emory).

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary