

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Quarterly Meeting

February 12, 2017

M I N U T E S

The quarterly meeting of the Natural Resources Commission was held on Sunday, February 12, 2017 at the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Headquarters, South Charleston, West Virginia. The following individuals attended:

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSIONERS

Jeffrey S. Bowers
David M. Milne
Kenneth R. Wilson
Peter L. Cuffaro
Gregory K. Burnette
Thomas O. Dotson (via conference call)
Byron K. Chambers (absent)

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE

Delegate George Boogie Ambler, 42nd District
Delegate Joe Statler, 51st District
Senator Glenn Jeffries, 8th District

MEDIA

John McCoy, Gazette Mail, Charleston
Chris Lawrence, Metro News, Charleston

DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Stephen S. McDaniel, Director (Presiding), South Charleston, WV
Lysti Looney, Director's Office (Recording Secretary), South Charleston, WV
Emily Fleming, Director's Office, South Charleston, WV
Paul Johansen, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV

Jerry Jenkins, Law Enforcement, South Charleston, WV
Bret Preston, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
David Trader, Law Enforcement, South Charleston, WV
Chris Ryan, Wildlife Resources, WV University, Morgantown, WV
Scott Warner, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Art Shomo, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Gary Foster, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston/Elkins, WV
Keith Krantz, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Jim Crum, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Colin Carpenter, Wildlife Resources, Beckley, WV
David James, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
S. K. Hickman, Law Enforcement, Parkersburg, WV
W. A. Phillips, Law Enforcement, Parkersburg, WV
G. M. Willenbarg, Law Enforcement, Franklin, WV
A. D. Kuykendall, Law Enforcement, Petersburg, WV
C. J. Whittington, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Dustin Allen, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Chris Lester, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Josh Toner, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
W.W. Brogan, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Cliff Brown, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Terry Ballard, Law Enforcement, Nitro, WV
Larry Rockel, Law Enforcement, Nitro, WV
Jerry Payne, Law Enforcement, Nitro, WV
Brandon Mullins, Law Enforcement, Nitro, WV
David Thorne, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Roger Wolfe, Parks - Planning, Engineering, Maintenance, Logan, WV
Kem Shaw, Wildlife Resources, Forks of Coal, South Charleston, WV
Holly Morris, Wildlife Resources, Beckley, WV
Bill Rheinlander, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV

ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Larry Lawson, Belle, WV
Jim Musgrove, Franklin, WV
Justin Hetrick, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Morgantown, WV
Justin Covert, Red House, WV
Russ Lingenfelter, Milton, WV
Steve Frye, Salt Rock, WV
John Drangmeister, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Hurricane, WV

Bryan Elkins, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Ashford, WV
Donald McAllister, Huntington, WV
Cory Boothe, Quinwood, WV
Jeremy Siders, Charleston, WV
David Lyle
Scott Wilson, Clarksburg, WV
Frank Hughes, Elizabeth, WV
Ronnie McPalliete, Barboursville, WV
Mike Persinger, Oak Hill, WV
Jerod Harman, West Virginia Bass Nation/West Virginia Wildlife Federation,
Buckhannon, WV
Ed McMinn, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, South Charleston, WV
Jeremy Preston, Mountaineer Quality Deer Management Association, Fairmont,
WV
Aaron Johnson, West Virginia Hunters for Better Buck Management, West
Hamlin, WV
Sherry Durst, Clendenin, WV
James Durst, Clendenin, WV
William Vandale, Charleston, WV
Jack Lambert, Wyoming County Sportsman Association, Saulsville, WV
Lance Murray, Mountaineer Quality Deer Management Association, Fairmont, WV
Rhonda Mullins, Ernie Nester Chapter Trout Unlimited, Charleston, WV
Steve Young, Ernie Nester Chapter Trout Unlimited, Charleston, WV
Jeff Holbert, Scott Depot, WV
Larry Orr, Ernie Nester Chapter Trout Unlimited, Charleston, WV
Kari Mihal, Almost Heaven Archers, Dixie, WV
Tim Mihal, Almost Heaven Archers/ West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Dixie,
WV
Koleman Mihal, Almost Heaven Archers, Dixie, WV
Brad Toler, Baileysville Sportsmen Club
Tim Ickes, West Virginia Trophy Hunters Association, Charleston, WV
Bob Bungers, Trail of Dreams, Charleston, WV
Tony Keller, West Virginia Bass Nation, Charleston, WV
Homer Sweeney, Ernie Nester Chapter Trout Unlimited, South Charleston, WV
Lee Orr, Ernie Nester Chapter Trout Unlimited, Charleston, WV

CALL TO ORDER

Director Stephen McDaniel called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. Director McDaniel introduced himself, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked the commissioners to introduce themselves and state the county they represent. Director McDaniel introduced and thanked Senator Glenn Jeffries, Delegate George (Boogie) Ambler, and Delegate Joe Statler for attending.

Director McDaniel presented the SEAFWA 2016 Officer of the Year award to six Natural Resources Police Officers:

Joshua A. Prickett – District I
Adam D. Kuykendall – District II
Dustin S. Allen – District III
Joshua Toner – District IV
Larry K. Rockel – District V
Allen Phillips – District VI

Officer Joshua Toner was presented the Shikar-Safari Club International “2016 Wildlife Officer of the Year” award.

RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bowers made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2016 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission as submitted. Commissioner Burnette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2017 LEGISLATURE UPDATE

Emily Fleming explained the procedures during the legislative session and reviewed the DNR tracking sheet, which has all the bills that affect our agency. The tracking sheet is updated daily as the bills go through the committees. Emily stated that the public could go to the Legislature’s web page to listen into committee meetings and to get updates. (Attachment A)

SUMMARY of the 2016 BIG GAME HARVEST

Gary Foster presented an overview of the 2016 big game season harvests. He also stated that the DNR is in the process of acquiring approximately 40,000 acres in the southern coalfields region which is the largest WMA acquisition in our state’s history. In December, 2016, twenty-four elk were released on the Tomblin WMA to initiate the agency’ elk restoration efforts. Gary stated mast conditions were above average this year but varied in different areas of the state. Game management is working on

revisions of the five-year deer and black bear operational plans, with both operational plans to be completed this year. Gary introduced project leaders Colin Carpenter (Black Bear Project) Jim Crum (Deer Project) and Keith Krantz (Turkey/Small Game Project). (Attachment B)

PROPOSED 2017 BIG GAME HUNTING REGULATIONS

Gary Foster reviewed the 2017 proposed Antlerless Deer Season regulations. (Attachment C)

Chris Ryan reviewed the 2017 Proposed Black Bear Season regulations. He stated this is the fifth year under the current Black Bear Management Plan. Chris stated West Virginia ranks in the top five for bear harvest. (Attachment C)

2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations

Chris Ryan reviewed the proposed 2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Season regulations. (Attachment C)

PROPOSED 2018 FISHING REGULATIONS

Bret Preston presented a fishing regulation recommendation for a newly acquired public fishing area in the Spring Run area. Commissioner Wilson made a **MOTION** to establish a fly-fishing only, catch-and-release regulation for trout on an approximately 1-mile section for Spring Run in a marked area accessible from Spring Run Road near Dorcas in Grant County. Commissioner Bowers' seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Bret Preston reviewed the proposed 2018 fishing regulations. (Attachment D)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry Lawson, welcomed Director McDaniel. He handed out a copy of the COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR H.J.R.2 (Originating in the Committee on constitutional Revision) dated February 1, 1995 and included a letter addressed to The Honorable Oshel Craigo, Chair, Committee on Finance, West Virginia State Senate, from Robert "Chuck" Chambers, Speaker, House of Delegates, amendment to HJR 2 specifically highlighting 6-55 and 6-56. (Attachment E)

Justin Hettick, President, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, welcomed Director McDaniel. He stated that one great thing that happened last year was the elk restoration program. The elk can help pay for themselves by the development of a

preference point system. The Association supports the archery only counties and suggested an antlerless archery season in January.

Justin Covert, stated that if leached dogs were legal to use in West Virginia it would help in hunters being able to recover wildlife. He also stated that a two buck limit is favored over one buck limit.

Russ Lingenfelter, stated that the one buck concept will result in a loss of 1.1 million dollars in state revenues, it will reduce hunting time with family, loss of days spent in afield, and loss of revenue on sportsmen purchases. He does not think the one buck limit concept is good for the state now. He also stated that Sunday hunting would increase sales and increase time spent with family.

Cory Boothe, thanked DNR for the Sunday hunting bill. Since 1999 license sales have decreased - all figures are down and he feels we need to lower the buck limit, says Ohio license sales figures have increased with one buck limit. He stated that statewide surveys show that 85% of respondents are in favor of a 2 buck limit. (Attachment F)

Robert Pate, Chairman, Southern Coal Fields Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, suggested adding elk sheds in the legislation that is now being considered.

Dave Truban, welcomed Director McDaniel. He challenged each commissioner to come up with one idea from their district to help the state and the DNR. Dave also stated that the Hunters Helping the Hungry program does not have enough meat processors. Mr. Truban would like to see an advisory group of volunteer sportsmen conduct a round table discussion - he would be willing to organize.

Jerod Harman, West Virginia Bass Nation, West Virginia Wildlife Federation, stated the second committee meeting of the Hunting and Fishing Days event was held and the event will take place this year on September 23rd and 24th. He asked that the fisheries staff continue working on plans at Stonewall Jackson Lake and that he would be glad to serve on the planning committee.

Frank Hughes, feels the regulations should be for the harvest of one either sex deer with option of purchasing an additional tag at any time. Limit harvest to two bucks, if you charge \$30, for extra buck tag, would be more revenue. Mr. Hughes recommended that doe seasons be set on a county by county basis. He would also like to see a leash law for dogs for tracking wounded deer.

Ed McMinn, commended DNR staff and Law Enforcement officers - appreciate the job they do.

George Workman, President, Trooper Erick Workman Foundation, says Musky tournament will be in June. The foundation is looking for projects to work on – would like to see money go back into the musky program. He spoke to Officer Simms about the problems at access sites, vandalism, drugs and lettering and possibly the foundation purchasing groundhog cameras for the sites. Thanked DNR for what they do.

Jeremy Preston, Mountaineer Quality Deer Management Association, welcomed Director McDaniel and commended the DNR staff for their efforts. He stated Sunday hunting is an important issue with the MQDMA. He feels hunters want prime bucks to harvest and that West Virginia is the only state that harvests more bucks than does, and they feel this needs to change. (Attachment G)

Jack Lambert, Wyoming County Sportsman's Association, does not want any changes in the four southern counties (Logan, McDowell, Mingo and Wyoming) wants to keep firearms out of these counties, they have been working thirty years to get prime bucks in the area.

Lance Murray, Mountaineer Quality Deer Management Association, thanked DNR Commissioners and officers for all their work. He is working with the Governor's One Shot committee offering his land and to be a guide, if needed. Lance said that QDMA has a tremendous amount of information on deer management and would like to see DNR embrace more of these ideas.

Steve Young, Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited, presented a donation in the amount of \$6,000 to the DNR for aquatic habitat projects.

James Durst, feels we need more Law Enforcement officers in southern Kanawha County to help enforce poaching - officers are doing excellent job just need more officers.

Jeff Holbert, requested keeping regulations as they are in the four southern counties (Logan, McDowell, Mingo and Wyoming) - no firearms. Furthermore, he recommends that we reduce buck tags in other parts of the state, and that a leash law for training dogs is needed.

Lee Orr, West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited, welcomed Director McDaniel. Trout Unlimited supports DNR on wild and native trout habitat and restoration efforts - continue with the work you are doing.

Aaron Johnson, West Virginia Hunters for Better Buck Management, spoke of his opportunities to hunt in the past; with proper management, we could have quality bucks in the whole state.

Bradly Toller, Baileysville Sportsman Association, feels one buck limit would devastate DNR. He stated that coyotes are a problem and that hunters need to kill coyotes. Stated NRPO should receive same pay and benefits as State Police.

Director McDaniel announced the Regulations meetings would be March 13th and 14th in various areas of the state.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND PLACE

April 23, 2017, North Bend State Park, Cairo, WV

ADJOURN

Commissioner Milne made a **MOTION** to adjourn. Commissioner Burnette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.