

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Quarterly Meeting
Chief Logan Lodge and Conference Center
October 22, 2017

M I N U T E S

The quarterly meeting of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was held on Sunday, October 22, 2017, Chief Logan Lodge and Conference Center, Logan, West Virginia. The following individuals attended:

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSIONERS

Jeffrey S. Bowers
David M. Milne
Kenneth R. Wilson
Byron K. Chambers
Gregory K. Burnette
Thomas O. Dotson
Peter L. Cuffaro

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
Scott Warner, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Zack Brown, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Brad DeBord, Law Enforcement, South Charleston, WV
Dakota Chattin, Law Enforcement, Alum Creek, WV
Larry Rockel, Law Enforcement, Logan, WV
Jerry Payne, Law Enforcement, Alum Creek, WV

Steve Haines, Law Enforcement, Farmington, WV
Bret Preston, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Terry Ballard, Law Enforcement, Alum Creek, WV
Kem Shaw, Wildlife Resources, Alum Creek, WV
Zachary Mills, Law Enforcement, Raleigh County, WV
Jim Crum, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Gary Foster, Wildlife Resources, Elkins/South Charleston, WV
Todd Petrunger, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Josh Lambert, Law Enforcement, Summers County, WV
Chris Ryan, Wildlife Resources, Morgantown, WV
Roger Wolfe, Planning, Engineering & Maintenance, South Charleston, WV
Jeff Hansbarger, Wildlife Resources, Alum Creek, WV
Charles Stephens, Law Enforcement, Creston, WV
Brett Simon, Law Enforcement, Romney, WV
Josh Parsons, Law Enforcement, Roanoke, WV
Steve Antolini, Law Enforcement, Farmington, WV
Bob Johnson, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Dennis Feazell, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
David Farmer, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Clarence Whittington, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Seth Rader, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Robert Clark, Law Enforcement, Romney, WV
Shane Duffield, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Chris Fitzwater, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Dwayne Duffield, Law Enforcement, Parkersburg, WV
William Phillips, Law Enforcement, Parkersburg, WV
Woodrow Brogan, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Ryan Hill, Law Enforcement, Alum Creek, WV
Chris Lester, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Kenneth Little, Law Enforcement, Beckley, WV
Dave Trader, Law Enforcement, South Charleston, WV
Jeff Sweeny, Law Enforcement, Alum Creek, WV
Randy Kelley, Wildlife Resources, Logan, WV

ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Don Ratcliff, West Virginia Bear Hunters Association, Elkview, WV
Justin Hetrick, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Morgantown, WV
Kenny Bishop, Delbarton, WV

Chad Bishop, Gilbert, WV
Bradley Toler, Bailyville Sportsman Club, Clear Fork, WV
Eric Davis, Cabela's Charleston, WV
Larry Lawson, Belle, WV
David Bops, Summit Bass Sportsman's Association, Clendenin, WV
Arthur Brunty, Buffalo Creek Water Shed, Buffalo Creek, WV
Barbara Brunty, Buffalo Creek Water Shed, Buffalo Creek, WV
Amy Hetrick, Morgantown, WV
Ed McMinn, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, South Charleston
Jessica Stephens, Cresten, WV
Kim Johnson, Alderson, WV
Robin Lester, Beckley, WV
Hannah Lester, Beckley, WV
Clay Lester, Beckley, WV
Kendell Stewart, Beckley, WV
Staci Morgan, Beckley, WV
Aiden Morgan, Beckley, WV
Madelyn Little, Beckley, WV
National Guard Members
David Runyon
Zoe Morris, Public Affairs, West Virginia National Guard

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 in which they reside.

Director McDaniel and Bret Preston, Assistant Chief, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to David Kapsa, Summit's High Adventure Director, in recognition of the Boy Scouts 2017 National Jamboree Conservation Project Team. During their time at the Jamboree, 750 Scouts participated in a Conservation Project constructing more than 200 "spider block" fish habitat structures, which will be placed in West Virginia lakes this winter and will provide habitat for fish.

Director McDaniel and Colonel Jenkins presented Medal for Lifesaving Awards. Natural Resources Police Officer Kenneth Little received Law Enforcement Sections Lifesaving Award.

Sergeant Bob Johnson, Shane Duffield and Officer Joshua Lambert received Law Enforcement Lifesaving Awards for their work in the June 23, 2016 "Thousand Year Flood".

Sergeant Chris Lester and Officer Zack Mills received the Meritorious Service Award for their assistance in the June 23, 2016, "Thousand Year Flood".

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Boating Officer of the Year Award district nominees were NRPO Stephen Haines, District 1; NRPO Seth Rader, District 3; CPL Clarence Whittington, District 4; and CPL. Jeff Sweeney, District 5. District 2 did not have a nomination. The State Boating Officer of the Year was awarded to NRPO Seth Rader, District 3.

Colonel's Award – Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Officer of the Year Award – district nominees were: NRPO Chris Fitzwater, District 1; NRPO Brett Simon, District 2; NRPO Joshua Parsons, District 3; NRPO Todd Petrunger, District 4; NRPO Bryan Hill, District 5; and NRPO W. "Allen" Phillips, District 6. NRPO Bryan Hill, District 5, was awarded the Colonel's Award SEAFWA Officer of the Year.

Director McDaniel and Paul Johansen, Chief of Wildlife Resources presented Bret Preston with the Governor's Certificate of Appreciation for his dedication and hard work during his time with DNR. With his knowledge and determination, the fisheries unit is where it is today. Bret will be retiring October 30, 2017 and will be missed by all.

RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bowers made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2017 meeting of the NRC as submitted. Commissioner Dotson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO 2018 – 2019 RACCOON HUNTING SEASON

Gary Foster reviewed the proposed modification of the raccoon hunting season so that raccoons can be taken at any time during the season. Currently, raccoon hunting is legal only during the eleven-hour period beginning at six o'clock postmeridian (6:00 p.m.) and ending at five o'clock antemeridian (5:00 a.m.) on the following day. This would be for the 2018-2019 season. (Attachment A)

Commissioner Wilson made a **MOTION** to approve as submitted. Commissioner Milne seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don Ratcliff, West Virginia Bear Hunters Association, stated there was mild weather for the early week of season, and stated his group harvested 14 bears. He would like to introduce a legislative bill this year making it illegal to sell bear bait.

Justin Hetrick, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, President, spoke on how the WVBA has expressed their opposition to deer farming and specifically the transfer of oversight of deer farming from DNR to the Department of Agriculture. He spoke of a deer escape from a deer farm in Ravenswood, and hopes the Dept. of Agriculture takes escaped deer as a serious threat. He stated that less than 2 years after the transfer of oversight, we have already had a major facility breach. (Attachment B)

Perry Harvey, Water Shed Association of Buffalo Creek, Logan, showed pictures of the work they have completed on the stream. DNR now stocks February, March, April and May; however they would like to see DNR conduct a fall stocking on Buffalo Creek. From 2005 to present, the watershed has conducted private stockings of fish for "Fishing Days".

Clint Grimmatt, Huff Creek Watershed, stated they are starting stream restoration, asking to be added to the list for trout stocking. They have fishing day's tournament for youths and the stocking would benefit the tournament.

Bradley Toler, Baileysville Sportsman Association, Clear Fork, commended Natural Resources Police Officers for their awards. Mr. Toler stated he feels DNR should handle managing the deer herd and that we do not need a 1 buck limit. He recommended that the minimum antler size for a legal buck be a forked horn instead of 3 inches above the hairline. He asked that the gates on WMAs and National Forest be more accessible for handicap electric scooters for handicap hunters.

Larry Lawson, stated the commission meetings were held on Monday mornings at 9:00 in the 1980s. He would have to take a day of annual leave from work to attend. Mr. Lawson has missed three meeting in the last four decades.

Ed McMinn, thanked the ones who attended the sportsman's caucus barbeque. Would like for the commission to consider allowing the Class N stamps to be used anytime

during archery season and consider removing earn a buck regulation from archery season.

Shannon and Tyler Sizemore want to conduct coyote calling seminars in West Virginia. The seminars would take place in four locations in West Virginia. They are working with Cabela's to sponsor the tournaments. Ten major companies have been contacted to help in sponsoring the hunts this year. Tournament held in 2017 had 497 hunters involved. Hoping this year there will be a thousand participants. Hoping to host tournaments in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Ohio in 2018.

DIRECTOR MCDANIEL'S COMMENTS

NATIVE BROOK TROUT WATERS

Bret Preston and Dave Thorne presented

Trout and Habitat Biologist:

1. Native Brook Trout Regulations

Basic objectives of native Brook Trout management

Should be supported by Trout Management Plan

Watershed conditions for selection criteria

Four watersheds for consideration:

Middle Fork of Williams, Red Creek, Tea Creek and Otter Creek.

2. Chesapeake Bay Native Brook Trout Propagation

3. Coldwater Habitat Projects planned:

2018 – Holly River State Park and South Branch WMA

2019 – Cathedral State Park, Coopers Rock State Forest

SPECIAL TROUT STOCKING

Jim Hedrick, Hatchery Program Manger

1. Overview of objectives and purpose of a trout management plan

a. Goal: Provide framework for sound management decisions that will enhance trout fishing opportunities while incorporating public input.

b. Desired outcome: Improve WV trout fishing resources and overall angler satisfaction in addition to improving angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation.

2. Conceptual discussion on announcing Friday and Saturday stockings at State Parks and nearby waters

a. Goal: provide unique angling opportunities for families while promoting use of the WV State Parks System

- b. Desired outcome: Making trout more available when families and children have opportunities to participate.
- 3. Concept and discussion of gold rush promotions:
 - a. Goal: Make a unique fish opportunity that specifically appeals to children when they are available to participate.
 - b. Desired outcome: Create an anticipated fishing opportunity that will encourage families to specifically schedule a fishing event.

LIMITED ENTRY HUNTING AT STATE PARKS

Sam England stated controlled deer hunts were held at Blennerhassett and Pipestem State Parks and later this year hunts will be held at Cacapon and North Bend State Parks. He thanked the Law Enforcement and Wildlife Resource Sections for their assistance on the hunts. The weather has a great effect on the outcome of the hunts. Sam is hoping to have ten parks participating in the controlled hunts in 2018 and package with lodging at the participating parks.

Commission Cuffaro asked about deer processing, Director McDaniel stated we are looking for local processors. Commissioner Cuffaro has concerns about non-hunters in state parks, Sam stated they will have signs and will notify park visitors that there is hunting occurring in the park. Director McDaniel stated call centers & lodges will notify park visitors as well.

Commissioner Burnette stated he participated in a youth hunt yesterday. Fourteen youths participated with seven successfully harvested. Wildlife Resources and Law Enforcement employees participated. Commissioner Burnette thanked everyone for all their work and dedication.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND PLACE

February 25, 2018, DNR Headquarters, South Charleston

ADJOURN

Commissioner Bowers made a **MOTION** to adjourn. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:54 p.m.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
2018-2019 HUNTING AND TRAPPING REGULATIONS**

1. The Division of Natural Resources proposes to modify the raccoon hunting season so that raccoons can be taken at any time during the season. Currently, raccoon hunting is legal only during the eleven hour period beginning at six o'clock postmeridian (6:00 p.m.) and ending at five o'clock antemeridian (5:00 a.m.) on the following day.

Favor _____

Oppose _____

Eyewitness accounts of escaped captive cervid (red deer) near Ravenswood, WV on October 4, 2017.

Photos taken from two independent Facebook accounts.

