

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Quarterly Meeting
October 27, 2019
MINUTES

The quarterly meeting of the Natural Resources Commission was held on Sunday, October 27, 2019 at Stonewall Resort State Park, Roanoke, West Virginia. The following individuals attended:

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSIONERS

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

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
Chris Ryan, Wildlife Resources, WV University, Morgantown, WV
Scott Warner, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Keith Krantz, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Jim Crum, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
David James, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Zack Brown, Wildlife Resources, South Charleston, WV
Doug Benson, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Cliff Brown, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Kieran O'Malley, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Seth Rader, Law Enforcement, French Creek, WV
Jim Fregonara, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV

Richard Bailey, Wildlife Resources, Elkins, WV
Susan Olcott, Wildlife Resources, Farmington, WV

ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Jack Hudnall, Hudnall Wildlife Services, White Sulphur Springs, WV
Myrna Hudnall, White Sulphur Springs, WV
Larry Lawson, Belle, WV
Justin Hettick, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, Morgantown, WV
William Vandale, Charleston, WV
Scott Wilson, National Wild Turkey Federation, Clarksburg, WV
Mike Persinger, West Virginia Better Bucks Management, Oak Hill, WV
Jerod Harman, West Virginia Bass Nation, Buckhannon, WV
Frank Hughes, Elizabeth, WV

CALL TO ORDER

Director McDaniel called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. Director McDaniel introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked the commissioners to introduce themselves and state the county they represent. Commissioner Cuffaro introduced himself via phone.

RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wilson made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2019 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission as submitted. Commissioner Burnette requested clarification on financial estimates reported on pages 9 and 10 of the minutes. The estimated financial impacts of reducing the annual buck limit from three to two without a license fee increase was reported by Scott Kline to be an estimated loss \$828,432 over 3 years which differs from the estimated loss of \$1.5 million over 3 years reported by Director McDaniel. Director McDaniel noted the minutes would be corrected to reflect the estimated loss of \$828,432 over 3 years, as reported by Scott Kline. Commissioner Dotson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jerold Harmon, West Virginia Bass Nation and President, West Virginia Wildlife Federation, stated he saw a post on social media that Javin's Girls' team was the winner at the Governor's One Shot Hunt this year and he would like to congratulate them. He noted 6,000 people attended the Hunting and Fishing Day's event held at Stonewall Resort State Park, with more than 1,000 kids involved in the youth challenge. He would like to see the numbers double next year. If anyone has good ideas, the committee is open for suggestions. Next year's event will be September 19 & 20, 2020. The second annual Jim Evans Award was awarded to Shannon Lewis, West Virginia Muzzleloaders Association. Bass Nations membership is on the rise and kids are getting involved. We are working on habitat restoration. Bass Nation would like to stock bass. Stated that there is muskie fishing while bass tournaments are being held at Stonewall. Stated muskie are still being stocked. Stated we need to look at muskie stocking program, as there are too many. They are working on a study of muskie on the Kanawha, Ohio and Monongah Rivers.

Frank Hughes stated he supports lowering the buck limit to two. He recommends a sportsman license that allows for one either-sex deer and the option to purchase another either-sex deer tag. He also recommends an antlerless deer tag must be purchased before harvesting buck. Antlerless deer tags should be allocated on a county by county basis based on the deer population. He stated licenses need to be restructured and more user friendly.

Larry Lawson noted this was the 148-commission meeting since he started attending, and he has missed only 4 of these meetings. He referenced past attempts to reduce the buck bag limit, and he recommended holding off on reducing the buck limit. He also congratulated Commissioner Bowers on his reappointment. He noted Commissioner Bowers' father served as a Commissioner previously, and he hopes a Bowers will be on the Commission for years to come.

Bill Vandale the DNR does a poor job of communicating when Commission meetings are being held. The meeting notices need to be posted, so people will know when and where the meetings are. He looked on the DNR website and could not find anything posted about this meeting. He believes the pre-announced stockings are destroying trout fishing. He noted that something needed to be done to lower the coyote population.

Jack Hudnall was invited by Commissioner Dotson to attend and speak regarding trapping. He owns and operates Hudnall Wildlife Services in Greenbrier County, and he has four proposals he would like for the DNR to consider.

1. Allow use of bleach bones in coyote sets.
2. Establish 72-hour trap check for lethal water sets.
3. Allow Wildlife Damage Control Agents to use "kill springs" on snare sets for coyotes.
4. Increase the bag limit for river otter in West Virginia.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director McDaniel asked Chief Johansen if there were any updates from the hunting and fishing license structure study being conducted by Southwick Associates? Chief Johansen noted work continues on this project, but there were no specific updates to report.

Director McDaniel advised Mr. Hudnall that Wildlife Resources Section staff would review his proposals and provide recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission during their next meeting. Chief Johansen noted trapping regulations would be discussed during the January biologist meeting. Proposed regulation changes would be presented to the Director for his review and then presented to the Natural Resources Commission during their first quarterly meeting. These proposals would then be presented to the public during the March sectional meetings. The Director noted his appreciation for Jerod Harman and the West Virginia Wildlife Federation for their efforts associated with Hunting and Fishing Days. The Director will speak to fisheries staff regarding muskie stocking concerns at Stonewall Lake. The Director thanked Frank Hughes for his comments regarding the buck bag limit and license structure. He thanked Larry Lawson for his attendance and participation in Commission meetings. He told Mr. Vandale that he would check on the process for publishing DNR meeting notices. These meeting notices are also posted on the Secretary of States web page. He would also like to see more public attend the meetings. He also noted the DNR spends a lot of money on managing the state's brook trout streams, and he believes we need to let people know what our staff are doing and how our funds are being used.

Commissioner Burnette distributed a letter from an Elkview resident requesting the establishment of dove fields on Wallback WMA (Attachment A).

Commissioner Burnette also requested the following: 1. Develop a white paper exploring the feasibility of including wild turkey in the Mountaineer Heritage Season; 2. Address a discrepancy regarding the minimum age for youth to participate in the youth seasons versus the regular deer season; 3. Allow youth to use a vertical bow during the youth deer season; 4. Study the status of the declining ruffed grouse population in the state.

The Director noted habitat was an issue impacting grouse, and the agency is working on enhancing habitat on WMA's to generate young forest habitat that will benefit grouse and other species.

Commissioner Chambers noted his concerns with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). He agrees with Dr. Crum that we should not reduce the buck limit in areas with CWD. Commissioner Chambers also asked the DNR to explore opportunities to have hunter-harvested deer tested beyond the first two days of the buck firearms season. Chief Johansen noted CWD testing was not a food safety protocol; however, the agency does collect CWD samples from hunter-harvested deer upon request, and this service was currently provided at the DNR District 2 Office. Procedures are described in the Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure, and hunters are urged to call ahead to make sure DNR staff are available to collect samples. The Wildlife Resources Section will explore other options for the CWD testing of hunter-harvested animals.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND PLACE

The dates for 2020 Natural Resources Commission Quarterly meetings have not yet been confirmed. The first quarterly meeting of the Natural Resources Commission in 2020 will be held at the DNR Headquarters in South Charleston.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Dotson made a **MOTION** to adjourn. Commissioner Chambers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.

Wallback WMA dove field planting proposal

Good afternoon, my name is Pat Reed, I live in Elkview WV. The reason that I am writing this letter to the Wildlife Commissioners is to request that you give consideration to planting two or three dove fields at the Wallback WMA. I believe that this would not only attract more hunters to use the Wallback WMA but would benefit other wildlife species as well by being a supplemental food source. I believe that the first dove season comes in early enough that the impacts to the later big game seasons would be minimal, due to people hunting these big game species when those seasons come in.

The Green Bottom, McClintic, and Stonewall areas have been planted and managed for doves for years with great success. It would be great to have an area closer to the Metro Charleston area. I know for a fact that people from Clay, Clendenin, Elkview, Sissonville, Charleston and Teays Valley and other surrounding areas would hunt there if the fields were to be planted.

In conclusion, I would ask that you please consider this request closely. I am sure that it would be very popular with dove hunters in this area. I would like to thank each of you for the job that you are doing for the sportsmen of this great state. I hope that this meeting is successful!

If there are any questions, please contact me:

Patrick Reed
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