

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – OCTOBER 23, 2013

Chairman Jeffrey Plummer called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Approval for the October 23, 2013 Meeting Agenda

- The October 23, 2013 Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda was presented to the Commission.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to accept the October 23, 2013 Meeting Agenda as presented.
 2. Commissioner Compton seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from August 21, 2013 Meeting

- The August 21st meeting minutes were distributed to the Commission prior to the meeting.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gregor moved to approve the August 21st meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

WHS Regional Operations Program Update – Presentation given by Associate Director Karina Stonesifer, Western Regional Manager Jim Mullan, and Allegany and Garrett Counties Habitat Biologist Rick Latshaw.

- Ms. Stonesifer pointed out that the Wildlife Advisory Commission decided to visit different regions and learn more about staff members' field work.
- Ms. Stonesifer introduced Mr. Mullan and Mr. Latshaw to the Commission.
- Mr. Mullan and Mr. Latshaw outlined some of the projects that Western Region staff members are involved in.
- Mr. Mullan provided an overview of the Western Regional Operations in a Power Point Presentation. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
 1. There are 8 different Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Western Region with a total of 30,000 acres.
 2. There are 8,000 acres in cooperative agreements.
 3. Western Region (WR) staff members form habitat work on 120,000 acres of State Forest lands.
 4. WR staff members provide wildlife response when a situation poses an immediate threat to human life or wildlife.
- Mr. Latshaw outlined the Mt. Nebo Implementation Plan in a Power Point Presentation. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
 1. Mt. Nebo is managed for early successional habitat.
 2. Mt. Nebo was the first WMA to go through the WMA Implementation Plan since the 80's.
 3. Mt. Nebo Implementation Plan was a huge cooperative effort among WHS and other DNR staff.
 4. American woodcock and ruffed grouse habitat has been a focus on Mt. Nebo since 1974.
 5. These species need young forest habitat to survive, which is the highly limited habitat in Maryland. Maryland's forests have matured over decades.
 6. Most of the Best Management Practices for American woodcock and ruffed grouse have been implemented on Mt. Nebo.

7. WHS staff members were able to partner up with other groups in the management of Mt. Nebo, WMA. Some of the partners are Wildlife Institute, Ruffed Grouse Society and Aelred Geis Estate. Mr. Aelred Geis was a woodcock biologist for USFWS. WHS staff submitted a grant to Aelred Geis Estate and were able to get funds to help with implementing woodcock plan on Mt. Nebo WMA.
 8. Staff are working to regenerate portions of Mt. Nebo WMA habitat. Staff hired a contractor to implement some of the regeneration techniques including a timber harvest. Being in Garrett County (moist soil environment) helps this work without harming the upland habitat. Therefore, the timber sale work was done in a short window of time during January and February when the soil is moist and frozen.
 9. The young forest habitat is good for non-game species, such as the Golden-Winged Warbler.
- Questions and Answers Section
 1. Commissioner Boyles Griffin asked what type of disturbances occurred in the past that would have created this early successional habitat.
 - a. Mr. Latshaw indicated that fire is one of disturbances. Past regimes cannot be used today for early successional habitat due to housing, etc.
 2. Chairman Plummer asked what is the reproduction rate of American woodcock.
 - a. Mr. Latshaw explained that woodcock has a brood once a year.
 3. Commissioner Compton asked what will happen when the next 20 years of early successional habitat ages.
 - a. Mr. Latshaw pointed out that one of the things that staff members are doing is working with several partners to re-cut the forest as time progresses.
 - b. Staff members have set a goal to have 25 – 30% in early successional habitat on Mt. Nebo at any given time period.

Information and Education Program – Presentation given by Associate Director Karina Stonesifer [ATTACHMENT C].

- The Information and Education Program has grown in the past year.
- The Recruitment and Retention Program was added to the Information and Education Program. Patricia Handy is responsible for the Recruitment and Retention Program.
- Kerry Wixted oversees programs such as Project WILD and Growing Up WILD, etc.
- Maryland's twenty-year anniversary for Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) is next year.
- Maryland will host the 2017 International Envirothon Competition.
- The Black Bear Conservation Program helps with agricultural damage due to bears. In 2012, this program raised \$3,299.85, which was disbursed to the farmers that reported agricultural damage. In 2011, WHS decided to include a donation option on the application for the black bear lottery.
- Commissioner Compton revived Maryland's National Archery in School Program (NASP) in 2010 with the assistance of Information and Education Program staff.
 1. In 2013, Maryland had its first State NASP Tournament. There were 127 students competing from seven schools.
 2. Commissioner Compton mentioned that Maryland NASP received a lot of positive feedback from the parents and from the people that attended the first State NASP Tournament.
 3. The next Maryland NASP Tournament will be held on April 5, 2014.
 4. There were numerous volunteers from WHS and NRP that helped with the State NASP Tournament.
 5. Next year, there are potential 7 to 8 schools that plan on participating in the NASP.
- What is next for the Information and Education Program:

1. Compiling a retention and recruitment plan. The goal is to reach out to new potential hunters.
 2. Implementing more mentored youth hunts.
 3. Developing additional newsletters.
- Questions and Answers Section
 1. Mr. Matt Tefteau asked how is the reimbursement amount determined for bear crop damage.
 - a. Ms. Stonesifer explained that a WHS technician conducts a site visit to determine whether it is bear related damage and if so, the technician determines how much crop damage has occurred. After the technician measures the crop damage, it is reported to the Extension Office and the Extension Office provides the final total loss figure to WHS at the end of the year. The figures are based on the acreage of the damage.

Break

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) – Presentation given by Matt Tefteau, Assistant Director of Government Relations

- Mr. Tefteau reminded the Commission that the MDFB December Convention is scheduled for December 8th – 10th. There will be a discussion on wildlife at the December Convention.
- Mr. Tefteau provided a response to Chairman Plummer's questions about farmers planting radishes. Planting radishes is a cover crop for farmers to use. However, when it does not get cold enough, the radishes do not die off as they should, which is a concern for waterfowl hunters.
- Mr. Tefteau showed soundboards by Edward Ramsburg. The clips contain interviews of farmers from around the State of Maryland. Attached is the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJwBAJF44_Q&feature=youtu.be.
- Mr. Tefteau presented a Power Point on crop damage potentially caused by deer.
 1. Some farmers are limited with the type of management tools for controlling deer on farms.
 2. Mr. Tefteau pointed out that bears are causing crop damage in Garrett County.
- Mr. Tefteau announced that the MFB main office will be moving to Davidsonville, Maryland.
- Questions and Answers Section
 1. Director Peditto mentioned that the decline in crops is due to the areas being in the shade.
 2. Mr. Jim Mullan asked if the farmers interviewed utilize deer management permits.
 - a. Mr. Tefteau replied that the farmers in the Power Point used deer management permits. Several of the farmers do not have the time or resources to manage the deer.
 - b. Mr. Tefteau indicated none of the farmers that he visited complained about the deer management permit process.
 3. Mr. Glenn Therres, Associate Director, mentioned that some of the damage is not due to deer.
 4. Ms. Karina Stonesifer, Associate Director, explained raccoon damage; raccoons have the tendency to climb up to the tip of the stalk and in many cases the stalk is bent over.
 5. Mr. Jim Mullan, Western Regional Manager mentioned that some of the damages are due to black birds or crows.
 6. Chairman Plummer inquired whether insurance policies cover crop damage.
 - a. Commissioner Boyles Griffin commented that at some point it is the cost for doing business – crop damage caused by wildlife, from lack of a better term, is an act of nature. There are tools to use to manage wildlife; at some point, a farmer has to determine what is acceptable damage and having no damage is unrealistic.
 7. Commissioner Compton inquired about the farmers reaching out to the hunting community to help assist with crop damage due to wildlife. Commissioner Compton also asked have the MFB requested any sportsmen groups to attend the MFB December Annual meeting to engage

- in roundtable discussion on such issues.
- a. Mr. Tefteau agreed to discuss Commissioner Compton suggestion with MFB.
8. Commissioner Gregor asked if the farmers are allowed to have hunters use the farmers' deer tags.
 - a. Director Peditto reminded the Commission that crop damage permits are available year around. In fact, the best time to manage deer is in February and March.
 - b. Director Peditto discussed the loss amount of 10 million dollars caused by wildlife, which is \$604 million in revenue - that is less than 2% loss due to wildlife. The amount of loss is increasing due to the commodity prices.
 - c. Director Peditto explained that there is no wanton for deer. However, the farmer and/or shooter must use the deer that is taken under a deer management permit.
 9. Commissioner Gregor pointed out that since February and March are the best time of the year to manage deer due to many of the does are impregnated; therefore, the farmer would be taking more deer during that time period.
 - a. Commissioner Gulbrandsen explained that the deer management permits expired at the end of February.
 - b. Director Peditto added that the February deadline was a request from the agricultural community.
 10. Director Peditto outlined that on the average of four Sundays during the deer season (some counties have 2 Sunday hunting days and some counties have 7 Sunday hunting days), recreational hunters killed more deer on those Sundays than the 10,000 farmers that have crop damage permits.
 11. Director Peditto suggested that MFB consider the model of Carroll County Sunday hunting provision that gives the Department the legal authority to manage Sunday hunting opportunities in Carroll County.
 12. Commissioner Boyles Griffin asked about damage to livestock caused by coyotes.
 - a. Mr. Tefteau mentioned there have been situations where bears have taken some cattle.
 - b. Mr. Tefteau mentioned in Garrett County there is a decline in deer population; it may have something to do with the coyotes. Generally, farmers do not see coyotes killing livestock.
 - c. Director Peditto pointed out that there is a law in Maryland that allows a landowner to protect his or herself or livestock. WHS receives one or two bear kills from landowners that are protecting themselves. The burden of proof is with the landowner that he or she was protecting his or herself or livestock.
 13. Mr. Tefteau asked about the feral pigs on Taylors Island.
 - a. Director Peditto informed the Commission that the local Sheriff's Department and the local health department issued an order to remove the feral hogs. The Sheriff's Department and Health Department managed the operation as the owner of feral hogs loaded the feral hogs on a truck to be delivered to North Carolina for processing. Apparently, there were five remaining feral hogs on Taylors Island. The location of these feral hogs is next to a leased hunting club on the Nature Conservancy Province Property; DNR informed the hunters that the Department has no restrictions on shooting these free ranging feral hogs.

Natural Resources Police (NRP) Update – Presentation given by Sergeant Dave Marple from NRP Western Region.

- Sergeant Marple commented that NRP officers investigate incidents involving landowners shooting bears with the help of WHS staff.
- Sergeant Marple highlighted some things related to Area 8, which includes Garrett and Allegany

Counties.

1. There are eighteen officers assigned to Area 8 out of the 18, 2 of the officers are on extended sick leave, 6 officers are supervisors that means there are 12 working officers in the field. These officers are very busy providing service to Garrett and Allegany Counties.
 2. The primary hunting in Area 8 is deer; turkey would be second, bear would be third, and small game species would be fourth.
 3. NRP Area 8 officers work routinely with wildlife staff on different wildlife related situations.
 4. There were two significant cases during the White-tailed Deer Muzzleloader Season. There were groups of hunters that were hunting with the incorrect weapon – hunting without fluorescent orange and hunting without a license.
 5. Area 8 staff worked 12 baiting locations for bears; there were 7 areas where people were hunting with bait for bears. These are located prior to the bear hunt.
 6. Citations and Warnings were issued. There were 11 citations and 16 warnings in Garrett County, and 9 citations and 14 warnings in Allegany County. The citations issued were related to bear baiting. There were warnings related to wearing fluorescent orange and not remaining visible with people in your bear hunting party.
- Question and Answer Section:
 1. Chairman Plummer asked how does NRP decide how many officers are assigned to an Area.
 - a. Sergeant Marple is not responsible for deciding how many officers are assigned to an Area. However, NRP has a plan, which includes ideal number of officers per Area. In fact, Area 8 could use twice the number of officers that Area 8 currently has. NRP Headquarters staff determines the number of officers for a specific area based on the larger vision of the NRP. Keep in mind, that Area 8 has a wide range of recreational activities that require more NRP officers.
 - b. Director Peditto pointed out that NRP just completed a Five-Year Review and Future Management Plan. Director Peditto has not seen the NRP Five-Year Review and Future Management Plan but he confirmed it is finished. Sergeant Marple added that NRP Plan includes staffing.
 - c. Chairman Plummer requested copies of the NRP Five-Year Review and Future Management Plan for the Commission.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked is there a way to educate landowners to assist NRP in collecting evidence because it is unrealistic to have an officer to come out and observe a location for two weeks for hunters that are spotlighting or illegally riding ATVs.
 - a. Sergeant Marple responded that the key component is to obtain good detail information, such as days of the week and time slots along with vehicle and tag information.
 3. Chairman Plummer asked how it is working out to have all DNR cases going to one courtroom.
 - a. It was difficult for Sergeant Marple to respond to that question because Garrett County only has one courtroom. In Garrett County, there is one judge and one courtroom, which is unlikely in other areas of the State. Sergeant Marple deferred to Lt. Johnson on that question.
 - b. Director Peditto added that he tries to attend the NRP cases in Anne Arundel County every month. Director Peditto explained over the last year a couple things have happened: 1. the prosecutors from the State Attorney's Office in the Anne Arundel County are more familiar with natural resources cases, 2. the prosecutors are using the DNR language when speaking and handling witnesses. In fact, there are two judges that hear natural resources cases in Anne Arundel County.

Old Business

- Wildlife Management and Sustainability Act of 2013 – Director Peditto informed the Commission that most likely no one will sponsor a fee bill during the 2014 General Assembly.
 1. Chairman Plummer acknowledged that the Wildlife Management and Sustainability needs a break.
 2. Commissioner Compton recalled seeing a letter from Senator John Astle about requesting additional general funds to be allocated to WHS for FY15.
 3. Director Peditto reported that the amount is around 1.2 million dollars. WHS is currently getting \$300,000 from general funds and from that amount \$248,000 is going to FHFH.
 4. Commissioner Compton suggested that when WHS and the Commission receive emails from constituents requesting more services and/or funding for projects, they should be informed as to how WHS is funded.
- Shooting Range Email – Director Peditto outlined the email exchange from a constituent about building a shooting range at Indian Springs WMA.
 1. Director Peditto shared the email exchange and the drafted response from Chairman Plummer to the constituent.
 2. The response basically advised that there is no money in the budget for a shooting range at Indian Springs WMA. Director Peditto has learned that for the installation of a basic shooting range, it is going to cost WHS \$600,000.
 3. There are shooting ranges at New Germany State Park, Green Ridge State Forest, Elk Neck State Park, and Myrtle Grove WMA.
 4. Commissioner Gulbrandsen suggested that the information in the reply needs to be more explicit, recognizing the additional Pittman and Robertson monies for FY15. The response should also include the amount that it would cost to put in a shooting range and the annual maintenance cost.
 5. Director Peditto invited the constituent to the October 23rd meeting at Deep Creek Discovery Center; the constituent was unable to attend.
 6. The Commission agreed to include in the response an estimated cost and invitation to attend a WAC meeting to discuss the topic further.

New Business

- Director Peditto informed the Commission that the Department announced in a press release the new Wildlands Legislation. There will be seven public hearings scheduled on the new Wildlands Legislation. There are about 40,000 acres of wildlands in Maryland. This proposal will advance additional 25,000 acres during the next legislation session but the legislation requires public meetings in advance of putting a proposal together. These are lands that the Department already manages.
 1. WHS staff members played a key role in identifying sites for wildlands.
 2. Wildlands are a good idea because it precludes allowing disturbance on these lands.
 3. The Department would like the Commission's endorsement on the Wildlands Legislation.
- Chairman Plummer announced that Jacquelyn Bonomo resigned as a member of the Commission.
 1. A person serves on the Commission for two years until a successor is appointed.
 2. Director Peditto will alert the Governor's Appointment Office and Secretary Joe Gill that there is a vacancy on the Commission. Normally, this occurs once WHS has been informed of individuals that are interested in serving on the Commission.
 3. The Commission agreed to have Chairman Plummer contact Ms. Bonomo about a potential

replacement for WAC from the Audubon Society Maryland DC.

4. Chairman Plummer would like the Commission to submit at least three applicants.

- Director Peditto informed the Commission that Candus Thomson now works for DNR. Ms. Thomson is the NRP Public Communication Officer.
- Commissioner Boyles Griffin requested the topic of Nuisance Wildlife Control to be added to the agenda of one of the meetings in 2014. Mr. John Griffin is a wildlife control operator in Montgomery County and would like to address the Commission on nuisance wildlife topics and the business of managing nuisance wildlife and how it is regulated along with the challenges. Chairman Plummer mentioned that he would like to learn more on that topic.
- Chairman Plummer thanked the Commission for traveling to this part of the State and stated that it was a real benefit for the Commission. Chairman Plummer highlighted that traveling to different location of the State at less once or twice a year is truly beneficial.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, November 20, 2013 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room; Annapolis, Maryland.

Attendance

Members:	L. Compton, T. Gregor, S. Boyles Griffin E. Gulbrandsen, J. Plummer, and B. Wojton
Absent:	G. Fratz and C. Rodney
Guest:	M. Teffeau
Staff:	R. Latshaw, J. Mullan, P. Peditto, K. Stonesifer, and T. Spencer