

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., June 21, 2023**

**C-1 Conference Room
Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for June 21, 2023, Meeting Agenda

Approval for Minutes from April 19, 2023 Meeting

Wildlife and Heritage Service FY23 and FY24 (Associate Director Brian Eyler)

WHS Administration Update (Associate Director Brian Eyler)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Colby Ferguson)

Natural Resources Police Update (Captain Shawn Garren)

- **Sunday Hunting Violations Statistics**

Old Business:

- **Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3)/ Funding Update**
- **Online Hunting Automatic Registration Renewal Update**
- **Blood Tracking Regulation Update**
- **Farmers and Hunters Feeding Hungry (FHFH) Update**

New Business:

- **Commission Members' Attendance**

Public Comment:

Adjourn

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

**The Proposed Schedule for the 2023 meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 18th	Google Meet
February 15th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
March 15th	Google Meet
April 19th	Google Meet
May 17th	No Meeting
June 21st	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
July 19th	No Meeting
August 16th	Google Meet
September 20th	TBD - Google Meet or No Meeting or Field Day
October 18th	Google Meet
November 15th	Google Meet
December 15th	No Meeting

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

Note: Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held via Google Meeting. When meeting in person, the meetings will be held in the C-1 Conference Room Department of Natural Resources - Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 am. Available parking is located at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

JUNE 21, 2023

Chairman Carl Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. This meeting was held via teleconference and in person. Chairman Wagner asked for a roll call of individuals on the “call.” Unfortunately, because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant. The C-1 Conference Room had technology issues.

Approval for June 21, 2023, Meeting Agenda

- Motion to Approve the Agenda:
 1. Commissioner Schroyer moved to accept June 21, 2023, Commission Meeting Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Showalter seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from April 19, 2023, Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Keithley moved to accept April 19, 2023, Meeting Minutes.
 2. Commissioner Cole seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

WHS Administration Program and Budget Update – Brian Eyler, Associate Director

- Associate Director Eyler gave a presentation on the Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) Administration Program. [ATTACHMENT A]
- Chair Wagner requested information about the amount of PR money not being spent to be disseminated to the Commission. Once the Commission has that data, the Commission will need to discuss how the WHS can capture more of the PR money.
- The hunting fees increased is going to help with making use of the PR money. It will take time for WHS to utilize the PR money fully. WHS must obtain authorization to spend money.
- Program Open Space money is used for WHS match for spending federal dollars on land management.
- The WHS challenge is hiring staff to do the work that needs to be done. The good news is that it has been getting better at hiring staff.
- Commissioner Showalter noticed that he would like these positions to spread out throughout the State based on high priority for needed activities. Additionally, DNR does a great job on the Public Relations side of things; therefore, DNR should share the story about what the increased fees are doing and will do.
- Chair Wagner agreed with Commissioner Showalter that communication with the public about the projects that the fees increased are paying for with some success stories.
- Associate Director Eyler announced that a press release is going out to address the concerns of the Commission related to communicating projects that staff can do with the additional funding.
- Acting Assistant Secretary Peditto informed the Commission that DNR is working with Ducks Unlimited National and Ducks Unlimited Regional Communication Team to tell the tale using video and print about the success story and outline how WHS plans to use the money.
- Q&A Section
 1. Chair Wagner asked, with the increase in hunting fees is WHS utilizing 100% of Pittman Robertson's (PR) money, or is there still money being left on the table?
 - a. There is still money being left on the table.
 2. Commissioner Showalter asked if Associate Director Eyler knew how much money was being left on the table.
 - a. Associate Director Eyler would need to get research that amount.

3. Commissioner Showalter asked about a list of prioritized Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Capital Improvement Properties.
 - a. Yes, there is a list of running critical maintenance and improvement projects routed through the Engineering and Construction Team, and the Secretary reviews those, then ultimately approves through the Capital Budget Improvement System. The approval process is outside of WHS.
4. WHS can show the Commission the Department-wide request. To prepare the Commission, most of the approved Capital Budget Improvement list of items is for the State Park Service. The State Park Service has a substantially more infrastructure than the WHS.
5. Chair Wagner asked if there is a list that includes potential land acquisitions.
 - a. For most WMAs, WHS has a list of targeted lands for acquisitions submitted through Land Acquisition Planning. Doing so would allow staff to consolidate land boundaries with attractive habitats. Staff do not share these areas' locations for apparent reasons, but staff can share a gross scale of the target map of places.
6. Commissioner Keithley asked for clarification of additional offset federal dollars as to when those dollars will be in the WHS actual budget since the selling of the hunting fees has yet to start.
 - a. July 1, 2023, is when the new licenses go on sale. WHS can do budget amendments and capture additional PR dollars during FY24.
 - b. WHS has the earned to dollar amount and demonstrates to the federal government eligibility for reimbursement. It is awkward because the federal government fiscal year runs differently from Maryland's fiscal year. Maryland's fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30, whereas the federal government fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.
 - c. WHS can use some initial revenues from the increased hunting fees to get reimbursed this fall. However, much of the benefit of the 2023-2024 increased hunting fee sales will be next September 2024.
7. Chair Wagner asked if there is a delay in hiring the three Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) staff positions.
 - a. No, staff are working on hiring R3 staff; however, the hiring process will start during the FY24 budget year to get these positions in the Human Resources queue.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) –

- WHS staff read a public post that Mr. Colby Ferguson is no longer with the Maryland Farm Bureau.
- WHS has not received notification of a replacement from the Maryland Farm Bureau.

Natural Resources Police Update – Sergeant Karge gave a presentation.

- Sergeant Karge mentioned that the Natural Resources Police (NRP) is still waiting for a Colonel to be appointed.
- Captain Garren outlined the Natural Resources Police Stats from January 1 to June 21, 2023, as a total of violations 10,374: 7,693 warnings, 2,677 citations, and 4 SERO (Repair Orders).
- There were 9% wildlife violations, 33% boating, 15% public lands, 28% fisheries, and 16% traffic violations.
- The most common charge this year has been fishing without a license. There were 545 enforcement actions for fishing without a license.
- Mr. Eric Gulbrandsen reminded the Commission that officers must respond if they witness wrongdoing. Also, the ticket system requires an officer to reach a total number of tickets for that officer to get certified to use the ticket system.
- Sergeant Karge added to Mr. Gulbrandsen's comments by highlighting that for cadets to get certified in the e-ticket, there is a certain amount of Natural Resources entries they must make and traffic entries. Several traffic entries were issued to keep order and safety on State Park lands.
- Sergeant Karge responded to Chair Wagner's question from the last meeting about the timeline of Sunday hunting violations of game birds and game mammals.
 1. The static data is as follows: 2021 was 26 total violations; 2022 was 10 total violations; and

2023 was 2 total violations. In 2023 in Dorchester County, two violations were hunting after 10:30 am.

2. The queue for hunting turkey during the spring season before or after-hours violations was three for the last three years.

- Q&A Section:

1. Commissioner Keithley mentioned a Sunday hunting 10:30 am scenario related to if someone is archery hunting, and the person gets an arrow in something at 10:00 am. The person tracks the animal until around 3:00 pm. Commissioner Keithley proceeded to ask how NRP handles that situation.
 - a. Sergeant Karge replied that there is no policy for a situation like Commissioner Keithley described. It is up to the officer's discretion. We hoped the officer would take everything into account.

Old Business

- R3 Update – Information and Education Manager Chris Martin explained that three staff members are working on R3, Chris Martin, Torey Vayer, and Ashley Moreland (NASP Coordinator). Torey Vayer works on R3 full-time. Chris Martin handles the R3 administrative items.
 1. With the additional staff, there will be more information on social media, and staff will be involved in more activities.
 2. Since the R3 Summit in February, staff have been communicating that there is staff support for the partners. The team has been meeting with partners to determine how to proceed with these events.
 3. Staff started a relationship with the Wild Turkey Federation with their women and outdoor events, which has been struggling in Maryland. In July, there is the Women in the Outdoors Event related to hunting and fishing; the goal is to reach 50 women who have not done the Becoming an Outdoor-Woman.
 4. Staff members are working with US Archery to hold an Archery for Everyone Event.
 5. There are other projects in the workings.
 6. Chair Wagner pointed out that DNR can partner with many organizations to help with events and programs.
 7. Acting Assistant Secretary Peditto informed the Commission that staff participated in the 2023 Annapolis Pride Parade; it was good to see that the traffic that WHS produced had to reach more people.
- Online Automatic Hunting Registration Renewal –
 1. Chair Wagner recalled that Commissioner Showalter sent an email that he received about a birthday greeting, and don't forget to purchase your hunting license. Chair Wagner commented that he still gets notifications from other states to buy a hunting license or the option to renew online automatically. The way things are going, the capability is available. Having automatic hunting license renewal is a way to recapture R3.
 2. Commissioner Showalter indicated that he buys licenses in 15 states, and Maryland's COMPASS system is not user-friendly. Commissioner Showalter explained the different types of notifications and text messages he receives from the states. These messages are very engaging. Commissioner Showalter understood that there are going to be some people that do not like the messages, but there should be an option to opt-out. However, it will help those people that would appreciate the reminders.
 3. Associate Director Eyler announced that a new licensing vendor contract was signed, and incorporated in that contract will be what the Commission members have been discussing about automatic hunting license renewal and outreach messages. DNR is looking to start the new system in phases beginning in 2024.
 4. Chair Wagner requested that Commissioner Showalter work with Assistant Director Eyler on this project and be the point person for this item for the Commission.
- Commission Members Taken on Projects – Chair Wagner emphasized the need for each member of

the Commission to take on a project that the member is passionate about, and having an active role in working with WHS staff would be great. Chair Wagner recognized it would require further discussion and members' voting.

- Blood Tracking Regulation – Commissioner Keithley said he had contacted Darren Minor, Blood Tracking Dogs of Maryland. Blood tracking has amplified in the State. Several states around Maryland have started regulating blood tracking. Mr. Minor sent Commissioner Keithley some proposals and what other states are doing related to this topic. Commissioner Keithley suggested that he assemble an email to all the appropriate individuals. The email would highlight what the other states are doing, Mr. Minor's concerns, and Mr. Minor's priority of suggestions on where we should go with blood tracking regulations for 2024.
 1. Chair Wagner requested Commissioner Keithley send the information to Tracey, Karina, and Brian for circulation.
 2. Associate Director Eyler reminded the Commission that WHS is coming up on the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 regulation cycles. Therefore, this is the time to get the information to include it in the concepts. Staff members have started internal discussions on ideas. There will be a stakeholders' meeting that the Commission will be invited to attend and participate in related to these concepts. There will be public input.
- Farmers and Hunters Feeding Hungry (FHFH) Update – Acting Assistant Secretary Peditto explained that this was put on the agenda due to the ongoing push to continue to fund the FHFH program. WHS gave FHFH a grant this FY23 in the amount of \$25,000. Two groups applied for the grant: FHFH and a church, and the money was submitted to these groups.

New Business

- Commission Members' Attendance –
 1. The attendance sheet was handed out to the Commission members.
 2. The attendance record is reported annually to the Governor's Appointment Office.
 3. State Government Article, § 8-501 of the Annotated Code of Maryland: "A member of a State board or commission appointed by the Governor who fails to attend at least 50% of the meetings of the board or commission during any consecutive 12-month period shall be considered to have resigned."
 4. Chair Wagner announced that there was no quorum at the April 19, 2023, meeting. Chair Wagner was informed of no quorum after the meeting took place.
 5. Chair Wagner encouraged each member to get involved in a wildlife-related project because it is not enough to just attend these meetings. There is more that needs to be done.
 6. When a member's attendance is 50% or less, the Governor's Appointment Office will flag the individual, and the Governor's Appointment Office will ask DNR to explain on behalf of the member what is going on.
 7. Commission members serve at the will of the Governor so that anyone can be replaced at a given time, which includes lack of attendance.
 8. Discussion ensued about the lack of members' attendance, which has a negative impact on the Commission's business. With an additional member added to the Commission, we would need more attendance for business to be conducted.
 9. Chair Wagner will reach out to members who have consistently missed meetings to discuss with them to see if they are still interested in serving on the Commission.

Public Comment –

- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at wac.dnr@maryland.gov.
- There were no further public comments.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, using Google Meet.

Attendance

Members:	M. Cole, S. Keithley, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, K. Rossignuolo, and C. Wagner
Absent:	B. Alder, T.J. Jenkins and J. Parks
Guest:	S. Boyles-Griffin and Erik Gulbrandsen
Staff:	B. Eyler, R. Karge, C. Markin, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, and T. Spencer

WHS Administration Program

ATTACHMENT A



**Update to Wildlife Advisory Commission
June 21, 2023**

Wildlife & Heritage Service



- Administration
- Regional Operations
- Natural Heritage
- Game



Administration

-What We Do



- Budget, Procurement, Inventory
- Federal Aid Coordination
- HR/Personnel
- Wildlife Permits
- Offshore Blinds
- Shoreline Licenses
- Regulations
- Legislation
- Fleet Management



Who We Are



- Brian Eyler, Associate Director
- Caryn Getsinger, Fiscal Officer/Grants Manager
- Ivonne Montañez, Administrative Specialist
- Tina Jarvis, Offshore Blind and Shoreline License Coordinator
- Two LTCs (Alex Talbot and Joe Bulls)
- Georgia Johnson, Wildlife Permits
- Two LTCs (Jo Swift and vacant position)
- Plan to add additional fiscal and admin support

Permits and Licensing



Wildlife Permits & Offshore Blinds/Shoreline Licensing

Tina Jarvis

- Shoreline Licensing
- Offshore Waterfowl Blind Permits
- Regulated Shooting Areas Permits
- Waterfowl Guide and Outfitter Permits

Georgia Johnson

- Falconry
- Game Husbandry
- Captive Reptile and Amphibian
- Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Taxidermy
- Wildlife Damage Control Cooperator
- Scientific Collection Permits
- Endangered Species Permits
- Fleet Management

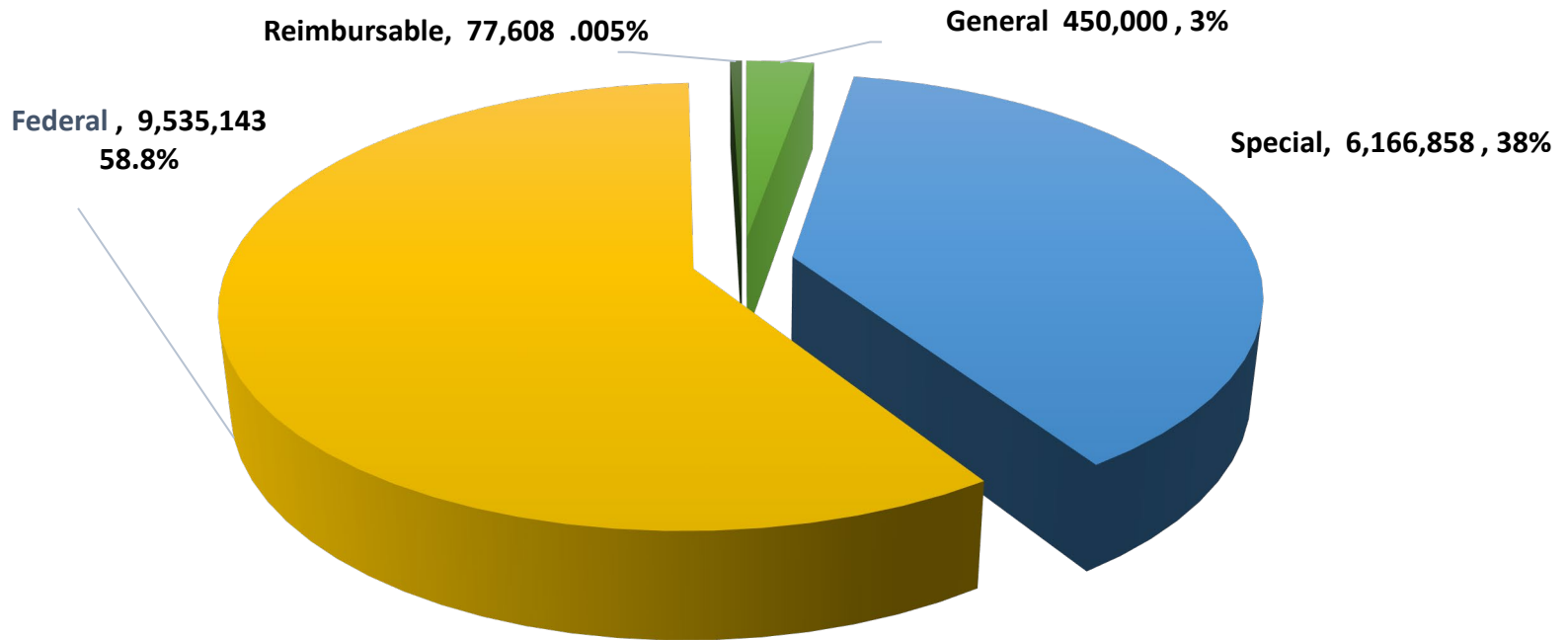
Blind Site and Permit Revenue (through June 13, 2023)

- Shoreline Blind Sites = \$126,790
- Wildlife Permits = \$99,867
- Total Permit Revenue = \$226,657

Budget



FY23 Budget as of June 13, 2023 \$16,229,609



(FY22 Budget = \$12,989,115)

Budget



Federal Funds – FY23

Closing Amendment Request

Pittman-Robertson = \$1,256,625

State Wildlife Grants = \$418,875

Result: \$11,210,643 new federal fund budget

Budget



• Classified Salaries	\$8,743,244
• Contractual Services	\$2,675,614
• Motor Vehicle Operations	\$1,133,684
• Contractual Salaries	\$1,034,406
• Equipment – Additional	\$1,007,990
• Equipment – Replacement	\$587,544
• Supplies and Materials	\$426,047
• Fixed Charges	\$207,427
• Communications	\$190,415
• Grants, Subsidies	\$110,000
• Fuel and Utilities	\$58,330
• Travel	\$54,908

Budget



State Special Funds – FY23

Wildlife Management & Protection =\$10,961,573

Marilyn Mause Bequeath / Other Donations

Migratory Game Bird Fund

Chesapeake Bay & Endangered Species

Upland Wildlife Habitat Fund

Budget



Federal Aid Obligated to WHS – FY23

Pittman-Robertson = \$9,703,723

State Wildlife Grants = \$929,406

Section 6 Endangered Species = \$57,350

White-nose Syndrome Grant = \$40,000

USDA CWD = \$249,944 (ends 9/30/2023)

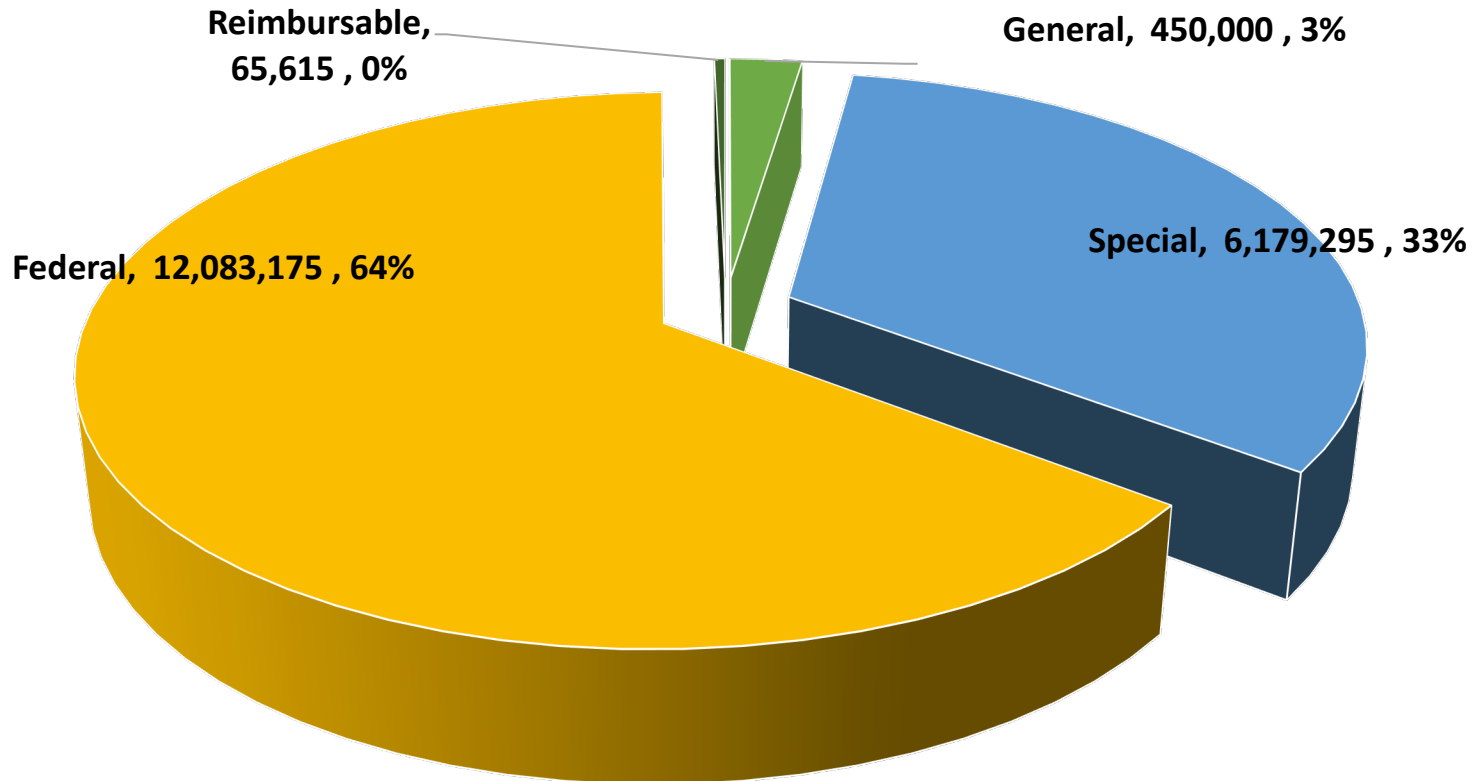
CSWG grants (multiyear) ~ \$100,000

Other = \$10,000

Budget



FY24 Budget \$18,778,085



***License fee increase adjustments likely**

Budget



Actions Taken to Capture More Federal Funds

- Use of land acquired with POS funds as match
- Additional equipment purchased for WMAs
- Increased staff for work on grant eligible activities
- In-kind match with volunteer hours
- Outside match from partners

Plans for Increased Revenue



- Listening session with stakeholders
- Internal solicitation for wants/needs

- R3 Initiatives
- Hiring of staff
- Research projects (bear population status, etc)
- Management projects (WMA improvements, etc)

Questions?