

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ
December 15, 2009

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council was held on the above date. In attendance were:

Acting Chairwoman Jeanette Vreeland
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Dave Burke
Councilman Ed Kertz
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Dan Van Mater
Councilman Len Wolgast

Absent: Councilman Fred Hough

Division employees included: Assistant Director Larry Herrighty, Paulette Nelson, Jim Sciascia, Tony Petrongolo, Tim Cussen, Pat Carr, Paul Castelli, Carole Kandoth, Sue Predl, Linda Buono, Ted Nichols, Andy Burnett, Kelcey Burgess, Joe Leskie, Jodi Powers, Dan Roberts, Joe Garris, Kim Tinnes and Dave Cramer.

Members of the public included representatives of the Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, The New Jersey Quail Project, the Star Ledger and others.

The meeting began at 11:19 am.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

In accordance with P.L. 1975, c.231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State and sent to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and The Press (Atlantic City) on November 18, 2009.

Roll call was completed.

Minutes of the November 10, 2009 meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Burke, seconded by Councilman Puskas to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken with all in favor, and one abstention from Councilwoman Brummer.**

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reviewed some of her activities from this past month. She attended the Freshwater Fisheries Forum last week, and noted that it was well attended. The anglers in attendance all seemed to be pleased with the sizes of the fish that were produced, and with the information presented to them. They also gave suggestions on information they would like included in the Digest.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland also attended the Trappers Association meeting this past weekend. She found it very interesting, adding that they would like to see rules and regulations for habitat and species improved.

Attendees at Federation meetings that Acting Chairwoman Vreeland attended were advised to gather Game Code suggestions to be submitted. She also noted that many letters were received in favor of the Council's position on the Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for Director Chanda, who was away in Washington, DC attending the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation meeting.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported that he had recently attended the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture meeting, which is the habitat branch of the Atlantic Flyway Council. Topics of discussion included global warming and climate change.

There was a meeting of the steering committee yesterday to discuss the Division of Fish and Wildlife's need to update the State wildlife action plan for climate change and to discuss conducting a wildlife vulnerability analysis.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported that the deer seasons have been going well. Information from the results of the Fall bow and arrow season will be given later today.

Senator Marcia Karrow will be leading the transition team for Governor Elect Christie, and there was a meeting and Director Chanda has had a meeting with the team. She liked the way the Division has managed its money. Director Chanda also discussed projects such as the brooder house and office complex at the Game Farm that were being held up by the Treasurer, even though this project is funded with dedicated Hunter and Angler money that was already in place. Personnel needs were also discussed. The Division is preparing a document on staffing needs. Councilman Wolgast asked if the Chief of Wildlife Management position was included. Assistant Director Herrighty noted it was, as well as replacing positions in Land Management, Fisheries, staff at the Rockport Game Farm, and Law Enforcement.

The meeting was opened to public comment on the two agenda items, Community Based Deer Management (CBDM) Permits for Princeton Township and Essex County (South Mountain Reservation), and a presentation on the status of Bobwhite quail in New Jersey. Members of the public were advised that they would have three minutes to comment on these items. Barbara Sauchau addressed the Council, stating that she was against the approval of the CBDM permits. She referenced South Mountain, saying that their plan includes many environmental actions such as such as the use of Round-up which she felt was a toxic pollutant. She also felt that the deer

exclosure plans do not work feeling that the growth inside the exclosure was the same as outside the exclosure. She asked that the permits be denied in both cases.

There were no other public comments at this time.

Councilman Puskas reported for the Agriculture Committee. He noted that the crop harvest in his area is 90 to 95% done. He added that while things are still wet, overall some losses in one crop were made up for in other crops. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked him about any more problems from the Canada geese, and he noted that they were gone for a while but has seen more migratory birds in the last week.

Councilman Kertz also reported that the ground was wet in his area, adding that they have had over eight inches of rain in the last month. Farmers are behind in their harvest, and some fields had over 50% damage to the crops.

Councilman Kertz also reported that he has spoken with several clubs on their hunting activities, and some did well, some said they did better than last year, but he added it is hard to get good information. Many clubs reported seeing deer but not harvesting them.

He attended the Agriculture meeting last night, where there was a talk on Gypsy Moths. He briefly reviewed some of the information from that meeting, noting that there is a chance that the State will no longer have a spraying program, and noted the damage that has occurred already and may continue to the oak trees.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that in her area they still have quite a bit of snow and ice. She has not spoken with Councilman Hough recently, and was not sure if the crops are in.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland also noted quite of bit of hunting activity in her area.

Councilman Kertz noted that a check station in his area had complaints from the hunters that the Division did not have personnel there to take ages. He explained the tooth collection program which can be used to assess data, but added that many of these hunters were individuals and not from clubs, and were not aware of the program. He asked that the Division advertise this and make the packets available to hunters. Principal Biologist Kandoth noted that they can explore the possibility of having the hunters pick them up or have them mailed to individuals. It was also suggested that something be added to the Digest about this program.

Legislative Liaison Nelson reported for the Legislative Committee. She noted that marine bill S-2194 has been sent to the Environmental Committee, which addresses having a saltwater license. They have taken testimony, and the bill was held by Senator Smith. The free registration is on hold for now, and registration will be done through the National Marine Fisheries Service for the coming year. She advised to watch for more information for 2011. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked how people would be advised of this, and it was noted that information would be in the Digest as well as on the Division website.

New bills have been introduced, but since the time on hearing them is coming to a close, they may be introduced again during the next session that begins in January.

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| A-4179
and companion
S-3012 | Allows construction of wind dependent energy facilities within 500 ft. of mean high water line of tidal waters under certain circumstances. |
| A-4220 | Changes membership of Lake Hopatcong commission and requires DEP to develop water level management plan for Lake Hopatcong to be approved by commission. |
| A-4328 | Provides that contracts for maintenance, repair or improvement of State buildings and facilities may require use of certain skilled labor. |
| AR-215
and companion
SR-136 | Opposes federal six-month ban on black seas bass fishing. |
| S-3129 | Revises statute concerning licenses to take menhaden. |

It was also noted on the handout given today, SGR-158 should be corrected to read SCR-158. This is also a new bill, which proposes constitutional amendment to prohibit diversion of dedicated State revenue and suspend dedicated revenue collections if not appropriated for dedicated purposes during State fiscal year.

Assistant Director Herrighty asked about the status of the 450' bill. Legislative Liaison Nelson noted that there was nothing new, and that it would have to move before January 19, 2010.

There was also a question to Councilman Messeroll from Councilman Burke, regarding changes that he had heard of where the Internal Revenue Service will be charging owners \$50.00 per gun and require documentation. This was discussed between them and Federation Representative Rob Winkel. No bill has been seen on this, and it Councilman Burke mentioned that it was done through a regulatory process through the Treasury. No further information to confirm this has been found so far.

Councilman Messeroll also asked about the Federal saltwater registry, wondering if Division could request names of those who register from the Federal database for New Jersey's database. Legislative Liaison Nelson felt that this would be worth pursuing. Councilman Kertz also asked what you would receive as proof of your registration, and would the marine police or conservation officers have authority over this. It was felt that a registration number would probably be issued, but it was questioned how this information could be accessed for enforcement purposes. Federation Representative Winkel noted that the enforcement matter is still up in the air.

Councilman Messeroll noted that the Legislative Committee would be meeting on February 9, 2009, at 9 am, before the start of the Fish and Game Council meeting.

Councilwoman Brummer reported for the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. They held their last Committee meeting on November 30, 2009. The four main topics they covered were:

1. A request from the builders association to de-list the Northern pine snake. It was noted that they do not support the request. A presentation was given by Dave Golden from the ENSP program at the last ENSAC meeting.
2. Delaware Bay shorebird update. It was noted that it was a good season for Horseshoe crab eggs this season, which was contributable to the good weather conditions.
3. Presentation on roads and wildlife. Both non-game and game species are killed on the road. How to correct the problem was discussed. It was noted that the Department of Transportation needs to consider this matter when designing roads.
4. Feral Cats. Although it was initially thought that this would not be decided on at this meeting, as the topic was discussed and the meeting progressed it was decided to set up an ad hoc committee. The committee reworded the resolution of the Fish and Game Council from June 2007. There were some minor comments made, and a copy of the resolution with the changes was distributed to the Fish and Game Council members.

A motion was made by Councilman Wolgast, seconded by Councilman Puskas to support the reworded document on the Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) program and make this a joint resolution between the Fish and Game Council and Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. Councilman Kertz asked that time be given to read over the changes before voting. Voting was postponed until after lunch.

Councilwoman Brummer also gave a brief review of the program and the ad hoc committee's thoughts to the Council. She recommended that this Council also consider using the electronic library, which the ad hoc committee will have access to. It can be linked through the Division's website and be accessed with proper authorization. There was additional discussion on TNR programs in other areas throughout the State.

Councilman Kertz asked about the red knot population, wondering if it was holding steady and if the weights on the birds were up. She noted that the weights were up, and offered that she could provide more information at the next meeting. He also asked if the number of horseshoe crabs was noted, but Councilwoman Brummer advised that they may not have population numbers, only egg density information. There was additional brief discussion on this matter.

The Federation Report was given. It was noted that there will be a State meeting this Friday night.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland reported that in the Northern Region they are working on the convention, which has moved to a new location for 2010. It will be held June 11, 12 and 13, 2010 at the Meadowlands in North Jersey. More information will be available in January.

Middlesex County is finalizing things for the Raritan Sports Show in January. They would like have more space available this year to highlight youth programs. The show is scheduled for January 14 through 17, 2010.

The meeting broke for lunch at 12:08 pm, and resumed at 12:52 pm.

After a brief review of the TNR document that was distributed earlier, it was noted that a motion was made previously by Councilman Wolgast, seconded by Councilman Puskas to accept this and present it as a joint resolution between the Fish and Game Council and the Endangered and Non-Game Species Committee. **A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed to support this joint resolution for the TNR program.** Councilwoman Brummer was thanked for all her work on this matter.

Chief Cussen reported for the Bureau of Law Enforcement. He asked to take a few minutes to make a presentation to the Conservation Officer of the Year for 2008. He explained why there had been a delay in presenting this award, and the circumstances involved.

The Conservation Officer of the Year for 2008 was presented to Andy Hutchinson from the Northern Region. He has been a Conservation Officer since 2004, coming from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where he was an Inspector. Chief Cussen reviewed the areas he has covered since becoming a conservation officer, and some of his work was reviewed. This includes bear investigations, bobcat case work and black bear enforcement work. Presentation of his awards were made by Chief Cussen, Northern Region Captain Chuck Fletcher and Assistant Director Herrighty.

Chief Cussen proceeded with the monthly report. He reported that officers had a total of 6,774 hours of service during this reporting period. They included 1170.5 hours for deer hunting patrols, 1051.5 hours for hunting patrols and 927.5 hours for marine resources patrols.

A total of 5,018 inspections were conducted. Chief Cussen added that these were up by 25% from this time period in 2008 due to the 11 new conservation officers who are now working out on their own. These inspections resulted in 338 fish and wildlife complaints, 27 warnings, and 1 criminal arrest. The complaints included 66 for deer hunting violations, 52 for hunting violations, 64 for wildlife management area violations, 36 for waterfowl hunting violations, 50 for marine recreation violations and 11 for non-game and exotic species violations.

Councilwoman Brummer asked about the violations for the non-game and exotic species violations. Chief Cussen noted they included exotic, non-indigenous wildlife such as alligators and prairie dogs.

Councilman Kertz noted compliments that he received regarding one of the new officers. Sportsmen in his area noted that the new officer was very polite, introducing himself to those he was inspecting, and all the sportsmen seemed to like him. Chief Cussen added that he had ridden with several of the new conservation officers this season, and they were all trained through the

field training officer program using officers who are good communicators as mentors for the newer officers.

Councilman Van Mater asked if there had been any hunting accidents, and Chief Cussen noted that they were not aware of any.

Chief Petrongolo reported for the Bureau of Land Management. He noted that 180 acres have been added to the wildlife management area (WMA) system this past month. This included closing on the Wattell's property along the Musconetcong River in Mansfield Township, Warren County. A parcel was also acquired near the Mannington Creek WMA known as the Fichera Parcel. This will connect to other parcels that we already own. There is also a contract in place for a 600 acre addition to the Dix WMA along the Delaware Bay near the Eagle Manor property.

Chief Petrongolo added that the stocking program for the pheasant hunting season is going well, and received the fewest number of complaints in years.

The road through the Ken Lockwood Gorge has been closed off. Chief Petrongolo noted that the problems with the new gates has still not been worked out.

Work has begun at the Oyster Creek boat ramp. This is a cooperative project being done with Ocean Township, and should be completed by the Spring of 2010.

The third timber harvest contract for improvements to the early successional habitat at the Flatbrook WMA has been awarded. The winning bidder was from New York State, and has better equipment than past contractors we have dealt with and is making quick work of the 25 acre project.

A second auction of the Eagle Manor house and outbuildings was held (there were no bids received in the first auction). The successful bid was for \$612,000, and these monies will go back to the Green Acres Program. Assistant Director Herrighty asked if all the outbuildings were included in this sale, and Chief Petrongolo noted that all but one pole barn were included. Councilman Messeroll asked if the area had been a pheasant farm previously, and Chief Petrongolo noted it had been a commercial shooting preserve and that some equipment was able to be salvaged.

Councilman Kertz asked if there were any plans to salvage any of the oak trees that had been damaged by Gypsy moths, and Chief Petrongolo gave an explanation of a program that the Bureau of Forestry was trying to implement, but noted that the price of the firewood was minimal. Councilman Kertz also asked about the homeowner firewood program that the Division of Forestry had years ago. Chief Petrongolo advised that they still have the program, but added that he has concerns about liability with this type of program. Councilman Kertz felt that this could be an incentive for hunters, rather than put out to a contractor. Chief Petrongolo felt that this was something to consider. There was additional minor discussion on this matter.

Chief Sciascia reported for the Bureau of Information and Education. He presented a handout of summary information for Hunter Education classes comparing information from 1996 through

2009. Both the number of graduates and certificates issued are up 21% from last year, and he added that this is the highest level of certificates issued in the last ten years. Chief Sciascia went on to review this information for the Council, which included certificate types by total and the population age trend.

Chief Sciascia added that staff need to look at the state residency of the graduates in the Hunter Education program, adding that the number of non-residents taking the New Jersey course could be up. Also, staff offered 30% more classes this past year which also could have increased the numbers, and he wanted to recognize the staff and volunteer instructors for their hard work in having so many classes to meet the demand for classes. The data for Hunter Education is not as readily accessible as the license information, and Bob Longcor will be assisting with this data analysis.

Councilman Messeroll asked if people were taking the course for the safety aspect only. Chief Sciascia noted that they have been tracking youth archery students and have seen a high retention rate in them buying adult licenses. Councilman Kertz also wondered if the addition of the crossbow for hunting had helped with the retention rate. Chief Sciascia noted that two remedial hunter education courses were held, and the rate of students responding and going through that course is also going up.

Chief Sciascia noted that it was asked previously if Wildlife Conservation Corps (WCC) volunteers could assist with trout and pheasant stocking, and with driving trucks that required CDL licenses. The Bureau of Risk Management was contacted, and they said they can drive these vehicles. Volunteers with CDL licenses or those willing to train for CDL licenses will be recruited and trained to drive the stocking trucks.

The Trout in the Classroom program was reviewed. Eggs were received in October, and distributed with assistance from members of Trout Unlimited. The program now includes 103 schools, and continues to grow.

Resource Interpretive Specialist Jessica Griglak is working with Trout Unlimited to set up a three day cold water conservation school. This would be held at the School of Conservation, and would have opening for 50 students. Courses would include content on trout stream life cycles and stream management and coldwater conservation. Chief Sciascia reviewed some of the plans being made, including sponsorship possibilities. Councilman Messeroll asked what age students would be offered this program, and Chief Sciascia thought it would include students in the 4th through 12th grades. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about obtaining sponsorship information, and Chief Sciascia advised anyone interested in this should contact Jessica Griglak.

Chief Sciascia also noted that last month he reported on the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation survey of lapsed anglers that New Jersey is participating in. This will be done an on-line survey to license buyers with an e-mail address.

Chief Sciascia also noted a letter to lapsed bowhunters focusing on new bow hunting opportunities created this year through the approval of the crossbow and Sunday hunting. The responses received in licenses sales were the same for the treatment and control groups. He

reviewed this information for the Council. Chief Sciascia also mentioned that the Division should consider doing a lapsed hunter survey.

Plans are moving ahead for the wildlife expo next Fall. There is a planning meeting this Friday. The tentative date may be moved due to a conflict with the Tuckerton decoy show.

Staff are gearing up for the Garden State Outdoor Show and Deer Classic. There have been 69 entries for the Deer Classic.

The freshwater fishing issue of the Digest should be here soon. Delivery is expected some time and the end of this or early next week.

Councilman Wolgast asked about the status of the archery park. Chief Sciascia reviewed some of the areas that may be considered, including the Essex County Parks System if the Morris County Parks System is not interested in having it located at the Greystone property. If necessary, it could always go back to the Black River WMA as originally planned. There was some additional discussion on this matter, and Chief Sciascia noted the great interest in the program from schools in the Essex County area.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked about the bear CD. Chief Sciascia noted that it was sent to the Communications Office in May and we have not yet received a formal response regarding its content. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked that he look in to this and it was noted that it may be best to have it reviewed after more is known about the incoming administration's position on black bear management in New Jersey.

Councilman Wolgast noted that the Hunter Education numbers are phenomenal, but felt the program had to go one step further to include a mentoring program. He suggested a group such as the United Bow Hunters would be ideal to use as mentors, but they don't allow the use of crossbows or anyone from outside of their organization on the properties they hunt. Councilman Wolgast felt that more mentoring possibilities need to be explored since the future of hunting depends on youth participation. There was some further discussion on this matter.

Chief Sciascia discussed the great potential for hunter recruitment through programs which provide incentives for existing hunters to take others hunting like some states offer through an apprentice license. Other states have seen increases in hunting participation with these apprentice type programs. He added that legislative action to create an apprentice license in New Jersey should be the top priority of sportsmen's groups who were interested in ensuring the tradition of hunting in our state. Councilman Puskas suggested that information be gathered from other states, and Chief Sciascia noted he would try to put something together.

Assistant Director Herrighty noted that there would be no report from the Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries today. He did note that the Fish Code was released from the Governor's Office and should be published in the January 4, 2010 Register.

Assistant Director Herrighty reported for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. He distributed a copy of the bear report, noting that Category One reports were down by 9%, Category Two

reports were down by 2.5% and Category Three reports were up by 23%. He also noted that last month it was reported that a bear had killed a horse, and advised the Council that the horse involved was a miniature horse.

A summary of the Fall turkey season harvest was also distributed.

Staff met last week with staff from the Division of Parks and Forestry to discuss a pheasant restoration project at the Six-Mile Run area and a Franklin Township Parks Property. He reviewed a similar project done in Hunterdon County and felt they could receive participation from them and their study. Plans include trapping native birds in other areas and moving them to this new study area. Councilman Puskas added that Franklin Township would be discussing this matter in January to allow this program on their properties, and as a courtesy, he and Councilman Wolgast should have been advised beforehand since this is in their area.

Principal Biologist Kandoth gave out preliminary harvest tallies for the Fall bow and arrow hunting season. She reviewed the information for the Council, noting that the harvest was up by 6%, with 14,025 data entries so far. She added that the data collection form now includes weapon type, and that results showed 76% used a compound bow, 21% used a crossbow, and 1% used traditional bows. There were 130 people who left this area blank, but that added with the errors was only a 1% margin. The data from this season will be further broken down by antlered and antlerless deer.

Principal Biologist Kandoth also noted that 21 check stations were manned on the opening day of the six-day firearm buck season. Totals were estimated to be down by 7% for that day, with 4,598 deer taken in 2008, and an estimated 4,300 deer taken in 2009. Additionally, one buck deer was taken with a bow and arrow as part of the “hunt down” program.

Principal Biologist Predl was in attendance to present two applications for Community Based Deer Management permits. She first followed up on the Bernards Township application from last month and the question if the Township was allowed to limit the number of hunters in an area if the land was purchased with Green Acres monies. Green Acres was contacted and they said that the Township could limit access to certain clubs, only if those clubs were open to allowing new members.

Today Principal Biologist Predl presented an application from six communities for the Essex County Parks System. The South Mountain Reservation covers 2,000 acres and this permit has been issued for the past two years. This year’s permit application also includes the 400-acre Eagle Rock Reservation in Montclair, West Orange and Verona and the 200-acre Hilltop Reservation in North Caldwell, Cedar Grove and Verona. They will be using 25 agents and 4 alternates on Tuesdays and Thursdays, January 19, 2010 through February 25, 2010. The first six days, January 19 through February 4 agents would be at the South Mountain Reservation, and the last six days, February 9 through February 25 agents would be at the two other properties. Hunters would be shooting during daylight hours, above bait, and using slugs only. They have requested that their agents who have three or more years experience with CBDM programs be given permission to use unplugged guns, and Assistant Director Herrightly asked Principal Biologist Predl her thoughts on this. She noted that half of the agents are members of Deer

Management Systems, who have used unplugged guns in other communities in the past. There was further discussion on whether or not to allow unplugged guns. It was also noted that there have been over 300 deer/vehicle collisions in Essex County in the last two years, and much understory browse damage. Principal Biologist Predl also reviewed forest health information for the Council, noting the deer density estimates in the areas of concern compared to surrounding areas, and the amount of deer they would like to reduce from the population. Based on the information presented in their application, Principal Biologist Predl asked that Council approve the application for a Community Based Deer Management Permit for the South Mountain Reservation with exceptions for hunting at designated times and no requirement to wear an outer garment of florescent orange. It was also recommended that they not allow the use of unplugged guns. It was asked if hunting was allowed during the regular season, and Principal Biologist Predl noted it was not but referred to the way the park was layed out, noting that it was criss-crossed by several roads, and added that it was just outside of the City of Newark. After some additional discussion, **a motion was made by Councilman Kertz, seconded by Councilman Burke to approve the application as recommended.** There was some other discussion relative to this matter and other activities and uses that these properties are utilized for and the possibility of using bow hunters in the future. It was also recommended that they don't stop after harvesting a certain number of deer, due to the problems they are having. **A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

The second application presented today was for Princeton Township. They will again be utilizing the services of White Buffalo on a 12 private, 5 township and 1 county property for which written permission has been granted. They have requested to use .223 rifles and .22's, however the use of the .22's is not recommended by the Division. Last year they culled 154 deer, with a total cost of \$41,100 to Princeton Township. It was noted that they have not culled this many deer since 2004. Agents will use a drop net and bolt guns only if needed in certain areas. This was asked for last year but was not necessary to use. Principal Biologist gave a review of the contraceptive study that has been done, noting that the deer are continuing to be monitored. Of the 28 deer still in the study area, six received SpayVac and booster shots, and two of those six did reproduce. The 13 deer treated with SpayVac and boosted with GonaCon have not reproduced. The different types of formulas administered were reviewed. A cost estimate of \$814 per deer was given to treat female deer in the research area, but there are still a large number of does migrating in to the area. Due to access obstacles, no additional deer will be treated. Deer vehicle collisions were as high as 342 in the year 2000, and were 62 in 2007 and 90 in 2008, and it is hoped that this number will be maintained between 60 and 70 per year. Population estimates and reductions goals were reviewed. After reviewing the application for the Council, Principal Biologist Predl asked that they approve the application for a Community Based Deer Management Permit for Princeton Township to hire White Buffalo using .223 rifles and drop nets and bolt guns only if necessary. Exceptions would include the types of weapons used, hunting times and no requirement for an outer garment of florescent orange. **A motion was made by Councilman Kertz, seconded by Councilman Burke to approve the application.** After some additional discussion, **a vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.**

Assistant Director Herrighty briefed the Council on the Northern Bobwhite Action Plan that was going to be presented by Research Scientist Paul Castelli. Several handouts were distributed to

the Council, and an extensive power point presentation was given. The decline in the population of the species was reviewed, and recommendations for limited or no hunting season opportunities and stocking restrictions was discussed. The plan would cover two areas throughout the State, divided by Route 33, with the most restrictive area being south of Route 33. Season dates and bag limits would be determined by the number of bobwhite heard while monitoring survey routes. In conclusion, it was recommended to the Council that based on the presentation made today, they approve the Northern Bobwhite Action Plan.

Council members had several questions regarding the presentation. Councilwoman Brummer asked that based on the status of the species, should it still be considered a game species. This matter was further discussed, with Assistant Director Herrighty noting that certain species are kept as protected species in the Game Code. Councilman Wolgast noted the bobcat, which is now listed as an endangered species, and nothing can be done to control the problems that are now occurring in some areas. Councilwoman Brummer was not familiar with any problems, however Acting Chairwoman Vreeland noted that the trappers were experiencing difficulties with bobcats. Assistant Director Herrighty advised that Principal Zoologist Mick Valent would be presenting information on bobcats to the Council at a later date. He also noted that there are less administrative problems to re-open a closed season if a species is listed as a game species with a closed season as compared to a species listed as non-game. There was additional discussion on quail and the information given today. Councilman Wolgast felt that this plan should be adopted by the Council, plus move forward to list cats a dangerous exotic threat to major wildlife. He also felt that the Division needs to do move forward with an educational effort about cats. After review, **a motion was made by Councilman Wolgast, seconded by Councilwoman Brummer to adopt the Northern Bobwhite Action Plan as presented today. A vote was taken with all in favor, none opposed.** Councilman Van Mater added that he has not seen any quail or ruffed grouse in his area in over twenty years, and felt that something had to be done. Other ideas such as a Memorandum of Understanding with Parks and Pinelands, and working with a plant partnership group were reviewed.

Old and new business was discussed next. Councilman Puskas asked if the hunting licenses, permits and associated transportation tags could be printed in order from the electronic sales site. He noted that he has received complaints about the confusion that is caused by things being out of order and hunters not sure of which tag to use. Councilman Wolgast suggested a program such as West Virginia has, where a hunter can purchase and print their license from their home computer. Assistant Director Herrighty noted that this has been done with the fishing licenses, but Law Enforcement is not in favor of open access to the hunting licenses which have other attachments such as transportation tags. He added it could be looked at, but there were limited companies available to run this system. Assistant Director Herrighty also recognized that the tags related to licenses and permits may print out of order. It was also noted that the paper used was hard to write on at times.

There was a suggestion that the Digest be made more user friendly. Assistant Director Herrighty asked that any ideas for improvement be given to him and he would forward them to Digest Editor Cindy Kuenstner.

Some hunters had complained about the wait time at the Sportsmen's Center deer check station. Principal Biologist Kandoth explained that this was the busiest station in the State, and noted that when hunters shoot a deer early and wait until later in the day to come to the check station, this will add to the delay.

Inquiry was made as to when the phone in check station might be available, and it was noted that they are hoping to have something in place by January 2011 with the current vendor. If this needs to go to bid, that process could add 12 months to the wait time.

Councilman Van Mater noted he was going to suggest changes for deer hunting in the Pinelands zones, but added he would like to see the harvest totals first.

Councilman Puskas has received e-mails and calls he received about the woodcock season in South Jersey, and asked that the Game Committee review them. Assistant Director Herrightly also asked that they be sent to Principal Biologist Ted Nichols.

Acting Chairwoman Vreeland asked that on behalf of the Council, an e-mail holiday greeting be sent to Division staff. **A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Van Mater to approve this message. A vote was taken with all in favor.**

The public comment period began. Joe Matter, Chairman of the New Jersey Quail Project addressed the Council. He noted that he has lived in South Jersey since the age of ten, and there used to be large populations of quail. He felt that habitat was the key to restoration of the population. He also noted concerns he has seen over 40 years of degradation of the Pinelands. Mr. Matter also felt that a lot of the problem was created due to the maturation of the forests, and the loss of successional growth and leaf litter that has collected, all which were due to excessive regulations. He added that he had distributed information to the Council today from the National Forestry Service, and encouraged the Council to review same. He stated that previously there was grassland savannah in the area, and noted where it could still be seen along the road edges. He knows it will be a tough sale to hunters in South Jersey to restrict the season. He showed a map with project sites and noted that all those involved are working well together. With working together and getting the Pinelands restrictions lifted, he felt that changes could be made.

Barbara Sauchau was next to speak. She stated that she found it amazing that representatives of such a small population could act so outrageously. She read her opinions to the Council, and added that she felt this agency was anti-environmental.

Ms. Sauchau also noted a recent event in Bridgewater-Raritan High School, noting it was almost Columbine again. She claimed that the party involved was a hunters' son, and questioned the mentality of someone to allow a 10 year old to pick up a gun.

Ms. Sauchau also asked the if the two Council representatives from the Franklin Township, Somerset County area knew who caused the poisoning of waterfowl in there area last year. She stated that she would like to know who the farmer was that called in the complaint.

Ms. Sauchau also stated that she felt Councilman Kertz was saying “give me” comments today regarding horseshoe crabs and firewood. She wanted to remind him that he was supposed to be representing all the people of New Jersey.

Next to address the Council was Janet Pizar from Essex County. She asked that it go on record that she had delivered letters to Acting Chairwoman Vreeland and Assistant Director Herrighty (for Director Chanda). She stated that she would like it noted she had put her questions in writing, as previously directed. Ms. Pizar commented that her August, September, November and second letter from April were still waiting for a reply. Acting Chairwoman Vreeland addressed Ms. Pizar, noting that her letters asked very pertinent questions with great detail, and explained that letters sent to her will be diverted to the Division when the questions are unique and require specific data. Ms. Pizar stated she understood how overloaded everyone was, and that she would accept a bulleted responses to her inquiries. She asked to remind Acting Chairwoman Vreeland that she had stated very early on that this was a Fish and Wildlife Council meeting and not a Division meeting, was advised by Acting Chairwoman Vreeland that the Division would provide information and expert advice and they would work from there.

Ms. Pizar next referenced the beaver and otter season. She said that she had read that many are killed by drowning, and referenced the American Veterinary Medical Association information which states that drowning is not acceptable or humane. She wanted to pose a question as to what could be done so that there were no violations of cruelty laws. Ms. Pizar also stated that she referenced the AVMA policy was stated for use of captive bolting for agricultural animals and modified same for captive bolting wild animals such as deer. She stated that the question posed would pertain to the beaver and otter season.

Ms. Pizar asked to comment the feral cat resolution discussed prior to today. She noted that today was the first time she had heard of the cats and causation of the feral cat population from dumping and abandonment. She reminded members that dumping and abandonment is illegal in New Jersey, and hopes that this is addressed as well by the ad hoc committee.

Ms. Pizar also noted a bear that was killed in Newfoundland, NJ on November 12. She noted that commuters in this area talked about the vast uncontained garbage in the area of this bear/vehicle collision, and stated that uncontained garbage was responsible for luring bears in to the area and causing problems.

She next addressed Councilwoman Brummer regarding feral cats and felt that the information seemed unclear. She noted information from the Humane Society and Dr. Gordon Stahl. She asked that the information for causes of the feral cat problem be clarified down the road.

Regarding the application for the Community Based Deer Management permit, she noted that she did not speak earlier, but she has lived in Essex County her whole life. She commented that it is true that the South Mountain Reservation does not look as it did in the 1950's, but said she had heard reports and read that there had been a change in forestation. A 1995 Rutgers report said that the changes were natural and man made, and there was no mention of deer, but the report did note bicycles and the use of herbicides for damaging the vegetation. She added that

she knows of plant species and vines that cause destruction, as well as natural pollution and acid rain, and felt it was wrong to only blame the deer when there are other factors.

Ms. Pizar asked to end on a positive note, and thanked all for a job well done with recovering the wild turkey that had been at the Turnpike toll area.

There were no other public comments.

A motion was made by Councilman Messeroll, seconded by Councilman Burke to adjourn. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 4:06 pm.