

**CORRECTED VERSION**

**NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT**

**JANUARY 20, 2010 COMMISSION MEETING**

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Headquarters, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301

Commissioners Present: E. Orff, R. Rowan, R. Phillipson, R. Blake, T. Tichy, J. Ryan, T. Hubert, W. Morse, and S. Guaraldi.

Commissioner's absent: None

Vacant Commissioner's Positions

Belknap County Commissioner

Coastal Commissioner

Executive Director Normandeau – present

Chairman Rowan called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance and to join in a moment of silence honoring the passing of former Commissioner Richard Riley. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the chairman, may speak on any item on the agenda.

In addition, Chairman Rowan welcomed Robert Blake to the Commission. He announced that Rob would be replacing Mitch Kalter, representing Strafford County.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1.) Commissioner Orff moved to approve the December 16, 2009 Commission Minutes with the following revision and Commissioner Ryan seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Additions:

Page 3, Legislative Committee – Should read: “Commissioner Morse reported that the committee did *not* meet in November and did meet the morning of the December 16, 2009 Commission Meeting”.

Many agenda items were heard out of sequence due to time constraints.

3.) Steve Weber, Chief, Wildlife Division, came before the Commission requesting authorization to expend \$1,800 from each of the Game Management and Wildlife Habitat accounts to pay the non-federal portion of the cost of two snowmobiles and a covered trailer.

Representative Dennis Abbott, Chair, House Fish and Game Committee, was in attendance and asked to speak regarding the above request. He reported that he was a sponsor of the habitat

bills some ten plus years ago and stated, "We would not have passed this legislation if we knew it was being used to purchase snowmobiles." He reported that this wasn't what they envisioned the funds to be used for and reiterated that the funds were to be used directly for "on the ground work". He further stated, "You may twist that a little bit, however, it is not what we intended".

In closing, he stated that he noticed on last month's agenda that there was a request to expend funds from fish habitat account to pay for dam registration fees to pay another department and did not feel that was an acceptable way to spend the monies either.

Commissioner Tichy reported that there were some concerns in the North Country regarding deer wintering habitat and stated that he felt that the only way for the biologists to get to the areas was by snowmobile. He stated, "Some habitat money should be spent on this".

Commissioner Orff questioned whether the division would still be able to purchase the snowmobiles if the funding did not come from the Wildlife Habitat Account?

Steve Weber responded that all the monies would have to come from the Game Management Account. He stated that he felt the division did not ask for this type of request very often and was cognizant of the concerns and felt this was a reasonable allocation, however, would take the funds from the Game Management Account if they so wished.

Bill Carney, former Merrimack County Commissioner, stated that the funds were put in place to protect the land and felt the department was starting to misuse the monies. He stated, "If things continue this way, I will have legislation filed to ensue the funds are to be used as specified."

Ritchie White, former Coastal Commissioner from Rye, reported that he was a Fish and Game Commissioner when this bill was passed and agreed with Representative Abbott that the intention was to use the money on the ground and not to purchase vehicles and such.

Commissioner Phillipson moved to expend \$1,800 from each of the Game Management and Wildlife Habitat accounts to pay the non-federal portion of the cost of two snowmobiles and a covered trailer and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Phillipson moved to amend the above motion to take the entire amount (\$3,600) from the Game Management Account to pay the non-federal portion of the cost of two snowmobiles and a covered trailer and Commissioner Morse seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Steve Weber stated that his interpretation of the law was that 50% was to be spent directly on the ground and 50% at the discretion of the agency. He further stated that he supported a review of that law, with the inclusion of some clarifying language to prevent these conflicting situations in the future.

2.) Doug Grout, Chief, Marine Division, stated that he was present to recognize his predecessor, John I. Nelson, Jr., former Chief of the Marine Division, for his achievement in receiving the 2009 Captain David H. Hart Award from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). He reported that each year this award is given to an individual who has contributed to the betterment of fisheries along the Atlantic Coast through significant biological, legislative, or management activities. Doug reported that three ASMFC Commissioners (Doug being one) along with Representative Abbott and Ritchie White, were in the audience to present 3 identical copies of the Hart Award, one to be displayed at Fish & Game Headquarters, one to Sue Nelson, John's widow, and one to be displayed at the Region 3 Office in Durham.

Representative Abbott stated that he had the distinct honor and privilege of working closely with John for 11 years as a Commissioner on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. He stated that John was a problem solver and sometimes worked behind the scenes. He reported that when 45 or so folks were sitting at the table debating difficult issues, John was always the fellow who had a smile on his face and was able to get people off in a corner and was seemingly able to solve the problem. He thanked John and Sue for being such good friends and traveling up and down the east coast together and stated, "It was always a pleasure and my honor to be John Nelson's friend".

At this time, Ritchie White thanked the Chairman for allowing him to speak out of turn, as he would not be present for the public comment portion of the meeting. Ritchie reported that he served on the board of Director's for the Coastal Conservation Association. He reported that the board made a decision, however, with concern, to continue to advertise in the department's saltwater digest, given the price increase of approximately \$400.00 from last year. He stated that he just wanted pass on the pricing concerns.

4.) Commissioner Tichy moved to accept the donation of \$100.00 from Margaret Goodwin, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account and Commissioner Orff seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

4a.) **LATE ITEM:**

Commissioner Orff moved to accept the donation of a Tachyno Video Camera from Columbia Sand and Gravel and another anonymous donor, valued at approximately \$360.84, to be utilized for off highway recreational vehicle enforcement and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Commissioner Phillipson moved to approve \$320.00 from the below donors, to be utilized by the Landowner Relations Program and Commissioner Guaraldi seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Sullivan County Fish & Game Club -	\$200.00
Howard Dickinson -	\$100.00
Phillip Miller -	<u>\$ 20.00</u>
	\$320.00

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Support Services, provided the monthly Financial Statement dated December 31, 2009. (See attached statement)

5.) Steve Weber provided an update on Legacy Easement lands posted in the Ossipee area due to unauthorized clearing and mapping of trails. Steve reported that these particular lands were posted based on the actions of the "Trail Bandit", who was essentially marking trails on private lands, clearing those trails, in some instances herbiciding those trails, then mapping them and putting them on the internet without the permission of the private landowners.

Steve reported that the Trails Bureau took the lead on this issue with the Attorney General's Office and the Division of Forest & Lands, and has worked out an agreement so that those activities would no longer take place. As a result, signage now indicates which activities are specifically allowed, which are specifically prohibited, and instructions to contact the landowner regarding all other activities. Hunting and Fishing are two of the activities that are specifically allowed.

3.) Rick Fink, Chief, Lands Bureau, distributed a matrix of access projects indicating their status (See attached) He reported that there were approximately 3 construction projects scheduled to start in the Spring of 2010 and 1 to start in the fall of 2010. Those are:

Connor Pond, Ossipee  
Winnepesaukee River, Northfield

Purity Pond, Eaton  
Umbagog Lake, Cambridge

Commissioner Tichy inquired whether there was another mechanism for building boat ramps that may work better and not be affected so much by ice-damage and require repair every 5 or 6 years?

Rick responded that the department did realize the need for change and reported that the older style concrete planks were not being used any longer and have been replaced with a wider plank with angle iron running along each side of the ramp, with an anchor block at the head of the ramp. He further stated that he hoped this configuration would work to prevent ice-damage.

4.) Matt Carpenter, Habitat Biologist, provided an overview of the status of the salmon/shad restoration plans on the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers. He provided the following summary:

Matt reported that Salmon restoration in New Hampshire has been plagued by low marine survival, a shift in resources to rivers in Maine, and a rigid management strategy. He reported that there were some opportunities to streamline salmon restoration into a more adaptive management strategy with a focus on smolt stocking and natural reproduction. He further stated that there was reason for optimism about shad and river herring restoration due to the capabilities of the department's shad truck, technical innovations in fish passage, hatchery operations, and an increased interest by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In closing, he reported that there was increasing evidence that a multi-species approach would be necessary for successful diadromous fish restoration. (See attached handout)

Commissioner Orff questioned whether the Lawrence Dam would be fixed in the near future?

Matt responded that they would have to prove they have fish passage in order to be relicensed.

2.) Steve Weber, along with wildlife staff project leaders, presented the hunting and trapping season recommendations for 2010 and 2011. (See attached)

The biggest concern amongst the Commission was the potential 5- month reduction in the coyote season. Pat Tate, Furbearer Biologist, reported that coyotes would just double in their reproduction as a way of managing their species. Many Commissioners agreed that this proposal would not go over well with their constituents as many people feel the coyote is the biggest predator to the deer population.

**STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**POLICY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Hubert, Chair; Commissioners; Phillipson, Orff, and Ryan. Commissioner Hubert reported that the committee did not meet this month.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Morse, Chair; Commissioners Tichy, Rowan and Guaraldi. Commissioner Morse reported that the committee did not meet this month.

**RIVERS COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Ryan; Chair; Commissioner Ryan reported that the committee did not meet this month and that the next meeting would take place in February.

**LAKES COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Orff; Commissioner Orff reported that the committee did meet in early January and reviewed proposed legislation.

**HANDBOOK COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Guaraldi, Chair; Commissioner Blake. Commissioner Guaraldi reported that the committee did not meet this month. She reported that she provided an updated sheet with RMP 1 being replaced by RMP 20.

Chairman Rowan appointed Commissioner Blake to the Handbook Committee.

Chairman Rowan asked Patti Costa, former Belknap County Commissioner, to come to the podium. On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Rowan thanked Patti for her dedicated service during her tenure as Belknap County Commissioner and stated that it was a pleasure to work with her. He presented her with a Fish and Game Commission jacket with her name and Commission term embroidered on it.

Patti thanked the Commission and stated that she hoped Governor Lynch would soon find a replacement for her as Belknap County Commissioner. She reiterated the importance of each county having representation.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1.) Chairman Rowan announced that Representative Abbott expressed concern that the Commission had not kept the Fish and Game Committee up to date regarding activities related to the audit and have sent no letter to date. He stated, "I propose we send a letter and review what we have accomplished in order to bring Representatives L'Heureux and Abbott up to date so they can share what we have done with the committee". He asked that each Commissioner go back and review the audit report and e-mail their ideas that address certain observations and what could be done to correct them.

Chairman Rowan announced that he was informed that they (the committee) were waiting for the Commission to respond prior to proposing legislation to address changes noted in the audit.

Chairman Rowan reported that he would then meet with the Director to review the observations and suggestions prior to forwarding to the Legislative Committee for their review.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

**COMMISSIONER HUBERT:** Commissioner Hubert reported that he attended the Sullivan County Sportsmen's Club Meeting where there was discussion and still some concern regarding the Youth Hunt Weekend and that we are not making money on non-residents. He reported that the Wild Game Supper would be held on February 6, 2010 at the Sullivan County Sportsmen's Club. He further reported that he would be attending an upcoming snowmobile club meeting in the area as well.

**COMMISSIONER BLAKE:** Commissioner Blake reported that he attended the hearing on HB-1514-FN, regarding prohibiting the sale of raw skins or un-skinned carcasses of fur-bearing animals. He reported that he would be attending the Wildlife Control Operators Meeting on January 21, 2010, and that he would be taking an ice-fishing class in Greenland on Sunday.

**COMMISSIONER ORFF:** Commissioner Orff reported that he attended the Wildlife Federation Meeting and Annual Meeting, visited the Suncook Valley Rod & Gun Club, the Salem Sportsmen's Show and attended the Legislative Breakfast.

**COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON:** Commissioner Phillipson reported that at his liaison meeting in Keene a constituent requested a list of all habitat projects in Cheshire County and how much was spent on each. Commissioner Phillipson asked that the information be provided to him and he would relay to the constituent. He further reported that he attended the bobcat study meeting in Keene, which was an interesting event. He reported that a 30± lb. male was collared and covered a good distance within a two-week period. In closing, it was reported that the department had collared 3 more cats, consisting of a 37 pound male, 27 pound female, and a 19 pound male.

**COMMISSIONER GUARALDI:** Commissioner Guaraldi reported that all of the Commission Awards of Excellence Nominations had been received and the committee would be meeting in the near future. She reported that she attended the Enfield Outing Club Meeting, the Wildlife

Federation Meeting and Annual Meeting, met with the Women's Club, and would be attending the Changing Times Meeting. She further reported that the Winter Becoming an Outdoor Woman Program would be held at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center in Holderness on February 20, 2010. She invited another Commissioner to attend if they wished. Commissioner Tichy volunteered.

**COMMISSIONER MORSE** : Commissioner Morse reported that things were quiet and that he received the usual calls.

**COMMISSIONER RYAN**: Commissioner Ryan reported that he would be attending a meeting of the Trapper's Association on February 20, 2010. He further reported that he received a letter, as well as other Commissioners, from Senator Gallus with some concerns from constituents that he asked be addressed.

**COMMISSIONER TICHY**: ~~Commissioner Tichy reported that the Androscoggin Valley Fish and Game Association believe there is a need to propose legislation regarding harvesting deer in deer yards.~~ *Should read: Commissioner Tichy reported that the Androscoggin Valley Fish and Game Association believe there is a need to propose legislation regarding timber harvesting in deer yards.* The group has started a petition to obtain names of individuals who support that legislation. He further reported that Will Staats, Region 1 Wildlife Biologist, would be attending the club's meeting in February to discuss the issue and to clarify any misunderstandings there may be.

In closing, he stated, "I'm going to stay out of it so there is no conflict of interest".

Steve Weber stated, "I do not feel they will get the legislation they are seeking".

**COMMISSIONER ROWAN** : Commissioner Rowan reported that he was invited to Districts 2&3 to meet with Conservation Officers. He reported that the upcoming Becoming and Outdoor Woman Workshop would be held at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Facility in February and suggested everyone visit the facility at some point in the winter months and take advantage of the educational opportunities offered. He further reported that he attended the Belknap County Sportsmen's Banquet, several hearings at the Legislative Office Building, and the Rockingham Hunting and Fishing Exposition, where the department had a display along with a few Conservation Officers on hand as well.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**: Director Normandeau reported that he received state bids a few weeks ago for vehicles that were amazingly low. He stated that he tried to get funds appropriated into the Fish and Game Fund to purchase vehicles, however was unsuccessful. The Governor's Office informed him that the department should have foreseen the future and included it in the budget.

He reported that license sales were down and stated that hopefully we would see a recovery in the near future.

He further reported that he would be attending a meeting at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Facility on January 21, 2010 to discuss Barry Conservation Camp and hoped to have a productive discussion.

In closing, he reported that he had been granted authority by the Governor to hire individuals to fill pertinent vacant positions within the department. He reported that he would be looking to fill the vacant Access Program Coordinator position in a timely fashion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Eric Rottenecker, audience member, spoke regarding baiting and it being on the rise. He stated that it was his belief that due to baiting, bears seem to lose fear of humans and are continuing to bring cubs into bait sites more and more.

At this time, Commissioner Guaraldi moved to adjourn and Commissioner Phillipson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

James Ryan, Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Rowan, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

