

Northwest CT Sportsman's Council

NWCSC
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Council Minutes: February 28, 2006

Meeting called to order by Council President Craig Nelson at 7:40 PM. All rise for Pledge of Allegiance.

Delegates in attendance:

Mike Fusco, Harwinton R&G; Dominic Basile, Bell City, Metacon & Chase; Jim Fedorich, Sharon F&G; Jerry Ciarcia, Waterbury F&G; Dean Fraley, CT Classic Bucks & Ousatonic F&G; Seamus Muzzulin, Rocky River Coon Club; Elise Mauriello, Olde Newgate Coon Club; Phil Mauriello, Woodbury/ Southbury R&G, Chris Marino, NVBC; Craig Nelson, New Preston R&G; Jason Marshall, NWCSA; Tom Accuosti, Goshen Sportsmen; Tony Chinese, Bethlehem WC/ C; Jim Fairchild, Bethlehem WC/ C; Clyde Breakell, Foothill's Sportsmen; Joe Rinaldi, Torrington F&G.

Members: Don Adams, Metacon BOD.

Officers: All officers in attendance.

Secretary's Report: Copies of January Minutes distributed. Motion to accept the January Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Tom reviewed the current financial status of the Council and gave a preliminary financial report on the Annual Banquet Fund-Raiser held on February 17th. Tom distributed a three-page report on banquet night activity including, gross income from each game/ event and overall expenses to date. There remain a few bills to pay, most notably Autumn Gun Works for banquet gun and merchandise purchases. Overall, this year's banquet looks to be a success.

Chris Marino moves to "Accept the Treasurer's Report." Approved.

Correspondence:

Received invitations from the USDA Forest Service's, CT Highlands Study Regional Workgroup to attend the next round of meetings concerning the mapping and identification of key natural resource areas of the Connecticut Highlands, (Northwest CT.) Meeting to be held at the UCONN Branch in Torrington on March 2, 2006 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Chris and Clyde to attend.

Membership:

Tom Adams representing the Metacon BOD gave a review of lawsuits filed against Metacon. Tom spoke to the precedents resolution of these lawsuits will set to determine the level of "Range Protection" all clubs in this state can expect from Connecticut and Federal Courts in the future on environmental and safety issues. Costs to date approximately \$300,000. The club has had to survey all of its property, contract a sound survey, contract safety studies, and install no-blue-sky baffles above rifle ports. It is 500 yards from the firing line to the base of Avon Mountain and 600 feet to the top, all of which is owned by the club. The club is exhausting its resources and is looking for help of any kind. Metacon membership has fallen off due to the expenses involved. Membership now stands at about 600.

One Federal and one State Lawsuit remain to be defended. The members believe they will prevail in the end but need help to continue.

Don reports that millions are being spent by the state to update and modify the State Police Range next door to Metacon. There has been no effort to sue the state for this range although as much, or more noise and environmental impact emanates from this facility.

Don states that between one and one & one-half miles separate the club from the nearest residences on either side of the club. Deeds for homes on the left side of the club contain notification of range existence.

Don thinks it very important to the Metacon effort that they receive the public support of as many clubs and organizations as possible. The thought is that the issues affecting Metacon will eventually affect us all; and we can better deal with these issues as a unified body rather than wait for each individual club to be attacked and have to face the same issues with limited resources.

Council Comments:

Jason Marshall asks that Metacon improve communication with the Council. Suggest Metacon add Council Report to their meeting agenda as many of our clubs have.

Phil Mauriello feels the Council is in a position to help clubs such as Metacon, either financially, legislatively and/ or personally. United we stand.

Chris Marino asks if Metacon has approached the 2nd Amendment Foundation, GAO, NSSF, or other large pro-gun entities besides the NRA. Don is beginning to do so.

Our members need to ask their legislators why they are letting this group of self-interested people choke out and destroy this gun club that provides a safe shooting venue and educational facilities that not only benefits the 600 members and their

families, but thousands of CT citizens who partake of their public functions. All of whom are citizens of the state who deserve to have this matter settled by the rule of law. This is a case of Tyranny of a vocal and well-funded minority against legitimate citizens engaged in legal and safe conduct. The real problem is a legal system that is designed for the benefit of lawyers, that has lost the capacity to quickly and fairly resolve any issues. Situations such as Metacon faces become matters of who can financially afford to hold out the longest through the legal proceedings, regardless of the merits of the case. Due process has become a concept of the past. Get into court, present evidence, be heard, get a decision and be done! Jason and Phil suggest approaching FNRA for range improvement funding.

- Delete Northfield R&G from our membership role as the club is now disbanded to the best of our knowledge.
- It was noted that Phil Mauriello is signing in as a delegate for Thomaston R&G, and that Elise Mauriello is signing in as a delegate for Bristol F&G, in addition to their regular appointments for the clubs they represent. The Secretary pointed out that we need letters of appointment from the two additional clubs in order for Phil and Elise to officially represent them as primary or alternate delegates.

Committees:

Rapid Response:

Conservation Advisory Council: Feb 14th Meeting.

NWCSC past President Chris Marino assumed chairmanship of CAC at this meeting. Chris congratulated Wildlife Director Dale May on the federal acceptance of Connecticut's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy. Chris then handed out copies of a recently published "letter to the editor" regarding the new wildlife funding and ways citizens can help with direct contributions through contributions to the wildlife fund provided on all CT income tax forms and through purchase of wildlife conservation license plates.

As part of the Chairman's report, Chris passed around copies of a list that is being developed regarding regulatory issues that affect sportsman satisfaction and opportunity in CT. This list will be published on the web site. A good discussion among the delegates and Dale May followed. Issues addressed included Handgun Hunting for Deer, Night Hunting for predators, Traditional M/ L Rifle Deer and Turkey seasons, Lesser implement regs, reducing acreage requirement for landowner deer permits for any implement other than a rifle, tag management, and hound hunting hours.

- Deer take down about 7% statewide in 2005.
- New study reveals that CWD prions have been detected in deer meat. There is still no evidence that contaminated meat poses a direct threat to human consumption.
- Dale May reports more state lands being opened to hunting.
- Dale reported the result of the ruffed grouse survey this past spring. Only three drumming birds were heard on the thirty routes that were monitored.

Banquet:

Final Report: Critique.

- Auctioneer let items go to cheap. Confused auction event. We lost too many description tags moving items around. Need separate sheet for auctioneer for known auction items. Receipt books should be prepared in advance.
- Too many bucket raffles. Need better quality items but fewer.
- Eliminate items on tables. First attendee gets the prize, not evenly divisible.
- Prints sell too cheap. Need fewer prints of good quality, or donated prints.
- Eliminate bucket tickets on tables. Not divisible by all table members. Better to give tickets at time of table purchase if table is paid for. Staple one strip of raffle tickets to each table sponsor dinner ticket. (50 instead of 100 or 100 instead of 200.)
- Better women's prizes spread throughout events. Silent auction, special table, raffles and live auction.
- Our success was due in large part to big -ticket donations. Look for sponsors.
- Pre-assigned jobs for event workers.
- Treasurer in assigned room with Credit Card processor. He should not have to leave his post. Runners to transfer tickets, money and receipts.
- Try to organize more volunteers next year.
- Change date of banquet so as not to conflict with NE Expo. One week later next year. February 23rd.
- It would be helpful to have a list of table attendees for reserved tables.
- Set up schematic at door of reserved and open tables. Use Mylar cover to facilitate changes.
- Soda and water included with meal price. Many people did not know. Pitchers on tables.
- Directional signs this year were appreciated.

- Metacon's raffle netted \$250.00, which was donated back to the legal defense fund of the club by the Council.

Everyone should keep in mind that overall we run a very successful banquet and owe a debt of gratitude to all of our members who give up their evening to run the event. Our problems are small when considering the magnitude of what we do. We strive to make our banquet better, even though we know it already is the best in the state. Thank you to all who have helped make it so. We also thank the DeStasi family for the excellent service and meal they provide each year.

Raffle::

The in-house Council raffle scheduled for the Spring/ Summer of 2006 will include a 1st prize of one Springfield M1-A rifle, a second prize of a half-day, Pheasant Hunt for two people at the Plumb Hill Preserve in Washington, and a third prize of a \$100.00 Gift Certificate towards any taxidermy work from Kevin Conroy of Kevin's taxidermy.

Cost to be \$10.00 per ticket with 500 tickets to be printed. Jason to develop tickets.

Legislative:

Dom reminded everyone of a previously discussed concept for legislative action, the "Range Disclosure Law." This is a concept we mentioned to Representative to Sean Williams last year. It would be fashioned similar to other disclosure laws, such as airports. We need to research and develop language to at least start the process of introducing a bill. Passage of such a bill would remove one argument of neighbors; that they did not know a range was nearby, thereby reducing the credibility of certain complaints. Jason and Chris will bring this concept to the CAC next meeting to see if DEP can take up the issue.

Web Site:

Try to link up the club web sites to the Council site.

We currently have links to Bell City, CT Trapper's Association, Bristol F&G, Harwinton R&G, Metacon, Ousatonic, Second Amendment Sisters, and Torrington Gun Club.

Please send any other club web site info to Chris Marino, or go to the Council web site and e-mail your club's web site address to our web-master with a request that it be linked to our site.

Old Business:

The Secretary checked on the "Teaming With Wildlife Program" which was received at the last Council meeting. He reports that it amounts to a statement of endorsement for federal programs and funding to help prevent wildlife from becoming endangered or threatened. Over three thousand organizations have signed on to date. This is a national program being promoted by the State of CT. It seems to be a good program and there are provisions to withdraw support if the program changes.

Phil Mauriello motions for, "the Council Secretary to sign on to the Teaming With Wildlife program for the NWCSC." Motion approved.

Secretarial duties were brought up for discussion. Kathy Frost to act as our recording secretary last year, until we could find a delegate willing to take the job. Our new secretary reports that he is willing to do so and now assumes that responsibility. Kathy has offered to help with special projects such Land trust work, and to serve as an alternate secretary if the need arises. We thanked Kathy for the work she has done and the offer to help out in the future.

Clyde moves "that Chris resume full responsibility for Secretarial duties and delegate specific projects to Kathy Frost when needed." Motion approved.

It was reported that we have received our corporate status for the state.

Sunday Hunting Bill is raised. We need to remind our members to write and call Environment Committee members to support this bill.

New Business:

The Secretary reported on initial investigations into the Council forming a Sportsman's Land Trust. Ousatonic is reported to be set up as such and Torrington F&G has started the process. The Council is probably in the best position to do something meaningful on a regional level in this regard.

Good of the Council:

Northwest Trout Unlimited will hold its annual banquet March 11th at the Torrington Elks Club. Call Jim Fedorich in Torrington for reservations.

FNRA Banquet at the Aquaturf March 24th.

Woodbury/ Southbury Game Dinner at the Grand Oak Villa March 18th. Call Phil Mauriello for tickets.

Adjourn: 10:30 PM. Chris Marino, Secretary

