

Conservation Advisory Council
Minutes of March 14, 2006 Meeting

Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 7 PM.

Attendance was taken and a quorum was present. Attendance list available from the Secretary.

The minutes for the February meeting were discussed and a motion to accept them as received was made by George Finch, seconded by Vincent Ringrose. Motion approved without changes.

Chairman and Secretary report: None.

Tip Report:

Sgt. Lewoc provided copies of the Wildlife Hotline Activity report, copies of the 2005 ENCON POLICE Annual Report, and copies of a letter from TIP Chairman Chris Torino, detailing a new business address for the TIP program.

Conservation Environmental Police Report: Sgt. Lewoc.

- Two new COs are at the academy now. Law enforcement staff now at 55, but slated to lose 3 soon. The division remains understaffed. A discussion of policy and requirements regarding hiring and training Special Cos followed. These are reported as seasonal positions usually dealing with lake authorities and lake enforcement issues.

BNR Report: Edward C. Parker, Bureau Chief:

- Administration: In a continuing effort to keep CAC member data up to date, Ed passed around the most current contact data sheet for delegate updates and corrections. All member organizations and delegates are encouraged to verify and update contact information with the BNR liaison.
- Regarding our CAC/BNR liaison; Ed reported that Heather Overturf has been assigned to the BNR Chief as the Secretary to this office. Heather has assumed the duties of CAC/BNR liaison from Elaine Hinsch. All communication and correspondence with the BNR should be directed to Heather through the office of the BNR Chief.

Forestry: Nothing to report.

Wildlife:

- Mr. Parker commented on the Wildlife Division's current efforts to formulate a Wildlife Regulations Package for next year. Dale May and his staff are reviewing ideas and proposals now, including those submitted by sportsmen at the February CAC meeting. Mr. Parker asked that any delegates, who have ideas or proposals for the Wildlife Division, submit them to himself and Dale May within the next thirty days for consideration. Mr. Parker also mentioned that we would probably be revisiting the mandatory Orange Hat issue in April or May. Contact Mr. Parker with ideas at: edward.parker@po.state.ct.us
- Auto Licensing System: Mr. Parker reports progress in this effort. Three proposals have been received from vendors that all exceeded the minimum requirements established by the agency. Next step will include cost proposals and checking references. In an effort to take advantage of other state automated licensing systems, Mr. Parker asked for input from sportsmen regarding their experiences; both good and bad, utilizing the systems available in other states.

Marine Fisheries:

- Sport fishermen face a reduction in recreational fluke catch. Five options under consideration: Current limit is 6 fish at 17&1/2" minimum, season runs from April 30th through December 31st.
- Scup fishery will see an increase in allowable catch. Agency is considering adding 30 days to current July 1 through October 31 season.

Inland Fisheries:

- **Mr. Rick Jacobson, Assistant Director, Inland Fisheries Division**, distributed copies of **and summarized** Inland Fisheries Regulation Proposals. Proposals include a summer closure on three trophy trout lakes. High summer mortality results from the stress of taking trout from the deep, cold-water layers of the lake. Growth studies indicate that fishermen apparently catch enough trout through the use of downriggers and weighted lines as to impede the growth and survival of entire lake populations. This proposal will go to public hearing for further assessment, and creel surveys will be conducted this summer. Public notice of the regulation package and public hearing will be made in late April. Mr. Parker asked CAC delegates to review package proposals. We will discuss at the April meeting and ask for an action item to endorse the proposed package.

- The status of Alewives and Blueback Herring remains unchanged, **thus a season closure will be in place this year as it has for the past several years.** Returning numbers are in the hundreds of fish rather than the hundreds of thousands seen in the 1980s. Massachusetts has closed herring fishery and Rhode Island is considering the same option. Connecticut will remain closed for 2006 season. Trout hatcheries and stocking proceed on schedule for the 2006. 725,000 trout to be stocked. Conditions good. Need volunteers to help with stocking.

Wildlife:

- Discuss P.O.S. licensing system. Will have internet access to start. Agency will begin with fishing licenses and add other license and permits as practical. Internet license sales may result in more dollars to the agency since no agent's fee will be required.
- Avian Influenza: Agency is planning and preparing for the appearance of this virus. Experts expect to see A/I appear in North America soon. Most likely introduction will be via migrating birds. DEP is planning for worst-case scenario, and possible mutation of virus to affect human population.
- BNR currently engaged in successional planning. All agency managers eligible for retirement in the next three to five years **have been identified.** CAC will see introduction of Career oriented personnel at our meetings.
- All Advisory Councils must be listed on agency web sites, along with the name of a contact person for each. It was decided that it would be proper to list the Chairman as contact person for CAC. With the additional public exposure, it becomes more important to see regular attendance from all of our member organizations.
- Discuss Sunday **Hunting** Bill and Environment Committee public hearing. DEP supports this bill with all hunting implements allowed, in order to fulfill intent of management goals.
- A proposal was discussed to allow youth hunters to obtain a hunting license in the calendar year they turn 12 years of age rather than on the actual birth date.
- Trapping:
- Agency is concerned that no Fisher carcasses were turned in to the Wildlife Division during the past trapping season. Wildlife would like to know why trappers chose not to voluntarily comply. Fisher harvest remains unknown at this point.
- It was noted that road-kill fishers should be turned in. Call law enforcement to inform them of sightings and pickups for the Wildlife Division.

Committee Reports:

Legislative: Robert Crook

- Lost & Stolen Gun Bill. Of concern to sportsmen and legitimate firearms owners. Oppose.
- Free Licenses: Oppose. Agency loses too much revenue.
- TIP Bill: Support
- Road-kill Bill: Support
- Essex Land Purchase: 1,000 Plus acres. Support.
- CO Staffing: Support
- ATV Bill: Unknown
- Motion from Al Moller, second by Vincent Ringrose to "authorize CAC Chairman to make statement in support of DEP Management Position regarding Sunday Hunting, at the Public Hearing scheduled for March 17th." Motion approved.

Old Business:

New Business:

- Motion by George Finch, seconded by Ray Szajkowski to "support DEP proposed river herring closure for 2006" Motion approved.
- Mr. Parker reported to the CAC that Deputy Commissioner David Leff will be taking a disability retirement from the agency at the end of March.
- Motion by Ray Szajkowski, seconded by Al Moller to; "send a letter of appreciation on behalf of the CAC to Deputy Commissioner David Leff, thanking him for his past contributions and many years of service to the DEP and the citizens of the State of Connecticut." Motion approved unanimously. Patty Pendergast volunteered to draft letter and see to its delivery.

Motion by Vincent Ringrose, seconded by Robert crook to, "adjourn." Motion approved. Meeting adjourned approximately 9:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Chris M. Marino
Chairman, CAC