

Conservation Advisory Council
Minutes
November 13, 2007 Meeting

Chairman Chris Marino called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Attendance: See attached attendance list.

Secretary's Report:

Discussion of the September minutes not reaching all delegates in a timely manner. C. Marino took a list of names and preferences for delivery method; US Mail vs. email delivery. Chairman will follow up with BNR staff to address delay issue.

The chairman requested a motion to approve the October, 2007 minutes. Motion made by George Finch and seconded by several delegates. The motion to accept the minutes was approved.

Chairman's Report:

The Chairman reminded all present that the actual date for the November 2007 monthly CAC meeting, approved by the membership at the December 2006 scheduling meeting was to be November 6, 2007. This was decided in order that we may avoid a late meeting the night before the regular deer season begins. Apparently, we all forgot this change and found ourselves once again meeting the evening before deer season. No harm done, but we should revisit this issue at our next scheduling meeting in December.

DEP:

Conservation Environmental Police Report:

*Sergeant Jim Wolfe was not present to hand out the T.I.P. report

BNR Report: Wildlife Director Dale May reporting for BNR.

Forestry:

Forestry Director Don Smith to retire in April 2008. An active search is being conducted to find and select a new director.

Marine Fisheries:

No items reported.

Inland Fisheries:

Dale May confirmed that despite lingering low water conditions, a number of very large brood stock salmon had been placed in several lakes and rivers this fall. The Shetucket and Naugatuck rivers, as well as Crystal Lake and Beach Pond were among waters receiving the stocking.

Wildlife:

Dale said that based on CAC input, Paul Rothbart will do a site survey of John A Minetto State Park in Torrington. Purpose will be to understand both specific issues affecting the site, along with opportunities for improvements. Several CAC delegates volunteered to participate in a site visit and to offer suggestions for reconstituting the site for the benefit of sportsmen. Waterfowl habitat improvements, as well as consideration of the site for pheasant stocking and dog training were mentioned as areas to be evaluated by the Wildlife division.

Dale gave an update on progress made on the new online licensing system. He said work on the fishing license portion of the system is well underway, and that the hunting license elements remain a work in progress. Hunting licensing includes more variables, due to the many tags available to sportsman. Given these variables, the system will eventually have a "telecheck" capability to validate requests for various tags such as: turkey, pheasant and deer hunting tags. This element of the system will

probably not be part of initial system rollout, but rather an enhancement in the future. Initial system deployment will require paper tags as is done today.

Dale also mentioned that the IHEA has been invited to conduct a peer review of Connecticut's Hunter Education program during the next several months. Ct is developing a new 5-year plan focused on new hunter recruitment and the IHEA has been asked to provide recommendations and feedback on these efforts.

Dale gave a brief recap of the Department's regulations change proposals to the CAC delegates. Various changes are being sought to increase hunter opportunities where possible, as well as to expand seasons and reduce restrictions on take methods as a means of effective management of various game stocks, such as resident Canada geese and whitetail deer.

Finally, Dale passed along notice of a Sunday Hunting bill under consideration in Mass. Several CAC delegates were familiar with this bill. Bob Crook advised that this bill has been submitted previously in Mass. To date, there has been no confirmation of the bill's passage.

Misc.

Dale May reported that the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) is coming to Connecticut. Elaine Hinch of the department is working to select 10 schools to pilot this program. NASP will hold a "train the trainer program" March 8-10th and pilot schools will each receive a \$4K kit that includes equipment and instruction. The goal of the program is to introduce archery into the mainstream curriculum as a way to encourage children to take up the sport. No connection to hunting is made in the program, but the hope is that success in archery will lead to hunting interest among participants. Dale said that the program may look for expertise and mentorship support from CAC organizations such as the UBC, as well as archery supply shops in the state.

George Finch asked the BNR to look into illegal use of ATV's in various state forests, citing several incidents in the southeast part of the state. Dale advised George to call the Eastern District Dispatch number: 424-3333, to report such incidents.

CAC Committee Reports:

Legislative

Bob Crook advised that Senator Lou Deluca resigned today. Sen. Deluca has been a strong supporter of sportsmen's issues and his support will be missed.

Bob noted that the Quinnibaug Hatchery received bonding money to perform renovations. A delegate knowledgeable regarding this funding said that the computerized water management system is being renovated with these funds, to allow water flow management needed to support fish rearing.

Bob said that given the recent violent incident in Cheshire, there is a chance to revisit the "Castle Doctrine". This doctrine would allow occupants of a home to use equal force in response to an aggressive act conducted by intruders in a person's home. A hearing on the issue of home invasion and possible legislation is set for November 27th

Bob advised that Ct will have a short legislative session next year. Bob expects to fight against another set of "bullet bills" that will be submitted. He once again implored CAC members to reach out to legislators. Bob advised that this outreach is vital to educating legislators and gaining their support for our issues. He specifically mentioned the great success that Bristol Fish and Game has had in engaging legislators through club events.

Bob mentioned that Whitetail Solutions has submitted a package to the Governor and is scheduled to meet with her to discuss deer management options.

Sunday hunting is viewed as part of a Lyme disease management program. Delegates would like to know whether the DEP intends to submit a deer management bill; that includes provision for Sunday hunting, for specific high populations areas as early as possible.

Finally, Bob suggested that the BNR needs to consider increased engagement with legislators, including participation by technical staff as subject matter experts available to legislators. Bob also asked the BNR to present a briefing to the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus.

CAC Nominating Committee:

The Chairman asked for volunteers for the nominating committee.

committee. Jason Marshall and Vinnie Ringrose will staff this

Old Business.

Once again, there was discussion around both number of meetings and member attendance. A reduction in meeting frequency was discussed. Chairman Chris Marino asked the delegates to consider the impact of any reduction in meetings before making a decision. Chris feels that our monthly meetings represent the best face-to-face contact with the BNR and DEP that our sportsmen and outdoor interests have throughout the course of the year.

Also discussed was the need to consider adding new organizations to the CAC, and the agenda for future meetings. Vinnie Ringrose described the FAC meeting format and process as a possible reference point for CAC agenda changes.

Fred Frillici again asked about pheasant stocking opportunities in Fairfield County. Fred noted the lack of stocked areas in Fairfield as a deterrent to pheasant stamp sales. He advised of several locations that had been stocked previously and could support stocking in the future. They include parcels that were previously leased from the Kelda Water Company, now Aquarion. Development and recreation rights to the majority of this land have been purchased by the State of CT. Dale May responded by saying that he would look into the three leased properties for suitability.

Fred also mentioned his continuing interest in a cormorant management program to check the substantial increase in cormorant numbers. Fred cited several negative impacts brought about by a large cormorant population, including increased pressure on fish stocks and degradation of habitat due to cormorants.

Response to a BNR proposal to consider a "Mentor Program" for hunting in CT: Fred Frillici reports that Fairfield F&G is opposed for safety reasons. George Finch reports that the Groton F&G feels the same way.

New Business:

Chris Marino shared photographs of pheasants taken this year by hunters on state lands. Chris noted complaints from hunters, due to the small size and poor condition of some birds taken. Dale May responded that the breeder admitted to a pheasant die off, and this resulted in younger birds being shipped to fulfill contract requirements. Several CAC delegates asked for a sub-committee to be formed to work with the BNR to address pheasant program issues. Chris said that Jason Marshall would be interested in working on this issue with the department. Phil Mauriello and Gary Sylvestre also volunteered to participate in this effort. Chris to contact Dale May with committee list.

Reported that Striped Bass have been designated a "Recreational Gamefish" in the exclusive economic coastal zones, by executive order, President George Bush.

A motion to adjourn was made by Fred Frillici and seconded by George Finch. Approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Proulx for Acting Secretary: Jason Marshall.