

Conservation Advisory Council
Minutes
Feb 5, 2008 Meeting

Chairman Chris Marino called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Attendance: See attached attendance list.

Secretary's Report:

Secretary was not in attendance. David Proulx volunteered to keep the minutes. Minutes of the January meeting were distributed to members who did not receive them electronically. The chairman requested a motion to accept the minutes. Motion made by George Finch, seconded by Bob Lazarski. Minutes accepted with no discussion.

Chairman's Report: No report.

DEP:

Conservation Environmental Police Report:

Sergeant Jim Wolfe presented the monthly Wildlife Hotline Activity report. Sgt Wolfe advised that the TIP trailer will be at the Dodge Hunting and Fishing Show in late February. He reminded delegates that the TIP trailer is available to support public events, such as Sportsmen's gatherings, Scouting days and similar events.

BNR Report: Bureau Chief Ed Parker

Forestry:

Seven candidates are being interviewed to replace Don Smith, retiring Forestry Director. Mr. Parker is heading the selection committee. A new Forestry Director should be in place by April 1, 2008.

Marine Fisheries:

Director Eric Smith is attending a meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. CAC will receive a report on this at the March meeting.

Ed Parker reported that DEP has received approval from OPM to re-introduce the DEP Licensing Bill in the current Legislative Session. BNR has received 26 endorsement letters to date from individuals and organizations that support the proposed, marine licensing system. Ed reported that as proposed, Marine Licensing revenue derived from new Combination Licenses that include saltwater fishing would be deposited to the Environmental Conservation Fund. Revenues associated with existing "traditional" Combination License sales will be split between the Environmental Conservation Fund and the General Fund. Sportsmen and Conservation groups are encouraged by the CAC to continue sending endorsements of the Marine Fishing License proposal to BNR.

Inland Fisheries:

Informational meetings will be held to discuss possible regulatory changes for trout fishing on the Farmington River. Mr. Parker encouraged any interested sportsmen to attend one of the three scheduled meetings to be held: Feb 21 6:30 PM at Sessions Woods; Feb 26, 6:30 PM at New Hartford Town Hall; March 4, 7:30 PM at Bristol Fish & Game Club. Details of the regulatory options being considered will be available at the meetings.

Wildlife:

Ed reported that the Bluff Point deer management operation is underway. The Bureau expects to meet its goal of harvesting 12 deer. This controlled harvest is being conducted at night. All deer will be processed and donated to area soup kitchens by the Groton Sportsmen's Club. Ed reported that this is the first year that there was no press coverage of deer management activity at Bluff Point.

Mute Swans: The agency has received many letters and calls to the Bureau regarding possible management plans to control mute swans. A Ct Audubon report identified negative impacts caused by the growing mute swan population. Approximately 50 calls, and 50 letters received by the Bureau. The Bureau will continue to monitor mute swans and their ecological impact.

Deer Biologist Howard Kilpatrick will attend the March CAC meeting to discuss deer population status in the northern management zones of CT. Focus is on Zones 1, 2, 3, 4A and B. Mr. Parker reports that preliminary harvests statistics for the 2007 season appear to be very close to that of 2006. The figures for the last 4 months of the bow season in zones 11 & 12 have not been included at this time, but will increase the final totals.

Preliminary 2007 Deer Harvest information:

Implement	2006	2007
Muzzleloader:	697	638
Shotgun/ Rifle:	6778	6592
Archery:	3157	2100 (to date)*
Landowner:	959	978
Total:	11,591	10,308

*Zone 11 and 12 data not compiled yet. Expect similar totals to 2006 once all harvest data added.

Of the 20,000 deer permits issued in 2007, only 1500 deer survey cards were returned. Bureau will consider performing the survey online to improve returns.

Mike Ose asked if an aerial deer survey was conducted this year. Ed Parker advised that surveys are only done every 3 years and did not believe a survey was performed in 2007. Ed also mentioned that the Bureau would employ a refined aerial survey method, coupled with hunter survey information, road kill analysis and other inputs to make deer population projections in the future. Mr. Parker stated that the deer population continues to grow in Connecticut and an active hunting program continues to offer a sound management technique, as well as recreational opportunity for Ct hunters.

Mike Ose asked about the feasibility of deer hunters obtaining a "guest permit" to allow hunters to bring a guest on private land deer hunts. Ed Parker advised that Ct law states that each individual must possess a signed consent form from the landowner when hunting on private land.

Chris Marino asked if any research efforts were underway to evaluate the status of the Bobcat population in CT and possible impact on other wildlife species. Chris noted concern among Northwest CT region sportsmen regarding the unusually high number of bobcat sightings and suggested that the Wildlife Division begin to assess this growing population to prepare for possible management changes in the future. Ed said that no research is underway, given other staff priorities. Ed also noted that the Bureau established a Fisher trapping season without a formal research project being conducted.

Ed reported that Dale May is investigating Permit Required hunting areas to see if "sun -setting" of permit requirements at additional areas are possible. It appears that some have mandates in place requiring permits. Ed suggested this as a topic for the Pheasant Committee.

Several delegates asked about additional hunting opportunities on state lands, specifically the Aquarion/ Kelda parcel. Ed said that a 3-person committee manages public access to the water company lands. The committee members represent 3 constituent groups: Aquarion, the Ct Health Dept and the CT DEP. Ed noted the interest each of these three entities has in managing the property. Their resulting positions related to hunting access are not necessarily aligned at this time. All parties must agree in order for the parcel to be opened to hunting. Issues affecting the opening of hunting on these lands include: From Aquarion; the requirement for adequate law enforcement presence; and from Public Health; a requirement that any hunting activity be linked to a water quality management issue related to specific wildlife species.

The Bureau has confirmed that pheasants purchased from a NY breeder have Avian Tuberculosis. The Bureau is working with UCONN, the CT Dept. of Agriculture and the state of New York on this issue DEP is evaluating the need to pursue a new source of birds to maintain planned volumes.

Bob Lazarski asked about Ct pheasant breeders being considered as part of the procurement process. There was discussion of historical experience with breeders in Ct and the many factors that present challenges to their success. Ed advised that the state has open bidding for this business and that Ct breeders are encouraged to participate.

Misc.

On-line Licensing System:

Ed gave the delegates a briefing on system access. He advised delegates that one of three forms of ID would be needed to access the online system: 1) Hunter Ed. Certificate Number, 2) Drivers license, 3) Social Security Number. The system will accept either MasterCard or Visa as forms of payment. Non-Residents may use the system. Once a user is into the system, a Conservation ID number will be assigned and printed on the selected license. This Conservation ID number will be used to identify users during subsequent license purchasing sessions.

Phil Mauriello requested a demonstration of the process to be given at a future CAC meeting. Ed Parker will investigate.

CAC Committee Reports:

Legislative

Bob Crook was ill and not in attendance.

Mike Ose asked about the Sunday Hunting Bill. Ed advised that Bob Crook is working with legislators to raise a Sunday Hunting Bill.

The Chairman advised the delegates that a meeting of the CT Legislative Sportsman's Caucus has been scheduled for Thursday February 7th at the LOB in Hartford. A reception is scheduled to be held at Cabelas' in East Hartford from 4 to 6 PM. Sportsmen and Conservation leaders are invited to attend the reception to meet and discuss issues with Caucus members. A donation of \$50.00 is being asked of attendees. Ed Parker discussed the importance of this Caucus to sportsmen's interests in CT. It was noted that viability and success of this; or any other Caucus, depends in large part on adequate funding of its efforts. The Chairman encouraged all delegates to report back to their clubs and encourage attendance.

Old Business.

The Bureau will resubmit a Dog Regulation package for consideration by the Regulations Review Committee within the next few weeks. This revised submission will eliminate the 4 field trial areas from the package, allowing for a separate single subject hearing on this issue at a later date.

Gary Sylvester asked about his request to participate in the Pheasant Hunting Evaluation Committee. Chris Marino will set up a meeting with the appropriate Wildlife division contacts to begin the Committee's work.

Ed is working on getting an update regarding implementation of the Shepaug River Agreement.

The Chairman asked if there has been an Agency evaluation of Minetto State Park yet. Ed will look into this.

New Business:

Several delegates asked about the possibility of educational seminars being held in Eastern Connecticut; as an alternative, or in addition to, the Sessions Woods location in Burlington. Distance and driving time to Sessions Woods precludes attendance of many interested sportsmen from the Eastern side of the State from attending DEP seminars and events. Several sites were mentioned as possible venues for these classes. Ed Parker suggested that interested parties should write to the Bureau to outline their request.

Mike Ose asked if sportsmen's clubs could purchase trout from the DEP. Ed advised that the DEP uses all fish raised and does not have surplus stock for sale.

A motion to adjourn was made by Fred Frillici and seconded by George Finch. Motion passed, meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Proulx: for Secretary Jason Marshall.