

# Northwest CT Sportsman's Council

NWCSC  
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## Council Report: December 23, 2003

The December meeting of NWCSC was held at Borgeson Universal Co., in Torrington. Council Vice-President, Jason Marshall, called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. All rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll of Clubs, Delegates and Officers attending:

Torrington Gun Club	Gerry Zordan	Foothill's Sportsmen	Clyde Breakell
Ct Classic Bucks	Dean Fraley	New Preston R&G	Craig Nelson
NWCSA	Jason Marshall	NWCSA	Peter Gray
Harwinton R&G	Mike Fusco	CT Trapper's Assoc.	Bob Andryzeck
Waterbury F&G Prot.	Jerry Ciarcia	2 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sisters	Jennifer Zordan

Officers in attendance: Presiding: Vice President, Jason Marshall, and Treasurer, Clyde Breakell. President, Chris Marino was unable to attend due to illness.

**Council report:** November report reviewed and accepted.

**Financial report** given by Clyde Breakell. Accepted as received.

**Membership:** Jason introduced the CT state chapter of Second Amendment Sisters as the Council's latest organizational member. Jennifer Zordan was welcomed to the meeting as the SAS primary delegate. Jen is the Coordinator for the CT chapter of SAS. We all hope for a mutually beneficial relationship between the Council and SAS.

**Correspondence:** Note received from Jim Fedorich stating that he would not make the meeting due to a prior commitment to attend Trout Unlimited BOD meeting this evening. Jim wishes all a merry xmas and happy new year. TU banquet coming up March 13-2004. Does NWCSC want to reserve a table? **Motion** to bring table reservation up at January meeting approved.

Jim also submitted a copy of the Ruffed Grouse Society annual report. NWCSC is listed as Annual Sponsors of RGS in the report.

Jim also informs that Sharon R&G will donate ½ day trout fishing trip to banquet.

### Committee Reports:

**Rapid Response:** None

**ATV Raffle:** Jason reports purchase of Yamaha 400 Kodiak 4X4 ATV from Cycle Performance of Torrington. A trailer was also purchased from home Depot to be included in the raffle. Jason anticipates further donations from Yamaha to outfit the ATV for sportsman use. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> prize gift certificates at various sports shops have been included in the raffle. Raffle duration is limited by the state to 9 months. We will begin the raffle at the NWCSC banquet.

Jason discussed need for rigid sign to display on trailer. Craig to check on signs.

**Banquet:** Tickets being printed. Prints and Bronzes have been ordered. Donations reported. We seem to be moving along on schedule. Tickets sales are now the primary focus. All delegates should ask their clubs to make table reservations early. One idea that seems helpful has been for the club to reserve and pay for the table, and then offer the tickets to club members at reduced prices. This way, the participants share the expense and the club does not absorb the full cost.

**Citizen's Advisory Council Report:** Jason reported on the December meeting of CAC. **Hunting and stocking** issues were raised with the Bureau Chief. Also discussed was perceived harassment of hunters coming out of the woods after sunset. Conservation Officers have the right to check hunters and their equipment, but as long

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as there is no loaded hunting implement, the sportsman is not hunting and therefore has no obligation to be out the field at any particular time.

Bob Lazarski of the CT River Chapter of the **Ruffed Grouse Society** spoke to the issue of Ruff Grouse decline in CT and what can be done to help this game bird. He indicated that the NE Regional Biologist of RGS is willing to help DEP set up a statewide Spring Drumming Survey as has been successfully accomplished for the state of Mass. Bob also indicated some financial support could be made available for this purpose from RGS. We indicated that financial support from our Council would also be available. Mr. Parker agreed to discuss the proposal with the Wildlife Director. He also mentioned the possibility of using the private funds offered to leverage federal dollars to finance this effort. This is a program our Council has advocated for the past two years without success. While waiting for DEP to get on board, we initiated our own informal spring survey for NW CT this past year and though not a formal study, the limited results we obtained were informative to our members. We plan to continue and refine our own program until such time as DEP accepts this responsibility. When that happens, DEP will find a corps of willing volunteers prepared to help with the program in NW CT.

Bob also indicated willingness of RGS to help with habitat projects benefiting small game.

Full report available on the nwcsc web site.

**Legislative:** Gerry Zordan reporting.

The **Ct Sportsman's Legislative Caucus** is scheduling its second meeting in early January. In discussion with Representative Ann Ruwet, Gerry has learned that many more legislators have signed on for membership. Rep. Arthur O'Neill has been leading the effort to form this caucus to date; however, no official chairman has been selected as yet. It is anticipated that a chairman may be selected at the January meeting. Once this structure is formalized, we will have direct contact with the leadership.

The success of this caucus will be crucial to sportsmen in the future. We will have an opportunity to address our issues with interested legislators. Through contact with sportsmen's groups such as ours, legislators can be educated and informed about the issues that affect us. By being so informed, the caucus can become the most effective ally we have in Hartford.

Dean and Gerry headed up a lively discussion on political awareness and the ability of sportsmen to effect outcomes in Hartford. Without awareness of the issues and of the legislators; both pro and con, we have no power in the legislative process. As distasteful as it sometimes can be; it is incumbent upon all sportsmen to be aware of their legislators, their positions on issues that affect us, and their voting records. This is the information that is critical to decision making; not only in Hartford, but at the polls during election cycles.

#### **Old Business:**

We will begin submitting updated letters to various division heads of the BNR regarding issues that are of importance to sportsmen. Having learned from the past, this round of correspondence will also have copies submitted to the BNR Chief and Deputy Commissioner, David Leff.

In this regard, the first of several letters has already been submitted. This letter addressed the issue of a **primitive muzzleloader hunt for spring turkey**. We first proposed this concept to Wildlife Director, Dale May last year. That concept was rejected by Director May for several reasons. There was no offer to discuss the proposal. Since that time, our Council President has researched the interest in this issue among sportsmen and hunter-safety instructors. He has also done some research regarding safety issues regarding turkey hunting and the use of small bore, (45cal and under) primitive muzzleloaders.

We believe the proposal that has now been submitted is better supported with factual information. What we are asking for is an objective inquiry and discussion of the proposal between the BNR, sportsmen and CE/ FS instructors who are knowledgeable regarding the practical use of a percussion or flintlock firearm. We have demanded nothing but a good will effort to design a workable proposal that will satisfy all concerned. We will report on any response from the agency as soon as we receive it.

**Snowshoe Hare:** Mike Fusco asked about our effort in regard to the snowshoe hare stocking proposal. The bottom line is that after three years of intensive effort on our part working with the states of Maine and CT, we came close to approval for a stocking last February. Maine was willing to sign off on the capture and transfer of hare, but only if DEP Wildlife would officially endorse the program. Director Dale May was not willing to do this. In fairness to the director, it must be understood that he did not oppose our plan in its final form; however, Maine did not ask for official endorsement until we came down to the final months before implementation. Mr. May and DEP had no intention of officially endorsing this plan and would have so informed us earlier if Maine

officials had asked for endorsement at any earlier time period. This position is somewhat understandable, politics being what they are today. One could argue that by endorsing the Council's program for limited re-introduction, the DEP would assume responsibility for the entire program. Much as we might like to see DEP take on such a project; it was in fact not a DEP program, had no DEP funding and little oversight. Director May was probably correct in not endorsing our private program.

This does not mean that we given up on the idea of limited snowshoe introduction. It just means we have more work to do. Time constraints on our volunteers have limited our ability to address this matter as quickly as we would like, but we do have options we are working on.

We plan to query other northeastern states about the capture and transfer of hare for our program. We will try to develop a cooperative agreement without the red tape that Maine presented.

Another option that is being considered is to address the issue of snowshoe hare directly with CT DEP and propose that DEP in fact, take responsibility for this native specie. After all, our original proposal was made in an effort to help with some meaningful research regarding a relatively rare, native animal. This actually should have been their task from the beginning! We can still offer our assistance in any manner possible, but the actual program may need to be DEP sponsored. Stay tuned.

We have had reports of at least four or five hare sightings this past fall, so there are still a few around. We have also been approached recently by management of Great Mtn. Forest enquiring about the possibility of stocking hare in this area. The development rights to Great Mtn. Forest have been purchased by the state and this may present another opportunity to get the DEP involved in the program.

#### **New Business:**

Jen Zordan was asked to report on activities of the **Second Amendment Sisters**. Jen reported that CT will be sending a SAS delegation to the SEPAC convention in Washington D.C. in January 2004. This convention is a conservative political action conference. Jen will be attending as a CT delegate, and will report back to the Council upon her return.

Jen reports the focus of SAS as being primarily related to legitimate self-defense and firearms ownership rights under the second amendment. In this regard, a rally of firearms owners will be held again this May at the Capitol in Hartford. We hope to add many of our sportsmen and women to those attending this rally.

Jen plans to organize a few women only shooting events throughout the state during the coming year. Our clubs can help make this project successful by offering facilities and instructors for the events.

We wish this organization success; and additionally, offer our assistance where possible in the coming year.

#### **Good of the Council:**

**Adjourn: 9:45PM**