

CWC WOH Sporting Advisory Committee

October 27, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present: John Casey, Michael Callan (NYSDEC), Herbert DeWitt, Michael Giuliano, Ralph Irving, Paul Lenz (NYCDEP), and Steven Roff

Others: Christopher Matthews (Neversink Supervisor Candidate), Alan Rosa (CWC), and Timothy Cox (CWC)

1. Called to Order at 6:00 PM

2. The October 21, 2014 minutes were moved by Herbert DeWitt and seconded by Ralph Irving. Voice vote, approved unanimously.

Timothy Cox noted that, at the request from Herb Dewitt, CWC staff shall prepare and forward 'Draft – not approved' minutes to all SAC members within ten days of the meeting. Alan Rosa asked Steven Roff if there would be any objection to the minutes being posted to the CWC website. Steve said that there is no objection.

Motion to post draft and approved minutes to the CWC website was made by Herbert DeWitt and seconded by Ralph Irving. Voice vote, approved unanimously.

3. Land Acquisition Update

Tim provided the new DEP recreational areas maps to Committee members.

Paul said that DEP is continuing to acquire lands, purchasing approximately 2,700 acres, and opened up 2,300 acres of public access. Some lands DEP is purchasing now will be posted next year. 209 acres of entry by permit lands were converted to public access areas. The majority of lands owned by DEP are now open as public access areas, except lands around the reservoirs and in Woodstock, which for now will be entry by permit. To date, well over 120,000 acres are open for public access in the West of Hudson Watershed.

Paul continued that there has started to be a little pushback from some towns regarding some of the smaller properties regarding access. Paul stated that if a property has 20 or more acres, and is not surrounded by a lot of houses, DEP is opening it as a public access area. Paul noted that 20 acres can accommodate two people bow hunting, one or two people gun hunting, and it can be hiked.

Paul handed out copy of a letter sent to the Town of Olive Supervisor Sylvia Rozzelle, during concern about DEP's parcel selection process. Any requests from Towns not wanting small parcels opened for public access will be forwarded to Alan and Tim, who will then forward the information to the appropriate SAC members. Any influence that the Sportsmen can put on the Town is a good thing, to keep these properties open.

4. Yankeetown Pond Update

Paul explained that Yankeetown Pond is an 800 acre parcel in Woodstock that DEP bought and hoped to open for hunting and hiking. The Wittenberg Sports Club is adjacent to the parcel. Paul noted that the Town Supervisor was in favor of opening the parcel, but received a large outcry from the public. The Town brought in the Ulster County Sportsmen Federation Chair Joe Liuni, as well as some of the neighbors, and came up with the compromise that DEP would open the property for large game hunting and spring turkey hunting, but no trapping, and that no small game hunting. Paul noted concern that the Town would not vote for big game and turkey hunting. He also noted that, with a resolution of support from the CWC for opening the lands to big game and turkey hunting.

Alan stated that CWC's position is that these lands should be open for ALL hunting and trapping.

Paul said that this parcel will be addressed again in a couple of years, but for DEP the main goal is to get it open. Paul said the City's concern is that this parcel will set a precedent that will lead to other Towns requesting the same restrictions on newly purchased parcels. Paul concluded that people are bow hunting on the parcel now, and there have been no complaints so far.

5. Deer Management Assistance Permits (D-Map) Program Update

Paul stated that this is the fourth year doing this program. Tags were given out as follows: 100 for Ashokan; 100 for Neversink; 80 for Cannonsville; and some were given for West Settlement. West Settlement, a 2,400 acre property in Roxbury, is the first area that DEP has received D-Maps for a property that is not a reservoir. DEP is looking forward to seeing the response in use of the D-Maps in West Settlement.

Paul continued that in Ashokan last year, 100 tags were given and 14 does were harvested. Neversink had 37 does harvested. Cannonsville, in the Johnny Brook area, there were 12 does harvested, despite the poor road conditions into Johnny Brook.

In Ashokan there are some areas which are posted as D-Map Only access. The Earn-A-Buck program, allowing hunters who harvest a doe early in the season within that D-Map area to also harvest a buck under their DEC license tag, only reported one buck taken last year.

Paul reported that there is some positive evidence of reforestation in the Ashokan area, and though it can't be proven that deer management is directly related, DEP is optimistic about its effects on the forests.

Alan Rosa asked how one would apply for the D-Map program. Paul replied that notices are sent via post to those who harvested a doe last year and are provided a tag automatically. Hunters can request the permit directly, and with an overabundance of requests, a lottery was done in the Ashokan area. Advertising is not used because DEP feels it more likely for someone local to utilize the permit than someone who is only in the area for a brief time.

Alan asked if the D-Maps were transferrable, like the regular doe tags issued by the state.

Michael Cullan responded that, as the D-Maps are location specific, they are transferrable.

Paul noted that they request anyone who takes a doe, but is unable to get back out for any reason, to return the unused tags to DEP so they can be redistributed. Both Michael and Paul

agreed that so long as a tag transfer is done within the limits of the program and successful, accurate reporting is done, transfers of tags are allowed.

6. Boating Program Update

Paul provided copy of a two page summary, attached hereto. He stated that 780 tags were given this year, down from 827 tags last year. Vendors last year provided 300 rentals. With rental racks provided at all vendors on all reservoirs where non-motorized boating is allowed, it has been difficult to track exact numbers of use this year.

Alan noted that CWC is awaiting final numbers from Adam Basch, who is working to collect the data needed to get a true number of boats utilized this year. Alan noted that once a vendor's boat has been steam cleaned, it's tagged by the vendor, placed on the storage rack, and then rented repeatedly throughout the season without need of being retagged. How many times each boat is used throughout the season is the number CWC and DEP would like to know.

Paul noted that the busiest reservoir by far was the Pepacton. 369 seasonal tags were issued, allowing owners to steam clean their boats and leave them on DEP property.

Paul also provided an update on the Pilot Trolling Motor Program, noting that there were 137 permits issued for the Cannonsville Reservoir. Since this was the final year in the pilot program, DEP will be reviewing data over the winter and thinking of expansion to another or all of the other reservoirs open for recreational boating. Paul explained that DEP is getting ready to send a survey to all boat owners who have their boats stored on the reservoirs to see what they feel about the expansion, and also a survey to those who have used the trolling motor permit and ask if they would use their boats on other reservoirs also. User conflicts, in particular on the Pepacton due to its popularity, are things DEP needs to be aware of and careful of.

Paul also noted that since the seasonal passes were done away with there have been no compliance issues with boaters utilizing and storing trolling motors.

7. Recreational Use Program Update

Paul noted some changes to the Recreational Use Program rules, and that once DEP has finalized the draft, he would like to convene a meeting with SAC to review them before public review and finalization.

Paul explained that DEP would like to designate public access areas for properties where not all uses (hunt, hike, fish and trap) be allowed. DEP would rather allow any of those activities individually, such as allow only hiking on an individual parcel without the need for an access permit.

DEP would like to find a way in East of Hudson (EOH) to address the large numbers of boats stored on the reservoirs. Some individuals store more than one boat on each reservoir, some

store up to 30 boats, and there are others who are not able to store their boats because there are no more open areas for storage.

8. Other

Paul stated that DEP gave Conesville Rod and Gun Club a land use permit to host a youth pheasant hunt. Birds were provided by Ralph Irving and Bill Eklund. Ralph asked if there was any chance of lowering the cost of insurance for an event like this. Paul noted that the standard coverage required is \$1,000,000-\$3,000,000, and was complied with by other clubs.

Ralph mentioned that he and Bill Eklund would be organizing and hosting a Wounded Warrior program at Eklund's property instead of on DEP land because of the insurance requirement. Paul reminded the committee that DEP hosted a Wounded Warrior event on the Ashokan, but that was because the Roughed Grouse Society did a lot of the work themselves. All agreed that it's difficult to connect with Wounded Warrior, but the understanding is that they are a very busy organization. Ralph noted that those attending the hunt at Eklund's would most likely be Veterans, though not necessarily wounded Vets.

John Casey noted that the Greene County Federation of Sportsmen had hosted a Wounded Warrior hunt for bear, over two days, and with only one bear taken. Several were seen, but John was told by the accompanying sportsmen that the Wounded Warriors would not take a shot unless they were guaranteed a kill. John also said that a hotel in Hunter put the Wounded Warriors up at no cost, and the Federation held a dinner. He said the Federation received a very nice thank you letter from the participating Warriors. Paul asked if the hunt was hosted on private land, and if people are generally open to hosting the Wounded Warriors. John said that they are always well received, and that one of the Federation members has approximately 1,000 acres and allowed the hunt there.

Paul reminded the committee that if they wish to host a Wounded Warrior hunt DEP might be able to open lands around the reservoirs not generally open to the public in the hopes that it would provide a greater probability of a harvest.

Jay Martin, sitting in for Joseph Liuni, and also an Ulster County Federation of Sportsmen member, noted a letter received from The Property Rights Foundation of America, which held a meeting October 17 in Latham. One of their speakers, Clayton Dethlefsen, was to give an address on large predators. Citing text from the letter, "Large predator restoration" is the announced wildlife priority of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Jay asked Paul if he knew anything about this.

Alan asked Timothy Cox to address this. Tim shared that this group, led by Carol LeGrasse, out of the Adirondacks is a group based in the Adirondack Park that is opposed to the Adirondack Park Agency and Forest Preserve purchases. Tim noted that the group wasn't as active in recent years, except for the annual conferences.

Paul requested and received a copy of the letter to further address the matter.

Mike Callan, a Supervising Forester from the NYSDEC Stamford office, spoke of three new Forester trainees now serving in the field. One is working in State Land Reforestation Areas, one is working in the Forest Preserve, and the third is working on Private Lands Assistance, all working under Section 488 of the tax law. The DEC has their Timber Pilot Program, hoping to cut more timber off reforestation areas and hoping to increase income.

Mike then spoke of the Young Forest Initiative. Statewide there are now 18 new people involved in this program. In Stamford there are two new Foresters and a Technician. They are all working specifically for the Bureau of Wildlife. They work specifically in Wildlife Management areas with the goal of getting 10% of those areas into young trees, because many of the areas have older trees. He continued that there are 20-30,000 acres in Region 4 that will be undergoing specific habitat management plans, using mainly clear-cuts and beginning early next year. There are 89 species that need the young forests, and a lot of them are game species. He explained that timber markets are doing very well. Over 2,000 acres will be cut this fiscal year out of Stamford. Areas with 80% or more ash or ash timber are being targeted due to discoveries of the Emerald Ash Borer. DEC is advising that when the borer is confirmed within 20 miles of private property containing ash trees that the owners start thinking about harvesting the trees. Mike also explained that in the reforestation areas around the Pine Hill site DEC utilized the D-Map program to assist with thinning the deer population. Over 200 tags were given, with a good return on deer taken and there is interest in it again this year.

Mike Giuliano inquired about handicapped access for the reservoirs.

Alan noted the removal of the bridge down by the Pepacton was a disappointment to locals with handicaps. Alan also mentioned that CWC would be happy to discuss the possibilities and funding of these types of projects.

Rondout is the only reservoir with drive down handicapped access.

Paul said that the Governor has an initiative for all future installations to be handicap accessible, and DEP is looking at several sites that may be possible for incorporation of handicap accessible features and docks. Ambulatory permits are also being discussed for those who would require use of an ATV in order to access lands for sport use.

Jay Martin updated the committee on the condition of Bill Smith, a former SAC member in ill health, who is in Golden Hill facility in Ulster County and is unfortunately greatly affected by Alzheimer's.

9. Schedule Next Meeting – April 12, 2016, 6:00 pm

10. A motion to adjourn was made by Herb DeWitt and seconded by John Casey at 7:45 pm.