

Northwest CT Sportsman's Council

NWCSC
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nwsc.org
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Council Report: August 26, 2003

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM. By Council President Chris Marino. All rise for Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll of Clubs, Delegates, Officers and Guests:

Northwest Rod & Gun	Andrew Cote
Foothill's Sportsmen	Clyde Breakell
Woodbury/ Southbury Rod & Gun	Philip Mauriello
Old Newgate Coon Club	Elise Mauriello
Ousatonic Fish & Game Prot.	Dick Malin
NWCSA	Jason Marshall
NWCSA	Peter Gray
NW Chapter, Trout Unlimited	James Bower
Waterbury Fish & Game Prot.	Jerry Ciarcia
Harwinton Rod & Gun	Mike Fusco
Sharon Fish & Game	Jim Fedorich
NVBC	Chris Marino

Guests for the evening included DEP Wildlife Biologist, Peter Picone; DEP Fisheries Biologist, Timothy Barry and Sportsman, Jake Derwich.

We were fortunate to have these guests attend our meeting and we extend our appreciation to all three who took the time to join our meeting and share their unique perspectives on fish, wildlife and habitat issues affecting NW Connecticut. Jake works for the Torrington Water Company and is a member of NWCSA, Tim is a DEP fisheries biologist stationed in the Western District, and Peter is a DEP wildlife biologist, who very recently was assigned to direct and oversee all State Wildlife Management areas in Western Connecticut, replacing Judy Wilson in this Wildlife Division position. All three guests contributed to our meeting giving insights into management programs and discussing issues relevant to our clubs.

Council Report of July meeting: Chris Marino. Reviewed and accepted.

Financial Report: Clyde Breakell.

Clyde distributed copies of a Balance Sheet current through July 31st, 2003. One check was written since the last report for \$300.00 to pay for one year of web hosting and registration of three domain names for the Council.

Motion to accept report as delivered: approved.

Discussion ensued of financial issues yet to be addressed:

Obtain one write check system, set up Council budget, and register with state tax department.

Correspondence:

Draft copies of the Connecticut Statewide Forestry Plan were distributed to delegates. This plan contains the elements needed to better manage state and private lands in the future. Council President, Chris Marino was a member of the advisory committee that produced this draft. Upon reading the draft plan, we are satisfied that issues related to our sporting interests have been addressed. Concepts of access and liability; multiple use, both commercial and recreational, habitat diversity and management; volunteer participation and acknowledgement; and public education are incorporated within the plan. Assuming that the final draft maintains all of these elements, sportsman and public advocacy for the plan will be needed to see that it is implemented by the state.

Letter of billing and explanation received from Attorney, Peter Reis. This bill is submitted for services to date to register the Council as a 501 C(4) entity. The total bill amounts to \$2717.80. This is for 10.5 hours of work charged at \$250.00 per hour plus incidentals. Attorney Reis also sent a separate communication, which states that filing for our state corporate status will involve another 2-5 hours of service time.

Consensus of the delegates was to allow Attorney Reis to complete the filings for incorporation as a non-stock, not for profit, corporation. After filings are complete, it is felt we may want to turn over management of corporate affairs for the Council to an attorney who is a member of the Council. Chris is to contact CPA, Norman Lindroth regarding accounting services and tax filings for the Council.

Drew moves: “that the current bill from attorney Reis be paid.” Second by Jason Marshall. Motion approved.

Mailing received from Ruffed Grouse Society, CT River Chapter. Basically, this is a brochure of chapter activity. It was mentioned because our Council is prominently mentioned in the brochure as sponsor to the Habitat Seminar held last year at Session’s Woods and for our volunteer work with the state and the clubs. We should take pride in the fact that as a result of our outreach through the seminar, almost 1,000 acres of club owned lands from six clubs are now under active management. It was suggested that we consider making the Habitat Seminar, an annual Council sponsored event. We should also consider using this venue to assess and discuss projects in progress. We will look into that possibility.

Committee Reports:

Banquet Committee:

Chris and Clyde attended a meeting with one of the partners of the Grand Oak Villa in Oakville. We inspected the premises, which are now in the process of being totally renovated. Capacity of the facility is 400 plus people, with plenty of room for displays, raffle and auction items. Parking area is very large, extending around both front and rear of building. The building is on a single level. The facility is located off route 8, exit 37. It is easy to get to from the north or south. Distance from the exits are; 1.5 miles if traveling south, and .5 miles if coming north. The price of a buffet style dinner is reasonable and the quantity and quality seems good. We will be going back for another meeting with our full committee, and will report back at the September meeting of the Council.

Citizens Advisory Council to DEP: No meeting in August.

Old Business:

Junior Hunting Day:

The Western Connecticut Session of Junior Hunting Day, sponsored for the fourth year by NWCSC is to be held on September 27, which also happens to be, National Hunting & Fishing Day.

The Torrington Fish & Game Club has consented to be our host club for the event, and we would like to thank the officers and members of Torrington F&G for their efforts in making this event possible.

The Junior Hunting Program is something we can all take pride in. Over the course of the four years our Council has been a partner in the event, which is also sponsored in the eastern half of the state by sportsmen’s clubs and field trial organizations, we have helped train over three hundred newly licensed, youth hunters by providing an opportunity to hunt pheasants under the supervision of trained Hunter safety Instructors. The in the field experience and instruction that is provided will help make these young sportsmen and women safe, ethical and responsible hunters.

Our club members are invited to stop by and enjoy the event, which will run from 8AM through 4PM. Refreshments and food will be available all day. We may do a pig roast for a special treat.

Jason Marshall made a motion to: “Authorize up to \$900.00 to pay for JHD Hats and imprinting.” Second by Clyde Breakell. Motion Approved.

Approximately one half of this cost will be reimbursed from the eastern contingent of JHD, as was done last year. It should also be noted that our treasurer reports a positive budget balance for JHD of \$2000.00 plus, which has accrued from donations and NRA grants in past years. Through our Council funding, all material, birds and refreshments for the day are provided for.

Phil Mauriello made a motion to: “Authorize the purchase of 90 pheasants for Jr. Hunting Day.” Motion received a second from Clyde Breakell. Motion approved.

The birds have been ordered from Sharon Pheasant Farm. Bob Wilbur; owner of the Sharon Pheasant Farm has been very supportive of our efforts since we began the program. Bob has been very generous in his

support of this program; supplying excellent quality birds at a very reasonable cost to our Council. We thank Bob for his continuing support.

Discuss raffle possibilities. Mike Fusco suggested doing a series of smaller raffles involving hunting and fishing trips that could be sold to club members. Jason spoke to the idea of a larger, registered raffle for a major prize such as an ATV. It was noted that the state specifies duration of time for these raffles. We need more definitive information. Inter-club raffles look more appealing.

New Business:
Connecticut Forest Centennial Field Day!!

Our Council will be participating in a Field Day Celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Connecticut's first state forest and the beginning of natural resource stewardship. The Field Day will be held at People's State forest in Barkhamsted on Saturday October 4th, 2003. There will be a variety of family oriented displays and events held throughout the day. Many state officials will be on hand to speak at the event. Expected are governor Rowland, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, Senator Joseph Lieberman, DEP Commissioner Arthur Rocque as well as many other legislators and professionals from DEP and noteworthy state organizations.

We urge all sportsmen to come on out and visit our Council exhibit and support our conservation efforts and the concept of multiple use of renewable resources.

Local control of Water Company lands. Seminar to be held at Torrington City Hall, City Council Chambers. To be held Thursday, September 4th at 7:30PM. Senator Roraback and other officials to make presentations. Several members expressed interest in attending. It is hoped we will have a report for our next meeting. It would be interesting to know if DEP has any agreements in place to address the possibility of future sale.

Jason mentioned that Pete Picone is interested in establishing a few Kestrel nest boxes at the Goshen WMA. We will get the info from Pete and proceed from that point.

Burlington Trout Hatchery:

A question came up regarding the loss of trout at the state hatchery in Burlington as a result of a major predation problem involving herons and birds of prey. The losses at this hatchery apparently have only recently begun to be documented, but they may well total in the tens of thousands of trout lost per year to birds of prey!

In the past, losses were minimized by using noise making devices to scare the birds away. This is no longer possible because of the close proximity of several newer housing developments whose residents have complained about the noise. Current plans are to provide net covers over the ponds to protect the trout from avian predators. Current trapping programs are working to control four-footed predators. When asked if there was anything the Council could do to help, Tim Barry mentioned that several chapters of Trout Unlimited have made donations to purchase covers for individual ponds. Cost per pond is estimated at \$1500.00 per pond for material, plus labor. There are thirty to forty ponds at the hatchery.

Jim Fedorich and Jim Bower offered to bring this matter to the Northwest Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and to coordinate with the fisheries division. We will look into what the Council may provide in the way of funding covers and providing labor to install.

There are unanswered questions involved with this problem and why it has only recently been addressed. Putting a dollar value to the losses seems to indicate action should have been taken at a time when the economy and fisheries funding were more robust, which was just a few years ago! A reading of September's CAC report will reveal that the other major trout hatchery in Connecticut; Quinebaug, is also suffering production losses due to long term problems with water flow and quality. It does seem reasonable to question why action was not taken to address both hatcheries during the past few years when sportsmen were successful in efforts to see the return of a few million dollars to the BNR from the Motor Boat Fuel Tax revenues.

Trout Management Areas: No Kill Zones.

Jim Fedorich brought up several incidents involving bait fishermen releasing mortally injured trout back into the Farmington River. Jim states that trout taking bait often swallow the hook. Removal of the hook results in mortal injury to the trout in a large proportion of the fish caught in this manner. Several remedies were suggested including: elimination of live bait use in no kill areas, signage to educate fishermen to cut the leaders rather than remove hooks on deep hooked trout, or a regulation change to allow taking of deep hooked fish in these no-kill areas. (The use of live bait would have to cease once the take limit is reached.)

Jason Marshal moves: “to authorize Jim Fedorich to write a letter to Inland Fisheries Director, William Hyatt expressing Council concerns with bait fishing in No-Kill zones of Trout Management areas.” Second by Clyde Breakell. Motion approved.

Tim Barry gave us an overview of fishing and trout mortality by all methods, and mentioned that our concern has been debated within the division. The division feels that they are providing opportunity to all the fishermen of the state with current regulations. The no-kill areas under discussion are stocked areas and any increased mortality can be made up with increased stocking. While this is no doubt true, we would like to pursue other alternatives that do not so blatantly waste our resources.

Access to State Lands:

Our delegates feel that it is time to write Deputy Commissioner David Leff, regarding access and use of certain state lands and waters, including Camp Columbia, Kent, and Lake Waramaug.

Peter Picone, DEP Biologist.

We enjoyed Pete’s company for the evening and his insights on various subjects. We asked Pete to say a few words to the group regarding his philosophy in managing our state lands and his views on sportsmen.

Pete stated that he is a lifelong sportsman himself, and he mentioned the fact that he is a father raising two boys, ages 13 and 15. His new position as the western district, State Lands Wildlife Biologist stands in contrast to his recent background as head of the Urban Wildlife Program in that his former duties required him to work with citizens who, for the most part were not active participants of outdoor type recreation. His new duties will bring him in close contact with sportsmen and other recreationalists. He is looking forward to working with people who are knowledgeable and dedicated to our natural heritage. Pete mentioned that he enjoyed sitting in on our meeting and that what he was hearing during our discussions was, “old school conservation”. He is looking forward to working with us. Pete also sounded a warning about the limitations his agency is facing because of budget considerations and sometimes because of political constraints. He also stated that care must be taken in accepting information that may often carry half-truths, myths and miss-communications. Pete’s advice is to always verify information with the expert in any given situation and not act strictly on second-hand information. Further discussion involved state land maintenance and care, situations that arise from abuse of state land, from all sources, and how we can best help.

Good of the Organization:

Old Newgate Coon Club has a Pig Roast and Sporting Clays shoot scheduled for September 28th, and a pheasant tower shoot scheduled for October 12th. Pre-registration required. Anyone is welcome to sign up and shoot.

NRA Friends Banquet to be held October 24th at the Cornucopia. Tickets available at all area gun shops.

Coalition of CT Sportsmen : 3Rd Annual Banquet at the Aquaturf. To be held October 19th. Information/ Reservations please call (203) 245-8076, or see Chris at Autumn Gun Works.

Maps of State Available to Sportsmen:

Some worthwhile information related by Pete Picone: Maps are available to sportsmen of all Wildlife Management Areas in the state at Sessions Woods. A file cabinet is set up alphabetically with maps of all permit required and non-permit hunting areas of the state in the main office. The maps are free. Pete reports that maps will hopefully be available soon on the DEP web-site.

A new Wildlife Management Directory of areas is needed for the western district. This is a project that we may want to consider helping with.

September Meeting of NWCSC: September 23rd, 2003

Pete Picone has offered the use of the DEP, Sessions Woods facility in Burlington for our September meeting. We will meet at our usual time of 7:30PM and Peter has offered to give our delegates a tour of the wildlife displays at Sessions. As usual, members of all Council Clubs are welcome to attend.

Directions: From Route 4 East or West; turn onto Route 69 South, at intersection of 4 and 69. Travel 4-5 miles south on 69 to DEP, Session Woods facility. Look for sign on right.

Adjourn: 9:45PM

Chris Marino, President NWCSC