

Northwest CT Sportsman's Council

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Council Report: 07/27/2004

The July meeting was held at our Council Office in Goshen. Meeting called to order by the Council President at 7:30PM. All rise for Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll of Clubs, Delegates and Officers:

Woodbury/ Southbury R&G	Phil Mauriello	Old Newgate Coon Club	Elise Mauriello
NWCSA	Jason Marshall	NWCSA	Peter Gray
Foothill's Sportsmen	Clyde Breakell	NVBC	Chris Marino
Sharon R&G	Jim Fedorich	Harwinton R&G	Mike Fusco
NW Chapter; TU	Jim Bower	CT Classic Bucks	Dean Fraley
New Preston R&G	Craig Nelson	Waterbury F&G	Jerry Ciarcia
Bell City Rifle Club	Domenic Basile	Guest	Tim Barry

All officers in attendance.

President; Chris Marino, Vice-President; Jason Marshall, Treasurer; Clyde Breakell.

Copies of the June **Council Report** were distributed, briefly summarized and discussed. A motion to accept the report was made and seconded. Motion to accept was approved.

Financial Report:

Clyde distributed copies of account Balance Sheet and P&L statement covering the period January 1 through July 19, 2004. Clyde gave a report on raffle ticket sales and checkbook activity covering the past quarter. A motion was made to accept the financial report and received a second. Motion approved.

Correspondence:

Incoming: Two letters from the UCONN Cooperative Extension Service. One reported on the current status of the Coverts Program, and the other was an informational flyer regarding a new environmental threat to our eastern Oak forests with the possible spread of a foreign disease named: Sudden Oak Death.

A letter from Pheasant Program coordinator; Mark Clavette was received which was basically a response to our letter advising the agency of 2003 Council observations and recommendations for 2004.

Letter from the US Sportsman's Alliance thanking the Council for donations and support regarding the upcoming referendum challenges to bear hunting in Maine and Alaska.

Committees:

Rapid Response Committee:

The RRC has been working on several very important issues that will impact boaters, fishermen, and hunters in the near future.

Lake Waramaug:

We have been hearing rumors of a deal between DEP and the three towns abutting Lake Waramaug to control boating access to the lake. We now have a copy of the proposed agreement, which has been signed by DEP Commissioner, Arthur Rocque. All that remains to implement the agreement is ratification by each of the three towns. As word of this proposal filters out to the public; the local press has been active in promoting the deal as being environmentally responsible, and fair to all boaters who may wish to launch on this lake. The agreement is to implement a cooperative management plan for boaters; which will legitimize the Washington boat launch as the only authorized launch site for trailered boats to access the lake for the next fifty years! The state has offered \$100,000 to rebuild the launch, and has agreed to mandatory environmental inspections of all boats. The inspections will be primarily conducted by a vendor hired by the town, with possible assistance by the state during off-season times at the state park. The agreement allows up

to twenty non-resident trailered boats to be on the lake on any given day. Thirteen of those boats must belong to campers at the state park, with the seven remaining to be admitted at the Washington launch on a first come, first served basis.

The negotiations leading up to this proposal have been very secret, with little or no input from DEP Division personnel, including Bureau Chiefs! This is a top down political mandate to protect the interests of lakeshore owners on Waramaug and almost completely ignore the best interests of the citizens of this state with regard to this state owned lake. The agreement is couched in environmental stewardship concerns and traffic safety. It stems from the Heritage Lake legislation passed a few years ago and may set precedents for lake use harboring many unforeseen consequences.

We are working with other interested parties on our response to this agreement. We know that the environmental division of the Attorney General's office has been made aware of the proposal, as has the Governor. We will develop our own assessment and publish it on the Council web site. For the moment, we can only hope that one of the three towns rejects the proposal at referendum, which would result in nullifying the agreement. A town meeting is scheduled for August 12th in Washington. We feel that this issue transcends town interests and that concerned sportsmen from throughout the state should attend these meetings to demonstrate this fact.

Also mentioned at the meeting is that the main source of water for the lake is Sucker Brook. This brook has been redlined by the state DOT because of pollution carried from a buried dumpsite at the source in Warren. What significance this may have to the issue at hand is debatable, but worth keeping in mind. This redline does not appear on DEP maps.

Bantam Lake Boat Launch:

The public launch for Bantam Lake is on East Shore Road in Morris. It is under lease by the state from the Town of Morris. The current 25 year lease expires next year and a town meeting was held this past Monday to discuss renewal with Deputy Commissioner; David Leff. Mr. Leff was very cordial in answering questions and concerns of the residents. He stated that DEP was open to suggestions for inclusion of provisions in a new lease to address the town's legitimate concerns such as enhanced law enforcement presence from both the DEP and the State Police. The state will also rehabilitate the launch if the lease is renewed. Mr. Leff made it clear that should the lease not be renewed, the state will move forward to construct a new boat launch on state land. Resistance to renewal came from the Beach & Recreation Commissioner, Reg Harrison, and his wife. Mrs. Harrison complained of overflow parking on East Shore Road, which blocked traffic and constituted a nuisance. Conversely; two other East Shore Road residents stated that; while off-lot parking did occur, they have never witnessed a time when traffic could not move through. Mr. Harrison would prefer to simply close the launch and use the land for expansion of the Morris recreation fields. This view was not popular with town boaters, who also need a place to launch.

All in all, the meeting was cordial, and the townspeople were thoughtful and respectful. Mr. Leff did his job well and we hope a new lease will result. Mr. Leff also reported that current plans call for the creation of a small, car-top launch on the Camp Columbia lake property off Route 209. This will help relieve some of the parking problems along the road in this area of the lake.

Camp Columbia:

Commissioner Leff provided a copy of the draft management plan for the 591-acre Camp Columbia property. The plan calls for 38 acres at the entrance area to be designated as a State Park with no hunting allowed. This area has buildings on it and will be managed for passive recreation and education. The portion of the property on the shore of Bantam Lake will be improved to allow car-top boat access to the lake. The balance of the property is to be designated as State Forest and will be open to hunting and fishing. Some good news for sportsmen!

Banquet Committee:

Discussion centered on how best to utilize our resources to obtain goods for our raffles and auction. A motion was made, "to form a **Prize Committee**". The motion received a second and was approved. The prize committee will consist of Dean Fraley, Clyde Breakell, Jason Marshall and Jim Fedorich. Jason will provide potential donor lists for the committee to work with. Anyone needing our Non-profit paperwork to solicit banquet items can see Chris to obtain a copy. All banquet purchases should be approved by the prize committee.

Council Outing:

The Torrington Fish & Game Club grounds have been reserved for the Outing on August 22nd. Tickets have been printed and are ready for distribution to the delegates. Ticket price is \$15.00 for adults. Children 12 years and under free. Anyone needing tickets may contact Chris Marino at Autumn Gun Works. A final Outing meeting has been scheduled for August 17th at Council Office in Goshen. Time 7PM. We urge all delegates to attend this meeting so we can coordinate our preparations.

Conservation Advisory Council: Summer recess. No meeting held in July.

Web Site:

We have been updating the Home Page on a regular basis. Meetings, schedules and references can be found on this page. New articles have been added to the Issues section, with more to follow. Any delegate wanting to contribute information or issue-based articles to the site content will be welcome.
We need to create links to all our member club web sites and to State of CT Legislative Directory.

Old Business:

Burlington Trout Hatchery:

Jim Fedorich provided a report on his discussions with the hatchery manager, David Zadrosny. Dave provided details regarding the successful program of "net coverings" at the hatchery ponds. The current coverings have dramatically improved the tonnage of trout raised to stockable size by providing relief from predatory birds such as Herons, and Hawks. A three hundred and ten foot raceway, and two concrete pools need permanent netting installed. The required netting will cost \$1533.92. Framing for the nets will constitute an additional expense. Mike Fusco made a motion: "to fund the net purchase of netting at \$1533.92". Motion received a second and was approved. We will also provide the framing for the nets and provide the labor to install all, with our Northwest Chapter of Trout Unlimited taking the lead on the installation project.

This project is one, which benefits sportsmen statewide and represents an appropriate use of Council funds to benefit our sporting heritage.

Pheasant Program:

We discussed the letter received from program director, Mark Clavette, in response to our earlier letter stating our observations and suggestions to improve the program. The delegates spent a considerable amount of time discussing proper methods of stocking birds throughout the season. It was interesting to note the various opinions of what constitutes a proper stocking. All agreed that a dedicated stocking crew with proper training is preferable to seasonal employees for accomplishing this task. The job of stocking would be better performed by stockers who care about the sport and the success of the program. It would seem logical to include our Game Wardens in the stocking program, which was once the case. They have the interest and knowledge to do a proper job; and, since they are in the areas anyway conducting law enforcement operations, the additional duty of stocking pheasants would seem to be compatible with their job.

Mr. Clavette mentioned that more birds will be stocked this year, and additional areas will be opened to the program. He also mentioned making more use of our volunteers for stocking.

Regarding hunting areas, we had mentioned in our letter the overgrown autumn olive that dominates the Mad River Dam hunting area. Mark responded that he would talk to State Lands Director, Paul Rothbart about conducting a habitat maintenance program on this area.

Mark reported that the use of the Wood Creek area for pheasants would depend on beaver activity and wetlands conditions on this site.

Responding to our suggestion of adding the newly acquired Kent/ Cornwall lands to the program, Mark reported that there are no plans to do so at this time because the Hunting Review Committee suggested that the property is too narrow to provide good bird retention, and because of intensive, agricultural use of the fields which will not provide adequate cover. Mark left the possibility of future use of this land open. Since there seems to be some controversy regarding the suitability of this property for pheasant hunting, it was suggested that several of our Council leaders visit the site and verify what has been reported. We will take pictures and compare what we find to other stocked areas. If necessary, we will bring our findings to the DEP Conservation Advisory Council in September.

Mark Clavette stated that the agency was looking into a voice or computer based system to allocate permits on permit-required areas. This is not something we can expect to see anytime soon, simply because the funding is not available at the present time. However, planning has begun within the agency for such a system when and if funding becomes available. Among our delegates there was some disagreement regarding development of an automated permit system. Some felt that the opportunity for abuse of the system was too great to make it practical; other delegates were confident that DEP could address abuse issues. It would provide a more efficient method of permit disbursements if we can be assured that it is being used properly. This item will be included in a future, wildlife division public hearing. It has potential to benefit sportsmen in many ways. Lets hope DEP comes up with a sound plan.

Finally, Mark Clavette reported that DEP has no plans to eliminate the pheasant tags in the near future. They believe that the tags are an important law enforcement tool, and help prevent over-taking of birds. It seems unfortunate that we are unable to interest the agency in providing expanded opportunity by increasing bag and season limits. Our position is one that recognizes the reality of decreasing hunter participation in state land pheasant hunting every year over the past 15 to twenty years. We feel that it is long past time to try some new, innovative adjustments to the program in order to encourage more participation. Over regulation and unnecessary requirements continue to turn off many sportsmen. We maintain that our sporting heritage of hunting and fishing should be a basic right of all citizens and that the regulatory process to insure safety and environmental quality should not constitute an

impediment to participation in these activities. Keeping regulations simple and logical are the best means we have to preserving our sports. We now are seeing organizations such as the US Sportsman's Alliance and the NRA publicly recognizing this simple fact.

New Business:

Statewide Junior Hunting Day:

We will be hosting the Junior Hunting Day again this year at the Torrington Fish & Game Club. The date has been set for September 18th. We have been informed that one of the Field Trial Clubs, which typically works these events, will not be available this year due to schedule conflicts. Therefore, we will be looking to our members to volunteer to work with the kids and the CE-FS instructors that day. Anyone having a well trained, pointing breed, bird dog will be welcome. Please contact Chris Marino if you would like to help. It's a great pre-season exercise for working dogs and the food and drink is free.

Jim Fedorich has volunteered to set up a demonstration table to teach the young hunters and their parents the proper methods of field dressing, storage and preparing birds for the table. Jim will probably need a helper or two to spell him from time to time. This demonstration proved to be very useful last year. We never realized how many new hunters haven't a clue about what to do with a bird once taken.

CT River Chapter of Ruffed Grouse Society:

Annual banquet scheduled for September 17th, at the Clarion Hotel in Bristol. The Council voted to reserve a table as we have done in the past. Attendees can make payment to Chris. We urge all sportsmen and women to consider attending this banquet as it is one of the best of its kind and we have never been disappointed with the evening. Tickets can be purchased at Autumn Gun Works.

Good of the Council:

The scheduled August 24th meeting of the Council will be held at the Washington Grill on Bee Brook Road in Washington. A spaghetti dinner will be served between 6:45 and 7:20PM. We ask delegates to contribute \$5.00 towards the meal. Dean Fraley will try to have a selectman from the Town of Washington attend to discuss Lake Waramaug.

Bee Brook Road is actually route 47 off route 202 just south of New Preston. The Washington Grill is on the left side.

Harwinton R&G will host a Cocker Spaniel Field Trial on the club land in Colebrook. Info can be found on Harwinton R&G web site.

Ed Spataro of Bristol F&G is looking for a club with large acreage to accommodate the "Northeast Rendezvous" muzzleloader event. This event is held in a different location in the northeast each year. Ed would like to bring it to Connecticut in 2005. They typically host between 1,000 and 1,500 attendees for the event so a large facility is required. Anyone with ideas can contact Chris Marino for details and further contact info.

Adjourn: 10PM