

Northwest CT Sportsman's Council

NWCSC
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Council Report: March 23, 2004

Meeting called to order at 7:40PM, March 23rd 2004 by Council President, Chris Marino. Meeting held at Borgeson Universal Co., Torrington, CT. All rise for Pledge of Allegiance.

Role of clubs, delegates and officers present:

Ousatonic F&G Protective	Rick Buckley	NW R&G	Andrew Cote
N. Preston R&G	Craig Nelson	NWCSA	Jason Marshall
NW Trout Unlimited	James Bower	Woodbury/ Southbury	Phillip Mauriello
Bell City Rifle	Dominic Basile	Harwinton R&G	Mike Fusco
NVBC	Chris Marino		

Officers present: President, Chris Marino and Vice-President, Jason Marshall. Excused absence, Clyde Breakell.

Council Report for February read and accepted.

Financial Report: Chris Marino.

No financial statement. Check book has been reconciled through Feb 27. Several small discrepancies were found during reconciliation with bank statements. Appropriate corrections were made and our account is in balance to date.

Report accepted as delivered.

Correspondence: None.

Committee Reports:

Rapid Response: Fast action was taken on a proposed bill in Hartford that was introduced with the stated intent of eliminating the 14-day waiting period for long gun purchases by unlicensed individuals. Several people noticed that the bill went much farther than its purported intent, and actually eliminated all exceptions for reporting sales of long guns to police officers, pistol permit holders and hunting license holders; thus the true effect of this bill had it been passed would have been the institution of **complete firearms registration** in the state of CT. This was and is unacceptable to firearms owners in CT and was brought quickly to the attention of Robert Crook; our lobbyist in Hartford. Bob made our objections known and had the bill withdrawn from consideration.

Membership: Rick Buckley has been appointed representative of Ousatonic Fish & Game.

Banquet: Jason and Chris met with Mike Destasi regarding the February banquet and reservations for 2005. We discussed a discrepancy in the billing for the 2004 event. A service charge was added that did not appear on our contract. Mike was understanding and offered to reserve next year's date and prices at the 2004 rate, less the service charge. He has also guaranteed this same price for an additional two years providing the price of his supplies remains stable. This offer will more than repay the extra charge in 2004, and was accepted. We have reserved the Grand Oak Villa for Feb 18th, 2005. A contract has been written and a deposit of \$250.00 has been made.

Citizen's Advisory Council to DEP:

Report will be posted to web site.

Wildlife Director, Dale May gave a presentation regarding the development of a ten-year wildlife management plan to be submitted to US F&W by the end of this year. This plan should qualify our state agency to receive new funding under the Federal Wildlife Grants program. The new grants may worth up \$3.5 million to the state for wildlife restoration. Concentration will be on species most in need of conservation. Of interest to sportsmen would be the inclusion on this list of Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse and New England Cottontails. It should also be remembered that any habitat improvement work; regardless of the targeted species, usually benefits multiple species of wildlife, including game species.

Old Business:

Maine and Alaska Bear Referendums: The Council voted \$300.00 in donations at our February meeting, to organizations defending bear hunting in these states. A check for \$100.00 was issued to the U.S. Sportsman's Alliance for use in defending bear hunting in both states. A check for \$200.00 was issued to the Maine Fish & Wildlife Conservation Council for use defending bear hunting in Maine. We felt the Maine donation was of greater significance to CT sportsmen because of its proximity to CT and the fact that so many CT sportsmen enjoy Maine's sporting opportunities.

Credit card processor used for banquet has been returned to EFS, Merchant Data. We need to monitor timing for next event to ensure one year does not elapse before using processor again. This is a requirement to keep our account open with EFS.

All attendees to Nutmeg FNRA and NW Trout Unlimited have reimbursed the Council for their tickets.

Two plaques have been ordered to recognize and thank the Colt and Smith & Wesson firearm's companies for their contributions to our annual fundraiser banquet over the past several years. We should have them within the week and arrangements will be made for presentation to the companies. The Sterling Name Tape Company has done a great job with these plaques. Cost should be approximately \$220.00 for the two plaques.

Discussed state lands hunting issue on recently acquired properties. Letter of inquiry to be drafted to Deputy Commissioner, David Leff regarding this issue.

Driveway to south Goshen WMA discussed. Inquiry to be made on progress of installation.

Burlington Hatchery trout pond coverings. Biologist Tim Barry has mentioned that 70 to 80% of the ponds at Burlington have now been covered to reduce depredation on hatchery trout by birds of prey. Tim reports substantial improvement in the number of trout raised to stocking size as a result. (58% to maturity previous to netting, to 80% currently.) The hatchery could use more help in covering the remaining ponds. Although we may feel this is properly an issue that should have been addressed by the state over past years when the budget was in better shape, the need remains and the agency is in no position to allocate new funds for these coverings. Through our discussion, it was decided that the Council president would contact the hatchery director, David Zadrosny and see if we can be of help. Jim Bower will contact the leadership of NW T.U. to inquire if they would be interested in taking part of any effort we may decide on. The Council may be able to help with the financial end of a project and T.U. could provide the coordination and volunteers.

New Business:

Jason discussed his efforts regarding Federal fish & Wildlife funding to the state of CT. Jason is developing contacts within the National Wildlife Federation and seeking advice as to how we can best determine where and how our state and federal dollars are being spent in CT. We would like to be sure that federal dollars from Pittman-Robertson, Wallop-Beroux and Johnson-Dingell funds are being properly applied to projects in CT.

Grouse Survey:

We will conduct our annual ruffed grouse survey in northwestern CT from April 1st through the end of May. All sportsmen are encouraged to get involved with this effort. All that is required of the volunteer is to go afield one or more times during this time period to listen for drumming grouse or observe active birds. (Drumming activity is most prevalent in the early morning.) The volunteer selects his area or areas to observe and reports back to Chris Marino with the following information:

Dates of observation. As specific a location description of the areas observed as possible. Time spent at each location and number of times visited. Results: did you hear or see any birds, if so how many individual birds do you estimate were heard or seen. It is also important to report negative results. If you spent time at an identifiable location and heard or saw no birds, we need to have that information.

This is a very informal survey we initiated last year. The results may only be important to our sportsmen. The information returned last spring was helpful in identifying pockets of grouse population in Harwinton and Falls Village. We hope to expand on that info this year. Please take the time to make at least one field trip and report the results back to Chris Marino through our web site, e-mail or by phone.

NWCSC initiated this survey because the state is either unwilling or unable to undertake a proper survey. The Wildlife Division sees the need and perhaps will get involved in the future. In the meantime, we have determined to collect as much relevant information as possible. It was suggested at this meeting that we propose a statewide survey to be administered by UCONN natural resource division, in conjunction with the Ruffed Grouse Society, which has already offered to help. We will pursue this idea with RGS, the DEP Wildlife Division and UCONN.

Jason Marshall will be participating for the second year in the statewide Woodcock Survey. This is the second of a three-year survey. The results, along with telemetry monitoring, contaminant testing etc., will be used to develop a comprehensive assessment of woodcock and their habitat needs in CT.

Good of the organization:

Craig Nelson reported on the Western CT FNRA Banquet to be held at the Fireside Inn, in Newtown. Date: Thursday, May 13th. Cost \$35.00. Motion for the Council to sponsor a table of ten was approved. Check issued to reserve table. Ten delegates offered to attend and reimburse the Council for their tickets.

Adjourn: 9:10PM