

## **Fish and Wildlife Board Draft Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, April 28, 2021**

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board held a meeting beginning at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2021 via video conference. The Zoom Meeting ID was: 843 9375 4873.

**Board Members Present:** Tim Biebel (Chair); Brian Bailey; Michael Bancroft; Wendy Butler; Brad Ferland; David Fielding; Michael Kolsun; Bryan McCarthy; Nancy Mathews; David Robillard; Jay Sweeny; and Marty Van Buren.

**Department Staff Present:** Louis Porter, Commissioner; Catherine Gjessing, General Counsel; Mark Scott, Wildlife Director; Nick Fortin, Deer Project Leader; Colonel Jason Batchelder, Law Enforcement Director; Josh Blouin Wildlife Specialist; John Hall, Information Specialist; and Will Duane, Executive Assistant.

**Members of the Public Present (Note:** Zoom Webinar requests a first and last name from all participants, the following usernames attended the meeting): Mark Green; and Paul Noel.

**Agenda:**

- 1) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes.
  - April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- 2) Public Comments (Limited to 2 minutes per speaker)
- 3) Petition Acknowledgement and Discussion
  - Petition to Suspend the Issuing of Doe Permits in the Wells/Pawlet, VT Area
- 4) 2021 Antlerless Deer Season Recommendation – Board Straw Vote
- 5) Commissioner’s Update
- 6) Roundtable Discussion

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The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:00 PM

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### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (April 7, 2021)**

**Motion:** Bryan McCarthy moved to approve the minutes as offered. Mary Van Buren seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Tim Biebel offered a correction to the minutes to note that Marty Van Buren first moved to approve the 2021 moose season proposal at the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Vote:** 10-0 voice vote to approve the minutes as amended. Note: Nancy Mathews and Jay Sweeny joined the meeting after this vote on the April 7 minutes.

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## **Public Comment**

No members of the public requested to address the Board

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## **2021 Antlerless, Youth, and Novice Deer Season Recommendation – And Petition Discussion**

Chair Biebel and Commissioner Porter requested that the Board address the petition after the presentation on the 2021 antlerless deer season as the subject area of the petition would be addressed in the presentation.

Wildlife Division Director Mark Scott introduced Deer Project Leader Nick Fortin who presented the Department's proposal for the 2021 antlerless deer hunting and Youth/Novice deer hunting weekend. The full 2021 recommendation is attached to these minutes. Following the presentation, Board members and Department staff discussed components of the recommendation including online vs. in-person reporting of deer, chronic wasting disease, deer mortality rates, antler point restrictions, doe and buck behaviors and ratios, reproduction rates, and other deer health metrics.

The Board took a straw poll of its Members to determine if there was support for the Department's proposal for the 2021 antlerless, youth, and novice seasons.

**Vote:** Unanimous straw vote supporting the Department's proposal.

The final vote will take place at the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

During the presentation Nick Fortin presented data on statewide and regional populations of deer specifically in southeastern Vermont and in the area named in the petition on the hunting of does in the Wells and Pawlet area. Fortin noted that sighting rates were low in 2020, but that these can be explained by several factors. The harvest rate and deer population for both of these regions have been stable for the last 15 years. There was a crash in the deer population in the early 2000s but that was prior to the implementation of the antler point restriction. The population has since stabilized. The antlerless harvest is still lower than it was in the late 2000s. We do not have data from our harvest reports showing that the antlerless harvest has reduced the population. It may be holding the population down lower than it could be, but it would be irresponsible for us to let that get higher at this time.

Commissioner Porter stated that the Department requests that the Board vote to not approve the petition and that when the pandemic subsides and we can meet in person again, the Department would be happy to meet with the petitioners to discuss deer management and management strategies.

**Motion:** Bryan McCarthy moved to deny the petition. Wendy Butler seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 11 in favor of denying the petition, Nancy Mathews abstained.

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### **Commissioner's update**

- Youth and novice season for 2021 spring turkey hunting went well. There were 2,100 youth permits and 182 novice licenses. There were 649 reported, about half were reported online.
- Next board meeting is May 19<sup>th</sup>.
- I have concerns about our ability to meet the young forest targets in Vermont Conservation Design. Lack of young forest may cause issues for deer and moose populations as well as bear behaviors. We support wild and uncut forests, but we also see things coming together that may make it harder to increase the amount of young forests statewide and harder for us to meet our young forest goals.
- The legislative session is still in full swing. There may still be some movement on a wanton waste bill, which the Department does support, in the House Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Committee. We've suggested some new language and we are waiting for a new draft for review. That bill may move out of the Committee but we are not sure.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM

Petition to Suspend the Issuing of Doe Permits in the Wells/Pawlet, VT Area

We, the undersigned, want to temporarily suspend the issuing of doe permits in the Wells/Pawlet, VT area due to the fact that the deer herd has decreased significantly over the last five years. Many hunters saw little to no deer over this time frame and have had to hunt elsewhere or go to other states. We believe by suspending the killing of does this would bring our deer population back to where it should be. We believe in deer management but not to the extent that we no longer have a population.

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to suspend the issuing of doe permits in the Wells/Pawlet, VT area until the deer population has increased.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Peter Holcomb	<i>Peter Holcomb</i>	339 East Wells Road Wells, VT 05774	Better Management	2/27/2021
Tammy Holcomb	<i>Tammy Holcomb</i>	339 East Wells Road Wells, VT 05774		2/27/21
James P Storr	<i>James P Storr</i>	Wells, VT		2-27-21
Naren Storr	<i>Naren Storr</i>	137 ST Catherine Court Wells VT		2-27-21
Jeff Mattison	<i>Jeff Mattison</i>	104 Spinn Cath CT	Very few Deer	2-28-21
Paisley Mattison	<i>Paisley Mattison</i>	104 Spinn Cath CT		
Roy Sims	<i>Roy Sims</i>	457 N. Pawlet Road Wells, VT 05774	Hunting since 1967 New season 2 few deer	2-27-21
Douglas Haskins	<i>Douglas Haskins</i>	201 Wells Brook Rd Wells, VT 05774	NO Doe	2-28-21
Mary Haskins	<i>Mary Haskins</i>	225 Wells Brook Wells, VT	No hunting DOES	2/28/21
Robert Mattison	<i>Robert Mattison</i>	25, Wells Brook Rd	No Doe	2, 28, 21
Harvey Haskins	<i>HARVEY HASKINS</i>	23 HASKINS PL	NO DOE	2-28-21
Kevin Haskins	<i>Kevin Haskins</i>	203 Haskins PL	NO DOE	2-28-21
Steven Clark	<i>Steven Clark</i>	12 Lamb Hill RD	NO DOE	2-28-21
Doug Clark	<i>Doug Clark</i>	19 Lamb Hill RD	NO DOE	2-28-21
Jeff Haskins	<i>Jeff Haskins</i>	200 Lamb Hill RD	No Doe	2-28-21
Jan Haskins	<i>Jan Haskins</i>	200 Lamb Hill RD	No Doe	2-28-21
Jonathan Burke	<i>Jonathan Burke</i>	242 Lamb Hill Rd		2-28-21
Sue Burke	<i>Sue Burke</i>	242 Lamb Hill Rd		2/28/21
Mary Porter	<i>Mary Porter</i>	1025 E Wells Rd	NO DOES	2/28/21
Mark Porter	<i>Mark Porter</i>	1025 E Wells Rd	NO DOES	2/28/21

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Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Walker Stomski		137 St Catherine Ct Wells VT 05774		Feb 28 2021
Lane Mattison		104 St Catherine Ct Wells VT 05774	Dont see deer	Mar 1st 2021
Jason Clark		94 Truthville Rd Granville NY		Mar 2
Don Mattison		167 Norths + Wells, VT		3/3/21
Charles Devito		234 Little Birch Hill Road Granville NY		3/3/21
Russ Bronson		Granville NY		3/4/21
Kevin Weeden	Kevin Weeden	Pawlet VT		3/4/21
Dan Ke		Dorset VT		3-4-21
Glenn Gould		Poultney VT		3/4/21
Josh Kim		Wells VT		3/4/21
JEFF PERKINS		WELLS VT	No Deer in Wells	3/4/21
Matthew Perkins	Matthew Perkins	Wells VT		3/4/21
Larry Taylor		Hebron NY		3/6/21
Chris Matthews		Pawlet VT		3/6/21
Stephanie Care		Wells, VT		3/7/21
EDWARD OLSON		RUTLAND VT		3/10/21
KEVIN AUSTIN		BALTIMORE VT	Better Deer Management	3-10-21
T. Daniel Williams		Poultney VT		3-11-21
Chris STEPHANSON		Poultney VT		3/11/21
JOE PERKINS		Poultney, VT		3/11/21

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Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Chris Stephenson	<i>[Signature]</i>	256 Main St. Pawlet VT		3/1/2021
Chad Kulwer	<i>[Signature]</i>	6916 Monument Hill Rd. <sup>Castleton VT 05735</sup>	Too Many Doe!	3/1/2021
Kay Fifield	<i>[Signature]</i>	10 Pacific St <sup>Granville VT</sup>	Too many Doe Permits	3-2-21
SOP Phillips	<i>[Signature]</i>	803 rd. ST WELLS VT	no PERMITS	3-3-21
Linda Phillips	<i>[Signature]</i>	803 North St. Wells VT	better management	3/3/21
Dale Decker	<i>[Signature]</i>	1951 Rte 133 Pawlet, VT 05761		3/4/21
Perry Brown	<i>[Signature]</i>	2299 Rte 30 Pawlet VT 05761		5/4/21
Rebecca Gould	<i>[Signature]</i>	36 Maple Grove Pawlet		3/8/21
Shawn Gould	<i>[Signature]</i>	36 maple Grove Pawlet		3/9/21
Clarence W. Gould	<i>[Signature]</i>	369 east Wells Rd <sup>Wells</sup>		3/9/21
Michael Newton	<i>[Signature]</i>	1704 VT Route 133 Pawlet		3/9/21
Clarence Gould Sr.	<i>[Signature]</i>	1704 VT RT 133 Pawlet		3/9/21
Jon Hughes	<i>[Signature]</i>	3053 VT Rte 30 pawlet		3/9/21
Allan Tiff	<i>[Signature]</i>	1178 Little Village Rd Pawlet		3/9/21
Crystal Seward	<i>[Signature]</i>	1178 Little Village Rd		3/9/21
Joseph M. Summers	<i>[Signature]</i>	1211 Vermont Mtn Rd. Pawlet, VT		3/9/21
Jason Greene	<i>[Signature]</i>	1211 VT Route 149 West Pawlet		3/9/21
Roger Brown	<i>[Signature]</i>	Pawlet VT		3/9/21
Ronald Lacosta	<i>[Signature]</i>	Wells, VT		3/9/21
Kalyn Gould	<i>[Signature]</i>	Pawlet, VT		3/9/21
Marlee Muff	<i>[Signature]</i>	Pawlet VT		3/10/21
Richard J Holcomb	<i>[Signature]</i>	Wells, VT		3/10/21

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Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Wendy Chmura	<i>Wendy Chmura</i>	4101 East Wells Rd.		
Dan Carlotti	<i>Dan Carlotti</i>	193 E. Wells Rd		3/12/21
Lucas Welch	<i>Lucas Welch</i>	Wells VT		3/13/21
Heidi Welch	<i>Heidi Welch</i>	Wells VT		3-13-2021
Garry L. Witke Bee	<i>Garry L. Witke Bee</i>	Wells		3-13-2021
Frank Woodruff	<i>Frank Woodruff</i>	W. Pawlet		3/13/21
Michael Muller	<i>Michael Muller</i>	Pawlet VT		3/13/2021
Ryan Muller	<i>Ryan Muller</i>	Wells, VT		3/13/21
Megan Muller	<i>Megan Muller</i>	Wells, VT		3/13/21
Melissa Muller	<i>Melissa Muller</i>	Pawlet VT		3/13/21
Caleb Parker	<i>Caleb Parker</i>	Arlington, VT		3/13/21
Chris Parker	<i>Chris Parker</i>	Wells		3/14/21
Brian DeBeno	<i>Brian DeBeno</i>	Poultney		3/14/21
Chad Monty	<i>Chad Monty</i>	Whitcomb, NY		3/20/21
Jim Devino	<i>Jim Devino</i>	West Pawlet VT		3/20/2021
Mike Beecher	<i>Mike Beecher</i>	West Pawlet VT		3/20/21
Howard Cooper	<i>Howard Cooper</i>	Wells VT.		3/21/21
Robert Cooper	<i>Robert Cooper</i>	Wells, VT.		3/21/21
William Cooper	<i>William Cooper</i>	Granville NY		3/21/21
Grant	<i>Grant Cooper</i>	Granville NY		3/21/21

