

**Fish & Wildlife Board**  
**APPROVED Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 18, 2007**

The Fish & Wildlife Board convened a meeting at 5:00 p.m. on April 18, 2007, in the Skylight conference room in Waterbury, Vermont.

Attendees

Board Members: Brian Ames, R. Keith Armstrong, Wayne Barrows, Ed Gallo, Cyndy Jones, Michael Popowski, Claude Rainville, John Roy, Bob Shannon, and Bruce Therrien.

Absent: Dana Kittell, Jeremy Baker, Walt Driscoll, and Craig Lefevre.

Department Employees: Commissioner Wayne Laroche, Colonel Robert Rooks, Thomas Decker, Steve Hill, John Buck, Cedric Alexander, Scott Darling, and Cathy Merrill.

Due to Chair Kittell's absence, Commissioner Laroche, as Executive Secretary of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., and introduced the newly-appointed Board members, Cyndy Jones and Michael Popowski. Commissioner Laroche asked for nominations for a "temporary" Chair.

Shannon nominated Bruce Therrien; Barrows seconded. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Therrien then presided over the meeting.

**Importation and Possession of Animals for Hunting – Second Vote**

Hill informed the Board that as of 5:00 p.m. today, no opinion had been issued by the Attorney General's Office concerning the *Importation and Possession of Animals for Hunting*. Hill noted that Doug Nelson's attorney, Jon Valsangiacomo, was in attendance. In an effort to not keep Mr. Valsangiacomo waiting unnecessarily for that item to be discussed, and as the Attorney General's opinion had not been issued, Hill recommended striking this item from the agenda.

Shannon made a motion to postpone any discussion on this issue until next month, and to strike this item from the agenda; Ames seconded. The vote was unanimous to strike this item from the agenda.

Hill assured the Board that the length of time spent to date waiting to receive the AG's opinion is well within the nine month time frame the Board has to address this issue. Hill will follow up with a phone call to the AG's Office regarding the Board's request.

**Vice-Chair**

Shannon asked Hill about the possibility of having a Vice-Chair of the Board. Hill responded that the basic statutory language on this issue is broad, and that the Board could establish its own rules of procedure, which could include appointment of a Vice-Chair. Therrien recommended the Board postpone discussion on this issue due to the lack of Board members in attendance. This will be on the agenda for discussion at the Board's May meeting.

Therrien welcomed the new Board members, who then gave brief background information on themselves.

Therrien wanted to follow up on one of former Chair Borowske's requests that the Department continue to invest in training for the Board members. Hill responded that the Department would arrange for a training day (or half-day), to review the authority of Department and the Board, as well as the rulemaking process.

### **Approval of March 28, 2007 Minutes**

A motion to accept the March 28, 2007 minutes was made by Shannon and seconded by Gallo. Gallo wanted to clarify the statement attributed to him on page 4 of the minutes concerning the carrying capacity of the land. He stated he was concerned about raising the carrying capacity of the land, not "matching" the carrying capacity of the land to the deer population. The sentence will be amended to read: "He would like to see identified in the deer management plan how the carrying capacity of the land could be raised."

The Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes as amended above.

### **Visitors**

Therrien reminded the people in attendance that the Board meetings are public meetings and the public is invited to attend, however, they are not public participation hearings. Visitors are welcome to speak if they have concerns, but not join in the Board's discussion.

At that point, the visitors introduced themselves as: James Spencer from Hartland; Roy Kilburn, Berlin; and Kyle Scanlon. They were all present to observe the meeting. Dennis Jensen and Matt Crawford were in attendance from the press.

Tom Decker, Chief of Operations for the Department, distributed an updated Board member listing and a revised calendar of proposed agenda items.

### **Presentation: The Future of Hunting**

Decker gave a PowerPoint presentation on "The Future of Hunting in Vermont" conference held in August 2006, and the follow-up conference that was held in March 2007. He spoke about the Department's programs and initiatives, and the outcomes of the conferences, which included the creation of the Vermont Wildlife Partnership and the proposed apprentice license legislation, among other items. The Department is planning to reconvene the conference participants in eight months. This presentation was an informational overview to the Board and requires no Board action.

### **Update on Moose Population Data**

Cedric Alexander, Moose Team Leader, gave an update on the moose population data gathered by the forward looking infrared (FLIR) study. There were some quality control issues with the contractor and the Department received a revised report in April. Based on the review of the video and the data, the moose population is estimated to be 2.5 animals per square mile in Unit E. The population target is 1.75 per square mile for that Unit. Alexander estimates the herd will be at the target after the 2009 moose season. There was some discussion on the correction factor, but the Department's consensus is that the FLIR study correlates to the hunter survey data.

Ames asked about the special archery-only moose season question he had submitted for the telephone survey. John Buck said the survey results arrived today and on that specific question, there was no support by the majority of the respondents.

Therrien asked if Alexander anticipated any changes to the moose season proposal before the second vote is taken in May. Alexander said he does not anticipate any changes.

Hill said the comment period for the moose regulation ends on April 22, and as of today, no comments or requests for a public meeting have been received.

### **Winter Severity Index (WSI)**

Commissioner Laroche gave a PowerPoint presentation which illustrated the snow cover depths in Vermont during the winter of 2006/2007, and how they relate to deer yards. It appears this winter will be considered “average” for winter severity and may be “less than average” in some areas of the state.

### **2007 Antlerless Deer and Youth Weekend Hunting Proposal**

John Buck, Deer Team Leader, gave a presentation on the 2007 Antlerless Deer and Youth Weekend Hunting Proposal and summarized the changes from last year.

There was discussion on the challenges of distributing all the available antlerless permits for some units. Buck said the Department has always supported a three-deer bag limit, however, the Department did not formally recommend an increase at this time.

There was discussion on the criteria used to open/close zones to antlerless hunting, the purpose of youth hunting season, and what the Board could do to help with distribution of antlerless permits. Decker said the Department is redesigning the antlerless permit this year to mirror the moose application.

Commissioner Laroche said the Agency of Natural Resources was working on a web-based wildlife management atlas, which could show where the State holds easements, which in turn, could help point people to hunting areas.

Gallo made a motion to accept the proposal as written, which was seconded by Roy.

There was no further discussion, and the proposal was unanimously accepted as presented.

### **Importation and Possession of Wildlife (not for hunting) Presentation**

Scott Darling, a Wildlife Biologist from the Rutland office, gave a presentation on a proposed regulation regarding the *Importation and Possession of Wildlife (not for Hunting)*. The presentation was for discussion purposes only. There will be a first vote on this proposal at the Board’s May 16 meeting. Darling asked the Board to review the materials, and if they have specific questions/concerns to email him ([scott.darling@state.vt.us](mailto:scott.darling@state.vt.us)), copy Cathy Merrill ([cathy.merrill@state.vt.us](mailto:cathy.merrill@state.vt.us)), and he will address those concerns in his presentation.

## **Legislative Update**

Hill said there would be a public hearing on the proposed wanton waste regulation on Monday April 23 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Pavilion Auditorium in Montpelier; the rule will be before the Board in May for a second vote.

The bear hound rule is scheduled to be before the Legislative Committee on Rules (LCAR) on April 25, and back before the Board for a third vote in May.

Hill gave an update on the status of pertinent legislative bills.

## **Board Member Roundtable**

There was discussion on whether to schedule a special meeting to address the *Importation and Possession of Wildlife for Hunting* regulation and the Board's options. Hill indicated the Board could withdraw its request for an AG's opinion.

Armstrong raised a concern about non-resident youth not being able to participate in the youth hunting weekend. Hill said the statute allows a non-resident youth to participate if at least one parent is a Vermont resident. The Board does not have the authority to change the statute regulating this activity.

Therrien brought up the issue of landowners applying for antlerless permits when their land is not legally posted (i.e., not registered with the Town Clerk), and asked if the Department could tighten up the language on the antlerless application as a deterrent. Col. Rooks said the Department is working to update its database to include Town Clerk information in an effort to close this loophole.

Roy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Shannon.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

***The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in the Skylight conference room at the State Office Complex in Waterbury, Vermont.***

Respectfully submitted:

**/s/cpm**

Catherine Pirie Merrill  
Executive Assistant

***The mission of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is the conservation of all species of fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.***