

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MINUTES – JUNE 17, 2020

Chairman Compton called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held via teleconference and videoconference. Chairman Compton asked for roll call of individuals who were on the “call”. Because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

**Approval for June 17, 2020, Meeting Agenda**

- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Schroyer moved to accept the June 17, 2020 Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda.
  2. Commissioner Gregor seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Approval for Minutes from April 15, 2020 Meeting**

- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Gregor moved to accept the April 15, 2020 meeting minutes as presented.
  2. Commissioner Keithley seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Wildlife and Heritage Service Administration Update and FY19 and FY20 Budget Update –**

Presentation was given by Associate Director Glenn Therres.

- Associate Director Glenn Therres is planning to retire at the end of the calendar year. WHS is trying to get approval to hire a fiscal officer to support this role. The fiscal officer would manage the WHS budget that includes making adjustments, appropriations monitoring, close-outs at the end fiscal year, and federal grants. WHS must obtain authorization to hire a fiscal officer because there is a statewide hiring freeze. Hiring a fiscal officer will allow the new Associate Director to focus on the legislative liaison, human resources liaison, overseeing regulations, supervise wildlife permits, and other assigned duties. The goal is to consider candidates with a fiscal background in lieu of a biology degree.
- The Commission received the Three-Year Wildlife and Heritage Service Summary via an email. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
- Associate Director Therres provided a summary of the Wildlife and Heritage Service Budget.
  1. The budget year starts on July 1 and ends on June 30 annually.
  2. WHS is currently authorized to support 82 full time positions for FY20.
  3. WHS is authorized 81 positions for FY21.
  4. Contractual Services are mostly contracts that involved research activities. These contracts are federal funded.
  5. WHS’ budget has felt significant impacts from the increased costs borne of cost-of-living increases provided to staff. Staff are no-doubt pleased to have the increase in salaries but the unit receives no appropriation to support these additional un-budgeted expenses. If WHS was a general funded unit then general funds would be allocated to cover salary increases approved by Department of Budget & Management. Since WHS is a special funded agency, WHS has to absorb the increase by using special funds.
  6. State Special Funds are made up of the Wildlife Management & Protection, Chesapeake Bay & Endangered Species, Migratory Game Bird Fund, Upland Wildlife Fund, and the Deer Stamp Account.
  7. The USFWS approved matching funds in the form of monies expended by the State to acquire new wildlife management areas. These areas are purchased with Program Open Space money and the new match will create several million in new federal fund matching opportunity. However,

WHS will need the additional personnel to support those budgeted funds – many of the tasks we are required to do (crop damage permits, nuisance wildlife, et al) are not eligible for federal match and ultimately preclude staff from working on stateside matching projects.

8. WHS is expecting \$100,000 in general funds that was approved by the General Assembly for FY21. Covid-19-related budget cuts could reduce or eliminate that approved appropriation.

#### **Farmer of the Year Award Status and Criteria Discussion – Commission Members**

- Director of Government & Public Relations Colby Ferguson mentioned that it has been a struggle to get nominations for the Farmer of the Year because there is no guidance and criteria.
- Discussion ensued about the continuation of the Farmer of the Year Award should continue and if the Wildlife Advisory Commission should be voting on these nominations. The Farmer of the Year Award still should be a meaningful award. Consideration could be given to include nominees such as the Maryland green producers, wineries, and some of the other land conservation entities.
- Discussion to form a committee with the assistance of Director of Government & Public Relations Colby Ferguson, Chairman Compton, and Commissioner Gulbrandsen. The mission of the committee is to develop criteria for the Farmer of the Year Award.
- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to develop the Farmer of the Year Award Committee to address the lack of criteria in the nomination process.
  2. Commissioner Schroyer seconded.
  3. Motion passed.
- Chairman Compton and Commissioner Gulbrandsen will report out to the Commission on the Farmer of the Year Award Criteria at the August meeting.

#### **Natural Resources Police Update – Presentation was given by Sergeant Bradley Lowe.**

- Sergeant Lowe outlined the wild turkey season violations from May 1 through May 31, 2020.
- There were 22 citations and 23 warnings Statewide (2 citations for baiting, 7 citations for check-in violations, 4 for unplugged guns, and 6 citations for hunting without written permission.
- Natural Resources Police attributed the amount of violations so late into the season due to enhanced hunting opportunities due to people not having to go to work.
- The cadets from the NRP Academy have been working online and are on target to graduate in the fall.
- Lt. Charles Fawley agreed to send the Commission members the May Statewide Stats.

#### **Maryland Farm Bureau Update – Presentation given by Director of Government & Public Relations Colby Ferguson.**

- Mr. Ferguson indicated that the Department agreed to extend the deer management permits expiration due to COVID-19.
- Local producers are very busy because people are purchasing local foods.

#### **Old Business – No Old Business.**

#### **New Business**

- Director Peditto reminded the Commission that the virtual model for the issuance of Offshore Blind Site for waterfowl hunters due to uncertainty of COVID-19 will be implemented in August.
- Director Peditto mentioned that Riparian Blind Site renewal licenses were extended.
- The straight-wall regulations are at the Maryland Register.

#### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 A.M.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, using Google Meet

**Attendance**

Members:	L. Compton, T. Gregor, S. Boyles Griffin, E. Gulbrandsen, S. Keithley, J. Schroyer, C. Wagner, and R. Weinberg
Absent:	J. Michael
Guest:	C. Ferguson
Staff:	B. Eyler, N. Doran, C. Fawley, J. Homyack, T. Larney, B. Lowe, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, K. Stonesifer, G. Therres