

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 27, 2019

Chairman Compton called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Annual Nomination of the Chair and Vice Chair

- Chairman Compton called for nominations of the Chair and Vice-Chair from the floor.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to nominate Lou Compton as Chair and Tina Gregor as Vice-Chair.
 2. Commissioner Weinberg seconded.
 3. Commissioner Compton asked if there are other nominations on the floor for the positions. Being that there were no other nominations, Lou Compton will continue serving as Chair and Tina Gregor will continue serving as Vice-Chair.

Approval for the February 27, 2019 Meeting Agenda

- Chairman Compton requested that the agenda item “Annual Maryland Predator Hunting Competition” be moved to the March 20 meeting when Commissioner Boyles Griffin will be able to attend.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to accept the February 27, 2019 Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Gregor seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from January 16, 2019 Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Schroyer moved to approve the January 16, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Natural Heritage Program Update and the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee Update – Presentations given by Associate Director Jonathan McKnight

- Associate Director McKnight gave a presentation entitled “Maryland Natural Heritage Program” [ATTACHMENT A] to the Commission.
- The Natural Heritage Program manages non-game species and that work is guided by the Maryland Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan.
- The Natural Heritage Program has four programs.
 1. Science Program has our specialists; State Zoologist, State Botanist, State Invertebrate Zoologist and State Habitat Restoration Ecologist. With regards to restoration, the entire team participates in the restoration process. The Commission visited one of the restoration sites back in September. This group is also charged with species restoration, i.e. the blackbanded sunfish. The blackbanded sunfish at one time was populated all over the coastal plains. There is one isolated pond that has a blackbanded sunfish population in Maryland. The genetics were done on the blackbanded sunfish by Frostburg State University. The genetics are very similar to the sunfish in the sand barrens of New Jersey. Staff members are working with New Jersey and National Aquarium in Baltimore on a project to bring some of the sunfish from New Jersey to build a breeding population at the National Aquarium in Baltimore so that hopefully someday staff will be able to reintroduce the sunfish to Maryland to get it removed from the Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) List..

2. Private Lands Conservation Program coordinates the Farm Bill on the State level to bring Farm Bill funds into the State for private lands to support wildlife habitat. Glenn Carowan runs the entire program for DNR with Maryland Department Agricultural, and US Department Agricultural. These funds help Maryland farmers to execute conservation outcomes for Chesapeake Bay as it relates to water quality and wildlife enhancements along with wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities.
 3. Conservation Technology Program has the staff to bring our computer and technology to serve other programs and other units in the Department. It is part of the Nature Serve Network. The same matrix is used by every state, almost all the provinces of Canada, and 17 Latin America nations. There is BioNet resources that has been used for over hundred years. The Maryland Natural Areas are public areas for the public to observe conservation habitat and see rare species. Drone system are used to monitor wildlife population and record wetlands hydrology changes.
 4. Habitat Conservation Program has our regional ecologists who are charged with working on species on the ground and land management as it relates to restoration. Staff also handles conflict resolution from environmental review.
- Associate Director McKnight provided a brief summary of the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee.
 1. Wildlife Diversity Advisory Committee (WDAC) Chair Jim Rapp was unable to attend the February 27 WAC meeting.
 2. There are currently four members on the WDAC.
 3. State wildlife grants are submitted to the members of committee for review and approval.
 4. WDAC is marketing the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Tax Checkoff.
 5. WDAC is also working on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The Commission was actively involved in supporting the Recovering America's Wildlife Act..
 - NHP works closely with Fisheries Service on managing all RTE fish in Maryland waterways. Many of the aquatic species are on the RTE list in freshwater.
 - Chairman Compton invited Associate Director McKnight back to talk about the hellbender at the April 17, 2019 WAC meeting.

2019 Legislative Session Update – Presentation given by Associate Director Glenn Therres.

- Associate Director Therres handed out the “Summary of 2019 Proposed Legislation – Wildlife and Heritage Service (as of February 26, 2019)”. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
- Associate Director Therres provided a summary of the bills to the Commission. There were 13 House Bills and 12 Senate Bills that were wildlife related. Several of the bills were cross-filed.
 1. HB1194/SB0760 Natural Resources – Whistleblower Program – Establishment – this bill will establish a whistleblower fund, which will be a reward program for individuals reporting fishing or wildlife violation(s) that lead to a conviction. The funding mechanism in whole or part will be 25% of the restitution fund as a result of the restitution law. The 25% from the restitution fund that comes to the Wildlife and Heritage Service will go to the Whistleblower Program.
 - a. The Catch-A-Poacher Program is going away and it is being replace with Whistleblower Program that is similar to other states’ Whistleblower Programs, where a board of citizens reviews the complaints and then determines the reward. The bill will take the current restitution funding being allocated to WHS and give it to the new Whistleblower Program.
 - b. Lieutenant Charles Fawley agreed to provide the Commission an update on the new Whistleblower Program at the next meeting. The Whistleblower Program has been operating for a year.
 - c. Chairman Compton expressed that the new Whistleblower Program needs to be advertised

in the hunting community and to the citizens, letting the public be aware of the Catch-A-Poacher being eliminated and being replaced with the Whistleblower Program.

2. HB1221 Natural Resources – Hunting – Sundays – this bill authorizes the Department to establish Sunday hunting for all game species including migratory birds, keeping all the current language in law. It would add maximum of three Sundays for deer firearms season, two Sundays for deer muzzleloader season, and any Sunday for the deer archery season.
 - a. Chairman Compton indicated that this bill will continue to protect what has already been accomplished legislatively related to Sunday hunting.
 3. SB0293/HB1378 Natural Resources – Sunday Hunting – Migratory Game Birds – this bill allows any Sunday to be open to migratory game bird hunting. This bill will require an amendment to include waters of the State.
 - a. SB0293 received an unfavorable report in the Senate but HB1378 is still active. If HB1378 passes through the House, it will go to the Senate for a vote.
 - b. The difference between HB1378 and HB1221 is that HB1221 is all game species, including migratory game birds. However, HB1378 is migratory game birds only.
 - c. There were only three hunters that testified on SB0293. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation and Ducks Unlimited were also there in support of SB0293.
 - d. There are three states remaining that have a ban on Sunday hunting: Maine, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, its House just passed a Sunday hunting bill and if that bill passes through the Senate, Maryland will probably lose over a million dollars in revenue.
- The Commission can review natural resources related bills by going to <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>, then click on By Broad Subject, where you can select Natural Resources (M1) or Hunting and Fishing (M2); this will provide the list of all bills under the Department’s jurisdiction or hunting and fishing section.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update – No representative from the Maryland Farm Bureau in attendance.

Natural Resources Police Update – Presentation given by Lieutenant Charles Fawley.

- There is no new business to report. It is a slow period for hunting related items.
- Thanks to the Maryland Bowhunters Society, Garrett County Sportsmen’s Association, and Washington County Sportsmen’s Association for donating funds to NRP that secured new deer decoys.
 1. Lieutenant Fawley agreed to bring one of the deer decoys to the WAC meeting and invite the leadership members to see one of the decoys that law enforcement is now using. Chairman Compton suggested that DNR do a press release related to the donation.
- The Maryland Hunting Coalition was responsible for the Poaching Prevention Act passing, specifically, including the restitution funding to be allocated to the wildlife protection fund, which is the Wildlife and Heritage Service. If the Whistleblower Program bill passes, it will undo what the Maryland Hunting Coalition did during the 2012 Legislative Session. Most of the other states use Crime Stoppers Program that are funded through corporate sponsors like Remington Arms.

Old Business

- Discussion ensued to move the Annual Maryland Predator Hunting Competition agenda item to April 17 meeting. Ms. Fritz from HSUS will check with Commissioner Boyles Griffin to see if she is available on April 17 for the Annual Maryland Predator Hunting Competition presentation to the Commission.

New Business

- Annual Maryland Predator Hunting Competition presentation by Commissioner Boyles Griffin is tabled to the March meeting.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Weinberg moved to add Associate Director Jonathan McKnight on the April meeting agenda to discuss hellbender.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen seconded.
 3. Motion passed.

Public Comment

- Commissioner Weinberg made a request to staff about a summary of what was discussed by the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee related to the 30-day Atlantic Canada Goose Season three options. The Commission was informed by staff that the three proposals were discussed by the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee and the committee voted to support the proposal that did not include Thanksgiving.
 1. The press release link related the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons is at <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2019/02/26/input-sought-on-proposed-2019-20-migratory-game-bird-hunting-seasons/>.
 2. The Commission receives press releases via Management Assistant Tracey Spencer by email.

Other Business:

- The Commission asked for an update on the status of Commissioner Joseph T. Griffin. Management Associate Tracey Spencer reported that she has not heard from Commissioner Joseph T. Griffin.
- Commissioner Mitchell Goetze had to resign due to personal reasons from the Commission.
- There are cabinet changes: Secretary Mark Belton resigned and returned to his former position as Charles County Administrator and the newly appointed DNR Secretary is Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio. Deputy Secretary Joanne Throwe will be resigning.
- The members of the Wildlife Advisory Commission are appointed by the Governor. Staff are required to report attendance to the Appointment Office – attendance is tracked. A member of the Commission serves until he or she is replaced or reappointed.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 P.M.
The next meeting will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room; Annapolis, Maryland.

Attendance

Members:	L. Compton, T. Gregor, E. Gulbrandsen, , S. Keithley, J. Schroyer, and R. Weinberg
Absent:	J. Griffin and S. Boyles Griffin
Guest:	Jill Fritz
Staff:	C. Fawley, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, K. Stonesifer, and G. Therres