

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT
JANUARY 21, 2025 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301

Commissioners Present: R. Green, B. Temple, C. Hodgdon, E. Stohl, J. Titone, J. Caveney, P. McGonagle, G. Chandler, D. Poole & A.J. DeRosa.

Commissioners absent/excused:

Rockingham County Commissioner seat: vacant

Executive Director Simek – Present

Chairman R. Green called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner E. Stohl moved to approve the December 17, 2024 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and were noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. The Commission voted to approve these matters as presented. Commission members may remove certain items if further public input or discussion is deemed necessary.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa moved to accept consent agenda items 2a & 2d, as presented below, and Commissioner C. Hodgdon seconded.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations made to the Search & Rescue Account totaling \$2,000.00:

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|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Gerald & Heidi Little - | \$1,000.00 |
| • Frank & Marion Hauck - | <u>\$1,000.00</u> |
| | Total: \$2,000.00 |

2b.) The Commission accepted the below donations totaling \$250.00 in memory of John “Jack” Holden, who passed away on December 25, 2017 on Mt. Bond Cliff, for deposit into the Search & Rescue Account.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| • Edward & Sarah Holden - | \$150.00 |
| • Carla Rautenberg - | <u>\$100.00</u> |
| | Total: \$250.00 |

2c.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 from The Buffington Family, Enfield, NH, in memory of Raymond LeBlanc of Jaffrey, NH, for deposit in to the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of .50 cents, for overpayment on a Newborn Lifetime License, for deposit in to the Small Gifts & Donations Account.

3.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$100.00 made to the “Let’s Go Fishing” Program from Frank Dubisz, Jr., of Manchester, NH.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

- 1.) Financial Statement – Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division – there were no questions.
- 2.) Cheri Patterson, Chief, Marine Division, came before the Commission and provided an update on marine rules.
 - a.) American lobster rule changes; 1.) Increase the carapace length of lobster, and 2.) Trap tag issuance as required of the ASMFC American Lobster Fishery Management Plan.
 - b.) River Herring rule changes to reopen the fishery.

Public hearings announcement: Public Hearing on Re-Adopting Fis 602.12 Regarding Lobster Legal Length, and Re-Adopting Fis 603.01 and Adopting Fis 604.05 Regarding River Herring – NH Fish and Game Department.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Public policy development & recommendations, as well as Commission advocacy before legislature.

Commissioner Stohl, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa & McGonagle.

Staff members: Director Simek, Kevin Jordan & Marty Mobley.

Commissioner E. Stohl reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting.

The Commission took positions on the following legislation:

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-109-FN, relative to false reports to law enforcement, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-59-FN, relative to assault of a firefighter, emergency medical care provider, or law enforcement officer, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote carried with 9 in favor, 1 abstention (R. Green).

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-61, relative to creating committee to study the laws relative to oyster harvesting, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-202, relative to duties of the Fish and Game Commission, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-66-FN, relative to material subject to disclosure under the right to know law, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to opposed HB-114-FN, relative to removing fees and charges for government records under the right to know law and reinstating potential liability for disclosure of information exempt from disclosure, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-211-FN, relative to the use of air rifles for hunting game, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-74, relative to defining the term citizen for the purposes of the right to know law and including preliminary drafts circulated to a quorum of a majority of a public body as disclosable documents, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-87-FN, relative to prohibiting the posting of land not owned by the poster, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-573-FN-A, relative to the funding for search and rescue operations of the Fish and Game Department and making an appropriation therefore, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-174, relative to increasing the maximum weight of a utility terrain vehicle to 3500 pounds unladen dry weight, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote carried with 9 in favor, 1 opposed (J. Caveney).

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-127-FN, relative to extending the closing of the OHRV trails on the CT River Headwaters property from September 30 to Columbus Day, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support SB-71-FN, relative to cooperation with federal immigration authorities, and Commissioner P. McGonagle seconded. The vote carried with 8 in favor, 2 opposed (R. Green & A.J. DeRosa). Commissioner A.J. DeRosa stated, "I don't think this is necessary and it is not in the best interest of New Hampshire."

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-251-FN, relative to allowing the ownership of certain squirrels and raccoons, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote carried with 9 in favor, 1 opposed (R. Green). Commissioner A.J. DeRosa reported that the concern is rabies and felt no game animals should be allowed as pets.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-545-FN, relative to requiring certain cervid meat processed outside New Hampshire to be tested for Chronic wasting disease before being brought into New Hampshire, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support SB-51, relative to decal fees and the statewide public boat access program, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support SB-31-FN, relative to establishing an apprentice guides license, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support SB-32, relative to the Fish and Game Commission, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to add to line 29 “with approval of the Commission” and Commissioner Green seconded.

Director Simek questioned the need for that.

After brief discussion, Commissioner E. Stohl withdrew his amendment and reported that he would speak with Senator Pearl and provide him with our concerns and perhaps he would amend the language.

Commissioner R. Green withdrew his second to the amendment.

The vote to support SB-32 was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-375, relative to allowing municipalities to designate sections of state and local highways for all terrain vehicles, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-315, relative to prohibiting employees of state agencies from knowingly providing false information to a legislative committee, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-439-FN, relative to non-driving related violations and driver’s license suspensions, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-313, relative to non-public sessions at public meetings where a discussion in public would likely affect a person's reputation, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-338, relative to the authority of Fish and Game Officers, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-579, relative to requiring applicants for a Fish and Game Guide License to take and pass a standardized test provided by the Fish and Game Department before receiving their license, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-589-FN, relative to defining and prohibiting wanton animal waste and prohibiting certain wildlife hunting contests, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded.

Commissioner R. Green stated, "I could support some of the language in the bill, if it were split into two separate bills."

Director Simek reported that she met with supporters of this bill, however, agreed with Commissioner R. Green that the Department could support the bill if it had some wordsmithing.

The vote to oppose HB-589-FN was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-594, relative to the definition of a way, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to support HB-404, relative to information on the hike safe card, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-456, relative to testimony of agency employees in general court hearings, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner E. Stohl moved to oppose HB-123, relative to enabling municipalities to tax standing wood and timber on land used for carbon sequestration, and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

At this time, Commissioner E. Stohl reported that he met with Colonel Jordan to review the legislative list and pulled certain bills that do not pertain to Fish and Game.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon recommended that the Commission take a closer look at HB-522, relative to the expectation of privacy in personal information maintained by the state and HB-332, relative to allowing for the establishment of a village district to protect and remediate surface waters, and remove it from the pull list to have further review by the agency and Commission.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: Commission professional development, education & policy recommendations related to Commission conduct & activities.

Commissioner DeRosa, Chair; Commissioners: Temple, Caveney & Titone.
Staff member: Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa reported that the committee would be meeting immediately after the adjournment of today's Commission Meeting.

Chairman R. Green added Commissioner D. Poole to this committee.

SUSTAINABILITY & STRATEGIC PLANNING: Agency funding, development & oversight of strategic plan.

Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners: Caveney, DeRosa & Stohl.
Staff member: Director Simek.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that the committee met on January 3, 2025 to review Director Simek's feedback on the draft strategic plan. He reported that the committee asked that she share the draft with Senior Staff and provide feedback for review at a meeting in early February, potentially February 3, 2025, for final edits. Final draft to come before the Commission at the February 18, 2025 Commission Meeting.

RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE: Policy recommendations related to agency infrastructure; including facilities, public access, habitat & wildlife.

Commissioner McGonagle, Chair; Commissioners: DeRosa, Caveney & Temple.
Staff member: Dianne Timmins.

Commissioner P. McGonagle reported that the committee met immediately following the adjournment of the December 17, 2024 Commission Meeting and discussed the Hatchery Modernization Project. He further reported that the committee now has a Resources & Infrastructure List by county, so Commissioners are aware of what facilities are in their county.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION: Engagement, partnership, awards, public recognition & education strategies for the public & interest groups.

Commissioner DeRosa, Chair; Commissioners: McGonagle & Temple.
Staff members: Dan Bergeron, Kevin Jordan & Cheri Patterson.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa reported that the committee would be meeting at 9:00 a.m., prior to the February 18, 2025 Commission Meeting to review award nominations and select the 2024 Commission Award of Excellence winners.

SEACOAST REPORT: Commissioner J. Titone.

Commissioner J. Titone reported that in May of 2023, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Addendum XXVII, which required a series of lobster gauge and escape vent increases in order to build resiliency into the lobster stock. These changes were to be July 1, 2025. On January 9, 2025, following a public hearing, Maine's Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources decided to pull the lobster gauge increase regulation for that state. Currently, the NH Commercial Fishermen's Association and other NH fishing industry groups are lobbying state and local officials to follow Maine's lead by reversing NH's position on this regulation.

LAKES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Commissioner P. McGonagle.

Commissioner P. McGonagle reported that he was still not a voting member on the committee, however, he attended the January 16th meeting where they discussed The Shoreline Protection Act and legislation they are tracking, which can be found on the DES (Department of Environmental Services) website.

He further reported that Garret Graaskamp, Boat Access Coordinator, also sits on this committee and does a great job representing the Department.

NH RIVERS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Commissioner C. Hodgdon.

Commissioner C. Hodgdon reported that the committee met on January 14th with a lengthy agenda, tracking legislation and adopting their biennial report (a copy was provided to the full Commission).

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner J. Caveney inquired about the possibility of just seeing the changes (additions/deletions) to the WAP (Wildlife Action Plan), as it is a massive document and this would make it easier to review.

Dan Bergeron, Chief, Wildlife Division responded that the team wasn't at that stage as of yet, however, he would get back to him with an answer to that request.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS: Commissioners will report on their recent activities as it relates to Fish & Game Commission duties and responsibilities. This is an informational item only.

Commissioner J. Titone provided a follow up to last month's report regarding the issue of shoaling at the northern entrance to Seabrook Harbor. He reported that it was determined that no action will be taken to alleviate the harbor entrance silting until the Army Corps of Engineers completes its study of the problem, which could take up to three years to complete.

In addition, he reported that The New England Fisheries Management Council is looking to fill the vacancy for NH's seat on the council and that the Marine Division would be hosting a "Candidates Night" on February 10, 2025, to interview interested candidates. This will take place at the Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth, NH, at 6:00 p.m.

In closing, he reported that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission would be hosting its Lobster Stock Assessment Workshop at the Great Bay Discover Center in Greenland, NH from February 11 – 13th. These meeting will assess the health of the lobster stocks for managerial purposes and are open to the public.

DIRECTORS REPORT:

Director Simek reported that it was a busy end of the year and an extremely busy beginning to this New Year.

Recent events you have likely heard about include:

- the recent congregation of Right Whales off coast of NH and Maine
 - Department has been working with partners to notify lobster and fishermen and women.
- Additionally, you may have heard that NHF&G is proposing fish rule changes particularly around trout fishing and fly fishing. This is not accurate. The Department is not proposing rule changes now, merely gathering information and meeting with a variety of user groups to gather input. Also, the department has been invited by groups to provide background information on the changes that were discussed last summer. For clarification, last summer the proposals were considered to provide more opportunity during the time we have lower stocking due to the new hatchery build. Clarification, no proposals are being made and it will be some time before anything may be proposed, as we anticipate the next year we will spend gathering information.
- There are rules in FIS 400 that expire this year and those rules will come before the Commission in late summer so that we can have them reinstated for the upcoming year. We are not considering changes...just reinstatement.

We will send a list of the expiring rules to you and post those on our website.

- You likely have heard of numerous hiker rescues, meetings around environmental permitting with emphasis on the Alteration of Terrain permits. I will speak on these items in my report.

Wildlife Division:

Habitat Update

1. The Wildlife Habitat Program published its latest interactive accomplishment report Some quick highlights include:

- Forest management operations to enhance wildlife habitat will happen on seven Fish & Game properties.
- Eight land conservation projects are in the works.
- Staff continue work to repair 11 miles of roads that were damaged by the last summer at the Department’s 25,000-acre CT Lakes Natural Area in Pittsburg

Nongame Program Update

1. The NH Fish and Game Department received notice that we were selected to receive a 2.6 million dollar nationally competitive grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through federal *American the Beautiful* funding.
 - a. The effort is to restore habitat connectivity and reduce roadkill mortality for imperiled wildlife.
 - b. This project will focus on restoring habitat connectivity to benefit at risk wildlife, while also assisting some communities with flood hazard and safety concerns.
 - c. Most of the funds will be passed through to local community project managers to execute the projects.
 - d. Project contracts will go through Governor & Council approval at a later date.

Game Program

1. Wildlife Division has 2 concurrent items that involve public participation.

Both the 10-year revision of the Big Game Management Plan and the biennial rulemaking process.

These both involve scheduling public hearings and public input sessions to gather public opinion.

During Feb Commission meeting staff will introduce draft proposed rules and in March bring forward the final draft for consideration with an intended vote in April.

2. Wildlife Division Biologist have begun establishing waterfowl capture sites as part of ongoing winter waterfowl work. Waterfowl will be captured for banding, GPS data logger attachment (hen mallards only) and avian influenza surveillance. These activities are performed annually to monitor waterfowl status, activity patterns, health, and population dynamics.

Law Enforcement Division:

1. Conservation Officers have responded to a number of search and rescue calls and OHRV Accidents over the past couple of weeks. These would include:

- A hiker in extreme distress who had spent the night on MT Haystack during a recent snowstorm and was suffering from hypothermia due to extreme wind and cold. We partnered with the National Guard Helicopter flew to airlift this hiker out, our team located the hiker and kept him alive until the weather cleared for a very fast lift and flight to Littleton Regional Hospital. This hiker will survive but will most likely lose limbs.
- An injured climber suffered significant injuries after surviving a 60-foot fall in Harts Location while ice climbing. He was carried out to safety and received extensive medical treatment for his injuries.
- Responded to a snow machine accident that occurred on Lower Haystack Trail off Bear Notch Road. A female was operating with her ten-year-old son on board. The

machine left the trail and struck a tree. The female was injured but her son was uninjured. She was transported out two miles out to a waiting ambulance.

- Responded to an electric Dirt Motorcycle crash that injured two juveniles who were riding it at the time of the crash. The bike was being operated along Main Street in Conway along the sidewalk when they lost control. Both juveniles are expected to make a full recovery.
- Conducted an extended search for a missing male adult from Peterborough who had walked away from his residence this week. This individual was being treated and monitored for extreme emotional challenges and he walked away and stayed out overnight. Fortunately, this individual was located by our teams and brought out to safety. It was determined he had hiked approximately six miles from the point last seen. He received medical treatment for cold weather exposure.

2. Conservation Officers are continuing with various whitetail deer and bear investigations left over from hunting season.

Public Affairs Division:

1. Public Affairs Education Program Volunteer Data for 2024
Volunteer Hours Converted to Dollars

TOTAL - \$630,026.76

This translates into \$1,890,080.20 the department could bring in in federal funding when used as in-kind match

2. Through a combination of grants, donations, and in-kind match, Public Affairs staff are able to continue upgrading the Discovery Room and the interpretive pond out in front of Fish and Game headquarters. Changes will be made gradually during the year.
3. The Saltwater and Freshwater Digests have been published and distributed to license agents and our Fish and Game offices.

Business Division:

1. The Business Division's Licensing Section is excited to announce the deployment, January 7, 2025, of the newly added feature of our online licensing system which prohibits customers from purchasing hunting and fishing licenses if they are under suspension from any state. This is a requirement as part of the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact.
2. Business Division Financial staff are currently undergoing an audit of some of our Fish and Wildlife grants.

Inland Fisheries Division:

1. Inland Fisheries Staff are working on entering the bass tournament applications for the lottery.
2. Fish Habitat Program is organizing a meeting with aquatic restoration partners to discuss acquired funding and project prioritization.

3. Inland Fisheries staff are continuing to make recommendations intended to improve fish passage and reduce impacts from hydropower projects on rivers.
4. MWH Construction will be setting up their work trailer and demolition for the New Hampton Hatchery Modernization Project will begin at the end of January.
5. Other Inland Fisheries Programs are continuing to work on data analysis and report writing from their past field season.

Human Resources:

1. Human Resource is actively recruiting to fill vacant positions. Working to get the vacancies filled as quickly as possible.

Marine Division:

1. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
 - Attended a Striped Bass Management Board meeting to determine if further emergency management measures were needed to address overfished status. The Striped Bass Management Board decided to go through an addendum process for further development of management measures starting in 2026.
 - Attended a Northern Shrimp Section meeting to discuss continuing the moratorium on Northern shrimp fishery through the 2025 fishing year. The Section approved for public comment Draft Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp to consider options managing the shrimp population and fishery.
 - ASMFC associated rule changes:
 - Opened access to fishing for river herring in 2025 after a four-year closure, which Cheri spoke about along with the other rule changes.
2. New England Fisheries Management Council meetings:
 - Joint Habitat Committee / Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee
 - Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team
 - Starting to process variety of biological samples and data collected from 2024 for federal reporting requirements.
3. Attended a variety of meetings:
 - Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team – update on monitoring of North Atlantic Right Whales.
 - Atlantic Large Whale Passive Acoustic Monitoring coordination meeting with NE states and NOAA.
 - Fish and Game Commission meeting plus various Commission committee meetings

Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR):

1. GBNERR hosted a workshop that brought social scientists together with natural resource managers, extension professionals, and environmental educators to summarize social science that was conducted in or relevant to NH professionals. Topics included:
 - Conceptual frameworks for motivating behavior change
 - Documenting public opinions to guide programs and influence policy

- Understanding and building loyalty among visitors and volunteers
 - Social science for communications and messaging
2. The GBNERR Education team hosted a winter "Pajama party" for young children and parents. This evening program welcomed families for a nature themed story and craft on December 22, 2024.
 3. The GBNERR Staff are working on four federal grant reports, the Estuarine and Salt Marsh threat Assessments and Habitat Profiles for the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan Update, and have assisted with five grant applications that are being submitted by partners for Great Bay related research, restoration and land protection projects.

Federal Aid:

1. The Department received notice of the final FY25 apportionments under the Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) and Sport Fish Restoration (Dingell-Johnson) programs from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This funding is available for addition to new or ongoing grants to support the agency’s work. In a typical state fiscal year, federal reimbursements from Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grants provide over 70% of all federal revenue to the Department and between 20-25% of all revenue.

The final amounts apportioned to NH for federal FY25 are:

Sport Fish Restoration \$4,163,828
 Wildlife Restoration \$5,396,808

2. Department received a partial FY25 State Wildlife Grant (SWG) apportionment of \$228,546 under the authorities provided in the Federal Continuing Resolution to support grants for species of concern. This amount is about 42% of the FY24 appropriation.

Director’s Office:

1. Department will start video recording the Fish & Game Commission Meetings in January.
2. NHFG is developing joint initiatives with DES and DNCR focusing on aligning environmental review processes with the environmental permitting processes.
3. Department participated in a meeting hosted by Executive Councilor Steven on the AoT permits and process with developers and realtors. We are also meeting with other stakeholder groups and developer organizations to further gain feedback from those users.
4. Attended Governor and Council meetings, met with the Governor’s team, and engaging in legislative activities.
5. Senior Staff will be attending a team building retreat on January 24th at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Facility.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Representative Catherine Harvey, representing Cheshire 6, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak and stated, “I am the co-sponsor of HB-202, relative to the duties of the Fish and Game Commission, which you opposed. I want to explain the reason why I put this bill in, it is to help

the agency and Commission become more efficient. It is not a hunting or conservation type bill, it is simply an efficiency bill.

She reported that she has been attending Commission Meetings for approximately 6 or 8 years and has seen things not happen because of the way the Commission is designed. She elaborated that she has seen land not be purchased due to the slow process and the landowner donated it to someone else, watched waterways not become part of the agency, and feels we need more access to waterways. She stated that it was very difficult for any organization to function in an efficient manner when headed up by 11 people and did not know any that have a governing body this large.

In closing, she stated, "I say, with all due respect, deep respect for what you do, that it may be time to think about that in some way. I have heard accolades from all parties regarding the Executive Director you have hired and think maybe it's time you allow her to do what you hired her to do. I wanted to explain my intent behind the bill and that in supporting it, I in no way disrespect what you do."

Gary Stevens, Wakefield, NH – thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. Gary spoke to his concerns over the lack of access to Dan Hole Pond, as you can no longer drive through the campground to access it, as it has new owners and has switched hands.

He further spoke regarding bear permits for hunters with dogs and stated that he does not fill the application out online, therefore, he would like to see a return/confirmation of some sort be implemented and sent to the hunter to confirm that it was in received.

In closing, he spoke to the pheasant program and safety concerns on stocking days over hunters with dogs lined up and waiting over the crates to hunt pheasant. He encouraged the Commission to go out on stocking days to witness it for themselves. He believes it was better when hunters didn't know when stocking was taking place, and was safer for all parties.

Steve Angers, Conway, NH – thanked the Director for her willingness to come to a meet & greet on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., with the NH State Council on Trout Unlimited, being held at Northwoods Brewing Company, Northwood, NH, which is open to the angling public, not just Trout Unlimited members.

Commissioner R. Green asked Commissioner P. McGonagle to represent the Commission at this meet & greet with Trout Unlimited, with Commissioner D. Poole as a back-up if Commissioner P. McGonagle is unable to attend.

At this time Commissioner E. Stohl moved to appoint Chairman R. Green, Colonel Jordan, Director Simek, and himself, to address all emergency situations relative to legislative matters and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

At 2:25 p.m., Commissioner E. Stohl moved to adjourn and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Ray Green, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission