

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

December 21, 2023 to January 20, 2024

Jason Hearon, Bureau Chief
Tyler Kinney, Habitat Planner
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner

HABITAT PLANNING

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney began planning for spring upland habitat management. Plans were developed for contract farmers to plant in Higbee Beach, Tuckahoe, and Dennis Creek Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). Boom mowing plans were developed for Egg Island and DoD Ponds. Our annual spring planting meeting was held between Planner, Regional Superintendent, and Crew Supervisors.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney has begun calculating 2024 spring seed orders. Quotes will be obtained for Sorghum, Buckwheat, and Pollinator Mix.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is working with the Regional Superintendent to complete a CBT-M habitat management plan for the Stadnick property in the Winslow WMA. A field overgrown with invasive woody vegetation will be reclaimed and planted with warm season grasses. A parking lot will be installed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney sent 2024 Farm Lease In-Kind Services via certified mail and email to all southern region tenants.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding the Glassboro WMA restoration. An onsite meeting with WSP and fence contractors was held. Fence installation mobilization began on 01/22. Installation will begin shortly and is expected to last several weeks.

Coastal Unit

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding the Pond Creek Marsh restoration project. Documents were submitted to proceed with the WMA closure. Several planning documents were reviewed.

The Fish and Wildlife website is in the process of being updated with recent project information. A townhall-style meeting is to be scheduled by the project team. WMA habitat management signs will be posted on site on 01/29.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney reviewed updated documents for the TNC Marsh Restoration Pipeline Project. A meeting is scheduled for 01/29.

All Regions

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney organized the 2024 Statewide Habitat Management meeting between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Non-Game Endangered Species Program (ENSP) staff. A powerpoint presentation was developed. The meeting is scheduled for 01/25.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney provided comments on State Wildlife Action Plan Priorities.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney provided comment on a recent legislative bill regarding forest management.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is developing a final report for the RESTORX grant.

Northern Region

After reviewing funding availability, herbicide treatments of invasive species will be conducted at Amwell Lake, Baldwin Lake, the Hyperhumus section of the Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMA in 2024. Contracts are being finalized with Solitude Lake Management and projects are pending Land Management Review.

Maps, parcel tables, and preliminary screenings were completed for permit notifications for upcoming herbicide treatments at the following WMAs: Amwell Lake, Baldwin Lake, Beaver Brook, Belvidere Access, Black River, Columbia, Honey Run, Paulinskill River, Rockaway River, Ryker Lake, Weldon Brook, and White Lake.

In-kind assignments for 2024 were sent to northern farm lease tenants via email and certified mail.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner assisted with pheasant stocking at the Medford WMA.

Maps, parcel tables, and preliminary screenings were completed for permit notifications for upcoming herbicide treatments at the Assunpink and Manahawkin WMAs.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting with staff from the Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems regarding the GIS habitat patch file.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting for the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration Project at Higbee Beach WMA.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a BLM budget meeting.

New "Habitat Work In Progress" and "No Picking Wildflower" signs were shipped to each region.

Early successional and pollinator planting acreages were updated for annual and cumulative totals for the northern and central regions.

NORTHERN REGION

Anthony McBride, Regional Superintendent

Jim Hartobey, Crew Supervisor
Robert Bodnar, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Mark DeVito, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Trevor Hull, Heavy Equipment Operator
Vacant, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Christopher Murphy, Crew Supervisor
Bill DeYoung, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Septembio Garo, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Jonathan Kenney, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Nick Yanuzzelli, Wildlife Worker
Jonathan Kaye, Wildlife Worker

Crews continue with lot clean ups, equipment maintenance, and road maintenance at northern region WMAs.

Staff continue to push forward with habitat improvements: work continues at Columbia, Beaver Brook, Berkshire Valley, Flatbrook/Roy, Clinton, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff completed stocking fields for pheasant season on northern region WMAs and then conducted after season cleanups and prepared boxes for delivery.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey prepared seed orders for spring habitat planting.

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey, Wildlife Worker Nicholas Yanuzzelli, and Heavy Equipment Operator Trevor Hull removed creek blockages at the Buckhorn Creek WMA to stop flooding of neighboring properties.

Crew Supervisor Christopher Murphy and Heavy Equipment Operator Trevor Hull repaired roads at the Musconetcong River and Whittingham WMAs that had been damaged due to heavy rainfall and localized flooding.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride attended a site visit to the Warren Mills Dam with contractors to conduct a dam inspection.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride met with representatives of The Nature Conservancy about the possibility of routing the new 9-11 trail through a portion of the Columbia WMA.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride, Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey, and Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner discussed next steps for scheduled invasive plant control on several northern WMAs.

CENTRAL REGION

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent

Wendy Barbuck, Agency Services Rep. 1

Bill Torry, Crew Supervisor WMAs

Vacant, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Zachary Mahon, Wildlife Worker

Tim Ruth, Wildlife Worker

Brian Kubin, Crew Supervisor

Anthony Carben, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Vacant, Wildlife Worker

Robert Madden, Heavy Equipment Operator

Central region crews continue performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs.

Crews finished stocking Pheasant and Quail according to the 2023 schedule.

Interviews were completed for a Wildlife Worker Position for the Colliers Mills Crew. A candidate was selected and will begin work 1/27/2024.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Forked River Mountain POWWOW.

Crews performed snow removal activities within the Region when appropriate.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler submitted the OSHA quarterly reports.

Staff participated in round 2 of the Statewide Priority Threats survey for the NJ Wildlife Action Plan.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the OTPLA quarterly meeting.

The following groups and activities utilized the Assunpink Conservation Center and the Central Office Meeting Room during this reporting period:

NJSFSC State
SWAP TAG Meeting
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
CLUE Bureau Meeting
OIS
NJSFSC BOD
Fresh Water Fisheries
Waste & UST Division Staff Meeting
NWTF
4-H
NJSFSC
Fish and Game Council Meeting
I & E

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent

Brad Heffley, Crew Supervisor
Sean Clayton, Sr. Wildlife Worker

Dan Baker, Crew Supervisor
Steve Dobrosky, Heavy Equipment Operator
Jennings Jones, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Erin Peek, Heavy Equipment Operator

Mason Reeves, Crew Supervisor
Nicholas Carros, Sr. Wildlife Worker
Ben Keys, Wildlife Worker
Jeffrey Wettstein, Sr. Repairer
Rich Ingraldi, Wildlife Worker

Seasonal - Curt Riggins

Southern region crews continue performing routine trash clean-up at boat ramps, shooting ranges, and other high use WMAs.

Road Crew staff are working on roads in the Glassboro WMA. This job hasn't progressed much, due to the wet weather we have been dealing with. While waiting for drier conditions, staff have been clearing roadside culvert pipes, addressing erosion gulleys that formed at boat ramps, and prepping areas for future work. Two future projects include enhancing parking lots at Stephen's and Maple Lakes. Part of these projects is the installation of floating docks to allow boaters to tie-up pre-/post launch.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits consistent with the latest State issued Covid-19 related Executive Orders.

Staff cleaned and moved pheasant crates into a barn located on the Dix WMA. Quail boxes were also cleaned and moved to this location.

Staff are working with the Offices of Resource Development (ORD) to complete repairs on the Maskells Mill, Shaws Mill, and Harrisonville Lake Dams.

Staff have been preparing for a restoration project associated with Pond Creek in the Higbee Beach WMA. A portion of this WMA will be closed from January 29, 2024, through December 2026. If the project finishes prior to that, it will be reopened earlier.

Staff have been working with ORD to remove two derelict buildings from WMAs. By the end of February, both demos are expected to be complete. Once demolished, Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley will inspect the location to determine if the footprint could be developed into a parking area.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley attended the Wharton State Forest Road Planning Meeting. State Forest Staff met with constituents to discuss the plan and took comments.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley Provided monthly report to Dam Safety for the no name dam located on Salem River WMA.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, Bureau of Law Enforcement, NJSFSC, Higbee Beach Project Meeting, BLM/ENSP meeting, habitat planning meeting.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

Nothing to report this period.