

# **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

January 21, 2024 to February 20, 2024

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

## **HABITAT PLANNING**

Tyler Kinney

### **Southern Region**

Tyler Kinney continued planning for spring upland habitat management. Purchase orders have been placed for Sorghum/Buckwheat mix and Pollinator Mix. A purchase order is currently being drafted for contract farmer labor to assist with planting activities.

Tyler Kinney is working with the Regional Superintendent to complete a CBT-M habitat management plan for the Stadnick property in the Winslow Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The plan was drafted and submitted into Land Management Review, with a review completion date in early March.

Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding the Glassboro WMA restoration project. Fence installation has been postponed, with an estimated mobilization date of 02/27. A quote for the purchase and installation of plants was obtained, and Fish and Wildlife staff will meet to discuss the next steps.

Tyler Kinney submitted responses to the State Wildlife Action Plan Survey.

Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with Whibco staff to discuss interests in the Millville WMA.

Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding farm leases, including notification issues with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration and a small reclaim on a routinely farmed lease field in the Raccoon Creek WMA.

Tyler Kinney is coordinating with South Jersey Waterfowlers to attend their March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and discuss the construction and placement of wood duck boxes on southern region WMAs.

### **Coastal Unit**

Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding the Pond Creek Restoration Project. A pre-con and public meeting was attended on February 8<sup>th</sup>. A presentation was given to Fish and Wildlife staff on February 12<sup>th</sup>. A meeting was held onsite with a reporter on February 14<sup>th</sup> to cover the project. Weekly check-in meetings were attended. Several public inquiries were responded to.

Tyler Kinney attended a meeting and reviewed updated documents for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Marsh Restoration Pipeline Project. A meeting is scheduled for 02/28.

Tyler Kinney attended a Saltmarsh Sparrow & Black Rail workgroup meeting.

Tyler Kinney attended a DEP Wetland Team Meeting.

Tyler Kinney drafted language on Abbotts Meadow and Heislerville WMAs beneficial use placements for the Commissioner's office.

Tyler Kinney registered for the NJ Coastal Resilience Collaborative seminar to speak on a panel regarding beneficial use projects.

Tyler Kinney is coordinating with Duck Unlimited to facilitate desktop analyses of the Mannington Meadows area, in hopes to pursue a restoration project at this site.

### **All Regions**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the 2024 Statewide Habitat Management meeting between BLM and ENSP staff. A presentation was given on conducting habitat management on WMAs.

Tyler Kinney completed and submitted the final report for the RESTORX grant.

Tyler Kinney submitted responses to the State Wildlife Action Plan Survey.

Tyler Kinney attended a Conservation Collaborative meeting to discuss habitat projects with NGOs on wildlife management areas.

Tyler Kinney attended a meeting to discuss "Northern Forest Funding Opportunities" through USFWS.

Tyler Kinney attended the ACJV Review Webinar.

Melissa Woerner

### **Northern Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting with TNC and WSP to discuss Land Management Review comments for the Hyperhumus restoration project at the Paulinskill River WMA. Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner also attended two bi-weekly status call meetings.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the Conservation Collaborative meeting to discuss a potential RCPP grant proposal for the Hyperhumus restoration project.

Contracts were completed and signed for upcoming herbicide treatments at the White Lake, Paulinskill River, Baldwin Lake, and Amwell Lake WMAs with contract vendor Solitude Lake Management.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner scheduled a planning meeting for the northern region to discuss 2024 habitat projects and funding needs.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner obtained a cost estimate from WSP to delineate wetlands at a potential field reclamation site at Pequest WMA.

### **Central Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the NJ Black Rail/Saltmarsh Sparrow meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner met with a representative from the American Woodcock Society at the Prospertown Lake WMA to discuss a potential volunteer tree planting this spring.

Contracts were completed and signed for upcoming herbicide treatments at the Manahawkin and Assunpink WMAs with contract vendor Solitude Lake Management.

An edited draft of the Greenwood Forest WMA Natural Resource Stewardship Plan was sent back to Pine Creek Forestry for review. Updated DPA paperwork was obtained, and an PO was requested for the completion of the draft plan.

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

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been developing spring planting plans for the central region and obtaining seed quotes.

### **All Regions/Miscellaneous**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting with the Endangered and Non-Game Species Program (ENSP) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff to discuss statewide habitat projects and partnership projects. Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner presented on various habitat projects in the northern and central regions.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner was a guest speaker at the Somerset County Vo-Tech High School's Agricultural Science and 4-H Career Day.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture 2024 Kick-Off Webinar.

## **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 the Columbia, Beaver Brook, Berkshire Valley, Flatbrook/Roy, Clinton, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff have begun mowing fields now that small game season has concluded.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

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

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey and Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride met with representatives from the Office of Resource Development (ORD) and Bureau of Dam Safety (BDS) to plan the decommissioning of the Buckhorn Creek WMA dam.

Heavy Equipment Operator Trevor Hull repaired roads at Musconetcong 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 and property owners to discuss next steps for the dam decommissioning.

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

Northern Region staff met with Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner to discuss habitat plans for this year.

Crew Supervisor Chris Murphy worked with fisheries staff on the spring trout stocking schedule.

## **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  
Brian Hankins, Wildlife Worker  
Robert Madden, Heavy Equipment Operator

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Board of Directors Meeting at the Horse Park of New Jersey and for the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education representing Fish and Wildlife.

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

Crews are preparing fire breaks to conduct prescribed burning at WMAs throughout the Central Region in coordination with the New Jersey (NJ) Forest Fire Service.

The feasibility study to dredge Lake Assunpink has been completed. We are awaiting the final report from the consultant. The main focus of the project is to optimize largemouth bass habitat within Lake Assunpink, one of NJ's Lunker Bass lakes.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Capital Improvement Program quarterly coordination meeting.

Plans are being finalized for spring plantings and field work for the coming season.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the kickoff meeting for the design of a replacement bulkhead for Sedge Island WMA.

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

Mosquito Control Commission Meeting  
ENSAC  
Law Enforcement  
Bureau of Land Management  
NJ Licensed Site Remediation Professional Assoc Board Meeting  
NJSFSC State  
Deer Project  
NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Club  
Underground Storage Tank  
NJSFSC BOD  
ENSP-BLM Biologist Habitat Meeting  
SMCC EUA Meeting  
Bass Nation  
WRAC  
ENSP Staff Meeting  
Capital Improvement Program Coordination Meeting  
4-H  
Deer Depredation / ELS  
NJ Stated Federation of Sportsman  
NJSFSC BOD

## **SOUTHERN REGION**

### **Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent**

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

Vacant, 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

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

Road Crew staff continue working on roads in the Glassboro WMA. A trapper helped alleviate some of the issues beavers were causing along Carpenter Ave. Erosion gulleys continue to be problems at boat ramps and staff have been addressing as concerns are reported by the public and/or Fish and Wildlife staff.

Steve Dobrosky is putting together specs for a lowboy trailer to be used in conjunction with the semi.

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

Staff continue working with ORD to complete repairs on the Maskells Mill, Shaws Mill, and Harrisonville Lake Dams. A consultant has inspected these dams and is working on putting together a quote to repair them.

Staff participated in the Pond Creek Restoration pre-construction and public meetings, held at the Cape May Point Firehall and Lower Township Town Hall respectively. The contractor has started work at this location, which will continue for the next two years. A 290-acre portion of the Higbee Beach WMA will be off limits during the construction period.

Staff worked with ORD to demolish two derelict buildings. One of the buildings was located on the Port Republic WMA and the other on the Tuckahoe WMA.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley worked with the Bureau of Law Enforcement on two vehicles that became stuck on WMAs. The drivers of these vehicles were both operating vehicles where they are not allowed and became stuck. A tow company was called to remove them, and proper fines were issued. Also working with Law Enforcement to stop vehicles that have been driving through fields, leaving 6-8" deep ruts and several encroachment cases.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley is working with volunteer groups to plan cleanups on WMAs in several different southern region counties. In addition to working with the volunteers, County and Township partners have also been brought in on the efforts.

Docks for Maple and Stephen Lakes have been delivered. Staff will install the docks in March.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley submitted multiple equipment orders and is working on several more. Equipment includes vehicles, zeroturn mowers, loader, mini-excavator, plows, and UTV.

Received additional materials for the sign shop to continue making WMA signs. In addition to the sign boards, seasonals working at the sign shop also fabricate the 4x6 posts, routing a groove for the sign boards and painting. To increase productivity, specs for a forklift have been created and will be bid out.

The Bureau would like to thank Dan Baker for his 26 years of service, he retired at the beginning of this reporting period. Jeff Wettstein is also planning on retiring at the end of February after 32 years of service.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, Bureau of Law Enforcement, NJSFSC, Higbee Beach Project Meeting

## **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION**

### **LAND ACQUISITIONS**

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

Nothing to report this period.