

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

February 21, 2024 to March 20, 2024

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

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

A planning meeting was held with Regional Superintendents and Crew Supervisors to discuss 2024 habitat projects and funding needs in the northern region. A spreadsheet was finalized and sent to Assistant Director Jason Hearon detailing FY24 projects, staff responsibilities, and cost estimates.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting with the Office of Transactions and Public Land Administration (OTPLA) to discuss a northern farm lease.

Purchase orders were secured for herbicide treatment of Japanese barberry at the White Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and a wetlands delineation project at the Pequest WMA.

Four projects were submitted for Land Management Review: Japanese Barberry Treatment Plan at the White Lake WMA, Invasive Species Treatment Plan at the Amwell Lake WMA, Invasive Species Treatment Plan at the Baldwin Lake WMA, and Hypericum Invasive Species Treatment Plan at the Paulinskill River WMA.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner conducted field visits at the Stafford Forge and Greenwood Forest WMAs with a contractor to discuss spring planting plans and assess field conditions. A purchase order was secured for C. Creamer Land Services to plant approximately 37 acres of fields for wildlife food plots.

The NJ W-79-R-1 Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Evaluation grant was successfully extended to 12/31/25. This extension will allow Rutgers University to conduct post-restoration avian surveys in the fall of 2025 at the Manahawkin WMA. Pre-construction spring avian surveys are currently underway.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a drone flight at the Colliers Mills WMA in conjunction with an on-going fence lizard research project conducted by Rutgers University.

Seed estimates and phone quotes for spring plantings in the central region were completed. Purchase orders were requested to buy seed from two vendors for planting approximately 93 acres of fields that will benefit a variety of wildlife, including game species, pollinators, and early successional species.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the State Contract Manager and delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA) Training webinar.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a quarterly meeting between Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Land Resource Protection to discuss permitting needs for habitat and maintenance projects on WMAs.

The Division of Information Technology (DOIT) upgraded Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner's laptop to Windows 11.

Southern Region Habitat Management

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney created additional plans for spring upland habitat management including boom mowing in the Tuckahoe, Hammonton Creek, Dennis Creek, Makepeace Lake, and Glassboro WMAs. The contractor is working on providing a quote.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney tended to several matters regarding the Glassboro WMA restoration project. A field visit was attended with contractors. Fence installation is currently underway. A purchase order was procured for planting activities.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with the South Jersey Waterfowlers. Several matters were discussed including habitat management in waterfowl impoundments and conducting managed youth hunts. Follow up will be conducted on the possibility of pursuing these activities.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney has scheduled a meeting with Solitude Lake Management to begin planning for Fall 2024 phragmites treatments.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney created blanket permit submittals for the treatment of Wisteria in the Dennis Creek WMA.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney has begun the process of reprocurring the T2931 Custom Farm Services Contract.

Coastal Unit

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to attend weekly meetings on the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration Project. The project team is currently coordinating to navigate hurdles related to dynamic compaction efforts.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting and reviewed updated documents for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Marsh Restoration Pipeline Project.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a site meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) staff to review the dredging project at the mouth of the Maurice River.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to work with Rutgers to update the Manahawkin Restoration monitoring task order to add additional monitoring efforts.

All Regions

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the 2024 New Jersey Coastal & Climate Resilience Conference. Time was spent learning about coastal habitat management projects and speaking on a panel of restoration practitioners.

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

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a meeting to discuss "Northern Forest Funding Opportunities" through The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

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, Clinton, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued mowing fields and conducting prescribed burns with the cooperation of NJ Forest Fire Service (NJFFS) in preparation for habitat work this season.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

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

Staff began preseason stocking of trout the week of March 18th.

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

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride continued to work on dam decommissioning, including Warren Mills Dam and Buckhorn Creek Dam in Warren County and Rockafellows Mills Dam in Hunterdon County.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride met with representatives of Three Sisters Farm to discuss implementation of an organic farming lease at the Whittingham WMA.

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

CENTRAL REGION

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent

Wendy Barbuck, Agency Services Rep. 3

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 and conducted prescribed burning at WMAs throughout the Central Region in coordination with the NJFFS.

Crews are preparing for trout stocking season, getting vehicles ready, reviewing the routes and the stops.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Barnegat Bay Lighthouse restoration meeting.

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

Staff constructed the exhibit walls and displayed the mounts for the 2024 Deer Classic.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Northern Region Habitat Planning Meeting.

Staff are preparing the Pheasant/Quail stocking schedule for 2024.

Staff attended the 2024 virtual Trout Meeting.

Staff met with the Office of Resource Development (ORD) to prepare the bid specifications for the Manahawkin Impoundment Project. This project will replace failing water control structures and enable water levels to be manipulated for habitat management within the impoundments. This is a joint project with Ducks Unlimited. We are hoping for a fall 2024 installation.

Staff had a planning call with the Pinelands Commission regarding permit requirements for the removal of a section of road within the Greenwood WMA. A long-term beaver/culvert issue has been causing flooding which is impacting rare plant survival.

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

NJ State Federation Sportsman's Club
Mosquito Control
[State Parks, Forests, and Historic Sites](#)
HOFNOD Leader Gathering
United Bow Hunters of NJ
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
Wildlife Website
NJSFSC BOD
SWAP Technical Advisory Group
Beaver / Otter Check

Hunter Education
BLM – ORD
4-H
Game Code Meeting
DEP - ASU/DATABASE MEETING
OIS
Fish and Game Council Meeting
Waterfowl Stamp Committee
Hunter Ed / R3 Website Meeting
Health & Forensics Progress and Planning Meeting
NJSFSC State

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. The weather slowed progress here, but upon entering the WMA vast improvements will be noticed. Some sections of the roads still have potholes, staff are waiting on a contractor to deliver material to address them. Staff also met with a contractor that will be boom mowing the Glassboro WMA roads.

Staff requested quotes for road material to be used at the DOD Ponds WMA. Work is expected to begin here in April. A contractor is currently boom mowing the roads at this location in preparation for the roadwork.

A UTV was purchased to help with maintenance of all WMAs in the Southern Region, but primarily to be used at the Cox Hall Creek and Higbee Beach WMAs. These WMAs both have narrow trails that aren't wide enough for pickup trucks to safely navigate. The UTV will allow staff to easily access the more interior areas to keep up with maintenance.

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 participate in weekly construction meetings regarding the Pond Creek Project. The contractor was having issues with some sign postings being stolen and/or removed by forces extreme wind/water forces.

Land Management Staff member Nick Carros provided the contractor with sign posts that New Jersey Fish & Wildlife uses in some of these dynamic environments.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley is coordinating with the National Wild Turkey Federation on seed orders for the Southern Region.

Staff prepped field areas and coordinated prescribed burning activities with NJFFS.

Staff reviewed the trout stocking schedule and assigned staff to various runs within the Southern Region.

Rich Ingraldi developed a parking area improvement plan for the Featherbed Lane WMA. Work on this location will begin this week. The parking area serves as an important vantage point for birders to view grassland nesting species.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley met with ORD staff to discuss the installation of gas and diesel pumps at the Southern Region Office. Project was submitted to LMR for comment.

Jeff Wettstein has officially retired 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.