

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

August 21, 2024 to September 20, 2024

Vacant, Bureau Chief
Tyler Kinney, Habitat Planner
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended two bi-weekly status calls for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner also attended a call to discuss rare plant concerns for the permitting process. Phase I surveys for dwarf wedgemussel and bog turtles determined the project area to contain unsuitable habitat for both species. The Flood Hazard Area (FHA) permit was issued; the Freshwater Wetlands permit is on hold pending completion of rare plant surveys and compliance documentation. Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner is now assisting with documentation that needs to be filed per the FHA permit conditions.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner confirmed 2024 in-kind assignments were completed for farm leases in the northern region.

Approximately 10 acres of invasive phragmites were treated with an herbicide by a contractor at the Hyperhumus section of the Paulinskill River WMA.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner conducted a site visit to the Greenwood Forest WMA with a contractor to evaluate fields for fall wildlife food plot plantings. A funding request was submitted for seed purchase and hiring the contractor for field preparation and planting operations. Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA) paperwork was updated with the seed vendor.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner reviewed a draft report from Rutgers University for the pre-construction vegetation, seed bank, and avian community surveys at the Manahawkin WMA.

Approximately 34 acres of invasive phragmites were treated with an herbicide by a contractor at the Manahawkin WMA.

A draft of the Greenwood Forest Natural Resource Stewardship Plan was sent to Pine Creek Forestry with guidance on how to address internal stakeholder comments.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting to work on Statewide Action Plan (SWAP) action items.

A blanket permit application for maintenance of existing facilities on WMAs was issued.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Land Resource Protection (LRP) quarterly coordination meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner was interviewed for an upcoming New Jersey Fish and Wildlife (NJF&W) video about early successional habitat work on WMAs.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Wetlands Team meeting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a meeting regarding the Land Management Review process.

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region Habitat Management

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is overseeing ongoing fall habitat management operations. Fields will be planted in Forage Oats, Crimson Clover, and Rapeseed Mix in the Tuckahoe, Maple Lake, Winslow, Dennis Creek, Heislerville, Millville, Dix, and Peaslee WMAs. Various fields and edges across these WMAs will be boom mowed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is coordinating invasive species management in the Abbotts Meadow and Tuckahoe WMAs. Treatment of phragmites via herbicide at the Abbotts Meadow marsh restoration site was completed on September 18th. Mowing of phragmites along the Tuckahoe WMA impoundment dikes is ongoing. Treatment of phragmites via herbicide in the Tuckahoe WMA impoundments is expected to begin September 30th.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order for fall seedling planting in the Glassboro WMA. Planting activities are expected to begin and be completed in October 2024.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended the southern region Sportsmen Federation meeting. Several habitat initiatives were discussed. A project to investigate the potential to create grassland in the Winslow WMA was discussed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney updated language in the Farm Service Contract and resubmitted to Treasury for bid solicitation.

Coastal Unit

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to attend bi-weekly meetings on the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration Project. The project team is discussing technical details of planting the southern portion of the site in the Spring of 2025. Additionally, a meeting is being planned between NJF&W, NJDEP Coastal Engineering, and NJDEP Office of Natural Resource Restoration to discuss long-term site management. This meeting is expected in late October.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney saw through the completion of an emergency culvert installation in the Matts Landing Impoundments of the Heislerville WMA. Currently we are waiting on As-built surveys to submit to NJDEP Land Resource Protection (DLRP).

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to work on the Manahawkin WMA monitoring amendment. A final draft of the amendment was sent to the Contracts and Grants Management Unit for review, before beginning the signatory process.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended an Action Plan meeting and a Stakeholder meeting for the Commercial Township Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) application. Input was collected from the community to advise project goals. The project team discussed the potential to complete a nature-based solution project on the Peak of the Moon Tract located on the Egg Island WMA.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended several meetings on the Stouts Creek Restoration Project on the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The land management review for this project was completed. A pre-permit project review meeting was held between the project team and regulators. The DLRP package is currently being constructed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended several meetings to assist in facilitating The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) marsh pipeline project. Data collection plans are under development. A Special Use Permit was amended to include several data collection techniques. A meeting was held between NJF&W, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) to discuss the potential of doing a restoration project on SJTA property. SJTA was receptive. An agreement will be developed between SJTA and TNC to conduct activities.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a weekly update meeting on the Baypoint Beach Restoration. Debris removal began on September 16th.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney completed desktop analysis to identify areas of interest for Beneficial Use of Dredge Material projects associated with sediment from the US Army Corps of Engineers Philly-to-the-Sea Scoping Project. Areas were identified in the Egg Island, Dix and Mad Horse Creek WMAs.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney facilitated several items including a computer deployment and ePAR setup for Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries. Steve's first day operating in the Coastal Unit is scheduled for 09/21/24.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended several meetings on the Lighthouse Center Restoration Project in the Upper Barnegat Bay WMA. BioBenchmarks were collected and concept designs are under development. Concept plans to grade the marsh access road were discussed.

All Regions & Other

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a SWAP. SWAP threats are being developed for the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Coast 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 the Columbia, Beaver Brook, Berkshire Valley, Flatbrook, Clinton, Walpack, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work. Seed for Fall planting is being ordered.

Staff are preparing fields for youth pheasant and regular pheasant stocking.

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

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride worked on GIS-based encroachment tracking for the northern region.

Staff are working on several access points in various WMAs in preparation for the fall hunting seasons.

Several fields have been planted at the Whittingham WMA for the Organic Farm Lease Program.

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey and crew completed field reclamation at the Jane Chapel Rd. section of the Pequest WMA.

The Ryker Lake dam at Sparta Mt. WMA was inspected during the reporting period.

CENTRAL REGION

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent

Wendy Barbuck-Jones, 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.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Waterfowl Stamp committee, he will be taking over for Ted Nichols as the Fish and Wildlife liaison.

Central region staff hosted new Fish and Wildlife staff for the Lands Management Fish and Wildlife experience.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the Lighthouse Center Restoration monthly meeting.

Crews began mowing safety zones.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler reviewed the fall trout stocking schedule.

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

Freshwater Fisheries Committee Meeting
UNBJ
Law Enforcement Background Investigation Returns
OIS
NJSFSC State
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
NJSFSC
Eagle Project Season Meeting
NJSFSC BOD
Law Enforcement Interviews
Conservation Priorities
Central Region Law Enforcement
R3 Muzzleloader Workshop
Mosquito Control Committee
BLM – Fish and Wildlife Experience
NJ LSRPA Board Meeting
4-H
I & E Staff Meeting
Management Team Meeting
Fish and Game Council Meeting
Council's Finance Committee Meeting

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent

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

Vacant, Crew Supervisor
Steve Jeffries, Heavy Equipment Operator
Vacant, 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
Vacant, 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 Peaslee WMA roads. This WMA has an extensive road system and will take the better part of a month to complete work here. Material has been ordered to patch several of the large holes and address rutting in multiple locations. Material for Tuckahoe WMA roads was also ordered and will be the next location that road work will occur. In addition to road grading, staff also used cold patch to fix potholes on paved roads in the Tuckahoe and Dennis Creek WMAs.

A vacancy notice was posted to backfill retired Road Crew Worker Steve Dobrosky. Currently, road crew has one person on staff.

Interviews were held for two Wildlife Worker Positions in the Southern Region. No start date has been provided yet, but the new staff members will work out of the Millville Office as part of the Salem Crew. Staff continue routine maintenance mowing of dams, offices, boat ramps, and WMA access points. With a point of emphasis on dams during this period. Several dam inspections were completed during the reporting period and several more will occur during the next period. Union Lake dam inspection will take place in October because it requires the lake level to be lowered. Land Management staff received the lake lowering permit from Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries.

Winslow crew made some enhancements to the Winslow WMA archery range. Old rotting telephone poles were removed, and guard rail was installed to define the range parking area. A new sign will be installed, when completed by the sign shop.

Staff prepped and planted most fields slated for fall plantings.

Salem Crew completed work on a duckbill valve in the Mad Horse Creek WMA. The valve keeps tidal water from flooding nearby uplands.

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

Staff participate in weekly construction meetings regarding the Pond Creek Project. Work continues, with the focus on the creation of the earthen berm and installation of silt fencing in preparation for additional vegetation clearing. The vegetation clearing is currently on hold due to timing restrictions.

Staff are working with Blue Acres and Coastal Engineering on a project to rehabilitate the Bay Point shoreline. Currently the shoreline is covered in concrete and other debris, which makes it impossible for horseshoe crabs and terrapins to access the beach to nest, the debris also traps these animals leading to their demise. This project will address those impingement issues as well as create a sandy shoreline where horseshoe crabs

and terrapins can come ashore to lay eggs. The horseshoe crab eggs are an important food source for migrating shorebirds (many of which are endangered or threatened) in the Spring.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley continues to work on encroachments. Each encroachment presents itself with unique challenges, multiple parties needing to get involved, and are time consuming.

Meetings Attended: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Staff, Bureau of Law Enforcement, NJSFSC, Higbee Beach Project Meeting.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

The following lands have been acquired by the State and have been assigned to New Jersey Fish and Wildlife during this period.

Nothing to report this period.