

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

September 21, 2024 to October 20, 2024

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

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a bi-weekly status call for the Hyperhumus Wetlands Restoration Project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner is now assisting with documentation that needs to be filed under the FHA permit conditions. Ninety-percent design plans and reports have been completed by the contract engineer.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been providing guidance on habitat management activities at parcels in the Musconetcong River WMA enrolled in a management agreement with New Jersey Audubon. Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner addressed field mowing questions, delivered riparian buffer signs, and reviewed the species planting list for an upcoming riparian buffer planting.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been addressing multiple matters related to farm leases in the northern region. A farmer at the Musconetcong River WMA was notified of a sinkhole in one of his leased fields; field access lanes and gate access were addressed at the Pequest WMA; impacts to farm lease fields related to an upcoming dam removal at the Musconetcong River WMA were addressed; and preparations were made for potential new agriculture fields at the Buckhorn Creek WMA.

Farm lease files for the northern region have been updated in preparation for 2025 in-kind assignments.

Central Region

Approximately 29 acres of fields at the Greenwood Forest WMA were planted as wildlife food plots by a contractor.

Farm lease files for the central region have been updated in preparation for 2025 in-kind assignments.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner collaborated with Fish and Wildlife's Office of Information Systems to update field boundaries in the GIS habitat patch file.

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region Habitat Management

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is overseeing ongoing fall habitat management operations. Planting operations are complete. Fields were 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 are currently being boom-mowed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney oversaw the completion of 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. Treatment of phragmites via herbicide in the Tuckahoe WMA impoundments was completed the week of September 30th.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order for fall seedling planting in the Glassboro WMA. Plantings are expected to begin October 2024, pending precipitation. The restoration area is currently too dry to plant. Sub-contractors conducted a site visit to inspect the fence for breaks or access by deer. No concerns were raised.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney assisted the Bureau of Information and Education in developing a video on early succession habitat.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney completed the development of farm lease in-kind assignments for calendar year 2025.

Coastal Unit

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a field visit to the Sawmill Creek WMA with the Meadowlands Research Institute to discuss the potential to complete a marsh restoration project in an area that was formerly marsh and now converted to mudflat. The project is currently a concept, and no formal proposals have been made.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is coordinating with The Wetlands Institute and US Army Corps of Engineers to complete a beneficial use restoration project at Scotch Bonnet Island in the Cape May Coastal Wetlands WMA. Signage was provided for the site, an FAQ sheet and maps were developed, and updates were made to the Fish and Wildlife website and WMA Explorer to reflect the closure area. Placement of material is ongoing.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney continues to attend bi-weekly meetings on the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration Project. Hydrology modifications are proceeding as planned. A meeting to discuss long term management of the site will be held on 10/23/2024.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney saw through the completion of an emergency culvert installation in the Matts Landing Impoundments of the Heislerville WMA. As-built surveys are complete, and New Jersey Fish & Wildlife (NJFW) is working on submitting post-project permit applications.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended a Maurice River Township – Commercial Township joint action plan meeting for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) applications. Efforts are ongoing to identify project alternatives and develop applications.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended several meetings to assist in facilitating The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Marsh Pipeline Project. Data collection is under way. A field visit to the Great Bay Boulevard WMA is planned for late October.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended weekly update meetings on the Baypoint Beach Restoration Project. Sheet pilings are being driven, marine mattresses are being constructed, and sand is being trucked in.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended several meetings on the Lighthouse Center Restoration Project in the Upper Barnegat Bay WMA. A field visit was held to discuss the grading of the access road. This project is a potential Corporate Business Tax Maintenance (CBT-M) candidate.

Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries is assisting NJFW staff in road maintenance activities in the Peaslee, Tuckahoe, and Glassboro WMAs. Steve's computer equipment has been deployed and efforts to equip his truck with a fuel transfer tank are ongoing.

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, Walpack, Whittingham, Paulinskill, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey and crew completed fall planting on the Beaver Brook, Black River, Buckhorn Creek, Columbia, and White Lake WMAs.

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

Staff have been stocking dog training areas for Saturdays in October on northern WMAs.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride continued to work on the decommissioning of dams, including the Warren Mills 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.

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 NJFW.

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

Crews began Fall trout stocking.

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the National Conservation Leadership Institute as part of the 18th Cohort class.

Crews are completing fall plantings, mowing safety zones and getting areas ready for the Youth Pheasant hunt.

Crews began stocking chukars at our Dog Training Areas.

All Central region Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff Electronic Performance Assessment Review (EPARS) were completed.

All High and Moderate hazard dams were inspected within the Central Region.

Watershed planning began for revitalization of Dams within the Assunpink WMA with National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Planning will take approximately 2 years.

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

Wildlife Management Bureau Meeting
OIS
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
CLUE Bureau Meeting
ENSAC
NJSFSC State
Mosquito Control Committee
NJSFSC BOD
Federation Trapping Committee
WRAC
Game Committee Meeting
NJDEP - Division of Air Enforcement
Fish and Game Council Meeting
4-H

SOUTHERN REGION

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent

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

Vacant, Crew Supervisor
Steve Jeffries, 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. One seasonal was hired during the period and will help complete these routine jobs as well as help with pheasant/quail stocking. Three additional seasonal positions were posted, and resumes were reviewed. From that a list of interviewees was determined, interviews are expected to be held at the end of October.

Road Crew Staff are working on grading roads in the Tuckahoe WMA in preparation for the upcoming waterfowl season. Material is being delivered during the week of October 21st and once it is done, this job will be complete. The grader will then be moved to the Peaslee WMA, where several holes still need to be filled, and a final grade will be completed. Staff also worked on patching several holes in roads at the Glassboro WMA.

A vacancy notice was posted to backfill retired Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Dobrosky. Currently, the road crew has one person on staff.

Regional Superintendent participated as a panel member for Habitat Planner interviews.

Staff attended a demonstration at the Union Lake dam for a remote operated slope mower. The current slope mower that is being used is 30 years old and replacement parts are no longer being made for it. The remote operated mower can mow steeper slopes and makes the job safer for staff.

Staff completed dam inspections and worked with engineers at East Lake Dam to complete bathymetric readings of the stream as it exits the dam. Staff relocated several large striped bass (up to 20lbs) small and largemouth bass (up to 5 lbs.) to the headwaters of the Maurice River that had been stranded in shallow pools during the water lowering.

Staff completed fall plantings. The lack of rain is expected to negatively impact the growth of these plantings.

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

Staff participate in weekly construction meetings regarding the Pond Creek Restoration Project. Work continues, with the focus on the creation of the earthen berm and installation of silt fencing in preparation for additional vegetation clearing.

BLM 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. 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. One encroachment is up for final inspection, and it is expected to be resolved by the next reporting period.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, 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.