

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

October 21, 2024 to November 20, 2024

Vacant, Bureau Chief

Tyler Kinney, Coastal Biologist
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner
Benjamin Keys, Habitat Planner

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended two calls for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been assisting with documentation that needs to be filed under the FHA permit conditions. Design changes are underway to minimize the impacts to rare plant species that were documented in recent surveys.

Approximately 27 acres of newly acquired agricultural fields at the Buckhorn Creek WMA were put out to public bid through a Special Use Permit (SUP). The SUP was awarded to the highest bidder and the permit will go into effect on January 1st, 2025.

In-kind assignments and associated documents for 2025 farm leases were completed for the northern region.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner has been working on 2025 spring planting plans for the central region. This has included field visits to multiple WMAs to evaluate field maintenance and planting needs, as well as the development of several new custom seed mixes.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a call with Pine Creek Forestry to discuss revisions to the draft Greenwood Forest WMA Natural Resource Stewardship Plan.

In-kind assignments and associated documents for 2025 farm leases were completed for the central region.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

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

Benjamin Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys conducted a field visit to the Thundergut Pond WMA to inspect an erosion gully in a farm lease field.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys conducted a field visit to the Raccoon Creek WMA to inspect fields for winter reclaim work to be completed by the contractor. Two fields were selected to be reclaimed, plowed, disced and planted in Sorghum/Buckwheat totaling 20-acres. A map was created to present to the contractor.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys coordinated with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff to identify additional areas for the contractor to complete winter reclaim work. A 33-acre field in the Dix WMA was selected to be reclaimed, plowed, disced and planted in Sorghum/Buckwheat. A map was created to present to the contractor.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys conducted field visits to the Harrisonville Lake WMA to inspect fields for potential winter reclaim work. The conditions of the fields did not require a full winter reclaim. The location was identified as a potential area for spring planting work to be conducted by the contractor.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys and Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries conducted a field visit to the Winslow WMA to inspect a reclamation project. A list of potential equipment to be rented was created.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys conducted field visits to the Maple Lake WMA to inspect potential sites for boom mowing operations to be completed by the contractor. Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys coordinated with the contractor to begin work on 11/20 boom mowing field edges and access roads.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys met with Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney on teams to review methods for map creation in ArcGIS pro. A screen recording was created and shared for further review.

Habitat Planner Benjamin Keys conducted interviews to fill three hourly positions with the BLM.

Tyler Kinney

Coastal Unit

Coastal Biologist 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. Placement of material is ongoing. A low ground pressure skid-steer is being utilized to evenly distribute material as the sediment is coarser than anticipated, leading to sediment buildup at the distribution pipe.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting to discuss the long-term management of the Pond Creek Restoration Project. Items discussed included the management of phragmites and maintenance of the dikes and water control structures. Additional meetings will be held to refine expectations and techniques.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney saw through the completion of an emergency culvert installation in the Matts Landing Impoundments of the Heislerville WMA. Post-project permits applications were submitted to satisfy the emergency authorization requirements.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several meetings to assist in facilitating The Nature Conservancy's marsh pipeline project. Data collection is under way. Additional discussions arose regarding the conveyance of Great Island and Mystic Island. Discussions are ongoing.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended weekly update meetings on the Baypoint Beach Restoration Project. Debris clean-up across the project area is progressing with some areas >90% complete. Construction and installation of marine mattresses is ongoing.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney is assisting with the planning of the Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials Summit on 12/4. This summit will bring together practitioners of coastal restorations to review the latest techniques of beneficial use projects.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney continues to process a 076 Amendment to the Manahawkin WMA monitoring task order.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney is reviewing the Nature Based Solutions Adaptive Management and Monitoring guidance document produced by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Nature Based Solutions workgroup.

Southern Region Habitat Management

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney is coordinating with Regional Habitat Planner Ben Keys to begin training and transfer of upland habitat planning job responsibilities. Progress has been made across several areas, including Ben conducting a site visit to plan a Corporate Business Tax Maintenance (CBT-M) project with Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jefferies in the Winslow WMA, site visits and map making for winter reclaims in the Dix and Raccoon Creek WMAs, coordinating with a contractor to complete boom mowing in the Tuckahoe and Maple Lake WMAs, and ArcGIS training.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney placed a purchase order for fall seedling planting in the Glassboro WMA. Plantings were delayed due to drought conditions. The supplemental plantings will begin on 11/18/2024.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney met with the Northeast Organic Farming Association at the Mantua Creek WMA to discuss the potential for organic farming practices at this location.

All Regions & Other

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney is coordinating the purchase and installation of a fuel transfer tank for Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries truck.

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

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

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

Staff stocked pheasants and assisted volunteers with the youth pheasant hunt at northern region WMAs.

Crews are busy stocking pheasants for the regular season on northern WMAs.

Staff continue to work on WMA roads to ensure access for pheasant stocking vehicles. Recent windstorms have caused trees to fall across roads on many 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 Fish and Wildlife.

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

Crews completed Fall Trout stocking.

Staff completed stocking dog training birds.

Watershed planning began for the revitalization of Dams within the Assunpink WMA with NRCS. Planning will take approximately 2 years.

Crews began stocking Pheasant and Quail according to the 2024 schedule.

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

OIS
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
Bureau Of Business Administration
NJSFC State
Management Team Meeting
Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems
Bureau of Business Administration's Fish & Wildlife Experience
Mosquito Control Meeting
NJSFSC BOD
NJDEP - Division of Air Enforcement
Endangered and Nongame Species Program
Fish and Game Council Meeting
Bureau of Wildlife Management
Office of Information & Education
ENSP
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
Drew McClure, Wildlife Worker
Bobby Murphy, 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.

Two full-time staff members were recently hired and have been performing well in their new positions. Congratulations to Bobby Murphy and Drew McClure, the agency expects great things from both and wishes them a long and happy career.

Staff are busy with stocking pheasant and quail and spend multiple days each week completing this task.

Road Crew Staff are working on grading roads in the Peaslee WMA. This is the largest WMA in the state and has the longest road system. It is anticipated that this will take a minimum of a month to complete work here. Staff have also started working on road improvements at the Menantico Ponds WMA. Staff fixed the kayak launch at Salem River boat ramp that had washed out during rains from this spring.

Road Crew picked up a loader from the Central Region, with several attachments and are already putting it to good use.

Benjamin Keys was hired and recently started as the new Habitat Planner for the Southern Region. Ben is hard working and brings a can-do attitude to the job, for the past several years he was in the title of Sr. Wildlife Worker and part of the Millville Crew. From day one he dove in headfirst and is already working on several projects to improve habitat and access for hunters/anglers/wildlife viewers. One project will be completed in the Winslow WMA to create a new parking area and reclaim a field to provide turkey brood habitat.

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

Staff participated in weekly construction meetings regarding the Pond Creek Project and Baypoint Shoreline Restoration Project. Both projects are on schedule to be completed within the initially anticipated time constraints.

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, Bay Point Project meeting,

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Lisa Carben, Executive Assistant

Nothing to report this period.