

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

December 21, 2024 to January 20, 2024

Pete Winkler, Bureau Chief
Tyler Kinney, Coastal Biologist
Benjamin Keys, Habitat Planner
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner

COASTAL PLANNING

Tyler Kinney

Coastal Unit

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney oversaw the completion of the beneficial use of dredge materials placement at Scotch Bonnet Island in the Cape May Coastal Wetlands Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Placement occurred over roughly 3.5 acres. We are awaiting the sediment data.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a staff meeting to discuss the status and progress of the Fish and Wildlife Coastal Unit. Past, current, and future projects were covered along with a site visit to the Pond Creek Marsh Restoration Project.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several meetings to assist in facilitating The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) marsh pipeline project. Data collection is under way. A meeting is being organized between the Pipeline Team and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to discuss a potential placement on Boot Island in the Absecon WMA.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended weekly update meetings on the Baypoint Beach Restoration Project. Sand continues to be trucked in, and coir log installation is underway.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended the Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials Summit at the Rutgers Eco Complex. The coastal unit conducted a presentation on the Abbotts Meadow Restoration Project. Priorities were shared in advance of the development of the Restoration Task Force.

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 (NJDEP) Nature Based Solutions workgroup.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several planning meetings for the Lighthouse Camp Restoration Project. Concept designs are being imported into models by WSP for testing.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with USACE to discuss their New Jersey Back Bay Study and its interface with the Upper Barnegat Bay WMA. Nature-based solutions are being proposed.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney met with the NJDEP Wetland Team. Additionally, a list of projects was compiled to assist with the NJDEP Networked Wetland Plan.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended planning meetings for a potential marsh restoration project in Mannington Meadows. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife provided sign off as a non-federal sponsor for a USACE feasibility study.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several meetings to assist NJDEP Coastal Management Program with their 309 Strategy Assessment.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Joint meeting between Commercial Township and Maurice River Township. Project status updates were shared. Concept ideas were shared.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with American Littoral Society (ALS) to share project status updates for several Delaware Bay Projects. ALS is submitting for a permit to augment their Moore's Beach shell bag reefs. A land management review was submitted. Discussions are ongoing.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney organized a meeting with the Great Egg Harbor River Council Watershed Association to discuss a potential restoration at Tuckahoe Island, Tuckahoe WMA. The meeting is scheduled for January.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with the New Jersey Coastal resilience Collaborative (NJCRC) Ecological Science and Research workgroup. We discussed restructuring NJCRC workgroups for efficiency.

HABITAT PLANNING

Tyler Kinney

Southern Region Habitat & Land Management

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a meeting to discuss Heavy Equipment Operator priorities for the coming weeks. Priorities include grading in Glassboro, Peaslee, Millville, Dennis Creek, DOD Ponds, and Winslow WMAs.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney saw through the completion of planting activities at the Glassboro WMA wetland restoration site. Meetings will be held to discuss monitoring.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney continues to provide training and guidance to Habitat Planner Ben Keys. Current priorities include a Corporate Business Tax Maintenance (CBT-M) project in the Winslow WMA to improve access and habitat and preparations for spring habitat planning.

All Regions & Other

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney sat on a panel for Heavy Equipment Operator Interviews.

Benjamin Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Ben Keys received quotes for the winter reclamation work to be conducted on the Raccoon Creek and Dix Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). A purchase order, along with the necessary justification, has been created and submitted for approval.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys has initiated work on the Corporate Business Tax Maintenance (CBT-M) process for the Winslow WMA reclamation project. The project will involve the removal of high-density woody vegetation and the creation of a small, permeable parking lot.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to assess potential Frosted Elfin habitat at the Cox Hall Creek WMA. Robert Somes of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) provided background information on the management of Frosted Elfin habitat and identified potential sites for consideration.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Glassboro WMA to map the locations of damaged culverts. The maps were subsequently presented at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) & Land Use Resource Protection (LURP) Quarterly Coordination Meeting by Nathan Figley.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys has begun developing a plan for managing native warm-season grass fields at the Peaslee and Port Republic WMAs. The goal is to reduce grass density and promote the growth of forbs. A site visit is scheduled for the first week of January.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys met with the contractor while they dived Sawmill Pond Dam to inspect it for necessary repairs.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Pond Creek Restoration Site.

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended two calls for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River WMA.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner led the annual planning meeting for habitat projects in the northern region. Plans for 2025 farm leases, crew plantings, contractor work, and various habitat management projects were discussed, including cost estimates and budget allocations.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner led the annual planning meeting for habitat projects in the central region. Plans for 2025 farm leases, crew plantings, contractor work, and various habitat management projects were discussed, including cost estimates and budget allocations.

Two small fields at the Prospertown Lake WMA were mapped in the field using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit and will be incorporated into the Geographic Information System (GIS) habitat patch file.

Two projects were submitted for Land Management Review: an expansion of pine savanna at the Stafford Forge WMA to create a connected mosaic of early-mid successional habitat and creation of pine savanna habitat in a fire-damaged area at the Greenwood Forest WMA.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a quarterly meeting between BLM and the Division of Land Resource Protection to discuss permitting needs for upcoming projects.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a NJDEP Wetland Team meeting.

The interim performance report for NJ W-79-R-1 Habitat Restoration Monitoring and Evaluation grant was submitted. This grant is currently being used to contract Rutgers University to perform pre- and post-restoration monitoring of vegetation and avian communities at the Manahawkin WMA.

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 River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued ordering equipment for habitat work.

Staff stocked pheasants on northern region WMAs and on the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

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 have ordered stones to work on WMA roads and access points as part of CBT-M projects on northern region WMAs.

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

Bureau Chief 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.

Watershed planning began for revitalization of Dams within the Assunpink WMA with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Planning will take approximately 2 years. Staff spent considerable time working with contractors to perform inspections at the Assunpink dams.

Staff met to discuss and plan habitat projects for the coming year.

Bureau Chief Pete Winkler attended the Fish and Game Council meeting, reporting on Bureau activities and the Ranch Hope Lease renewal.

Staff met with a contractor from TRC to perform an energy audit at the Central Region Office.

Crews continue 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:

Wildlife Society
OIS
ENSAC
BLM Central Planning Meeting
UNBJ
NJSFSC Convention
4-H
Conservation Police – Recruit Training
The NJ Women in the Outdoors, NWTF Chapter
Division of Land Resource Protection
Rocket Net Training
ENSP Staff Meeting

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. WMA ranges have had a large increase in use during this period and additional cleanups were necessary.

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

Road Crew Staff continue to work on roads in the Peaslee WMA, recent rains have slowed work here. A final grade on a few of the smaller roadways within the WMA will bring this work to completion. The Menantico Ponds WMA boat ramp and parking area were graded. Several trails that received heavy All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use were blocked. Staff removed numerous trees from roadways that fell during rain and high-wind storms. Staff will be moving equipment to the Millville and Winslow WMAs to complete roadwork and field reclamation.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits consistently 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 several building demolition projects. Both projects were submitted to LMR and a letter to adjacent property owners and utility companies has been sent.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has been working with Office of Resource Development staff and the Department of Treasury on the Jakes Landing Boat Ramp improvements.

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: 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

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

Weldon Brook	Sussex	Sparta	Edward J. Kurtyka	2
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Acres assigned during this period: 2

Total acres statewide: 359,657