

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

December 21, 2024 to January 20, 2025

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

COASTAL UNIT

Tyler Kinney

Coastal Unit

Tyler Kinney organized a meeting between The Nature Conservancy (TNC), New Jersey Department of Transportation, and United States Army Corps of Engineers to discuss a potential Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials restoration project at Boot Island in the Absecon Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Tyler Kinney attended meetings to discuss the restructuring of the New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative's restoration workgroups, including the formation of the Beneficial Use Restoration Taskforce associated with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOTs) regional sediment framework.

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

Tyler Kinney attended a planning meeting for the Lighthouse Camp Restoration Project. Concept designs are complete, and hydro models will be run. Initial steps for permitting them are underway.

Tyler Kinney attended an in-person stakeholder meeting at Monmouth University to assist NJDEP Coastal Management Program with their 309 Strategy Assessment.

Tyler Kinney attended a meeting with the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association (GEHWA) to discuss a potential marsh restoration project in the Tuckahoe WMA. A follow up meeting will be held with NJDOT, GEHWA, and Stockton University to scope out sediment opportunities in this watershed.

Tyler Kinney assisted Ducks Unlimited (DU) to acquire species-specific data to assist in planning for the Mannington Meadows Restoration Project. Additionally, a meeting with DU and Green Acres was scheduled to discuss public access to this site.

Tyler Kinney submitted a travel request to attend the Partners of the Delaware Estuary Summit on February 11th and 12th.

Tyler Kinney completed actions prioritization for the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Tyler Kinney saw through the installation of a fuel transfer tank and toolbox on Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries state truck.

Tyler Kinney attended several construction meetings for the Bay point Restoration Project.

Tyler Kinney attended several constructions meetings for the Pond Creek Restoration Project.

Tyler Kinney met with staff from the Endangered Species and Non-game program to discuss Saltmarsh Sparrow monitoring in association with marsh restoration efforts.

Tyler Kinney has reviewed the Meadowlands Research & Restoration Institute's Sawmill Creek WMA monitoring report, in advance of restoration efforts at this site. The report was shared with relevant New Jersey Fish & Wildlife program areas. A special use permit is being coordinated in association with this year's activities.

Upland Habitat & Land Management

Tyler Kinney attended the annual Spring Planting meeting with the Regional Superintendent, Regional Habitat Planner, and Crew Supervisors.

Tyler Kinney is organizing a meeting with contract vendor Solitude Lake Management to discuss habitat management statewide.

Tyler Kinney is working with WSP to create a monitoring plan for the Glassboro WMA restoration site.

Tyler Kinney is organizing a meeting with biologists from various Fish and Wildlife bureaus to discuss habitat management on southern region WMAs.

Tyler Kinney continues to provide training and guidance to Habitat Planner Ben Keys. Current priorities include a CBT-M project in Winslow WMA to improve access and habitat and preparations for spring habitat planning.

Tyler Kinney continues to work on the procurement of the T2931 Farm Service Contract. The final 1-year extension will be issued this March. There is not expected to be a lapse in contract availability.

Other

None

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a bi-weekly call for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). A meeting was set up with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) staff to discuss potential carbon sequestration funding for the Hyperhumus restoration.

The 2025 in-kind assignments for northern farm leases were sent to tenants via email and certified mail.

Project site maps and descriptions were sent to a contractor to obtain cost estimates for 2025 herbicide treatments in the northern region.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner worked with Green Acres to assign an open space parcel owned by NJ Fish and Wildlife to the Pequest WMA. It had previously been unassigned to any WMA.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed 10 wall maps for WMAs in the northern region.

Central Region

The 2025 in-kind assignments for central farm leases were sent to tenants via email and certified mail.

Project site maps and descriptions were sent to a contractor to obtain cost estimates for 2025 herbicide treatments in the central region.

Two projects in the central region completed the Land Management Review process: 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. Modifications to project plans were made to address recommendations from reviewing programs.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Ninety-two (92) habitat patch edits were sent to the Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems (OFWIS) for updating. A meeting was held with OFWIS staff to review patches needing further discussion.

Benjamin Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Ben Keys finalized the CBT-M packet for the Winslow reclamation project and submitted it for approval.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Stafford Forge WMA to better understand the field creation process.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys contacted Steve Knezick from Pinelands Nursery to schedule a date for touring the site. The tour will cover how seeds are stored, dried, and cleaned for both grasses and forbs.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys held the spring planting meeting with the crew. Acreage totals for Sorghum, Buckwheat, and Pollinator Mix were submitted by the crew leaders. The seed order is in the process of being finalized.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys met with Herc Rentals to review available rental equipment.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys began entering the fall planting data completed by the contract farmer into the WMA planning database.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys sent the Annual In-Kind Service Assignments to the lease farmers by certified mail and email.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed literature related to Mugwort management.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed literature related to impound management.

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/Roy, Clinton, Walpack, Whittingham, Paulinskill River, and White Lake WMAs.

Staff continued ordering equipment and seeds for habitat work.

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

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.

Staff worked to prepare equipment for the upcoming spring habitat work.

A meeting was held to discuss upcoming northern region habitat projects.

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

CENTRAL REGION

Vacant, 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 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.

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

Bureau Chief Pete Winkler attended the Forked River Mountain stakeholder meeting.

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

Fish and Game Council Meeting
Bureau of Business Administration
Deer Project
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
OIS
Office of Mosquito Control Coordination
B. E. A. R. S. Holiday Staff Meeting
NJSFSC State
NJSFSC BOD
Game Committee Meeting
4-H
Conservation Law Enforcement
NJSFSC

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 completed pheasant/quail stockings and sorted crates, moving all those in good condition to storage location and separated those that need repairs out. Repairs will be completed once the weather warms as the crates become brittle in the cold weather and the likelihood of causing further damage is high.

Road Crew Staff continue to work on roads in the Peaslee WMA, a few large potholes still need to be addressed before moving onto the next area. Larger stones have been ordered to make these repairs. The cold weather has slowed road work and during this cold snap, staff have focused on equipment maintenance and specking future jobs. DOD Ponds and Malibu Beach are two of these.

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 and Baypoint Shoreline Restoration Project. Both projects are on schedule to be completed within the initially anticipated time constraints.

Road Crew staff and Wildlife Workers cleared snow at offices, ranges, and boat ramps.

Wildlife Workers have been pole sawing road and field edges in preparation for the upcoming planting season. Due to the lack of rain during this past fall, staff prepped but never planted several fields. The plan for these locations is to try to frost seed these locations. Frost seeding is a method of spreading seeds on frozen soil in late winter or early spring. The seeds are buried by the freeze-thaw cycle, which helps them germinate. The key is timing the spreading of the seed at the tail end of consistent freeze/thaw period. Staff are watching the long-term forecast to determine when to move forward with this work.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley conducted the annual Spring planting meeting during which time the Habitat Planner, Regional Superintendent, and Crew Supervisors discuss planting plans for the Spring. From this meeting locations and acreages are determined to then move forward with ordering seed.

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.

Staff are undergoing routine hearing tests and recently hired staff completed new employee training.

Staff repaired a broken pipe at the Tuckahoe Office and are addressing leaks in a roof at Ponder Lodge.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley is working with the USCG to fix the beacon on East Point Lighthouse.

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: 358,482