

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

April 21, 2025 to May 20, 2025

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

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner attended a biweekly status call for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Permit applications are currently being reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner submitted a project through the internal Land Management Review process to herbicide invasive water chestnut and phragmites at Ryker Lake in the Sparta Mountain WMA. To protect rare plants in the area, Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner hosted a meeting with the Office of Natural Lands Management and Solitude Lake Management, a state contract vendor to discuss application techniques and specific herbicide use. The meeting resulted in an agreeable approach to treat the invasive species while minimizing potential impacts to rare plants.

Solitude Lake Management conducted a targeted herbicide application to invasive Japanese barberry throughout 15 acres at the White Lake WMA.

Central Region

A contractor completed spring planting work at multiple WMAs in the central region. Lime and fertilizer were applied to 27 acres of fields at the Colliers Mills WMA and 29 acres at the Greenwood Forest WMA. The fields at Greenwood Forest WMA were then planted with a wildlife food plot mix. A 5-acre warm season grass field used for pheasant stocking at the Stafford Forge WMA was overseeded with native wildflowers to benefit pollinators. A 6.5-acre field at the Stafford Forge WMA was planted with a mix of native warm season grasses, annual grains, and wildflowers to improve habitat in another pheasant-stocked field. Three fields at the Whiting WMA had encroaching woody vegetation removed, and one 4-acre field was planted with sorghum and buckwheat to help control invasive grass and provide cover and food for wildlife.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed coursework for Vegetation Identification for a Wetland Delineation class through Rutgers University. This is the second of three required courses to obtain a Wetland Delineation Certificate.

Benjamin Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Ben Keys attended a meeting to discuss submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) restoration in the Tuckahoe Coastal Impoundments.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys worked with volunteers from the American Woodcock Society to plant fifty smooth alder plants in the Dennis Creek WMA.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys completed a post-project closeout for a Winslow CBT-M Project.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys is currently attending a wetland delineation course offered by Rutgers University.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys participated in a site visit to Ephraim Island.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Port Republic WMA with heavy equipment operator Steven Jeffries to discuss the potential for a Port Republic CBT-M access project.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted wetland delineation with staff from the Bureau of Freshwater Wetlands and Highlands Permitting at the Lizard Tail Swamp WMA.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed the project plan for the Lizard Tail Swamp WMA Frosted Elfin Habitat Restoration Project.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to fields within the Tuckahoe WMA.

COASTAL UNIT

Tyler Kinney

Coastal Unit

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several meetings between The Nature Conservancy, Stockton University, NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT), and US Army Corps of Engineers to begin project planning for two Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials (BUDM) projects at Boot Island, Absecon WMA. NJDOT continues to collect non-resource data. Stockton University began instrument deployments on 04/14. Water-level loggers were placed across the marsh platform to collect tidal data. Wave and current loggers were placed off the northeast edge of the island. NJDOT made the determination that they will no longer dredge the channel between Sunflower and Boot Islands. The Ecological Team is convening to discuss the potential for a larger restoration effort.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several planning meetings for the Lighthouse Camp Restoration Project. State and federal permit applications have been submitted.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney has completed the processing of an intragovernmental payment voucher to acquire reimbursement from NJDOT to conduct adaptive management phragmites treatments at the Abbotts Meadow WMA beneficial use of dredge materials restoration site. Treatment will occur in late summer/early fall 2025.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended several Beneficial Use Restoration Task Force (BURT) planning meetings. BURT will be housed under the New Jersey Coastal Resilience Collaborative. This task force will facilitate and match-make sediment availability to coastal Beneficial Use of Dredge Materials (BUDM) restoration projects, as well as provide technical assistance to project managers. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife (NJFW) holds a spot as a steering committee member and will determine matchmaking efforts on the WMA system.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney was interviewed by The Philadelphia Inquirer on the Scotch Bonnet BUDM Restoration Project in the Cape May Coastal Wetlands WMA.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney conducted a field visit to Ephraim Island with staff from the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) to discuss the placement of Autonomous Recording Units to monitor bird use of the island in preparation for restoration efforts.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended a discussion panel hosted by the University of Georgia, who are researching how to streamline processes between coastal restoration practitioners and regulators.

Heavy Equipment Operator Steve Jeffries continues to work with road crew staff to repair roads across various WMAs. Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney is working with Steve Jeffries to address some IT issues associated with his state cellphone.

Upland Habitat & Land Management

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney assisted Habitat Planner Ben Keys and Regional Superintendent Nate Figley to conduct wetland delineation as a part of planning for Frosted Elfin habitat management in the Lizard Tail Swamp WMA.

Other

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended the Conservation Knowledge Exchange. Time was spent learning about Conserve Wildlife Foundation and NJ Audubon.

Coastal Biologist Tyler Kinney attended 3 full day training as a part of the CSC S3 Supervisor Success Series. The series was successfully completed, and a certificate was earned.

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
Robert Makin, 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 continued in-season spring trout stocking.

Staff worked to clear invasive vegetation from field edges.

Staff continue to work on WMA roads to ensure access for spring. Recent windstorms have caused trees to fall across roads on many WMAs.

Crew Supervisor Jim Hartobey prepared fields on several northern region WMAs for spring planting.

Heavy Equipment Operator Trevor Hull continued to fell dead ash trees from the edges of northern WMA parking lots and entrance roads and in the vicinity of Fish and Wildlife offices and powerlines.

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

Staff worked to prepare equipment for the upcoming spring habitat work. New seeders delivered to the northern region will help expand the footprint of habitat plantings.

Regional Superintendent Anthony McBride worked with staff on issues with access to various WMAs in the northern region.

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
Vacant, 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.

Crews are planting spring pollinators and food plot plantings.

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

A collaborative project to improve the path around Pemberton Lake was started. The project partners are New Jersey Fish & Wildlife (NJF&W), Pemberton Township and the Pinelands Preservation Alliance.

Crews finished stocking trout following the 2025 stocking plan.

Bureau Chief Pete Winkler completed his residency in Cohort 18 at the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

Crews set up the display and the mounts for the 2025 Deer Classic.

Adjacent Landowner notifications were sent out for a building demolition at the Manchester WMA.

Two land exchanges are moving forward. Surveys were completed for the land exchange at the Forked River Game Farm. The other is the proposed exchange between NJF&W and the New Egypt Raceway. Two public meetings have been scheduled. June 24th and July 10th. After the public meetings they will still need the approval of the NJDEP Commissioner and the State House Commission.

We continue to work on our budget and grant narrative for our WSFR grant for the coming year. Also working on our real property reporting for our WSFR grant for lands acquired with Federal Funding.

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

ENSP - The Fish & Wildlife Experience
OIS
WRAC
UNBJ
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
Federation Trapping Committee
UST Staff Meeting
Law Background Returns
NJ Pullorum Testers Class
Taking Flight
I & E Staff Meeting
Trappers/Animal Control Professionals Meeting

4-H
Coastal Permitting Staff Meeting
GSPT State Agency Mapping Support
Bureau of Wildlife Management
Fish and Game Council Meeting
ENSAC
Bureau of Business Administration's Fish & Wildlife Experience - Cohort 2 session

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.

Staff are busy with Spring planting work. A large portion of their time is now devoted to plowing, discing and planting fields throughout the Southern Region. Most of the Spring planting is completed. The remaining acreage that is not planted has been mainly due to weather conditions. Some field locations have been too wet with all the rain and while most are prepped, staff must wait to seed these areas until conditions improve.

Staff have begun routine grass mowing at offices, boat ramps, dikes, and dams. This work will continue throughout the summer months.

Road crew staff completed grading roads in the Winslow WMA, the grader was moved to DOD Ponds and work on roadways in this WMA are currently underway. In addition to completing roadwork in the Winslow WMA, staff have also completed several smaller jobs. These jobs included pushing trees off multiple WMA roadways, moving materials to the Tuckahoe and Dix WMAs for future road work, grading and raising a parking lot apron in the Dennis Creek WMA to make it safer to pull onto/off the paved road, and specked out two future parking lot improvement projects.

Staff completed Spring trout stocking and stored all transfer tanks for next year. New shutoff valves were ordered and will be installed when received.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has been working with the Office of Resource Development staff and Treasury on the Jakes Landing Boat Ramp improvements, replacement of water control gates on four dams (Shaws Mill Pond, Harrisonville Lake, Maskells Mill Pond, and Elmer Lake), the addition of a fueling station and electric gate at the Southern Region Office, and installing a new floating dock at Spicers Creek.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley met with the Habitat Planner and Road Crew Staff to discuss several future parking area projects, one in Port Republic and one in the Tuckahoe WMA. In addition to the parking lot project, we are also looking into a habitat creation project in the Tuckahoe WMA.

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

Nothing to report this period.