

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

May 21, 2025 to June 20, 2025

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

HABITAT PLANNING

Melissa Woerner

Northern Region

Permit applications for the Hyperhumus wetlands restoration project at the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) are currently being reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

Solitude Lake Management, a state contract vendor, conducted follow-up herbicide application to invasive Japanese barberry throughout 15 acres at the White Lake WMA.

Central Region

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner met with Rutgers University students enrolled in an Ecological Field Techniques class to discuss habitat management objectives and activities on WMAs and career aspects in natural resource management. The students were participating in a long-term field research study of fence lizards at the Colliers Mills WMA.

Two calls were held to discuss the construction bidding for replacing water control structures within two impoundments at the Manahawkin WMA. New Jersey Fish and Wildlife (NJF&W) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) have partnered on a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to restore approximately 70 acres of wetlands and are currently working with NJDEP to solicit construction bids.

All Regions/Miscellaneous

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner completed a virtual class and two field days for a Methodology for Delineating Wetlands course through Rutgers University. This is the third of three required courses to obtain a Wetland Delineation Certificate.

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

Benjamin Keys

Southern Region

Habitat Planner Ben Keys conducted a site visit to the Peaslee WMA to evaluate fields for potential soil amendment opportunities.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed scientific literature to inform an upcoming savanna management project.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys prepared a project plan for an access improvement project at the Port Republic WMA. A wetland delineation was also completed for the project site.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys picked up seed donated by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys attended a meeting to discuss the logistics of conducting soil sampling in the Tuckahoe coastal impoundments with assistance from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A site visit was also held at Tuckahoe to review the sampling plan in the field. Additionally, the water control structures were adjusted to facilitate draining the Lester Impoundment in preparation for the aerial seeding operation.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys attended the final classes required for the wetland delineation certification offered through Rutgers.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys attended the quarterly LRP meeting to discuss upcoming projects.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys reviewed the Farm Lease document and created a list of suggested edits.

Habitat Planner Ben Keys submitted a payment voucher for the spring planting operations carried out by the contract farmer.

Habitat Planner Ben reviewed the mixed-use plan for the Pond Creek restoration project in Higbee Beach 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.

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

Tyler Kinney has submitted purchasing paperwork for a purchase order to treat phragmites in the Abbotts Meadow WMA.

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 BUDM restoration projects, as well as provide technical assistance to project managers. NJF&W holds a spot as a steering committee member and will determine matchmaking efforts on the WMA system.

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

Upland Habitat & Land Management

Tyler Kinney is assisting habitat planner Ben Keys in draining waterfowl impoundments to conduct SAV Research.

Other

Tyler Kinney attended the Conservation Knowledge Exchange. Time was spent learning about New Jersey Forest Service, State Forest Fire Service, and Office of Natural Lands 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
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 worked to clear invasive vegetation from fields.

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

Crews planted sorghum, buckwheat, and pollinator seeds on several northern region WMAs.

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

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

Staff worked to prepare equipment for upcoming 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
Chris Murphy, 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.

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

Crews completed planting spring pollinator and food plot plantings.

Crews completed dam maintenance on all Central WMAs in time for the annual inspections. The inspections went well.

Staff at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) hosted the Fish & Wildlife Experience at Assunpink WMA. The program introduces new employees to the work NJF&W performs. Informational talks were given about BLM as well as field trips in the afternoon highlighting the shooting ranges, habitat management and boating access.

Bureau Chief Pete Winkler attended a meeting with Parks to discuss potential dam removals on parks or WMAs.

Crews posted lake Pemberton at an "advisory" level for a Harmful Algae Bloom.

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

Law Enforcement
AC Dave Golden
NJSFSC State
Mosquito Control Commission Meeting
CWA 1037 Meeting
OIS
Federation Upland Game Committee
DOIT
Kristen Mistrell
NJOA By Laws Committee
SWAP TAG Meeting
Bureau Meeting - Water System Engineering
Vector Borne Diseases
NJOA Environmental Projects
4-H
Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
Wildlife – Turkey Data
Manager's Meeting
Fish and Game Council Meeting
Human Resources

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 have completed spring planting work and are now completing any maintenance work needed on equipment, so it is prepared and ready for fall planting work. This includes routine maintenance as well as relacing worn parts.

Staff are in full swing on the routine mowing and weed whacking work on dikes/dams, parking areas, boat ramps, and offices, that occur at this time of year. In addition to this routine summer maintenance work, staff are also addressing the unforeseen issues of fallen trees, typically after thunderstorms, and completing maintenance on buildings/offices.

Road crew staff completed grading roads at the DOD Ponds WMA. The grader was moved to Union Lake WMA, where staff will grade Bates Blvd. Road crew has also been working on the dikes at the Tuckahoe WMA by replacing stone around the water control structures to reduce erosion issues. Larger stone will be placed as a base and then top-dressed with smaller stone to provide access to crabbers and anglers, while at the same time stabilizing the road.

Staff prepped two vehicles (removed transfer tanks, toolboxes, and all NJF&W logos) to be traded for electric vehicles. Charging stations have not been installed yet and could make using these vehicles problematic in the immediate future. Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has been working with the Office of Resource Development (ORD) to have these stations installed at offices in Millville and Tuckahoe WMAs.

Millville staff patched roof leaks onto the building at Ponder Lodge. This building, which was inherited by NJF&W as part of a land acquisition, is home to the agency's sign shop. Here, seasonal staff fabricate cedar WMA signs. It also serves as a secure storage location for equipment when not in use. The replacement of this roof was submitted as a need for capital improvements.

Sign Shop staff are currently working on signs for the Central Region and upon completing, will begin work on the Southern Region. Several signs were expedited over the last month, two boat ramp signs and a sign for the Nacote Creek Research Station.

Staff continue to issue Field Trial and Special Use Permits.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley has been working with ORD staff and Treasury on the Jakes Landing Boat Ramp improvements, the addition of a fueling station and electric gate at the Southern Region Office, and installing a new floating dock at Spicers Creek.

Controls at Shaws Mill Pond, Maskells Mill Pond, Harrisonville Lake, and Elmer Lake dams have all been replaced and are functioning. Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley worked with the contractor to determine the proper fluid to be used in the hydraulic lines. The contractor believes that at some point vegetable oil was

used, which could have deteriorated the lines. The use of which could not be confirmed and as of the last 5 years, vegetable oil was not used.

Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley met with Habitat Planner Ben Keys to complete a wetlands delineation project at the proposed Port Republic public access site. The delineation determined that one site is within the wetlands transition area and due to the small size of the project, will be removing that portion of it from the plan. Habitat Planner Ben Keys is currently working on submitting this project into Land Management Review.

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 the Division of Fish and Wildlife during this period.

| WMA | COUNTY | TOWNSHIP | NAME | ACRES |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Port Republic | Atlantic | Galloway | Colton | 38 |

Acres assigned during this period: 38

Total Acres statewide: 359,597