

# **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT**

December 21, 2020 to January 20, 2021

Jason Hearon, Bureau Chief  
Lisa Carben, Senior Management Assistant  
Melissa Woerner, Habitat Planner  
Tyler Kinney, Habitat Planner

## **HABITAT PLANNING**

Tyler Kinney

### **Southern Region**

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney developed a proposal for the restoration of the Sheppard's Mill Pond parking lot in the Cohansey River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This project will involve the regrading of the lot access road and pond boat ramp, clearing of vegetation along the access road, and installation of a new parking area. A CBT-M request was submitted and approved for materials and staff time. Regional Superintendent Nathan Figley is coordinating with Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) staff to begin on-site operations.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney met with staff from the DFW and New Jersey State Parks and Forestry to discuss the habitat restoration at the Holly Farm site. Conflicts in the project review were resolved. A follow-up email will be sent to continue moving forward with this restoration.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney attended two meetings with the Blue Acres program to discuss beach restoration efforts at Baypoint and Money Island. Project managers discussed how to go about removing concrete rubble from the beachfront.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney organized and attended a meeting with all DFW biologists conducting habitat management work on southern region WMAs. Operations relating to grassland habitat, quail habitat, and waterfowl impoundment water management/aerial seeding were discussed.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is coordinating with a contract farmer to complete a habitat restoration on the Marmora tract of the Tuckahoe WMA. This former farm is now overgrown with invasive autumn olive. The contractor is currently in the process of removing the invasive vegetation. The land will then be planted in a sorghum/buckwheat seed mixture.

Habitat Planner Tyler Kinney is coordinating with New Jersey Audubon to complete invasive vegetation management in the Cox Hall Creek WMA. This project was discussed at the previous year's meeting. We are currently awaiting their special use permit application and justification to be entered into land management review.

Melissa Woerner

### **Northern Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner worked with a northern region crew supervisor to update maps for the next round of farm leases based on current field conditions.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner mailed out the 2021 in-kind assignments for tenant farmers in the northern region.

### **Central Region**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner transferred photo and video files from the Assunpink wildlife crossing cameras to a shared Teams folder.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner mailed out the 2021 in-kind assignments for tenant farmers and agricultural Special Use Permit holders in the central region.

### **All Regions/Miscellaneous**

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner worked with the Office of Natural Resources Restoration to obtain invoices suitable for match for the Restoration Monitoring grant.

Habitat Planner Melissa Woerner compiled descriptions of upcoming management projects in the northern and central regions.

BLM and OFWIS are working together to revise the grant narrative for the WMA Planning grant.

## **NORTHERN REGION**

Susan Predl, Regional Superintendent  
Jim Hartobey, Crew Supervisor  
Christopher Murphy, Crew Supervisor

Pheasant stocking continued on December 21, 23, 28 and 30 at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Berkshire Valley, Black River, Clinton, Flatbrook, Pequest, Walpack and Whittingham WMAs.

Fields surrounding the pheasant pens at the Rockport Game Farm have been mowed. These fields are now ready to be incorporated into a farm lease or maintained as habitat in the Rockport WMA.

Two Special Use Permits were issued. One permit provided access across Flatbrook WMA fields for forest activities on an adjoining private property. The other permit granted the state police and state park police access to a vacant house on the Bear Swamp WMA for training purposes.

A request was received from Oxford Township to fence the southern entrance to the Oxford Tunnel. The southern entrance is on WMA property. Endangered Nongame Species Program (ENSP) biologist Mackenzie Hall was contacted regarding bat use of the tunnel. Since not many bats use that tunnel and the tunnel does not receive a lot of human disturbance, ENSP could not justify using funds to fence the tunnel to protect bats. Regional Superintendent Susan Predl and Crew Supervisor James Hartobey visited the site. It will be possible to lower sections of fence down to the tunnel entrance and attach the fence to the stone walls of the tunnel, when time allows.

All debris was removed from the Rockport barn by staff. The barn is ready to be leased to Mansfield Township.

A complaint was received about dying ash trees leaning over a house. Crews visited the site bordering the Black River WMA and verified the hazard. A memo and Purchase Order Request were submitted for a contract vendor to cut down the trees.

A new gate was installed at the Sparta Mountain WMA to prevent / deter illegal off-road vehicles.

Erosion damage to the parking lot at Delaware Lake and to the boat launch is being repaired with riprap and gravel.

A parking lot at White Lake is being improved. Ditches have been dug to drain the water out of the parking lot and quarry process stone will be used to fill the large potholes in the parking area.

Damaged locks were removed and replaced near the old Columbia Dam site in the Columbia WMA.

Regional Superintendent Susan Predl submitted a project for Land Management Review on behalf of the New Jersey Water Supply Authority. The NJ Water Supply Authority hopes to install several sections of biochar, a charcoal material used to filter out phosphorous and other nutrients from water. The biochar will be placed in socks that are attached to the bottom of the Mulhockaway Creek, which runs into the Spruce Run Reservoir. Spruce Run Reservoir has had numerous outbreaks of Harmful Algal Blooms in recent years that seem to stem from where the Mulhockaway Creek runs into the Reservoir.

## **CENTRAL REGION**

Pete Winkler, Regional Superintendent  
Mike Haines, Crew Supervisor Equipment Operations  
Bill Torry, Crew Supervisor WMAs

Regional Superintendent Pete Winkler attended the virtual online Board of Directors Meeting at the Horse Park of New Jersey representing the Division of Fish and Wildlife

The Stafford Forge and Colliers Mills rifle and shotgun ranges remain closed for upgrading the ranges. Upgrades include new covered shooting stations, parking access and handicap access. The project is potentially delayed 2-4 weeks due to COVID complications with staff and supply of materials. There was also a burglary of the contractors' tools and supplies. It is now on schedule for completion by the end of March 2021.

Staff continue to issue field trial and special use permits consistent with the latest State issued Covid-19 related Executive Orders.

Crews completed stocking pheasant and quail according to the published schedule.

Bids are being acquired to decommission the well for a structure demolition on the Assunpink WMA.

The dam projects are completed at Rising Sun and Stone Tavern lakes at the Assunpink WMA. Water levels have returned to normal. The concrete ramps and docks were not installed due to delays in acquiring the permits. Permits were secured and these projects will be completed at a later date. Permits are good for 5 years. We are seeking reimbursement for repairs from USDA NRCS.

Crews continue to work on 3 CBT-M access projects to improve parking areas, ramps and roads at Swan Bay, Manahawkin and Great Bay Blvd WMAs.

Crews picked up over 20 new wooded WMA signs from the BLM sign shop. The central region will be replacing old signs with these new ones and adding some new signs in area where they are needed.

The following groups and activities utilized the Assunpink conservation center and the central office meeting room during this reporting period:

NA – COVID 19

## **SOUTHERN REGION**

Nathan Figley, Regional Superintendent  
Brad Heffley, Crew Supervisor  
Dan Baker, Crew Supervisor  
Mason Reeves, Crew Supervisor

Staff cleaned, repaired, and stored all equipment used to stock pheasant and quail.

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

The road crew spent their time hauling material (dirt, stone, aggregate) prepping for work road work at the Dix WMA and restocking materials at the Millville office for emergency repairs.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein met with Office of Resource Development staff and an architect for roof replacement at the southern region office and to address water issues at the Tuckahoe office.

Electrical work at Eagle Manor was completed. An inspection is scheduled and then power will be restored to the building. Power to the newly acquired pole barn on the Union Lake WMA was restored. This building will be used to store equipment and as a trapper education facility.

Senior Repairer Jeff Wettstein is working with Calvi Electric to replace a failing main breaker at Holly Farm. He has also secured a purchase order for a security system to be installed and this will take place after the breaker has been replaced.

Staff worked with NJ Forest Fire Service and ENSP to postpone a prescribed burn until after the hunting season on a portion of the Peaslee WMA.

A project was submitted to create a boat launch and parking area at the Sheppards Mill Pond (Clarks Pond WMA). Project enhancements will include cutting of vegetation along either side of the driveway, gravel driveway and parking area, stone ramp, and floating dock.

Field work began on the Tuckahoe WMA in an area commonly referred to as Shaw's Farm. Removal of the invasive species will improve habitat for wildlife and provide opportunity to constituent. The area was overgrown with autumn olive.

Staff will work with a watershed ambassador from Salem County to conduct a trash cleanup at the DOD Ponds WMA.

Meetings Attended: BLM Staff Weekly, BLM/BLE monthly, Forest Service/BLE, WMA Regulations, Cumberland County Sportsmens Federation, Money Island Restoration

## **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SECTION**

### **LAND ACQUISITIONS**

Lisa Carben, Senior Management Assistant

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

<b>WMA</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>TOWNSHIP</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>ACRES</b>
Beaver Brook	Warren	White	JoAnn J. Dennis	4.275
Nantuxent	Cumberland	Downe	William F. Bowen	.2
Makepeace Lake	Atlantic	Hamilton	Anthony Baio	10
Peaslee	Cumberland	Maurice River	Gerald W. & Karen L. Bush	8
Union Lake	Cumberland	Deerfield	Eccleton Associates	63

Acres assigned during this period: 85.475