

CAC Meeting 5.11.04

Secretary Report

- The minutes were accepted

Conservation Environmental Police

- In the month of April, there were 330 bear complaints called into the DEP. Only one bear had been killed. Bear populations are widespread and not confined to any one area. Data is currently being gathered on population densities but more data is needed before any culling could be started. Data from NJ and Delaware is also being looked at and to date our data pretty much mirrors what these other states have experienced.

Marine Fisheries

Copies of the Ct Coastal Access Guide were handed out.

Inland Fisheries

- The Department had received good feedback regarding Opening Day. People were pleased seeing DEP personnel in the field and were happy about the size of the trout.
- A question was asked about the Quinnibaug Hatchery. Ed Parker stated that the roof needs repair. Wells at the hatchery also do not have the desired capacity but are adequate. The water has a high iron content, which has slowed the flow occasionally.
- There is currently an application in with the Bureau of Water Management regarding applying the aquatic herbicide Diquat to Highland Lake in Winsted. Many other options are available for weed control other than chemicals. A Meeting will be held on Sat May 15 at the Winsted Town Hall at 10 am.

Forestry

The Forestry Bill passed through the Legislation this year. This should be a very successful program. Estimates are that a one-year forester should bring in income equal to 2.5 times their yearly salary. Any income generated over \$875k will go to the Conservation Fund.

Wildlife

A brochure was handed around giving guidelines on how to become a Falconer. Region 5 of the USFWS has reviewed the regulations and has sent them off to D.C. with no modifications.

Two Regulatory packages are moving internally within the Department. One concerning Fisheries and the other concerns Wildlife. One issue in the wildlife package contains wording requiring the minimum acreage for a shooting preserve to be 200 acres. The CAC had recommended 150 acres as the minimum a few months ago. It is currently 300 acres. Any groups or individuals who take exception to this will have an opportunity to voice their feelings at an upcoming Public Hearing. At that time, written comment should be offered with details of specific examples of why less than 200 acres would be adequate.

The new Wildlife License Plates are now available through the DMV. Cost is \$50 with \$35 going to the Conservation Fund and the other \$15 going to DMV. Both the Eagle and the Bobcat plates are available.

Ed Parker supplied us with two sheets that explained fishing and hunting license sales from 2000 through 2003. There was a noticeable decline in sales in 2003 when the new price hike went into effect. Though sales were down, income was up due to the price hike.

Legislative Committee Report

Bob Crook had reported how the Sportsman's Legislative Caucus had submitted 4 Bills this year. Forestry was passed. Another concerning the hiring of more Conservation Environmental Police succeeded in getting 2 Officers hired. The Motor Boat Fuel Tax remains the same and with Sunday hunting, nothing was done. Bob may try to raise this issue again through the Finance Committee.

No other gun Bills were passed.

An act to preserve fishing died.

A proposal to go to a 2 year boating registration renewal appears to have died.

Electronic registration by marine dealers in selling vessels passed.

In regards to the Forestry Bill, the Nature Conservancy had given a grant of \$390k to the DEP to act as seed money to get the Forestry program started. Many groups pulled together to get this Bill passed.

A Bill regarding Invasive Plants was very controversial but did pass.

Betty McLaughlin spoke about passage of a new Wetlands Bill. It seems that there was a case that went before the CT Supreme Court involving a developer and Inland Wetlands Commission. The court found that current wetlands regulations do not need to demonstrate possible impact to wildlife by altering a wetland. This session, a new Bill was passed that does require showing the effect on habitat and wildlife.

By Law Committee

Discussion was had on how these by laws can be changed yearly. Only issues that surfaced in the discussion were with the possibility of a name change and issues revolving around the three categories of membership. There was opposition to the non-voting rights of Members Emeritus. A question was put to Ed Parker about a name change for the group. It was felt by most that retaining the initials CAC would be a good thing. A motion was made and seconded to change the groups name from, "Citizens Advisory Council" to "Conservation Advisory Council". The vote was unanimous to change the name to "Conservation".

More discussion was had regarding Members Emeritus and their ability to not vote. Eventually, a motion was made and seconded to approve the package "as is" with the exception of the name change. New By laws pass.

New Business

Rockville and Bristol Fish and Game will be holding free shoots for the Sportsman's Legislative Caucus. Bob had suggested that if you have a boat, offer to take some of these people out. It was stated that the CT BASS Federation would be looking into setting a date to get his group out also. A comment was made to check with the Ethics Committee to make sure this is all legal.

A question was asked about ATV issues. The Conservation Environmental Police stated that they have as much authority as local police but both local police and the environmental police will not give chase to an ATV.

Another question was asked regarding the Pheasant Program. Ed Parker encouraged all interested parties to submit their ideas and thoughts in writing to help this program. Gary Zielanski, the new alternate for the CT BASS Federation was introduced.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm

Respectfully submitted
Jon Puhalski