



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

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Scott R. Mason
Executive Director

May 21, 2024

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to accept a donation pursuant to RSA 206:33-a of a 12-foot inflatable raft boat from New Hampshire Council of Trout Unlimited (NHTU) valued at approximately \$4,500.00, effective upon Governor and Council approval.

EXPLANATION

This is a request to accept the donation of a 12-foot inflatable raft to the Inland Fisheries Division for fish population and fish habitat surveys in medium sized waters, as well as those habitats that lack established access. The raft, once accepted, would be converted into a small electrofishing sampling boat. We have been pursuing this type of gear for several years as the need to sample medium sized waters with limited access is critical to understanding changes in fish populations and their habitats. This raft will be equipped with a portable outboard motor and electrofishing technologies, which will enable it to sample locations and populations in areas that would otherwise be inaccessible. These include below dams targeting endangered anadromous species and in-between sized waters that can't be surveyed by other means. This will be helpful to all of the programs under the Inland Fisheries Division (ie Coldwater, Anadromous, Warmwater, Habitat, etc).

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to accept this donation at their February 20, 2024 meeting (See attached minutes, Action Item 3).

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Scott R. Mason.

Scott R. Mason
Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Kathy Ann LaBonte.

Kathy Ann LaBonte, Chief
Business Division

**NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT FEBRUARY 20, 2024 COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

Commissioners Present: R. Green, B. Temple, E. Stohl, S. Price, J. Titone, P. DeBow, M. Hodgson, J. Caveney & C. Hodgdon & A.J. DeRosa.

Commissioners absent/excused:

Belknap County Commissioner- seat is vacant at this time. Executive Director

Mason – Present

Chairman E. Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the Chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chairman reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner R. Green moved to approve the January 16, 2024 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner P. DeBow seconded. The vote carried with 8 in favor, 2 abstentions (M. Hodgson & J. Caveney).

At this time, Chairman E. Stohl removed items 2d. & 2e. from the consent agenda and reported that they would heard individually.

Commissioner R. Green moved to accept consent agenda items 2a., 2b., 2c., 2f. & 2g., as presented below, Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$5,500.00 made to the Search & Rescue account to assist in purchasing safety equipment and to provide lifesaving training to Conservation Officers:

John Berry -	\$5,000.00	
Dianne King -	<u>\$ 500.00</u>	Total:
	\$5,500.00	

2b.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$7,500 from the NH Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation to go towards habitat projects on the William B. Ruger Jr., Wildlife Management Area in Croydon, NH, the Danbury Bog Wildlife Management Area in Danbury, NH, and the Lamontagne Wildlife Management Area in Deerfield, NH.

2c.) The Commission accepted three donations totaling \$122.50 from the below individuals, for deposit into the Small Gifts & Donations Account:

• Stuart Marvin, Center Conway, NH -	\$100.00	
• June, Jean & Jonathan Caron, Nashua, NH -	\$ 12.50	
• Jerimiah & Andrea Beck, Gilford, NH -	<u>\$ 10.00</u>	
	Total:	\$122.50

2f.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 from the NH Trappers Association, for use by the

Wildlife Division for furbearer management.

2g.) The Commission accepted the donation of \$50.00 in memory of Ted Peabody from Thomas Angelosanto of Derry, NH, for use by the Wildlife Division for game management.

The vote was unanimous in the affirmative to accept the consent agenda items 2a., 2b., 2c., 2f., & 2g.

3.) Commissioner R. Green moved to accept the following donations from the NH Council of Trout Unlimited, total value \$5,599.00 and Commissioner B. Temple seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

- Check in the amount of \$500.00
- Firman 4550W Generator, valued at \$599.00
- Inflatable raft, valued at \$4,500.00

4.) John Magee, Programs Supervisor, Inland Fisheries Division, came before the Commission seeking approval to expend \$7,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to pay dam registration fees to the Department of Environmental Services.

Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, clarified for the Commission that the annual dam registration fees are \$27,000 and that the Inland Fisheries Division was seeking approval to expend an additional \$7,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to meet the \$27,000 total due.

Commissioner R. Green moved to approve the expenditure of \$7,000 from the Fisheries Habitat Account to pay dam registration fees to the Department of Environmental Services and Commissioner A.J. DeRosa seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2e.) Jim Oehler, Wildlife Habitat Program Supervisor, came before the Commission seeking approval to accept the donation of a 240-acre property in Mount Vernon, NH, from the Estate of Joanne & Roger Pinchard, to add to the Department's system of Wildlife Management Areas.

Jim reported that in 2013, the Pinchards were engaged in estate planning and reached out to several conservation organizations, including NH Fish & Game, to inquire about donating their land. After evaluating their options, they determined that the NH Fish & Game was best aligned with their values and how they wanted to see their land managed. An enforceable pledge was signed by both parties. The Pinchards have since passed away and their estate attorney has reached out to initiate the donation procedure.

Jim further elaborated that the property consists of 50 acres of hay and cornfields, 60 acres of wetlands, including a beaver impoundment, red maple swamp, and a shrub swamp, with the remainder in hemlock, oak, red maple, and pine forest. He reported that this habitat diversity would support a variety of wildlife, while also providing excellent wildlife based recreation opportunities.

Commissioner R. Green moved to accept the donation of a 240-acre property in Mount Vernon, NH, from the Estate of Joanne & Roger Pinchard, to add to the Department's system of Wildlife Management Areas and Commissioner M. Hodgson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2d.) Jim Oehler, Wildlife Habitat Program Supervisor, came before the Commission seeking approval to accept the donation of two islands, totaling 11± acres in the Pemigewasset River in Thornton, NH, from

LCJ Holdings LLC.

Jim reported that the islands represent unique and important wildlife habitat and are located 0.5 miles north of the Pemigewasset Wildlife Management Area. The Pemigewasset River and the islands are the highest ranked wildlife habitat in the NH Wildlife Action Plan. LCJ Holdings LLC has been working on a large scale, multi-phase, 500- acre development project over the last seven years and own the two islands in the Pemigewasset River abutting their development project in Thornton. These islands have a documented population of the state endangered cobblestone tiger beetle and currently represents the only known occurrence of the species in the Pemigewasset River Watershed. The Department has negotiated an agreement for the acquisition, in fee, of the two islands as mitigation for rare wildlife and habitat impacts that result from the development project.

Commissioner A.J. DeRosa moved to accept the donation of two islands, totaling 11± acres in the Pemigewasset River in Thornton, NH, from LCJ Holdings LLC and Commissioner P. DeBow seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

5.) Docket No. NHFGC: 2024-001, In re RSA 206:4-b Complaint Regarding New Hampshire Fish and Game Commissioner Price: Possible Appointment of K. Allen Brooks, Senior Assistant Attorney General, and/or alternate as Presiding Officer (Commissioner Price not participating).

Chairman E. Stohl moved that Senior Assistant Attorney General, K. Allen Brooks, serve as the Presiding Officer over the hearing, Docket No. NHFGC: 2024-001, In re RSA 206:4-b Complaint Regarding New Hampshire Fish and Game Commissioner Price and Commissioner R. Green seconded.

Chairman E. Stohl explained that Attorney Aslin represents the Department and Attorney Lucas represents the Commission, therefore, Chairman E. Stohl reached out to Senior Assistant Attorney General K. Allen Brooks, who agreed to serve as Presiding Officer.

The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) There were no questions for Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, regarding the monthly financial statement.

Chairman E. Stohl reported that he asked Kathy to do some research on other states license fees and compare the differences. He reported that she researched five other states license fees and has provided that information in a handout to the Commission. He thanked Kathy for the valuable information.

2.) Henry Jones, Moose Project Leader, provided an update on current moose research being conducted by the University of NH for the Department. The primary goal of this project is to develop and evaluate the use of camera traps and unmanned aerial system surveys to monitor moose abundance and provide estimates of density.

Henry reported that during the period 2022-2025, research is being conducted statewide on moose by UNH via a Cooperative Project Agreement between the Department and UNH. Moose densities from cameras and unmanned aerial system surveys will be compared with those generated from the ongoing deer hunter survey. The results of this research will allow the Department to select the most suitable moose abundance monitoring technique. Accurate moose population abundance data is necessary for guiding management recommendations and addressing the desires of the diverse moose user groups in NH. (See attached presentation)