

DRAFT Minutes
PA Game Commission/PA Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
Annual Cooperative Meeting
June 3,2005
PGC Headquarters, Harrisburg
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Attendees:

PGC – V. Ross, Carl Roe, Cal DuBrock, Bob Boyd, John Dunn, Mary Jo Casalena, Brad Myers, Mike Pruss, Ed Steffan.

NWTF - Bob Eriksen, Jerry Zimmerman.

PANWTF - Jim Panaro.

1. 2005 PANWTF Habitat Superfund
 - a. \$164,000 – projects ranged from \$200 - \$10,000 (Allegheny N.F. - hadn't submitted a project in 8 years - lot of projects to catch up on.).
 - b. 64 projects, 59 on public lands, 47 on SGL, 47 Counties, 1,058 ac.
 - c. PGC appreciates partnership – could not get work done without NWTF.
 - d. PANWTF – 2 programs that drive the volunteers:
 - i. Habitat & Youth
 - ii. PANWTF is #1 in country for money spent.
 - iii. Superfund Account = 65% Habitat, 25% Safety & Education, 10% Land Acquisition.
2. Cooperative I & E Articles for PA Game News, etc.
 - a. Lori Richardson – about Habitat Superfund projects on SGL in Rich Skubish's area. - **Completed.**
 - b. Bob E.
 - i. Importance of reporting turkey harvest – what & how data are used. Bob will submit to PA Game News. – **STATUS??**
 - ii. Cooperative ROW habitat project in SW Region, Doug Dunkerely's & Dave Griffin's area. 92 ac., 3 SGLs. Columbia Gas pipeline. PGC received grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 10-mile Chapter NWTF, Local Hunt Club, and DU. All habitat work to be accomplished in 1 year. – **STATUS??**
 - c. MJ Casalena – Article on Management Plan Revision – Not completed.
 - d. Ceremonial Wild Turkey Release in SE Region. – **STATUS??**
3. Potential Cooperative Project – Statewide GIS project
 - a. NWTF could help PGC with submitting grant. – **STATUS??**
4. NWTF/PGC Ceremonial Wild Turkey Release in SE Region - **Completed**
 - a. Thanksgiving week – approved by Ex. Director V. Ross
 - b. NWTF requests a different state agency each Thanksgiving week to conduct close to a metropolitan area. Very successful in educating about the restoration of the wild turkey and hunting heritage in urban setting. A Public Relations opportunity.
 - c. Local schools will participate & will follow 2-3 turkeys via radio telemetry. NWTF will loan the telemetry equipment to schools. – **STATUS?, still being tracked?**
5. Bob Eriksen – available to assist PGC during MJ Casalena's maternity leave.
Completed. Bob's assistance was sought and appreciated.

6. Women In the Outdoors
 - a. PGC has been cooperative with WITO
 - b. Program is strong and growing – 20-25 events in PA annually.
 - c. State event – 100-125 participants.
 - d. Successful – has gotten more women active in local chapters and to become members.
7. Jakes Program
 - a. Very strong.
 - b. Spring Gobbler Youth Season – 32 of 34 eastern chapters took youth hunting. 2 that didn't were in Philadelphia and Chester Counties and didn't have the opportunity to hunt.
 - c. PGC appreciates the funding NWTF provides for Youth Field Days and other youth programs.
8. Regulatory/Statutory Changes
 - a. 2nd Spring Gobbler – PANWTF Board's recommendations for implementation:
 - i. Sell prior to season – **Completed**. PGC selling centrally through Harrisburg, thereby absorbing administrative costs for the first year. Available Jan. 1 – April 1, 2006: avoids busy fall period for general license issuances.
 - ii. Valid only during second 2 weeks of season. - **Not necessary** biologically because the PA spring season is timed to begin at the peak of nest incubation.
 - iii. Bag limit of one per day. – **Completed**.
 - iv. Issuance of 2nd bird in the FALL – Do not offer until sufficient data justifies it. – **Correct**. This is stated in the Management Plan for Wild Turkeys in Pennsylvania, as well as the Spring Hunting Options White Paper prepared by MJ Casalena and B. Eriksen.
 - v. Do not issue 2nd Spring Gobbler license if population decline. **Unnecessary** - as long as PA's season begins at the peak of nest incubation after most breeding has occurred. Studies show that removing up to 35 – 50% of the gobbler population will not impact the overall population. Gobbler harvest rate data is now being acquired with the 4-year tri-state gobbler study (2006-2009).
 1. I&E articles needed to inform public that this additional tag will not impact the turkey population. **Completed** – B. Eriksen wrote several articles, MJ Casalena posted answers to FAQ's regarding such on PGC turkey web page.
 - vi. PANWTF is concerned about potential future population impacts. Suggest creating a game plan that is justifiable and understandable to public.
 1. PANWTF request a communication strategy for informing the public when license goes on sale, to avoid misinformation (press releases, handouts, Game News articles, etc.) - **Somewhat accomplished**.
 - vii. Mandatory reporting of harvest – **Completed**.
 - viii. PGC will monitor over next 3 years and change/modify regulations if necessary, and will continue to monitor.

- b. Extend Spring Season to May 31- Recommended by PANWTF Board. – **No Action.**
 - i. Option is explained in the white paper authored by Casalena and Eriksen (2003), “Options for Spring Wild Turkey Hunting to Increase Recreational Opportunities”, which states, “With the current 20 percent hunter success rate, additional days most likely would be utilized. Adding days following the Memorial Day weekend would result in less hen mortality than adding days prior to the current opener, and is the recommended method for this option. Adding an additional week may increase the harvest by twelve percent, or 5,360 gobblers. Season lengths in surrounding states are: Delaware (3 weeks), Ohio and West Virginia (4 weeks), Maryland and Virginia (5 weeks), New Jersey (6 weeks) and New York (the entire month of May). Of these states, New York’s season runs through the Memorial Day weekend, as do most of the New England states (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut), and the province of Ontario.”
 - ii. PGC – conflicts/safety issues with other user groups/public during holiday weekend. Dunn stated - similar to PGC concern with early goose season opener on Labor Day weekend, which turned out to not be a problem.
 - iii. PANWTF – suggestion – Close season for Memorial Day & reopen on Tuesday (similar to small game/grouse season closure for Christmas).
- c. Turkey Dogs for fall season – **B. Eriksen provided report to PGC Board of Commissioners Wildlife Committee.**
 - i. PGC –
 - 1. Requires regulatory change; Title 58, 141.45, A-2.
 - 2. Possibly increase harvest, requiring shorter seasons (?).
 - 3. Major social issue – use of dogs for big-game hunting.
 - 4. Not a good time to expand fall either-sex hunting due to lower statewide turkey population.
 - ii. PANWTF – participation would be low.
- d. Discussion of fall season lengths for 2006.
 - i. PGC now makes initial season/bag limit recommendations at October PGC meeting.
- e. Sunday Hunting.
 - i. PGC – **No opinion.**
 - ii. PANWTF – **Supports.**
 - iii. Ohio – 3-year study of Sunday hunting on public land & private registered in advance. So far, no problems.
- f. Hunting license increase package.
 - i. PANWTF – Supports general turkey hunting license.
 - ii. V. Ross – PGC will not propose this; PANWTF must push for it if they want it, which will carry more weight with legislatures. Same as what pheasant hunters are seeking.
 - iii. PGC – would support turkey-hunting license if proposed in package, if NOT dedicated funding.
 - iv. PANWTF – would money be used for turkey management? V. Ross – depends on turkey program’s needs and priorities compared to rest of agency.

9. Rodenticide Bait Stations Program – WMU 5A.
 - a. WCO David (Adams Co.) provided names/contacts of fruit growers to B. Eriksen. Also has contacts in Berks Co.
 - b. B. Eriksen will coordinate. **STATUS??**
10. Vineyard surveillance in PA – perceived turkey damage. – **No Action**
 - a. 78 vineyards, most in NW Region – Erie Co. largest producer.
 - b. B. Eriksen has equipment for surveillance of 3-4 each fall.
 - c. C. Roe – wait for complaints. Industry is very small. Conclusions might show deer damage, which would qualify vineyards for deer exclusion fencing. PGC currently has no money in cost-share fund.
11. Nuisance Turkey Complaint System – **Draft SOP completed (4/06) and being reviewed.**
 - a. B. Eriksen will give C. Graybill a CD of Ohio Wildlife’s manual for PGC to print color manuals. **STATUS??**
 - b. B. Eriksen can then provide training (identifying species that cause crop damage by examining site) to WCOs at regional meetings, ½ - 1 hour, and hand out manuals. **STATUS??**
 - c. Could even add info on Bear & Elk for regional training. **STATUS??**
12. PANWTF Awards to WCO & LMO of the year.
 - a. 2005 – information was not distributed through PGC – not sure why.
 - b. 2006 – **PANWTF is to send request for nominees to PGC Ex. Director.**
13. Data Needs
 - a. Turkey Age/Sex on report cards.
 - b. Status of toll-free phone reporting of harvest? C. Roe – driven by resources available.
 - c. Winter deer/turkey mortality surveys – are they still conducted?
 - i. **Discontinued in 2006** – no direct link between data collected and season/bag limit recommendations. Data were not being used, therefore survey discontinued.
14. Turkey Hunting Seminars
 - a. PANWTF available to help PGC conduct.
 - b. Possibly add to turkey management plan objectives.
 - c. C. Roe or C. DuBrock will email C. Graybill to inform of possibility. **STATUS??**
15. Wild Turkey Management Plan Review
 - a. PANWTF appreciated opportunity to review plan
 - b. C. Roe – Plan’s objectives will be resource driven. If license increase is approved, new program moneys will be available in 2008.
16. 2004 Hunting Related Shooting Incidents
 - a. Fall – 5 nonfatal, 4 victims were mistaken for game, 1 was in the line of fire.
 - b. Spring – 9 nonfatal, all victims were mistaken for game.
17. NWTF National Convention
 - a. PANWTF will continue to fund PGC registration feed to attend.
 - b. PGC thanks PANWTF for opportunity.