

Final Minutes: PGC/PANWTF Annual Meeting
June 9, 2008; 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Pennsylvania Game Commission Headquarters
2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg

(15 Attendees from PGC Executive Office, BWM, BI&E, BWHM, BWP, PANWTF Board and NWTF Staff. See attached attendee sheet.)

1. NWTF Regional Biologist Position and Funding Renewal Status – Bob Eriksen / PGC
 - a. In next yr's PGC budget – Contract expires June 2009, next 5-yr. renewal required (Roe)
 - b. Thank you from PANWTF
 - c. NWTF continues to expand Regional Biologists – 23 currently. PA was a pioneer in this regard.
 - i. Currently negotiating with Ohio (also cover WV), New England-NH willing to contribute; (one recently hired for KY).
 - d. **Action:** Renew next 5-yr agreement by this time next year.
2. Extension of Spring Gobbler Season Dates through Memorial Day (outcomes) - Jon Pries / PGC
 - a. Good feedback, hunters staying at camp longer
 - b. PGC – don't hear compliments, but didn't hear any complaints. Complaints regarding opening date of season - southern part of state, season should start earlier. Issue is not unique to PA and is an historic complaint. Hunting pressure suppresses gobbling activity. In NJ – northern part of state opened 1 week later & was administratively challenging.
 - c. Extension to May 31, after 3 years of Memorial Day closure, 2011. How can PANWTF help? What should PANWTF do to proceed? Maximum would be 5-day extension. Purpose – increase spring hunting opportunities.
 - i. How does this rate in terms of priorities for expanding spring opportunities? Season extension at end of season, vs. all-day hunting, vs. Sunday hunting? Make one change at a time, so what would be priority of PANWTF?
 - ii. Sunday hunting package – current language would allow for it (double negative)
 - iii. Intent – attract more turkey hunters or increase opportunities for existing hunters?
 - iv. J.Pries – all-day hunting would attract more hunters and out-of-state hunters
 - v. Option of bringing all-day hunting in during last 2 weeks.
 - vi. **Action:** Survey states that allow all-day hunting - what are number of hunters, do they require a turkey-hunting permit or just general hunting license? >50% of states require turkey-hunting license.
 - vii. **Action:** Look at results of turkey hunter survey to determine general hunters' opinions.
 - viii. **Action:** Longer season – more HRSI's due to more leaves on trees?? Determine when during the season the HRSI's occur.
 - ix. **Action:** Review the spring turkey hunting options white paper & update where needed.
 - x. **Action:** 3 options. BWM/I&E/BWP – discuss priorities taking into consideration all biological, hunter safety, enforcement issues. PANWTF Board will discuss as well. Bring priority lists (PGC & PANWTF) to next year's meeting.
3. Mentored Youth Fall Turkey Hunt – Jon Pries/PGC

- a. Feather in the cap of the PGC – being used as a model across the nation. PANWTF thanks PGC.
 - b. Model allowed for other species to be added once deer and spring turkey assessed.
 - c. Asked PGC opinion on adding fall turkey & if so, when?
 - d. Roe – if we continue to add species, when do we simply lower the minimum age of hunting?
 - e. One issue with fall turkey is use of rifle, but deer allows rifle. D.Heckman – could PGC specify mentored youth shotgun only?
 - f. Roe suggested PANWTF continue to raise issue to the Commissioners.
 - g. Tagging issue problem and fall season used as turkey population control, many hunters afield in fall pursuing other species (not sure what this comment means, avg. # spring HRSIs are same as HRSIs in fall).
 - h. Currently a proposal to add coyote hunting.
 - i. No data yet on harvest by mentored youth – will acquire from GT survey.
 - j. Once we have POS, will register mentors (C. Roe)
 - k. **Action:** Assess harvest from GT Survey.
4. 2008 Habitat Super Fund Report – Carl Mowry
 - a. Budget = \$100,000; \$68,784 approved for PGC; 2,818 acres on 40 PGC projects. One land manager successful in leveraged a Mellon grant and other partners to purchase a wet lime spreader. Great working relationships with land managers and PANWTF appreciates this relationship and glad to help.
 - b. PANWTF Habitat superfund:
 - i. 1985 - 2003: \$649,661 for SGLs (doesn't include amounts spent on PGC safety & education, agency travel or research projects (also considerable contributions).
 - ii. 2004 –2008: \$449,663.57.
 - iii. Total: \$1,099,324.57 for SGLs habitat enhancement since 1985! In addition PANWTF spent many \$ on PGC safety & education, travel and research projects.
 - c. **Action:** PGC publish news release showing PANWTF habitat superfund >\$1 million. PANWTF will provide info to C.Roe for news release.
 5. Fall 2007 and Preliminary Spring 2008 Turkey Hunting Incidents Update – Keith Snyder
 - a. Report – spring HRSIs 2000-Present. 2008 = 7 confirmed, 1 still under investigation from Cambria County – cause not specified yet. Previous 10-yr avg. = 9 incidents. No reports of mentored youth. Self-inflicted tend to comprise approx. 1/3 of all incidents – not as prevalent with turkey hunters as with small game hunters. Most victims were stationary and therefore not wearing fl. orange.
 - b. Mistake for game is of most concern.
 - c. Failure to properly identify target continues to be leading cause across the nation.
 - d. Has offender ever been repeat offender? Don't know, but most license revocations 5-10 yrs.
 - e. Summary of fall 2007 HRSI – one incident- rifle. Mistake for game. – Fewer hunters, more education. Those hunters remaining may be more dedicated turkey hunters.
 - f. **Action:** PANWTF continue with their I&E.
 6. Safety Messages/Hunter Education- what more can we do?- PGC
 - a. 2008-2009 Digest and inclusion of Turkey Hunting Success and Safety insert- Jon Pries/Joe Neville

- i. K. Snyder handed out new PA Hunting/Trapping Digest. Pages 74-75. The PANWTF Turkey hunting success and safety message. First of its kind. PANWTF thanked PGC for including in digest.
 - ii. NWTF Banquet program – safety is not typically included at banquets.
 - iii. **Action:** Provide the tri-fold to PANWTF banquet attendees, or insert in banquet program, with statement from emcee to mention that with the next hunting season coming up, think safety and read the material provided.
 - b. Turkey hunting clinic – funding will be provided by USFWS. Skills and ability to be successful. PGC will seek experienced turkey hunters to volunteer to teach the new turkey hunting curriculum (D.Heckman suggested Tom Hindman & Mike Horst or Horsch?).
 - i. **Action:** B.Eriksen & T.Hughes available to assist K.Snyder with curriculum development.
 - c. **Action:** D.Heckman suggested PGC mail the tri-fold safety message to every turkey hunter, once POS is established with resources from PANWTF (\$120,000). If we can reduce the HRSIs by 1-2/year, what would the resources be to reduce it? Could those resources be better spent somewhere else? How much more can the incident rate be decreased? Number incidents avg. 9/yr. 69 spring incidents since 2000.
 - d. **Action:** Look at future HRSIs and causes – does cause change once the fl. orange regulation was relaxed – change from mistaken for game with victim stationary, or change to victim moving?
 - e. Need to Produce Educational Signs and Reminders for 2008? – Don Heckman
 - i. Is current supply adequate? Yes, met our need.
 - ii. How well were they distributed on SGL this year? B.Coupuillez – well received.
 - iii. **Action:** PGC (BWHM) to determine need for this year, provide to K.Snyder.
 - f. Mailing of Turkey Hunting Success and Safety insert with second gobbler licenses- Don Heckman
 - i. Flyer wasn't available for 2008. Could it be done for 2009?
 - ii. **Action:** C.Roe will determine if increases cost of mailing licenses and will get back to PANWTF.
- 7. Wild Turkey Management – Don Heckman / PGC
 - a. List of Strategies started and strategies scheduled to begin in 2008, 2009, 2010
 - i. Of 47 strategies, 29 in progress, 7 to begin in the future (2 of which begin 2008), one ahead of schedule, 3 postponed due to delay in Point-of-Sale licensing, and 7 behind schedule (2 delayed one year due to lack of personnel, 4 beyond personnel time commitments and low priorities and one delayed due to internal review required).
 - ii. One strategy completed.
 - iii. 5 strategies were scheduled for completion in 2007: 2 will be completed in 2008, one postponed until completion of gobbler study and 2 postponed due to lack of personnel & low priorities.
 - b. Hen Study potential including funding needs-MJ Casalena/Bob Boyd
 - i. NY, OH– not interested, VT might be. But B.Eriksen encourages submitting to NWTF for Research Grant – would be applicable to the midAtlantic region. PANWTF will provide some funding. Pending project plan development and resources, may consider implementing this winter with the last season of gobbler study banding.

- Action:** MJ.Casalena & D.Diefenbach draft proposal in July 2008.
- c. Special Turkey License Sales and Reporting-PGC
 - i. New buyers '07 & '08, approx. 3,200 per year, but total sales have not changed much over 3 years, indicating large amount of turn over. About 14,500 turkey hunters have bought at least 1 Special Turkey License.
 - ii. Once P.O.S., no cut off for sale of special license (C.Roe)
 - iii. **Action:** Special license comprises 4-5% of total spring harvest. Look at harvest by WMU to determine if harvest is higher in some WMUs. If so, can these WMUs withstand the higher harvests? May influence number of additional licenses sold – may establish quotas by WMU. Currently harvest >40,000 spring gobblers – how much can we allow this to increase?
 - d. Tri-State Gobbler Harvest Rate Study-MJ Casalena
 - i. PANWTF - \$10,000-11,000 for this final year (Jan 06 – Jun 12, 08 = \$34,876).
 - ii. **Action:** BWM calculate PGC \$\$\$ commitment each year for study. (difficult to track costs but look at expenditures charged to turkeys during Feb-Mar.)
 - iii. OH is unsure if they will continue for the final year due to administrative problems. PSU & NWTF in discussion with OH to convince them their participation is important to the study and in their best interest.
 - iv. **Action:** NWTF and PSU will continue to pursue Ohio's involvement.
 - e. Turkey Hunter Survey Status- MJ Casalena
 - i. Delayed two years due to lack of personnel. Draft currently being reviewed.
 - ii. **Action:** Comments due to BWM by Fri. June 13, 2008.
 - iii. Survey to be mailed by mid-July, with notification postcards mailed 1-week prior.
 - iv. Report expected December 2008.
 - f. Status of Wild Turkey Nuisance Complaint System-Bob Boyd
 - i. Having difficulty determining how to add turkey into the existing system without creating a very onerous system. Response capabilities may be difficult to address.
 - ii. **Action:** BWP is exploring requirements of a universal system.
 - g. Northeast Wild Turkey Population Modeling Project Status- MJ Casalena
 - i. Requires recruitment variable, poults per hen, which we do not directly measure.
 - iii. Revised statewide turkey summer sighting & Michaux summer sighting surveys to calculate poults:hen. Previously we calculated index of production, poults:adult. Statewide survey was simply used to give an index of entire summer turkey population to track overall population changes from year to year.
 - h. Brief summary of WMU 5A Task Force status and review need for additional task forces- MJ Casalena

PANWTF Hunting Heritage Super Fund contribution to study: \$84,400 for telemetry equipment + \$21,940 for Michaux State Forest habitat projects by 3 local chapters = \$106,340 total.

No crisis immediately for creating another task force – given amount of resources required for each (time committment)

Action: None
 - i. Rodent Bait Station Grant– Bob Eriksen
 - i. No info yet on proposal to Wildlife Forever – will hear in July/Aug.
 - ii. Eriksen has info now on person who can cut tires.
 - iii. 3-4 orchard owners willing to participate. Jim Olsen (Extension) – helped provide names.

- iv. **Action:** NWTF pursue cutting tires if don't receive grant – schedule to do this fall.
- j. Status of wild turkey for pheasant trades with South Dakota- Cal DuBrock/ Bob Boyd 2008 was third & final year of transfers. All went to Pike Run. Data on success at Pike Run is limited.
Action: Completed.
- k. Pennsylvania Chapter Strategic Wild Turkey Plan- Bob Eriksen
Looked at what PA chapter has been doing (outreach, research and habitat) and at PA wildlife action plan. Focus areas developed: South mtn (encroachment potential), PA wilds (\$10,000/yr habitat focused there, large amt of public land), Poconos-development potential. Appreciated review provided by MJ Casalena.
Action: B. Eriksen to write an article for PA Turkey Talk (and PA Game News?).
- 8. Special Spring Turkey Hunting License (timing?) – Don Heckman / PGC
 - a. Current proposal – no new tags, no new stamps, 3-year automatic price adjustment
 - b. Hunting License increase package – alternative funding (sales tax %) – has gone nowhere. D.Levdansky – line item – would have to pull the \$15mil from an existing budget – robbing Peter to pay Paul. Legislatures not willing to do so during an election year.
 - c. **Action:** D.Heckman ask the Coalition – support the current proposal??
- 9. Articles for PA Game News – Bob Eriksen / MJ Casalena
 - a. B.Eriksen – submitted one on gas line ROW with SW PGC
 - b. **Action:** Demo areas – B.Coupillez has authorized Regions to submit articles, Private Lands and Public Lands managers to submit articles on Game lands management, etc., so turkey habitat/demo area could be included.
 - c. **Action:** B.Eriksen & MJ Casalena - Ethics article – Look at PANWTF code of conduct, and pg. 94 in Digest – use as starting point.
- 10. Women in the Outdoors Report – Tammy Mowry
 - a. 10th anniversary – planning national event to celebrate - 400 participants anticipated.
 - b. NWTF appreciates PGC assistance: Lori Richardson publishes info on PGC website, regions assist and are engaged well.
 - c. Cooperative agreement in place til 2009.
 - d. Since PGC canceled BOW program – our participation and engagement with WITO program is very important to PGC.
 - e. 1,000s of youth/women/handicap events statewide. How does PGC promote this involvement? C.Roe – we have data, some events are large, some very small. Every event receives coverage. Promotion of each event is standard, routine.
 - f. C.Roe – new recruitment – challenges participants and parents of youth to bring neighbor who doesn't hunt.
 - g. **Action:** Each of us, do the same & challenge participants/parents to bring someone who doesn't hunt.
- 11. WCO & LMO of the Year Awards – Jon Pries
 - a. Deadline for LMO award (Joe Kurz) – Sept. 15 deadline to PANWTF
 - b. WCO award – Nov. 15 deadline to PANWTF
 - c. How can PANWTF receive more than one or two names to select from?
 - d. **Action:** M.Schmit – we'll do what we can but we want to give names of those who are truly deserving.
- 12. Discussion on potential volunteer brood survey-PANWTF/PGC
 - a. E-bird site – could be reported there.

- b. No current desire by PGC to acquire data of questionable quality
 - c. Would require more discussion because implementation would demand personnel time, other costs.
 - d. **Action**: discuss within BWM and Game Bird Section.
13. Potential Game Lands Acquisition Projects (ie. Waggoner's Gap etc.)- PGC/Don Heckman
- a. Glatfelter Tree Farm #1: \$11.1 million – purchased by Conservation Fund, who will transfer to DCNR to be part of Michaux SF. PANWTF contributing \$10,000. DCNR contributing to purchase, and land is adjacent to Michaux SF.
 - b. **Action**: C.Roe suggested the PANWTF use influence with Conservation Fund to turn over future purchases to PGC instead of to DCNR. PGC has list of potential land purchases we would like to partner with PANWTF and Conservation Fund.
 - c. Land stewardship in NWTF turkey mgmt plan – \$10,000/year for land acquisition – this could get PGC over the hump to purchase properties even if no other partners can join in.
 - d. PANWTF would rather have land go to PGC for wildlife habitat mgmt.
 - e. **Action**: – BWHM will provide priority list to B.Eriksen and D.Heckman, and what grants to potentially work with.
14. Private Land Initiatives - PGC
- a. PGC staff is visiting every cooperator property to determine what type of cooperator each is, which game species are allowed to be hunted and what, if any, restrictions.
 - b. New requirement of sign at property with location specified on website for public access.
 - c. PANWTF will assist wherever possible. **(How can they help?)**
15. NWTF Convention – Carl Mowry
- a. 33rd annual Convention. Feb. 19-22, 2009, Nashville, TN.
 - b. **Action**: As in past years, PANWTF will provide \$1,600 to PGC toward LMO/WCO award winners, tech. Committee reps, and other staff/commissioners to attend.
16. High priority with PANWTF – All-day spring youth hunt.
- a. **Action**: PANWTF continue to address issue with Board of Commissioners.
17. New NWTF CEO – George Thornton.
- a. Field staff all participated with conference calls with him on his first day.
 - b. Good background with business mgmt, which NWTF needs at this stage.
 - c. **Action**: PGC send letter of welcome to George Thornton (BWM will draft for C.Roe signature). Added by MJC – to demonstrate the importance of our cooperation.