

Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council JULY 23, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

The Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council convened for its Fourth meeting at 1:00 P.M. eastern time on July 23, 2024. The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

Council members present:

Chair:

John Devney

Primary members:

Colin Beck

Simon Roosevelt* (served as primary member in the absence of Jeff Crane)

Michael Crowder

George Dunklin

Lucas Martinez

Cole Mannix

Brian Nesvik

Ed Arnett* (served as primary member in the absence of Collin O'Mara)

Wayne Hubbard* (served as primary member in the absence of Lydia Parker)

Joel Pederson

Andrew Schmidt

Land Tawney

Keith Tidball

Lauren Ward

Joel Webster

**Alternate member*

Alternate members:

Kathleen Falk

Mark Hennelly

Blake Henning

Tod Sedgwick

Ex Officio

Ron Regan, Executive Director – Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Welcome, roll call, and meeting overview

HWCC Chair John Devney

Doug Hobbs, HWCC Designated Federal Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Opening Comments

Siva Sundaresan, Deputy Director – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, spoke on behalf of Director Williams, who could not attend. Sundaresan thanked the Council for its work and recommendations on behalf of wildlife conservation. He also thanked the Council for its efforts to connect with and collaborate with the Service to provide increased opportunities to the American public. Sundaresan also announced that the Service, in collaboration with the Council, was announcing the location of 7 lead-free ammunition pilot program sites. See full remarks in the meeting transcript.

Public comment session

There were no public comment requests made by members of the public.

Council alternate member Mark Hennelly provided comments thanking the Fish and Wildlife Service completing a pintail harvest revision that will allow more harvest and also thanking the Service for a recent purchase of water rights on the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge.

The action has resulted in more water on the Refuge, increased habitat, and increased numbers of waterfowl.

Council Subcommittee report

Wildlife Health

Subcommittee Chairman Land Tawney highlighted the continued consideration of and work to implement Council recommendations made in December 2023 regarding the future management of the use of lead and lead-free ammunition on lands of the National Wildlife Refuge System. During the Council's May meeting, it heard updates on the Council's collaboration with the FWS in developing lead-free ammunition pilot projects to be implemented on select units of the National Wildlife Refuge System during the Fall 2024 hunting season. Tawney as mentioned the on-going work of the Subcommittee working group to collaborate with the Service on the creation of pilot projects.

Christian Myers, Policy Advisor – National Wildlife Refuge System, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, presented a briefing to Council members on the final pilot project concept, including 7 Refuge locations participating in the program and details for the economic incentive program.

-Ed Arnett asked if the Service would include any human dimensions research on program effectiveness; Joel Webster asked if there would be outreach to hunters on where to find lead-free ammunition; Chris Parrish mentioned that the North American Non-Lead Partnership was working with the Service on a survey tool; Simon Roosevelt asked about survey implementation and timing; Brian Nesvik and Ron Regan indicated

that state fish & wildlife agencies are supportive of the incentive-based approach advocated by the Council and which the Service is working to implement.

Motion to approve: Brian Nesvik

Second: Wayne Hubbard

The motion was approved by Council vote.

- Chair Devney asked Deputy Director Sundaresan for any updates on the Council recommendation that the Service engage the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) regarding the issue of regulatory burdens impeding research and development of lead-free alternative ammunition. Devney also asked if there was any news on the issuance of the 2024 Refuge hunt/fish rule.
- Sundaresan reported that the Service held a call with ATF to learn more about the impediments to the use of the sporting use exemption by industry to develop new, lead-free ammunition. The Service would work with ATF to see how it can help move a process forward.
- Sundaresan indicated that the Service would soon be publishing a 2024 hunt/fish proposed rule.

Other subcommittee reports

There were no other subcommittee reports.

Other Council business / open discussion

- Chairman Devney recommended that the Council and subcommittees focus on following up on current recommendations as the Council year and current Administration comes to an end.
- Deveny also suggested that there may be one last meeting before the end of the year and Administration.

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn: Keith Tidball

Second: Land Tawney

The motion was approved by unanimous Council vote.

Meeting adjourned

**Meeting minutes certified by HWCC Chair John Devney on Tuesday, October 15, 2024