

Meeting Minutes

Native Species Commission
July 31, 2018 at 10 am
100 W Water Street, Dover, Delaware
First Floor Training Room

Minutes approved on: December 19, 2018

Members Present

Sarah Cooksey
Michael Costello
Jeffery Downing
Ashley Kennedy
Faith Kuehn
James McCulley
Michael Petit de Mange
David Saveikis, Interim Chair
Tracy Surles
Robert Thornton
James White

Members Absent

Christopher Heckscher
Katherine Holtz

Administrative Staff

Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III

Also Present

Stephanie Hansen, State Senator
Terri Tipping
Ralph Downard
Erin Goldner

Call to Order

Mr. Saveikis called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes

This being the first meeting of the Commission, there were no minutes to review or approve.

Unfinished Business

This being the first meeting of the Commission, there was no unfinished business.

New Business

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Saveikis welcomed all members and the public to the first meeting of the Commission and reviewed the breakdown of members as five members serving by virtue of position and ten members appointed by the Governor from the public representing environmental organizations, Delaware institutions of higher learning and commercial interests. Members of the Commission introduced themselves.

No appointed member had taken their oath of office at the time of the meeting, so no voting actions would be (were) taken.

Background and Origin of Commission

Senator Hansen addressed the Commission to explain why Senate Bill 153 was created and why the commission was formed. Many members of the Commission were also on the Statewide Ecological Extinction Task Force. The Task Force worked through the process of acknowledging the loss of native species in Delaware at an alarming rate and identified several pathways and actions to address this loss, including the creation of a Native Species Commission. The Commission is to take the recommendations of the Task Force, discuss and implement ways to meet the recommendations and report back to the General Assembly each year for the next 10 years.

Senator Hansen pledged her support of the Commission and will act as a point person in the General Assembly.

Administrative support for the Commission falls to the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, with David Saveikis, director of the Division of Fish & Wildlife, serving as DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin's designee and Director Saveikis' administrative specialist, Jennifer Childears, providing administrative support for the Commission.

Commission Purpose and Charge as Established by SB 153

Mr. Saveikis read the following Commission purpose and charge, with informal discussions held regarding some:

- a) Reverse decline and extinction of native plant and animal species
- b) Implementation of Final Report of the Statewide Ecological Extinction Task Force
- c) Provide expertise and assistance to stakeholders

Mr. Costello raised the question of bringing in subject matter experts to present to the Commission on matters relevant to its purpose and charge. Several Commission members were able to positively say that they had subject matter experts available for future meetings.

- d) Annual report to General Assembly (1st report due December 31, 2018)

Mr. Saveikis stated the need to become organized quickly and look at "low hanging fruit" options first to have something of substance for the first report given the short time frame. Mr. Thornton mentioned creating a PDF for educational purposes that Commission members could take back to their respective areas to help make the public more aware of the Commission and its goals.

Commission Governance

Mr. Saveikis noted that members of the Commission could be reimbursed for mileage and tolls, but there was not a form or process in place at the time of the meeting and members should start tracking this information.

Due to the appointed members present not having taken the required oath of office, a quorum was not in attendance and actions to elect a Commission chair, establish rules of order and discuss the need for by-laws were postponed.

Initial Commission Actions

Informal discussions were held in reference to reviewing the Statewide Ecological Extinction Task Force recommendations and establishing priorities. The Task Force established nine categories in their final report to the General Assembly, one of which has been completed with the formation of the Native Species Commission. The remaining eight categories were discussed by the members. Many members are currently involved in several of the recommendations and there seemed to be overlap between county governments, commercial interests and environmental organizations. It was suggested and agreed upon that for the next meeting, each Commission member would provide their ranking of priorities as well as what skill sets and expertise they can offer.

Public Comment

Ms. Tipping discussed the value of volunteers to accomplish removal of invasive plant species throughout the state and the lack of guidance or help from environmental organizations. Commission members discussed the difficulty in having enough staff to dedicate to volunteer efforts, but acknowledged Ms. Tipping's statement about the value of volunteers and the desire to utilize them.

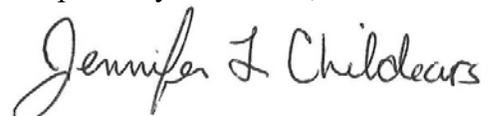
Next Meeting Date and Location

Ms. Childears will send a Doodle Poll to establish the date of the next meeting in August. It was suggested that the Commission should meet every other month.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:40 am

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Childears, Administrative Specialist III
DNREC, Division of Fish & Wildlife