

NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



"The Voice of Resource Law Enforcement"



2021 NAWEOA OFFICER OF THE YEAR

John S. Pretty

Wildlife Enforcement Officer

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Conference Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/173505916518726/>

SPRING 2021

75th Edition NAWEOA Newsletter

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SOUVENIR PATCHES AVAILABLE

2017 is the only current patch available.

The cost per patch (including shipping and handling)
is \$7.00 each USD.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NAWEOA

Mail to: George A. Wilcox

P.O. Box 480

Millville, PA 17846

*[1996 through 2010 patches are only available over-the
-counter at the Game Warden Museum*



The President's Report

By Richard Langley



Happy 2021 NAWEOA Members! It is hard to believe the year we have had and the changes we've seen in the past year. I never thought we would be where we are right now. Enough said.

I hope you all are in good health and taking care of yourselves and your loved ones. COVID has touched many of us and our fellow Officers.

As most of you know by now, we have made the decision to postpone the 2021 Nashville Conference, again! We feel that it is much better to wait a year and be able to gather without restrictions than to risk holding a conference where we cannot gather in a social or training environment, must wear masks, and travel is tightly restricted. Putting on a conference is a huge undertaking and requires thousands of hours of work. We simply cannot take the risk of holding a conference in 2021 and risk the health of our members and the financial well-being of the Association and our Tennessee hosts. The good news is that the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association was able to negotiate with the host hotel and secure dates for 2022 at the same rates as they contracted in 2020! We also had Utah lined up as a conference host for 2022 and they have graciously agreed to postpone and host the conference in 2023. Once we get past this bump in the road we have a lot of exciting conferences coming up! The Board did hold an abbreviated winter meeting over two days in February. We are trying to accommodate all of the COVID restrictions and take care of NAWEOA business in a virtual world. We are quickly finding that our constitution and by-laws were never written for a virtual environment and years where we

are not able to hold conferences and general membership meetings and elections. The Board is being forced to make decisions and take some actions on behalf of the membership in a "good faith" effort to follow those by-laws and the constitution. We are making adjustments and cleaning up the by-laws where we can to cover these situations in the future. Changes to the constitution must be voted on by the membership. The biggest challenge has been the number of terms for board members. Our Canadian board members have been gracious enough to continue to serve despite their terms being "over". My term as President would normally be up in July 2021, and I will continue to serve until that time we can have an election by the membership (hopefully July 2022). We are trying to be as transparent as possible and do what is best for the Association. We are still auditing the books, planning budgets, and we will present the budget to the membership.

We appreciate those members who replied to the survey sent out in February. We learned more about our members and your expectations of us. We plan to do more outreach and even conduct a virtual event in the near future. Please stand by and participate in these opportunities! One of the exciting things we are trying to do is bring a new look to a classic logo. We will present this new concept to the membership for approval very soon!

Please hang with us through these times. We are still here and Nashville 2022 will be EPIC! Please bring someone who has never attended a conference. I look forward to seeing everyone there. Please take the time to read the updates from the Regional Directors to see what is going on with the US and Canadian agencies. Share this newsletter with a co-worker and help make everyone aware of who NAWEOA is.



NAWEOA

The Vice President's Report

By Kurt Henry



Hello to all. I know the last thing any of us want to hear, is another thing cancelled from COVID!! It's the new four letter word of the day. So we all know that Nashville is still going to host a great event in the summer of 2022 and none of us will have an excuse not to show up!! I am looking forward to a world back to the new normal if it ever comes.

The executive and I have been working thru all the day to day issues via emails and some conference calls to best fit the needs of the association but very much look forward to an in person meeting so we can bring in some new ideas that need buy in from the membership. I thank all members for being patient with the association at this time, all be it COVID was number one on most of our plates.

As vice president I am partly responsible for booking the location for the next winter meeting and with the prospect of the conventions continuing, we feel the next meeting is most likely to be with our next host region. So we'll be working with Utah to find a suitable location for March of 2022. There has been some interest in hosting conventions in the next few years so this is a logical location now and in the future to assist the host committees.

As our duties have changed with the recent events, I hope we all are staying well and still managing to do some things for our own enjoyment. I do so stress that it is the utmost importance to keep our mental health as a priority. Everyday stress has been compounded by all of these restrictions and limitations. Do not let it go unchecked, take time for yourself, your family and, as much as can be, with your friends. Reach out to our brothers and sisters in green to ensure we all get thru this.

Be safe take care see ya in Nashville in July 2022



The Past President's Report

By Shawn Farrell



Hello everybody. I hope you have all weathered well over the winter. It is hard to believe a year has gone by and we are still fighting COVID-19. We are certainly living in different times and many of us have had to change

the way we conduct daily business and work duties. As game wardens, our roles have expanded during this crisis as what was "normal" is no longer. We are still manning provincial borders, screening flights entering the province and doing resident checks on those who need to isolate. Vaccinations are slowly rolling out so hopefully the end is near. This year the NAWEOA executive meeting was held virtually. This is certainly not the best way to conduct business, but we managed to get some items looked after.

As a board and in consultation with the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association we still feel that in the interest of our members' health and welfare that this year's conference will again be canceled. Our annual

training conference will be rescheduled for 2022 same location and in July. I would like to thank Josh Landrum and the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association for committing to next year as well thanks to the host hotel, the Millennium Maxwell House for their understanding and waiving this year's cancellation fees. The Millennium will host our NAWEOA family next year.

The NAWEOA executive board has faced many obstacles while not have the annual conference but we are doing our best to make things work. We realized they were facing a few obstacles this year by not having an annual conference. One of the big items that occurs every summer is elections. As we all realize these are extraordinary times. Outgoing board members have agreed to extend their positions for the next year so hopefully we will continue with elections in 2022.

Lastly, I would like to thank the executive board and J-reps for everything you do to keep the wheels rolling. It is a pleasure to work with you all.

To our membership, take care of yourselves and family, stay safe and I look forward to the summer 2022 when we can all meet again.



***"In Memory of Those Who Paid the Ultimate Price.
We Will Always Remember."***



**Captain Stanley Curtis Elrod
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
End of Watch Thursday, September 3, 2020**

Captain Stan Elrod was struck and killed by a drunk driver while jogging while on duty as part of his department's wellness program.

He was jogging along Hunt Road, between Booger Hill Road to Moons Grove Road in Madison County, when a vehicle crossed over the center line and struck him. The driver of the vehicle was arrested and charged with first-degree vehicular homicide, drunk driving, failing to maintain a lane, reckless driving, possession of a controlled substance, and having a firearm during a criminal offense.

Captain Elrod had served with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for 27 years. He had been recognized as the Game Warden of the Year in 1999. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

**Police Officer Charlie J. Cortez
Tulalip Tribal Police Department, Tribal Police
End of Watch Tuesday, November 17, 2020**

On November 17, 2020 Officer Cortez and a non-commissioned fish and wildlife officer/boat operator were responding to a vessel in distress call between Everett Washington and Tulalip Bay. After clearing the call at approximately 2030 hours, the officers were on their way back to their port when they encountered heavy seas which eventually caused their patrol vessel to capsize. Cortez's partner was later found alive in the water by a search party and has since made a recovery, but Cortez has still not been found.

Cortez was employed by the department for 2 years 8 months as a fish and wildlife officer the entire time and was also and enrolled Tulalip tribal member. Cortez is a father to a son named Dominic who is 8 years old and a daughter named Peyton who is 5 years old. The children's mother is Tawnya Stout.

Fish and wildlife enforcement are a division of their tribal police department dedicated to "game warden" duties on the reservation, and they also work tribal member violations off the reservation, but within their treaty right hunting and fishing areas.



***“In Memory of Those Who Paid the Ultimate Price.
We Will Always Remember.”***



**Conservation Officer Steven Reighard
Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa
End of Watch Friday, January 8, 2021**

Conservation Officer Steve Reighard died from complications as the result of contracting COVID-19 during a presumed exposure while on duty.

Officer Reighard had served with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for 16 years and was assigned to Dickinson County. He is survived by his wife and son.

Beginning in early 2020, thousands of law enforcement officers and other first responders throughout the country contracted COVID-19 during the world-wide pandemic due to requirements of their job. Many of these first responders have died as a result of COVID-19, and continue to do so as the virus spreads across the United States.



NAWEOA



NAWEOA is an 8000 member organization of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement officers from across North America. The association began at a meeting of 16 Wildlife Officers from the U.S. and Canada in Great Falls, Montana in 1980. Other associations for wildlife officers existed, but this was the first to actively solicit membership from all officers in North America.

What can NAWEOA do for you? NAWEOA as a group of dedicated wildlife law enforcement professionals is committed to wildlife protection and to the public we serve. NAWEOA supports the activities of many major conservation organizations through membership and active participation. If you are a Fish and Wildlife Officer, you can be part of the NAWEOA team today by becoming a member. Let us share the benefits of membership with you! If you are a Natural Resource Program Administrator, you can improve your program by sending your officers to NAWEOA conferences and training programs, or let us help you in hosting one yourself.

NAWEOA Financial Report

By Steve Beltran

What a wonderful time it is for officers to enjoy the warmer weather in the spring season. 2021 as well underway in the executive board has been working hard trying to keep our administrative tasks on track and keep the heart beat of NAWEOA alive. Our membership is thriving and I do appreciate all of the associations completing their dues notice on time and getting the payments sent in. We are adapting to the virtual environment and pray we can have an in person conference soon.

As always transparency is a critical part of my position as the secretary treasurer. I welcome any and all

questions and concerns that you may have about our membership and or financial status. Listed below is a detailed balance sheet for all of our expenditures from last year. Our annual taxes have been completed as well as the other administrative documents for a corporation and 1099 tax filings.

Please do reach out if you have any questions, you can also reach out to your regional director and or anyone on the executive board. We welcome your input. Be safe this year, take care of yourself and your families and love every day protecting the natural resources of your jurisdiction.

Draft Budget

Last updated 2/24/2021

Income	2021-2022	Comments
Conference	\$ -	
Dues	\$ 35,000.00	Estimate base on recent years dues
IGW Profits Share	\$ -	
Interest	\$ 250.00	
Promotional Sales	\$ -	
Travel Reimbursements		
Total Income	\$ 35,250.00	
Expense	2021-2022	
Administrative Costs	\$ 11,596.00	See Administrative Worksheet
Affiliation Dues	\$ 750.00	ANRET, IAFWA and NACLEC dues.
Awards	\$ 50.00	See award sheet for detail
Conference Expenses	\$ 6,000.00	See conference expenses sheet for detail
Donations	\$ -	See Donation sheet for detail
Meetings/Travel-Executive	\$ 15,000.00	See Meetings and Travel sheet.
Meetings/Travel-Service	\$ -	See Meetings and Travel sheet.
Membership Services	\$ -	See membership services sheet,
Memorial Donations and Expenses	\$ 1,550.00	See Memorial Services worksheet
Newsletter	\$ 1,250.00	See Newsletter Expenses worksheet
Promotional Items Expenses	\$ 4,750.00	Patches and pins
Web Site Expenses	\$ 500.00	See Website Expenses worksheet
Total Expense	\$ 41,646.00	

Income	\$ 35,250.00
Expense	\$ 41,646.00
Surplus/Deficit	\$ (6,396.00)

NAWEOA Conference Liaison Report

By Jason Sherwood

As you've hopefully heard by now, all know the annual conference has been postponed another year. With the date change, the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel cancelled all of the room reservations under our block. You should only need to call if you were outside the block or if you just want to confirm they are cancelled. The new room block will be up and running by August 1st (their system doesn't allow lodging reservations more than a year in advance) and we'll be sure to let everyone know the details once it is up and ready to go (again...).

While it is disappointing we aren't having a 2021 annual conference, this is an exciting time for NAWEOA! Of course, we have great teams in place to host conferences in 2022 (July 10-16 at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville) and 2023 (in Utah); and we have a group showing interest in 2024 already. As many of you know, we are also hoping to use this transition to learn a few new insights about our membership and maybe even test or revisit a few ideas.

In February we sent out a quick survey to start this process, garnering the observations of 380 members, spouses, and agency administrators. We're still digging into the details, but here are a few of the more notable results:

There is likely some bias in these results, as 62% of responses came from wardens with more than fifteen years of experience. (After you finish reading this newsletter, please take a minute to visit with your new neighboring officer about your experiences with NAWEOA conferences and the 9,000+ member network that will help you catch poachers more efficiently...)

Our members like hearing conference news via their J-Rep (44% of respondents), the NAWEOA website (NAWEOA.org, 36%), and social media (28%). Unfortunately, many people also reported not hearing from their J-Rep as often as they should. If you haven't heard from your J-Rep in a while, take the initiative to reach out to them (or a board member) and ask for current information.

More than 60% of respondents prefer to bring their families to the NAWEOA conference. While there is still a unique experience available to wardens who come by themselves or with a couple of co-workers, we are quite proud of the fact that our "professional"

conferences are inclusive of all active officers, retirees, and our families. A few responses even presented new ideas for helping to facilitate spouse networking during the events, so expect things to be even more inclusive in the future.



CONFERENCE NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS TO
WATCH FOR:

SUMMER 2021

LIVE ONLINE TRAINING



SUMMER 2021

VIRTUAL WARDEN SKILLS



BY 1 AUGUST 2021

MILLENNIUM MAXWELL HOUSE ROOM BLOCK OPENS FOR 2022 CONFERENCE



NAWEOA Conference Liaison Report

By Jason Sherwood

It seems wardens are always busy somewhere, but responding administrators and spouses both strongly supported July as the best month to support their officers attending a NAWEOA conference. Unsurprisingly, almost half of all responses preferred having more than six months to plan for conference travel and another third said they only wanted three to five months to make their plans. We'll keep working on securing hosts two or more years in advance, with hotels and conference registrations opening between six months and a year early.

Many responses showed a preference for a three day conference, but it appears many of those people also haven't been to a NAWEOA conference yet. It appears many newer members hear the word "conference" and assume days upon days of sitting in crowded room, listening to presentations. Once wardens attend a NAWEOA conference, they know it is an action-packed event, filled with certified, relevant training, as well as plenty of social events to visit with friends, network, and get your blood pumping. (I am quite certain many "professional organizations" do not have anything similar to our annual "Warden Skills Competition.") We'll certainly keep efficiency

in mind as we plan future conferences, but it looks like we also need to share with our neighbors how much fun can be had if you and your family stay for a whole NAWEOA event!

There was also a surprising amount of interest (78%) in revitalizing efforts for NAWEOA to host training events throughout the year. With COVID concerns slowing our return to live conferences, we are actively working on plans for at least one short "live online" training event. Watch for details to start coming out soon.

While some of us are definitely reaching our tolerance levels for "virtual" activities, I'm also intrigued by the strong interest in a virtual "Skills Competition" as well. It will take plenty of creative help, but we're starting to explore options... Holler my way (conference@naweo.org) if you have ideas or want to help out.

I hope you are as excited as I am about the future of our association. Please stay tuned for opportunities to interact with NAWEOA through new events this year, and I hope to see you in Nashville soon!



Use the link below to view a presentation covering our 2021 executive winter meeting.

[2021 NAWEOA Winter Meeting Presentation - YouTube](#)

2022 Conference Nashville, Tennessee



Tennessee 2022

The TWAOA welcomes NAWEOA to Tennessee for the 2021 annual conference.

7/11/22 - 7/17/22

Opening Ceremonies - Tuesday, July 13th

Banquet Dinner - Friday, July 16th



2022 Conference Nashville, Tennessee



Room Rate: \$139.00 per night +taxes and fees

Free Parking



Maxwell House Hotel
2025 Rosa Parks Blvd. Nashville, TN 37728

Reservation information coming summer
2021.



Information regarding
NAWEOA Jurisdictional Representatives,

- ♦ Names
- ♦ Contact information
- ♦ The jurisdictions they serve
- ♦ Etc.

Can be found elsewhere on the NAWEOA website
naweo.org

2021 NAWEOA Award Winners

NAWEOA would like to officially congratulate this year's award winners. Unfortunately with our annual conference canceled, we will not be able to recognize the winners in person this year. Our plan is to recognize our 2020 and 2021 winners, along with our 2022 winners in Nashville next year. As we do every year, we received many outstanding nominations. It is always difficult to narrow it down to a select few. Thanks to everyone for your continued dedication to wildlife law enforcement and protecting our valuable resources.

2021 Officer of the Year

John S. Pretty

Wildlife Enforcement Officer
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Enforcement Branch

2021 Torch Award

Corey Stratulat	Region 1	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment	Conservation Officer
No Nominee	Region 2		
Shane Hellyer	Region 3	New Brunswick Department of Justice and Safety	Conservation Officer
Jacob Berl	Region 4	Idaho Department of Fish and Game	Conservation Officer
Taylor Dixon	Region 5	Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	Conservation Officer
Tyler Lewis	Region 6	Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement	Game Warden
Daniel Carl	Region 7	Pennsylvania Game Commission	Game Warden

2021 Muddy Boots Award

Linda Anne Quirk
Captain Administration Unit
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Fish & Wildlife

2021 Loyal Partner Award

Scott Staples &
K9 Schody
State Conservation Officer / K-9 Handler
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Enforcement Division

2021 Certificate of Valor

No Nominations

2020 Lifesaving Award

Marlowe	Wilson	IA	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	State Conservation Officer
Richard	Price	IA	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	State Conservation Officer
Aaron	Johnson	IA	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	State Conservation Officer
Adam	Gacke	IA	Iowa Department of Natural Resources	State Conservation Officer
Eric	Lamb	Ohio	Ohio Division of Wildlife	Law Enforcement Program Administrator
Jason	Keller	Ohio	Ohio Division of Wildlife	Wildlife Officer/K9 Handler

2021 Lifesaving Award (cont.)

Randy	Crago	PA	Pennsylvania Game Commission	State Game Warden
Jason	Amory	PA	Pennsylvania Game Commission	State Game Warden
Cody	Jones	PA	Pennsylvania Game Commission	State Game Warden
Andrew	Hueser	PA	Pennsylvania Game Commission	State Game Warden
Michael	Banks	SK	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment	Conservation Officer
Mitch	Hatzenbuehler	SK	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment	Conservation Officer
Caleb	Acker	SK	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment	Conservation Officer
Brad	Johns	SK	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment	Conservation Officer SGT.
Tim	Cater	NB	Department of Public Safety	Conservation Officer
Travis	MacFarlane	NB	Department of Public Safety	Conservation Officer
Zach	Kierstead	NB	Department of Public Safety	Corporal-Conservation Enforcement

2021 Outstanding Service

Brice	Paey	NJ	NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Law Enforcement	Detective, Conservation Police Officer
Jonathan	Cianciulli	NJ	NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Law Enforcement	Chief, Bureau of Law Enforcement
Cory	Harbour	VA	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	Conservation Police Officer
Bryan	Whittington	DE	Delaware Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police	Officer
Michael	Disher	WI	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Conservation Warden
Ryan	Locke	GA	GA Department of Natural Resources	Game Warden

Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart



Hello from Region 1 and thank you for the opportunity for reach out to our NAWEOA membership yet again. We in Region 1 – like the rest of the world are still in limbo and desperately waiting for life to get back to normal... or at least a new normal. I know that we are

all going to reference Covid to some degree in our reports so I won't dwell on the issues that no doubt we are all experiencing. I would however like to commend all of our officers in Region 1 and within North America. For so many of us our roles have changed significantly. We find ourselves with newly assigned duties we would never have dreamed of prior to the world wide pandemic. I hope that all of you and your loved ones are doing and healthy both physically and mentally.

Please enjoy the brief write ups that follow from some of our Region 1 Jurisdictions

Saskatchewan

SACO cancelled their 2020 convention along with their upcoming 2021 convention. Awards and scholarships were still given out via mail and the current year's awards are out for nomination. Still not hosting any presentations. Our SACO Facebook page continues to get a lot of traffic and is great at reaching out to the resource users. 5-8 officers are planned to be hired this fall and trained internally rather than through WCLEA.

PC Law Branch

*Welcomed 17 new recruits into our ranks at the beginning of December. Was a major feat to pull off while in the middle of a pandemic.

*Elaine O'Neill, our training and standards specialists retired at the beginning of January after 30 years of service to Parks Canada. Elaine was part of the origi-

nal team that helped get the Law Enforcement Branch started in 2008/09.

*Phil Staniewski our branches Use of Force Specialist since 2010, will be leaving us for another agency at the beginning of March.

*Branch is looking at having a continuous job competition open for new recruits and experienced officers to help speed up the hiring process.

* A lodge operator in Yoho National Park was fined \$25,000 in court back in December. Case resulted from garbage being left unsecured. The same operator was fined \$15,000 for the same offence about 3 years ago.

National Park Warden Association

*Finally have an interim executive again. Will work towards an AGM in order to elect members.

*Working through getting the association more up and running. Been discussing membership fees and who should be allowed as members.

*Facebook page followership is still steadily growing. Over 1100 followers now.

* Created a challenge coin that we've been selling to members only since the middle of January. Depending on sales #, may consider selling to the public if we have any left over.

Albert

The Alberta Game Warden Association will be hosting its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, March 28, 2021. The meeting will be held virtually as we continue to deal with Covid-19 and it's restrictions. This year is a voting year so we will have a new executive team. In October 2020, our Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch was integrated into the Alberta Sheriffs Branch. All field level fish and wildlife officers are now located in the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services of the Ministry of the Justice and Solicitor General, Public Security Division, Sheriffs Branch. Our Special Investigations Section was moved into the Investigation Services section of the Sheriffs Branch. Our HQ/Operations/Training staff are now part of the Operational Support Services section of the Sheriffs Branch. This change is still new and adapting daily. Alberta Fish and Officers have been included

Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart Continued

into the Government's Rural Alberta Protection Integrated Defence Response (RAPID Response) initiative which was announced in November 2019. This initiative mandates Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officers to assist the Provincial Police (RCMP) during emergency responses to rural crime emergencies. Officers will provide first or back up response to priority one and two 911 calls when available. The expected implementation date is April 1, 2021. We are currently completing equipment upgrades (CAD systems, new

laptops, carbine rifles Sig .308 Cal, hard body, load bearing vest), procurements (CEW, ASD) and training. We have all recently undergone mental health first aid training, IARD training, Intimate Partner Violence training, Carbine Training, Enhanced Security Clearances. We will be receiving further training in months to come once items like the CEW and ASD are procured. I've attached our agency's latest fact sheet which explains some of the changes we have gone through as well as provides some insight into our Fish and Wildlife Services.

www.gamewarden.ab.ca

<https://www.facebook.com/AlbertaGameWardenAssociation>



Region 2 Director Martin Thabault



Over the last few months we have continued to adapt to a new work reality where contacts with others are minimized and administrative work is often done from home. Virtual meetings have become the norm and the lack of direct social interaction can be difficult. I

am currently involved in organizing training for new officers and annual recertifications for current employees. The least I can say is that the current public health situation brings its share of logistical challenges, from longer hiring processes to providing a safe and productive learning environment. We have moved a fair portion of our basic training to a new online learning platform where participants will be able to attend from their respective regions. The second portion of our basic training is scheduled to begin in early 2022. For this this portion attendees travel to a central location and go through use of force, firearms and scenarios-based training. Hopefully things are back to some sort of normalcy by then.

As the Region 2 Director I am responsible to coordinate the Officer Exchange program. Once again our 2019 winners Trevor Johnson from Alberta and Matt Sabo from Washington State had to postpone their trips until the Canada/USA border reopens for personal travel. It is hard to fathom that it has been closed for 14 months now. Of course this also means our Summer Conference had to be rescheduled for a second year in a row. Thank you to the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Officers Association for navigating through this situation and to our host hotel the Nashville Maxwell House Millennium for allowing us to postpone to 2022.

Once again I would like to express my gratitude to all the active Region 2 J-Reps for their contributions to this newsletter. A special thank you to Joey Foxon, the outgoing President of the Manitoba Conservation Officers Association (and outgoing Manitoba J-Rep) and a warm welcome to April Elphinstone, the new MCOA President (and new MB J-Rep). I look forward to working with you in the months to come.

Finally thanks to those of you who submitted names of your colleagues for the 2020 NAWEOA Awards. The awards program couldn't exist without you. Please read on to get an update from the active Region 2 Jurisdictions.

Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife Enforcement Directorate



Canadian Federal Wildlife Officers Association's new President

The Canadian Federal Wildlife Officers Association (CFWOA) has a new Executive as of January 2021. With this new Executive comes a renewed enthusiasm and energy on what our Association can accomplish. I would like to introduce Matt Burke who is our new CFWOA President.

Matt started with the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate (WED) in 2018 and is currently a Wildlife Officer in our Winnipeg office within the Prairie and Northern Region (PNR). Matt joined WED after an 11-year career as a Manitoba Conservation Officer. He brings to the CFWOA his experience in resource law enforcement and in various other roles on officer associations.

Also a quick nod to the rest of the Executive listed below that come with a variety of experience prior to joining WED, from a prior New Brunswick Conservation Officer, to one that held a variety of natural resources enforcement roles for Ontario and finally to a National Park Warden.

Vice President- Frederic Arsenault- Sackville, NB (former New Brunswick Conservation Officer)

Secretary- Steven Evans- Windsor, ON (former Ontario Conservation Officer)

Treasurer- Nick Cotter- Calgary, AB (former National Park Warden)

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

We are looking forward to the initiatives that the CFOWA are continuing from past years, along with future new initiatives. One of these initiatives is a new website. I invite you to visit it using the following link: <https://www.cfwoa.ca/>.

CFOWA has also an active Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/cfwoa.acaff/>) that among other things has links to some of the files listed below!

WED-ECCC Successful Prosecutions

From November 2020 to March 2021, ECCC's Wildlife Officers had six (6) successful prosecutions. These prosecutions totaled just over \$250 000 in monetary penalties and fines. This is quite significant given the number (60 or so) of active field officers across the country. Here is a quick summary of those files:

On March 3 2021, a British Columbia-based import company was ordered to pay a \$163,776 fine for illegally importing European eel meat without a permit. The European eel is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Company pled guilty to two federal wildlife legislation charges under the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of the International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA). The court ordered the forfeiture and destruction of 84 metric tonnes (or 94 US tons) of detained eel meat making this forfeiture the largest in WED's history!

These successes include four files that resulted in \$71 000 in fines and monetary penalties for violating the Federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). Three of these files related to the destruction of Bank Swallow nests, a threatened species, that nest in burrows dug into exposed soil, and are frequently found in sand pits and quarries, and at construction site where vertical banks of soil are present. The last SARA file dealt with two Quebec forestry companies violating an Emergency Order for the Protection of the Western Chorus frog, listed as threatened under SARA. The main purpose of the Emergency Order is to prevent the loss and degradation of habitat for this species and prohibits removing, pruning, damaging or destroying any vegetation. In this case, the companies pled guilty to the

charge of carrying out a prohibited activity- namely pruning vegetation in sensitive area.

The last file deals with charges under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA). On January 29, 2021, three individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador received a combined total of \$17 000 in fines after a file was referred to WED from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) from a July 23, 2018 incident. DFO had intercepted the boat for a Fisheries Act inspection and noticed a number of murres. These individuals were illegally in possession of murres, a migratory seabird. Although there is season for these birds in NL, the season was not open, nor did the men produce any type of permit to possess them onboard. A total of 98 murres were seized and forfeited to the Crown.

More information on all the above files can be found on ECCC's Enforcement Notifications web page: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-enforcement/notifications.html>

Way to go WED!

Julie Horvath

Wildlife Officer, Ottawa

J-Rep, ECCC Wildlife Enforcement Directorate

National Capital Commission

NCC Conservation Officers have been assigned their own patrol vehicle for the near future to prevent the spread of Covid-19 among staff members.

Part of our Forest Fire training which was scheduled for April had to be rescheduled. We attended the academic portion remotely via MS Teams, but the in person training will take place at a later date. All of our other training has been cancelled because of the public health restrictions.

We continue to work in the field with limited public interaction and all of our administrative work is done from home.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have been really busy dealing with crowds on NCC lands. This has led to an increase in search and rescues in Gatineau Park and the Greenbelt Lands.

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

We recently were involved in a file where a person shot and killed 5 Canada Geese with a 22 rifle on Bate Island (this island is located within the city of Ottawa, on the Ottawa River and along one of the busiest bridges between Ontario and Quebec). This shooting incident generated a response from the Ottawa police, Ontario Conservation Officers and NCC Conservation Officers. Charges pending from the Ontario C.O.s and the geese were seized. It was an odd event to have someone do that in such a public area.

Jason Pink

Senior Conservation Officer

J-Rep, National Capital Commission

Manitoba Department of Sustainable Development

The Manitoba Conservation Officer Service had a very busy fall season while continuing to operate with low field Officer numbers. Illegal night hunting and the illegal hunting of moose in closed areas has been a popular topic in the media during the fall, which has forced the COS to focus their attention on these illegal infractions. Officers conducted most of their enforcement patrols during the night hours with the aid of a helicopter equipped with thermal imaging resulting in charges against 47 individuals, seizures of 10 vehicles, seizures of 20 firearms, and restitution orders totalling \$20,500.

Officers were still required to respond to TIP calls during the day, increase decoy operations, and enforce new public health orders issued for the prevention of Covid-19 transmission, which has been extremely exhausting on all MCOA members. Due to the cancellation of the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy in 2020, Manitoba COS implemented an in-house hiring program that involved six new recruits who were trained by designated mentors during the fall and winter. The six new recruits attended a 4 week program involving a large number of CO in-

structors that certified the recruits in defensive tactics, and the use of restricted and non-restricted firearms. Recruits were then deployed to various districts within the Province to work with CO mentors and gain valuable field experience for 15 weeks, before they finally joined our CO family and become full time CO's

Joey Foxon

Conservation Officer, Roblin

J-Rep, Manitoba Department of Sustainable Development

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Ontario Conservation Officers Association Update

Ontario is still in the thick of the pandemic and as I type this, most officers are patiently awaiting vaccination while Ontario is being hit particularly hard with the impacts of this virus. Conservation Officers have continued to be listed under emergency legislation created by the Ontario Government to help address some of the issues in the pandemic.

Even with a pandemic, Ontario is seeing some modest recruitment efforts and associated job competitions. We have several officers just finishing up their formal training at Ontario Police College and around 6 officers scheduled to go for the next police college intake in May.

Our agency recently announced that officers will be equipped with a .308 cal. carbine long gun for enforcement duties. The Ontario Conservation Officers Association was supportive of a review of our long gun policy and the type of long guns issued to CO's within the province.

Virtual court with prosecutors and accused parties calling in to a Justice of the Peace has been going really smoothly across various parts of Ontario. These proceedings have actually been a more efficient way to handle guilty pleas, although there's something missing when a guilty party doesn't have to walk up in front of the presiding Justice and address the court with a plea of guilt.

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

In general, officers continue to make do with the current situation working remotely out of our homes for admin work while maintaining a strong field presence. We've seen some great cases go through court this winter and spring and I know there have been some great pinches across our various regions. Locally, we've had some major success doing surveillance at night on some of our small tributaries to Lake Superior catching both opportunistic and deliberate poachers dip netting steelhead and keeping overlimits (the limit is one). The crew down south will be busy with turkey season in the next few weeks and there's no doubt some cheaters will be apprehended by the guys and gals in green.

Stay safe and keep having fun!

Davis Viehbeck

Sgt-Conservation Officer, Thunder Bay

J-Rep, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry



Officers from the Thunder Bay MNRF Enforcement Unit ran a successful night blitz targeting dip netters poaching steelhead on Lake Superior tributaries. Officers conducted surveillance throughout the night and utilized a plainclothes officer in an unmarked vehicle to alert activity at other locations.

2021 Ontario Conservation Officer of the Year

Sudbury - The Ontario Conservation Officers Association (OCA) is pleased to announce that Peter Koskela has been selected as the 2021 Conservation Officer of the Year. Peter is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Sudbury Enforcement Unit working out of the Sudbury office.

Peter has held a variety of positions in a career with the MNRF that has spanned over 30 years, the last 22 years of which have been as a Conservation Officer in Gogama and Sudbury. Throughout his career he has proven to be a competent and skillful investigator who maintains excellent working relationships with other enforcement agencies who value and respect his investigation skills. This respect is evident in the 26 letters of commendation that supported his nomination for this award.

“Peter is a dedicated officer who goes above and beyond to see an investigation through, including working long hours and leaving no stone unturned and until he is satisfied that he has collected all the evidence available.” said OCA President Sean Cronsberry, “Peter isn’t the type of person who requires public recognition or acknowledgement for the work he does, he takes pride in his job and finds personal gratification in completing his duties to the best of his abilities. It is an honour and a privilege to publicly recognize Peter for his accomplishments.”

Peter is an accomplished investigator who has demonstrated his commitment to the job and to protecting the public and our natural resources. Some of Peter’s career highlights include:

Conducting and assisting with many complex investigations, including investigations into careless hunting, forest fires, and illegal moose and elk hunting.

Being the lead investigator on multiple high-profile investigations which attracted province wide media attention

Working co-operatively with multiple police agencies while conducting investigations and utilizing a wide variety of investigative techniques, including remote piloted aircraft systems for crime scene re-creation.

Past recipient of the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association Torch Award, an award given to recently appointed officers who have demonstrated exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties and is respected by his/her peers and the general public.

Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued

Being a valued member on many MNRF Enforcement Branch initiatives, including the creation of the North East Region decoy team, snowmobile procurement specification development, uniform and fleet committee and delivering training to other conservation officers on vessel safety legislation

Working alongside the Greater Sudbury Police Service in promoting safe snowmobile operation and wilderness survival to high school students. This includes a two day session each year where over 50 students receive one day of classroom instruction followed by a second day that consists of a 100 km guided snowmobile tour that focuses on safe snowmobile operation practices on both lakes and trails.

Upon learning he had been selected as the 2021 Conservation Officer of the Year, Peter said, "I would like to sincerely say thank you for selecting me as the 2021 Conservation Officer of the Year! I am deeply honored to be recognized by my peers, and for that I am very grateful. I share this award with all the people that I have worked with, and those that I have crossed paths with throughout my career. I believe what makes us better is working together. Being a part of this team of conservation officers and enforcement branch staff and witnessing their dedication has truly been inspiring."

Peter was also awarded the MNRF Conservation Officer of the Year Award and he will be receiving the Shikar-Safari Club International Ontario Wildlife Officer of the Year Award and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) Conservation Officer of the Year Award.



Peter Koskela has been selected as the 2021 Conservation Officer of the Year. Peter is part of the Minis-



Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau



I hope everyone had a safe and productive Winter season in their respective jurisdictions. I would like to thank the J-Reps for passing along information and keeping us updated on news from their agencies.

The corona virus pandemic continues to dominate peoples lives and

the work we do as Conservation Officers. Our officers are working very hard working at border check points, responding to calls for service and patrolling communities enforcing the province while under state of emergency.

We are hoping for a quiet spring flood season. The residents here in New Brunswick are hoping for a slow snow melt and some help from mother nature. Early predictions are indicating the spring freshet is looking good which is welcome news as our officers are still busy dealing with the Covid 19 response.

Region 3 has taken some hits this year to say the least. 2 Jurisdictions in Region 3 have pulled out of NAWEOA. Nova Scotia has fallen on some hard times with their department. They changed to the department of Environment a couple of years ago which resulted in them losing a lot of their powers and has created divide amongst officers and leadership. This has also crippled their Conservation Officers association and they currently have no money in the bank. I spoke to a few different officers who are involved in the association and it was voted amongst them to pull back from NAWEOA for now as they cannot afford the membership dues and there is no sponsorship for this from their department. I will be staying in contact with them and getting updates and we hope for their speedy return to NAWEOA.

We have also lost Prince Edward Island who use to have their NAWEOA membership dues paid for by their department. They have only 7 Officers in their unit and leadership did not feel the investment was worth it. I will remain in contact with the J rep from there and hope we can get them back to NAWEOA in the near future.

The NAWEOA board conducted a couple days of online meetings to tend to important NAWEOA business in the absence of the annual winter meeting. I would like to thank my fellow board members for participating in these meetings and putting their best foot forward and make the best out of a unique circumstance. These meetings are certainly challenging but the board managed to deal with certain items and go over the budget.

I am truly disappointed that there will be no summer conference again this year due to the current corona virus pandemic, but safety of our officers and their families is the number one priority. I would like to thank the Tennessee Conservation Officers Association for their dedication to NAWEOA and pushing back their conference again to 2022. Look forward to seeing everyone in Nashville for the summer conference in 2022. Take care and stay safe.

Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau

New Brunswick

Hi everyone from NB

It's been a while since we have touch base with all of you. Since mid March 2020 our province was faced with the pandemic and we like all of you were trying to prevent the spreading of this virus.

We, the conservation officers were asked to set up check points at several locations around the province. Our small province had to quickly install 7 check points at the interprovincial borders, 4 between Quebec, 2 for NS and 1 for PEI.

It was decided that we the conservation officers were going to be the guardian for all the maritime provinces. Our role was and still is, to check everyone coming in the province and determine if they are permitted to stay or turned around.

Within a few days we got the assistance of the Resources service officers and later on the Highway safety officers. our small group was not able to maintain the border by our self.

It was a real nightmare trying to keep track of all people coming in or driving through the province. The province's mandatory order changes frequently was also a challenge for the screeners who needed to keep updated.

Region 3 Director

Josh Thibodeau

Continued

Passes were given to daily commuters for work and people from neighbouring provinces have to apply to come in for essential or daily commute.

New officers were hired to fill in some vacancies, some on contract and others full time. It was not an easy task for the employer to find successful candidates.

This pandemic also affected the regular field work with it to protect the Natural resources. The Covid 19 became the priority on all aspects. Checking people if they comply with the order given to them, checking church, arena, theater, restaurant, etc. to make sure that all were respecting the mandatory order.

No need to say that our mandatory training was put aside basically all last year. Shawn Farrell who is the Provincial sergeant in charge of coordinating all training is slowly starting to organise sessions and has a big job ahead of him.

The province of NEW BRUNSWICK has started the process to vaccinate our officers it should be done by mid May. So far, the vaccine is not mandatory to all but and most of all are getting it.

Our group was in the middle of negotiation process when this pandemic started. We were negotiating after a long-time process in a job study, for so long we wanted to get our job revaluated and wanted to be compared to the Commercial vehicle inspector, who have now changed their name to Highway Safety Officer.

While still being on the job evaluation process, our task has changed quite a bit, more duties have been added. (this to both groups). Negotiation are now on hold until further date, government is not ready to step down their position, all is stalled on monetary topic.

Our CO association was forced to cancel our annual meeting and it looks like it will be hard to plan again for this year. Having 2/3 of our officers on different shifts and the rest working all kind of rotations, makes it hard to plan.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the Tennessee

association for their hard work in planning the next NAWEOA convention, their determination to host this next convention is remarkable. Even if it got cancel for two year in a row.

I also want to congratulate Sergeant Jason Macintyre who is the recipient of the Shakir Safari Officer of the year. This is well deserved after all these years.

Submitted by J Rep Roger Selesse

Newfoundland and Labrador

Our division has been going through a reorganization the past few years and the association has not been overly active.

The good news however, is that the reorganization is coming to an end soon and we have more officers join the division (and hopefully our association). Over the next couple months we will be having an new election and selecting new regional directors so that we can get representation from new officers as well. Once that dust has settled, we hope to be in a good position to be more involved with NAWEOA, which will hopefully include having representation at the conferences and submit more to the newsletters.

Submitted by J Rep Katlin Young

Quebec

We have had 5 retirements and have hired 4 officers. The UC program is running strong and presently has cases going through the court system.

We are not involved in the Covid response
JRep Michel Morin



Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood



In the higher-elevation portions of Region 4, we sometimes refer to the seasons as “Hunting Season,” “Late Winter,” “Sprinter,” and “the 4th of July.” As we enter this “Sprinter” season, and seemingly adjust from cold and snow to mud or blowing dust on a near-daily basis, I’m excited for the change in seasons—and the

knowledge that the ‘Rona appears to be coming under control and the challenges of the past year will also soon be behind us. Before we know it, we’ll be enjoying each other’s company again at an annual conference (even though we have to be patient for one more year) and I know the Tennessee crew is putting some great efforts (and tenacity) into what will be a great conference.

In the meantime, I’ll share some of the news from around the western US:

Arizona is experiencing an extreme drought. Even their highest elevations had less than two feet of snow this winter, following a really dry summer and fall in 2020. On the other hand, they are having some luck in hiring new officers to fill the twenty vacant districts in their state. Six trainees just graduated the academy and five more have started training. Like many jurisdictions, Arizona experienced a huge increase in the use of public lands in 2020. As a result, fishing licenses spiked, OHV and trailer sales had a huge increase, and the forest was inundated with people, many of them being first time (and largely uneducated) users. To increase officer safety, officers were required to patrol in tandem (separate vehicles, but same area) during the summer and fall to increase officer safety.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife has recently started to implement Smart COP, a SMART MTC system, used to electronically manage citations, reports, and evidence. They will eventually be able to electronically print citations and allow payments over the internet. For those wondering how they will be able to issue

citations in remote areas or when patrolling from horseback, paper citations won’t be going away. Last year Colorado had 1,078 fires, burning 625,356 acres, and including some of the largest fires in state history. While they have not seen any significant loss of wildlife or impacts to wildlife populations, several impacts to fisheries are expected and access for hunting was disrupted throughout the fall. CPW is now working hard to create a plan to reintroduce gray wolves west of the Continental Divide, following Proposition 114 (which passed 1,590,299 to 1,533,313). In addition, they are forming working groups and utilizing experts from other states to train field staff for investigating depredations and applying proper management techniques.

Like many jurisdictions, New Mexico is working to get approvals to hire more new recruits, hopefully in time to get them into an academy this summer. The waiting list on all LE academies continues to grow daily and the state currently has twelve vacant districts. (Props go out to J-Rep Clay Moyers for getting me an update, as currently only he and his sergeant are left to cover their region, which extends over nearly ¼ of the state.)

Similarly, Utah is trying to fill around eight conservation officer positions (out of around 55 total) and has recently had six positional changes in investigators (contrasting to only one change in the previous twelve+ years) and there will also likely be around five changes in sergeant positions coming. Unlike many jurisdictions in the West right now, Utah is improving the career pay ladder for conservation officers. This is being pushed in the legislature by UPEA (Utah Public Employee Association) and several legislators, with the goal of getting people to the top of their pay scales at around 14 years in. It appears this bill has passed, and once funded, it should mean significant pay increases for some officers.

Wyoming has also observed a spike in retirements and in another round of applications for game warden positions, with hopes of hiring around twelve new recruits. On another note, the Wyoming Game Wardens Association has been working with the department for several years to develop a formal memorial for officers and biologists who have died in the line of duty. Space has been secured in the Casper Regional Office and the memorial is nearing completion. Be sure to check it out the next time you come through Wyoming—or while you’re in the state for game warden interviews.

Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood Continued

The National Park Service has also been plenty busy

negotiating changes in the political climate as well as severe weather in a number of parks this winter. All that, and they still saw a successful prosecution of serial poachers in Crater Lake National park (be sure to check out <https://tinyurl.com/32evp8bk> for the local news' story) and were plenty busy with their usual rescue efforts and education/enforcement efforts.

Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt



Greetings from Kansas, in NAWEOA's Region 5. I hope this message finds all our NAWEOA brothers and sisters safe and in good health. 2020 is finally in our rearview, but not without some definite lasting effects. The snow has left us here in KS and Spring

is upon, meaning we are in full strut with Spring Turkey Season. I would like to offer up a large thank-you to all of the Region 5 J-reps for the work that they have done throughout this past year thus far. You are a great asset to making sure info flows to and from our NAWEOA family. Region 5 has had one J-Rep turn over the reins to another in Texas, and one retiring this year in Wisconsin. I want to personally thank you both for your years of service to NAWEOA, and Region 5. Also, thank you to all who submitted nominees for our yearly NAWEOA awards. There are still some that you may submit with no deadline, such as a lifesaving award. Please recognize your peers for a job well done. With the 2021 annual conference in Nashville postponed yet again, I look forward to 2022 now, and meeting up with you all in person, finally! Reminder, if you have not yet cancelled your Nashville Hotel reservations please do so. A new link for 2022 will be sent out when available. Unfortunately this year Iowa lost a veteran officer due to COVID, and we offer our condolences to his family and IDNR.

Nebraska

In November 2020 the Nebraska Game and Parks created 10 Sgt. Positions, 2 for each of the 5 districts. This was a historic move that has the potential to impact and enhance how their wardens serve their constituents, and will be a work in progress for the days

to come. In January 2021, 5 of the newest COs began their Law Enforcement Training as the 207th Basic Academy Class. In February 2021, 4 COs completed the FTO program in the LE division. The State Law Enforcement Bargaining contract was ratified and accepted by the membership, with no step advancement but there will be a 3% increase in pay each year. Many of you may have seen the article about a Nebraska man being investigated by authorities for illegally hunting deer on federal wildlife refuge planned to murder the game warden looking into his activities, according to the FBI.



5 of the newest COs in Nebraska at their LEC, 207th basic academy class.

L-R: Tyler Stueck, Bill Sellers, Sophia Gobber, Caleb Garzanelli, Brian Arp

Wisconsin

During the winter months wardens find themselves on snowmobile patrol. As the temperature rises these duties transition in the Spring. Wisconsin DNR continues their efforts to reach out and recruit prospective new warden candidates. The theme for this year's recruitment is "proactive outreach." Their goal is to find these candidates and be resources to them. One recruitment goal is to diversify the next warden hiring, focusing on social media and online events, including live chats. Wardens from across the state have been deployed to the Capitol to assist with security. During the early part of this year, about 12 offic-

Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

ers per day for security has been the norm. These officers have volunteered for this deployment. As things calmed down, these officers have been on standby, but not physically present on the grounds. Similar to other states, wardens assist with R3 efforts during the COVID pandemic. Wisconsin J-Rep Dave Youngquist will be retiring after 26 years with Wisconsin. We thank him for his years of service to WI and to NAWEOA.

Minnesota

Along with a significant uptick in Outdoor Resource Usage (Hunting, Fishing, State Park and other Public Land Use) we also had to deal with multiple civil unrest and/or riot call outs as our LE Division is fully trained and equipped for Mobile Field Force Response. This work is far from resource oriented but is certainly understandable in today's trying times, especially since MN only has about 10,000 total licensed peace officers state wide. We have also taken a more visible role in Capitol Security alongside our State Patrol partners who are statutorily tasked with Capitol Protection. DNR also has had some limited involvement with protests on the Line 3 pipeline that is being updated here in MN.

Minnesota's governor has requested a large supplemental budget for DNR to cover their agency costs associated with the Mobile Force Ops. to end 2020, and anticipated coverage of the upcoming trial of former MPLS PD officer Chauvin. MDNR was looking to staff 125 officers to the Twin Cities for an extended period for the trial. MN officers have been very fortunate with COVID 19 exposures and diagnoses. We have had quite a few officers test positive and some get ill but nothing that has caused any significant medical treatment, hopefully it stays that way. We have had struggles getting officers vaccinated, which just started last week for officers wanting the vaccine. The states roll-out of the vaccine has been troublesome.

Minnesota State Patrol received an 8.4% pay raise during a special legislative session this past fall. This is pertinent for our group as we collectively bargain with the State Patrol Troopers for wages and are provided basically a side-by-side comparison rat-

ing. Fortunately, a bill was also introduced to fix that error and provide the 8.4% to Conservation Officers along with other peace officer employed by the State of Minnesota. Frustratingly, our officers stood on the MN Capitol Steps performing the same tasks and taking on the same risks as State Troopers for almost \$4/hr less per hour.

Kansas

COVID hasn't affected the officers too bad, a few cases among the ranks. Many of our officers have now been vaccinated, with some not at their own request. We are currently navigating a new e-licensing system, which allows hunters to purchase a electronic permit to harvest their big game. So far this seems to be working without many hitches. Law Enforcement officers are still hoping for a more effective/efficient Records management system, which is being worked. This past Fall our Colonel left the agency for another state and a new Major of operations was hired. Currently two of the three regional Captain positions are vacant, as well as our Captain of Investigations. One of our Lieutenants was asked to be the interim Colonel and is currently still in that role. There are many moving parts in personnel at this time. KS currently has one newly promoted K9 officer that is in his final stint in Indiana for K9 academy.

Last Fall officers wrapped up two large wildlife cases; one in Medicine Lodge Kansas ended where an individual was found guilty regarding the complaint which filed 139 charges, including the illegal poaching of 60 whitetail and mule deer and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Part of the outcome of this case resulted in the suspect being sentenced to 14 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$310,234.68 in restitution to the KDWPT. Another case ended regarding three individuals who plead guilty to federal charges of illegally hunting closed areas (impact area) on Ft. Riley military installation. KS game wardens alongside Ft Riley game wardens conducted a lengthy investigation that revealed multiple deer being killed illegally on and off Ft Riley and the trespassing of these individuals onto closed areas where they illegally obtained deer and elk shed antlers along with multiple deceased deer and elk heads. The three men were ordered to pay approximately \$11,000 in restitution to KDWPT and \$10,000 in fines to the Lacey Act fund.

Our Commission recently implemented a new thermal/night vision/night hunting coyote season on January 1, 2021, by special permit only. There is current legislation to repeal that regulation, but so far not

Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt Continued

much has happened. Kansas sent two Game Wardens to Iowa for IDNR CO Steve Reighard's funeral and memorial services as Honor Guard members to assist. NAWEOA Reg. 5 director Lt. J. Gehrt was one of the attending Wardens. Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism will undergo a name change yet again. The Governor moved the Tourism Dept. out of our agency and placed it under the Dept. of Commerce. Effective July 2021 we will be back to KDWP (Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks).

Recently Game Wardens and State Parks Officials teamed up with some local NGOs and assisted with a cleanup of a stretch of the Kansas River. These officers utilized their airboats and hauled off many loads of trash. This effort is ongoing as the river levels allow.

Iowa

Game Warden Steve Reighard passed away in Dec. 2020 from complications with COVID-19. Officers from South Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa attended the services.



Region 6 Director Dan Fagan



I hope this newsletter finds you and your families well. As many of you know by now, the Executive Board had our winter meeting via a virtual platform in February and had to make the difficult decision whether to have the summer conference or to postpone it. The decision was made to

postpone the summer conference in Nashville to July 2021. This decision was not easy, but we felt it would be in the best interest of our membership health. I

know that I am disappointment to see another year go by that we do not get to enjoy the company of our brothers and sisters by sharing stories, awarding those who have excelled in our chosen field, and maybe ever trade a coin or two. We are a strong membership that will survive, and I believe we will have proof of that in Nashville 2021. On this topic, I want to send a huge "Thank you" to our Tennessee brothers and sisters, as well as the venue for being so understanding and accommodating to our membership. These are unprecedented times and they have been more than gracious and accommodating. The membership thanks you for your hard work and dedication.

It seems like not too long ago I was sitting under an oak tree working turkey bait and now with the weather warming up I find myself getting ready to hit the water as Florida's boating season starts to pick up with the grand kick off on Memorial Day weekend. Working a coastal county, the summertime is a busy time of year. Before we know it the opening of grouper and

Region 6 Director Dan Fagan Continued

scallop season will be at our door. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer.

In closing, I want to thank you all for what you do every day. I wish you and your families good will and continued health. I look forward to seeing all of you in Nashville 2021!!

Alabama

In 2020, the Alabama Department of Conservation had one of the biggest mergers in the Department's history. This year the Hunter Education Program, which has been under the Wildlife Section, transferred to the Law Enforcement Section.

With the full effect of Covid 19 throughout the Nation, the Alabama Department of Conservation had to adapt with the new guidelines and create training opportunities that were safe. This year was the first year

to have Departmental in-service training virtual. The Department created a virtual Functional Fitness Training for all the officers which included videos, PowerPoints, and at home physical training activities. Although this was not the norm, the virtual training was a success and hopefully soon we can all train together again.

Maryland

Corporal John Bunting was recognized as the 2020 National Association of State Boating Law Administration (NASBLA) Southern Region and National Officer of the Year. Please join me in congratulating Corporal Bunting!

Night hunting is a big issue for many of us around the US and Canada and Maryland is seeing these cases as well. Officers have been working hard to combat this violation. Multiple night hunting cases are being processed through the agency and the states attorneys. Another notable violation is a subject charged with selling illegal oysters. The subject is facing a fine of \$3,000 if convicted.

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder



As I begin this annual submission, I am eerily reminded of a movie that was filmed in my home state back in the 1980's. The national icon that lives in Punxsutawney, PA needs no introduction to Game Wardens as his story became another

modern classic on the silver screen featuring actor Bill Murray. If the title escapes you, the movie was called "Ground Hog Day" and so began 2020 with a pandemic creating a new lifestyle for everyone casting a shadow upon us all making each day seem to repeat itself. If you would have told me, we would not be meeting for the second year in a row for the Annual Summer NAWEOA Conference, I would have told you that you were out of your mind. Winter of 2019, when the Executive Board toured the Maxwell House Millennium Hotel in Nashville, TN, everyone was excited in knowing a great conference was planned and the membership only had to watch a year of cal-

endar pages pass by until we could enjoy the comradery of our brothers and sisters of this great profession. A few words that really none of us had paid any attention to until February of 2020, "Covid", "Pandemic" and "Quarantine" now became the focus point of everyone's life. As I am poised to receive my second dose of the Covid vaccine, life really hasn't returned to normal for anyone as we knew it before or has the reality of all of this become our new normal? Limited recreating where groups of thousands used to gather for a concert or now, simply shopping on your smart phone probably will remain the new normal for most of us. Whatever hardship we have all encountered in the past twelve months, the fact is that Game Wardens didn't take a day off protecting the wildlife resources that many more were in pursuit of due to the pandemic. Outside recreation was off the chart with sportsmen and women taking time to get outdoors and enjoy the natural resources us Game Wardens are tasked with protecting. Keeping up with the demand of incidents and long hours it was actually a blessing in disguise to keep our minds off what we were missing from our past normal.

Trying to maintain a sense of humor throughout all this chaos, I developed a new acronym regarding our association. I now refer to the 2020 and 2021 conference voids as "NO"-WEOA. For those who know

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

me, this has been very difficult for Missy and me to miss getting together with our friends we only get the opportunity to see once a year. Facetime and portal calls have replaced the in-person meetings and hopefully this will be the last delay until we get back to our preferred “normal” in Nashville in 2022. I cannot express enough the gratitude to TWOA and the staff at Maxwell House Millennium Hotel for doing all they have done to keep the torch lit working with the NAWEOA Executive to make sure the Tennessee experience will still happen. As the old adage states “Better Late Than Never” I’m looking forward to it. Stay safe and continue doing the great work that you all do.

Delaware

JRep Brooke Mitchell reports the following from Delaware:

2020 Recap

Like all wildlife enforcement agencies in 2020, we were forced to adapt to a new way of policing, not only due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the heightened scrutiny and hatred that law enforcement officers found themselves under. Through these challenges our agency has continued to make great, and positive efforts towards conservation and community relations.

Delaware Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police is excited to be an active agency with NAWEOA again.

Community:

One of the first things we focused on was ways we could still hold our events. One of our most well-known events has always been our Annual Youth Fishing Tournament. In 2020, we had to come up with an alternative way to hold this large event that would follow all COVID safety measures; so we held our first ever Semi-Virtual Youth Fishing Tournament. This still allowed us to engage our youth, maintain that sense of community, all while staying safe! Here is a website going over how it was held and tons of photos, videos, and feedback can be seen on our Facebook page from it.

<https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/events/690/2020->

[youth-fishing-tournament/](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/DelawareNRP>

Case Highlights:

We had a viral news story during 2020 involving wildlife animal cruelty. Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police arrested Richard Bunting, 20, of Frankford on July 9 and two juveniles on July 13 and charged them with multiple deer poaching and with felony charges, following an investigation into a reported wildlife animal cruelty incident that occurred July 8 in the Hudson Road area near Gumboro. The incident involved Bunting and two juveniles video recording themselves intentionally hitting a deer with a motor vehicle and continuing to perform cruel acts on the deer, which ultimately resulted in its death. Bunting and the two juveniles were charged with one count each of felony cruelty to animals, felony conspiracy second degree, hunting deer during a closed season, possessing or transporting an unlawfully killed antlerless deer, unlicensed hunting and underage possession of alcohol. NEWS RELEASE: https://news.delaware.gov/2020/07/15/dnrec-natural-resources-police-make-arrests-in-wildlife-animal-cruelty-case/?fbclid=IwAR0Buvlscba33x_fu3YZ2SWIBNAdT1oIZpVB1jIP5eIChzI-0VI9zPbqJrk

Was featured on multiple news outlets as well (one example): <https://www.wmdt.com/2020/07/three-arrested-in-wildlife-animal-cruelty-case/>

OPERATION BUTCHER BLOCK - This case was finalized in 2020 after a two-year long investigation into a man named Thomas Adkins. An initial search warrant was obtained for the residence where Adkins was running his butcher shop, but a total of 7 search warrants ended up being executed by the end of this



case. Adkins was living with, and running his butcher shop out of a residence where two individuals with Murder 1 Convictions were either living or commonly frequenting/hanging out. Adkins was a convicted felon himself and was known to be in possession of firearms. From the initial warrant a total of approximately 23 suspects were identified, of which the majority were believed to have committed a crime relat-

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

ed to illegal deer hunting.

Over the next 6-8 months case packets, video footage, surveillance, covert operations, and butcher records



were gone through and roughly 15 arrest warrants were executed. The case resulted in approximately 55 arrests being made that included charges such as white tail deer hunting violations, person prohibited, narcotics and license and tag violations. This included extra charges which were brought against Adkins in a grand jury indictment.

There were also around 30 warnings issued. Numerous cases were also turned over to neighboring states which have resulted in a handful of arrests and warnings as well. There are two pictures attached relevant to this case.

Officer Happenings:

Sgt. Brooke Mitchell is the new JRep for Delaware Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police

Retirements: Captain Douglas Mesesck

New Officers: Officer Callie Crouse and Officer Tyler McGovern

2020 Award Nominees have not yet been notified, so we are holding off on sharing those.

Pennsylvania

JRep Rick Finnegan reports the following from Pennsylvania Game Commission:

The 32nd Class of the Ross Leffler School of Conservation graduated in February and 27 new officers were given assignments across the Commonwealth. There are still about 14 vacant districts in which we hope to fill with the 33rd class which started March 28th, 2021.

Testing was open March-April 2021 for the upcoming

34th class.

Five district game wardens interviewed for the tracking team. We welcomed Kolton Mueller from the North Central Region along with Derek Spitler and Charles Schuster of the South East Region. They will be travelling to Kentucky to receive Level I training. They, along with some of the other newer tracking team operators will also receive Level II training this year as well as advanced land navigation, and other important training.

The PGC Training division certified nine additional State Game Wardens to serve as instructors for the Emergency Vehicle Operation Course. The Wardens certified are:

Daniel Carl
Michael Stutts
Michael Yeck
Denton Schellhammer

Jason Wagner

Ariel Douglas

Daniel Gible

Cameron Murphy

Derek Spitler

Pennsylvania Game Commission Officer of the Year Awards from this past year include:

NECLECA – State Game Warden Kevin P. Anderson Jr.

Shikar Safari- State Game Warden Matthew S. Johnson

NWTF- State Game Warden Special Investigator/K-9 Handler Lawrence R. Hergenroeder

Operation Game Thief case of the year - State Game Warden Eric Kelly

JRep Chad Lauer reports the following from Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission:

2021 is off to an excellent start for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Currently, the 23rd class of Waterways Conservation Officers are training at the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fisheries Conservation and Watercraft Safety and scheduled to start their initial field training assignment in April. Applicants for the 24th class of Waterways Conservation Officers are currently being accepted, and the Bureau is hoping to recruit a full class.

A new Director has been selected to lead the Bureau

**Region 7 Director
Larry Hergenroeder
Continued**

of Law Enforcement following the Retirement of Corey Britcher. Clyde Warner is now the Director and is excited to lead the Bureau into the future.

Adjustments to the 2021 Trout Season were implemented, and instead of two separate trout openers, the seasons have been consolidated into a single statewide opener, April 3rd, to reduce the amount of travel and the curve of COVID-19 outbreaks.

The Bureau of Law Enforcement recently recognized the following officers for honors for their field performances: Eric Davis (Southwest Region) - Top Gun Award, Ron Evancho (Southeast Region) - Greiner Award, Rachael Thurner-Diaz (Southcentral Region) NECLECA Officer of The Year.

Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania Association: Mike Reeder was voted in as the new COPA President.

Matt Visosky will remain the Vice-President.

Randy Shoup was voted to be the association's Treasurer.

Brian Sheetz will hold the Membership Secretary position.

Bill McGlone remains the Association Secretary.

Harold Cole will hold the Media Secretary position.

Stephen McGinnis will hold the Webmaster position.

The trustee's positions are at full compliment once again. Trustee's include:

Gary Toward

Timothy Marks

Derek Daly

Rick Finnegan

Ted Onufrak

David Keller

Praveed Abraham

Lawrence Hergenroeder

Daniel Carl

Clyde Warner

Brian Mummert

Brian Sheetz

Maine

JRep Kris MacCabe reports the following from Maine:

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE RETIREMENTS:

The Maine Warden Service would like to congratulate most recent retirements.

LIEUTENANT. ADAM GORMELY

GAME WARDEN SCOTT STEVENS

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE PROMOTIONS:

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE PROMOTES THREE GAME WARDENS TO GAME WARDEN SERGEANT.

SGT. JUSTIN FOWLIE

Sgt. Fowlie is entering his 20th year with the Bureau of Warden Service. He holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a master's degree in Theology with a Biblical Studies Cognate. Throughout his career Warden Fowlie has been assigned to a number of districts across the state from Biddeford to Haynesville. Currently he works out of Division B in the Camden district. Warden Fowlie has served as cadre for the 12th, 13th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th BLETP as well as an Advanced Warden School cadre in 2010 and 2012. He is a member and instructor of the Critical Incident Stress Management team, a member of the Water Survival team, an ERT and a member of the Honor Guard. He has attended Concerns of Police Survivors training and most recently attended a LE Chaplaincy Certification Course at MCJA. He currently lives in Boothbay with his wife Meredith and their 3 boys, Andrew, Avery and Kameron! Warden Fowlie will be assigned to Section 1.

SGT. TOM MCKENNEY

Sgt. McKenney is entering his 15th year with the Bureau of Warden Service and holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Warden McKenney spent the first three years of his career patrolling the remote area of the Rip-Dam district and the last eleven in the southern region of Somerset County. Warden McKenney served as cadre for the 35th, 36th, 37th and 38th BLETP as well as Advanced Warden School cadre in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020. He is a member of the Critical Incident Management Team, serves on our hiring board for new warden candidates and is on the Board of Directors for the International Wildlife Crime Stoppers. In 2015 Warden McKenney received the Shikar-Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year Award as well as the well-deserved honor of Maine Game

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

Warden of the Year as nominated by a board of his peers. Warden McKenney currently lives in Norridge-wock with his wife Lori and their two children, Hannah and Patrick. Warden McKenney will be assigned to Section 3.

SGT. CARLETON RICHARDSON

Sgt. Richardson is entering his 8th year as a Maine Game Warden. Prior to that he was a patrol officer at Biddeford Police Department for eight years. Warden Richardson holds an associate degree in Criminal Justice. Warden Richardson has spent his entire career in Division A patrolling the busy regions of York and Cumberland Counties. He has a special interest in staff development, education and training. Throughout his career he has been a Field Training Officer and a Warden Service WTO since the inception of the program in 2015. Warden Richardson has attended the National Hunting Incident Investigation Academy and is a currently a mapper on our Incident Management Team. Warden Richardson is an SFST/Intoxilyzer instructor as well as a seated battery SFST instructor. He has been actively involved in the Boating Deputy Program. Warden Richardson lives in Shapleigh with his wife Amy and their son Gavin. He will be assigned to Section 2.

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE PROMOTES TWO GAME WARDENS TO GAME WARDEN INVESTIGATOR

INVESTIGATOR JEREMY KEMP

Warden Kemp is a graduate of Unity College with a B.S. in Environmental Science. He began his career with Warden Service over 19 years ago, prior to that he held numerous part-time positions as a fish culturist, a conservation aide and an assistant ranger. Warden Kemp was initially assigned to the Danforth district, but soon found himself transferring to the Dover area where he resides today. Being in the heart of Piscataquis County, Warden Kemp patrols a rural, resource rich district intertwined with a series of multi-use trails, thus resulting in his involvement with numerous resource related violations, as well as other investigations such as recreational vehicle crashes and

the 2015 manhunt for Robert Burton. Warden Kemp has been involved with a number of specialty teams and special assignments during his tenure. Warden Kemp was a certified instructor on the firearms teams and served as an active member for more than 6 years. In 2011 he became an instructor in water survival and has been instrumental in training wardens, marine patrol officers, forest rangers and state troopers in that program. In 2020 he was tasked with organizing and planning all the water survival training. Warden Kemp has been on the dive team for more than five years, where he holds a Dive Master certification and has become familiar with our side-scan sonar and underwater ROV. Warden Kemp has been trained in the use of FLIR in conjunction with our fixed-wing aircraft and has attended a boat operators' course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. For the last two years he has been a board member for MSLEA.

INVESTIGATOR JOSH SMITH

Warden Investigator Josh Smith is a graduate of Unity College with a B.S. in Environmental Science and an emphasis in Conservation Law Enforcement. He began his career with Maine Warden Service 14 years ago. Prior to that he was a patrol officer in the town of Mechanic Falls for 3 years. Warden Smith was initially assigned to Mars Hill in Aroostook County, but shortly thereafter transferred to Oxford County to patrol the Rumford District where he remains today. Warden Smith patrols a resource rich district on the northern end of Division A. Warden Smith has been a member of the forensic mapping team and is certified as a Level II boat crash investigator. He is proficient in the seated battery OUI tests and has been trained in the MCJA physical fitness protocol. Warden Smith has served as cadre for two Advanced Warden Schools and was assigned as a Basic Law Enforcement Training Program cadre at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy for 2 years. While in that assignment he served as cadre for the 31st – 34th BLETPs. Warden Smith attended Leadership in Police Organization training in 2017 and became an EVOC instructor in 2019. Warden Smith has been involved with numerous high-profile Title 12 investigations while in Division A including: the Thompson Lake boat crash, the Megan Ripley fatal HRSI, the Pete Kolofsky fatal HRSI and the Karen Wrentzel fatal HRSI. Warden Smith was also named National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the year for Maine in 2012 and the NASBLA Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for Maine in 2018.

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

Maine Warden Service New Hires:

The Maine Warden Service continues the hiring process hiring 4 new Game Wardens this past year. The Maine Warden Service is continuing to recruit qualified applicants. The four recent hires are currently attending the Maine Criminal Justice Training with Law Enforcement all other law enforcement before attending Maine Warden Service own training program

New Jersey

JRep Anne Quirk reports the following from New Jersey:

Jason Snellbaker was promoted in January to the position of Marine Supervising Conservation Officer (Deputy Chief) within the Bureau of Law Enforcement. Previously serving as the Captain of the Marine Unit, he started his career with the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Bureau of Law Enforcement in 2000. His first assignment with the Bureau was as a Marine Conservation Officer conducting field enforcement activities in Atlantic County before being promoted to a District Lieutenant in 2011 and Captain of the region in 2016. Captain Snellbaker has received the Shikar Safari Club International and Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association's Wildlife Conservation Officer of the Year awards. Captain Snellbaker oversees the Joint Enforcement Agreement between the State of New Jersey and the National Marine Fisheries Service, is a member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Law Enforcement Committee, where he's currently serving as the committee chair, represents the Bureau at the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council meetings and at numerous state committee meetings. In 2017 he graduated from the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs leadership academy.

In February Chief J. Sean Cianciulli announced the Conservation Police Officer of the Year: Detective Brice Paey. Chief Cianciulli declared, "Detective Paey consistently displayed his dedication to finding ways to improve the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Bureau of Law Enforcement by cultivating professional standards and exhibiting a positive image

of the Bureau of Law Enforcement's Conservation Police. Self-motivation, perseverance and steadfast determination are the cornerstones of Detective Paey's personality.

"Detective Paey has worked to create a diverse network of contacts and acts as our liaison with other Bureaus and Divisions in the Department of Environmental Protection and with agencies around this State and the Country. Detective Paey has secured the Bureau of Law Enforcement a "seat at the table" related to egregious environmental violations that have long lasting negative consequences to the resources of our State. Detective Paey is always willing to take charge of these complex incidents and he conducts very thorough and professional investigations, prepares complete and impactful report files, and follows out the cases to resolutions that have the remediation and protection of the resources as the focus of the consequences rendered.

"Detective Paey has a vast and in-depth knowledge of New Jersey's laws pertaining to the protection of our State's natural resources. Detective Paey's confidence in his abilities to prepare and present a strong argument in the defense of our natural resources puts him a head above the rest when he presents cases for settlement and adjudication. His case closure rate is impeccable, and he is highly respected for his integrity and fairness by prosecutors and judges.

"Detective Paey is highly motivated to create a professional product and independently took the reins when we were looking to develop our scene mapping capabilities with Total Station equipment and software. Officers from around the State rely on his intricate knowledge of these systems when they are preparing files for cases of magnitude including Hunting Related Shooting Incidents, encroachments onto State Wildlife Management Areas and major dumping cases. The polished product that he presents is a testament to his professionalism and always represents the Bureau of Law Enforcement in a very positive light.

"I think that Detective Paey's motivation, attention to detail and unwavering drive to be successful are qualities that we strive to cultivate in our Bureau. It's an honor to say that the Bureau of Law Enforcement has officers like Detective Paey and a pleasure to recognize him as the 2020 Conservation Police Officer of the Year."

Rhode Island

JRep Jackie Peterson reports the following from Rhode Island:

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

This last year has been difficult for everyone. Rhode Island Environmental Police worked tirelessly to enforce closures of state parks and beaches when mandated and then ensure their safe use by the public upon reopening. Rhode saw a major increase in boating activity, primarily from new recreational boaters. This influx of new boaters led to a surge in boating accidents. The use of state parks and beaches was also greatly amplified this last year, as people sought recreation in outdoor venues due to bars and other businesses operating at a reduced capacity. Officers also experienced more assaults from the public and encountered more resistance to commands as a result of increasing hostility towards law enforcement.

One case of note this fall was a hunting accident that occurred in Southern Rhode Island. Two illegal hunters were caught by EPOs after one hunter shot the other with a shotgun. Both men were charged with hunting out of season, hunting without landowner permission, hunting with illegal shot, and fluorescent orange required. The injured hunter is alive and recovering. Additionally, several great fisheries cases were made this year. The following officers received awards this year; Lt. Fran Ethier received the NASBLA Boating Safety Award, Richard Browning the Shikar-Safari Award and Sgt. Chris Duguid the NECLEA Award. The department also hired two new officers, Officer Kory Bannon and Officer Joshua Bergeron. After many years of dedicated service Lieutenant Fran Ethier, Captain Steve Criscione, Officer Michael DiPietro and K-9 Bear will be retiring.

Vermont

Vermont Game Warden Jenna Reed reports the following from Vermont in JRep Robert Currier's absence:

The Vermont Warden Service, like many other states and provinces, found itself navigating new orders and new directives as the Novel Coronavirus continued to spread. Wardens were tasked with balancing a whole new set of guidelines; from keeping appropriate social distances, abiding by ever changing Governor's orders, and making sure the public knew enforcement of Fish and Wildlife laws was still a priority. The Ver-

mont Warden Service adapted well and found ways to reach out to its constituents, including via social media and the implementation of a Warden Service Instagram page (@vermontwardenservice). Additionally, many wardens conducted outreach meetings virtually with students from school groups throughout the state.

The spring brought not only Covid-19 but also an increase in bear problems, which persisted through the summer. Wardens excelled at educating the public on "bear awareness" and thinking outside of the box to come up with better solutions to deter problem bears.

As the year progressed Vermonters were faced with an increase in meat prices and/or lack of meat on grocery store shelves. Several wardens took the helm on a massive project to bring moose, deer, and bear meat to food shelves across the state. It was estimated that approximately 3500 pounds of deboned meat was processed by wardens and delivered to those in need.



In 2020, Vermont saw a significant increase in outdoor activity and fishing/hunting and trapping license sales, likely due to Covid-19 restrictions limiting indoor focused recreation. Although it was positive to see increased participation in outdoor recreation, wardens also dealt with higher numbers of snowmobile crashes, some of which resulted in serious bodily injury or death.

Proactive enforcement during fall deer season found wardens chasing and arresting many individuals attempting to take deer at night, over baited areas and from the roadways. One case involved the deployment of a standing and bedded deer facsimile. At approximately 0057 hours, a hatchback style vehicle traveling slowly on the roadway, turned into the field and then quickly accelerated towards the facsimiles. The bed-

**Region 7 Director
Larry Hergenroeder
Continued**

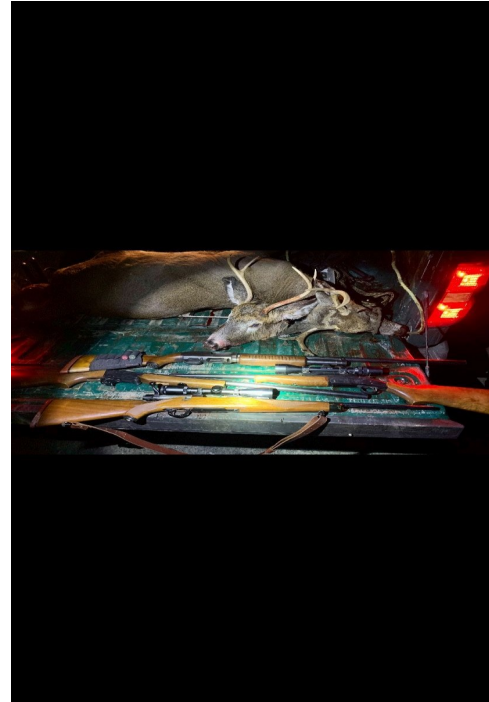


ded decoy was struck and suffered damage to the wiring system. The vehicle fled the scene leading wardens on a short pursuit before the pursuit was terminated. Back at the scene, wardens gathered evidence which identified the vehicle. Due to their in-depth investigative work, wardens later located the operator, resulting in multiple criminal charges.

On another busy evening, Wardens from the Southern Supervisory District were just clearing from the arrest of a nighttime poacher who shot their deer facsimile when they were dispatched to a separate deer poaching complaint called in through the Operation Game Thief hotline. While spread out, and searching for evidence, the wardens heard a gunshot at close range. They were able to pinpoint the gunshot to a nearby residence. Upon arrival, wardens made contact with a male subject dragging a freshly killed 7-point buck back to his residence with an ATV. The poacher had illegally taken the buck from a second story window

of his residence under motion activated flood lights, with the aid of corn, salt, and other illegal commercial mineral attractants. The subject was arrested and charged with five criminal violations.

In the southern part of the state a warden found himself working a deer jacking incident and while investigating, the warden heard another gunshot in the dis-



tance. He responded quickly and found a male dragging a deer out that was shot in the backyard with the use of bait and flood lights. Suspects from both incidents were arrested for offenses.

During the past year, Major George Scribner and Lt. Dennis Amsden retired after decades of service to the Vermont Warden Service. Additionally, the Vermont Warden Service announced the promotions of Lieutenant Justin Stedman to Major and Sergeant Keith Gallant to Lieutenant. Congrats to all four!

In one last major highlight, Sergeant Travis Buttle was chosen as 2020 Warden of the Year. Congratulations Sgt. Buttle!

Ohio

JRep Josh Zientek reports the following from Ohio:

As many of you know, Wildlife Investigator Kevin Behr was shot while investigating a poaching incident on December 20. The suspect has since pled not guilty

Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder Continued

to several charges and is awaiting his next court date. Investigator Behr has undergone several surgeries and is progressing at a steady rate. On January 28, he was transferred to a rehabilitation facility. Over 100 people including wildlife officers and police officers, lit up the night in support of Investigator Behr as he began his journey in rehab. The amount of love and support for the Behr family has been outstanding. The rehab nurses said they have never seen someone receive so many cards! The Behr family thanks you for your continuous thoughts, prayers, and support. It is truly heart-warming and inspiring to see a community come together from far and wide. Please continue to keep Investigator Behr and his family in your thoughts and prayers through rehab and his journey home. Kevin returned home on Friday March 12th! Cards can be sent to the Wildlife District 5 Office: 1076 Old Springfield Pike, Xenia, Ohio 45385

On February 23, our sister agency Division of Parks and Watercraft and all our ODNr family suffered a



great loss. Natural Resources Officer Jason Lagore died after suffering a medical emergency while on scene trying to locate a juvenile drowning victim. Jason was the head of K-9 training for both the Division of Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Watercraft here in Ohio. He was extremely dedicated and proud of his K-9 teams and all they accomplished. Jason was a familiar name both in the state of Ohio and across the country for his knowledge and expertise. Jason left behind his current K-9 partner Sarge his loving wife Michelle and their two young boys Fynn (5) and Henry (2). Please keep Officer Lagore, his family and our fellow officers in your thoughts and prayers as we all deal with the void of losing one of our own.

Wildlife Officers of the 20th Wildlife Officer Training Academy that graduated in 2020 have since completed their six month field training program in February. We now have one wildlife officer assigned to every county in the state, which was effective last August, and prior to that several counties had been vacant since 2017. We are exploring hiring for another cadet academy this year or in 2022 but are monitoring the Covid-19 Pandemic situation and associated restrictions and precautions for the feasibility and logistics of holding this academy.

Over the past year the Division of Wildlife formed a working group to evaluate the structure of the law enforcement program and how it can stay relevant with the everchanging society we serve every day. After several meetings and good discussion, it was decided to move all investigators across the state under one direct supervisor. It was also decided to keep one Wildlife Officer in each county across the state.

New York

Award recipients:

NYCOA Future of the Division Award - Presented to a Member with five or fewer year's total time in service with the Division who has done an outstanding job in their area of responsibility.

RECIPIENT: ECO Tony Drahms, Region 8

NYS Rifle & Pistol Association Award - Presented to a Member who promotes and personally participates in marksmanship competitions and one who encourages such participation by New York's youth.

RECIPIENT: ECO Scott Sincebaugh, Region 7

**Region 7 Director
Larry Hergenroeder
Continued**

RECIPIENTS:

ECO Brendan Dickson from Region 1 – For his response and actions involving a combative, suicidal subject at Robert Moses State Park on December 3rd, 2020.

ECO Chris DeRose from Region 1 – For his response and actions involving a suicidal subject at Bethpage State Park on March 21st, 2020.

ECO Ike Bobseine, ECO Jordan Doroski, and ECO Jacob Clark from Region 1 – For their rescue of three adults swept away from Maidstone Beach at mouth of Three Mile Harbor on August 23rd, 2020.

ECO Osman Eisenberg and ECO Jeff Krueger from Region 7 – For their response and actions involving a suicidal subject in the Town of Enfield on December 28th, 2020.

ECO Brent Wilson from Region 7 – For his rescue of a fleeing felon who had fallen through the ice and into a freezing Catatunk Creek in the Town of Candor on February 8th, 2021.

Notable Events:

The Division of Law Enforcement is providing continual support during the COVID pandemic, filling countless Incident Command System roles at Statewide COVID vaccination and testing sites.

The PBA of NYS, representing the NYS ENCON Police, NYS Forest Rangers, State University of New York Police, and New York State Park Police, is lobbying during this legislative session to pass a 20-year retirement bill and Pay Bill. The Pay Bill would provide a raise to members of PBANYNS, who haven't had a contractual raise since 2014.

Shikar – Safari Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in the area of wildlife law enforcement.

RECIPIENT: ECO Steven Shaw, Region 5

Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in his or her areas of responsibility.

RECIPIENT: ECO Stephen Gonyeau, Region 5

Samuel S. Taylor Award - The Samuel S. Taylor Award is presented in memory of the first New York State Game Protector killed in the line of duty. Officer Taylor was killed April 5, 1914 in Rome, New York. This award is presented to those Members who by a conspicuous act of valor, courage, integrity, resourcefulness and bravery in the protection of our natural resources and/or public safety, have clearly set themselves apart in the performance of their duties.

ECO Ryan Wing and ECO Dan Plows from Region 7 – For their response and actions at the scene of a homicide in the Village of Sherburne, Chenango County on October 19th, 2020.

Division of Law Enforcement Lifesaving Award - Presented to the Member or members whose extraordinary actions saved, or attempted to save, the life of a fellow officer or member of the public.



NAWEOA Awards

N.A.W.E.O.A. believes deeply in recognizing the commitment of the wildlife law enforcement professional. The awards recognize people and agencies that have performed outstanding work, exemplary service to the public, or have contributed to wildlife law enforcement in other ways. Look at the award categories below and consider nominating your fellow officers for accomplishments. Submitting an award is easy. Go to NAWEOA.org and in the main menu under “**Awards**”, is “**Award Application**”. Click that link and you will be taken to the online Award Applications.

N.A.W.E.O.A. OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a member of NAWEOA.
4. An officer whose character is beyond reproach.
5. An officer who is competent, knowledgeable and capable.
6. An officer who promotes wildlife law enforcement.
7. An officer who demonstrates professionalism in every facet of life.
8. The person submitting the nomination shall provide background material when submitting the nomination. Background material shall be in written narrative format, not exceeding 5 pages. Other supportive articles, certificates, awards, media coverage, etc. may be included with the nomination.
9. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th..

NAWEOA TORCH AWARD

- Presented annually to an officer from each region, to encourage the professional development of recently appointed officers. The selection criteria are as follows:
- Both nominating and nominated officers must be regular NAWEOA members.
- Nominated officer must not have worked as a wildlife enforcement officer more than five years.
- Must have demonstrated a genuine desire to protect the resource and develop professionally.
- Must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties, including public education.
- Must be respected by his/her peers and the general public.
- Nominations must be received by April 1st each year. Winners will be notified by April 15th.
- Awards will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given for outstanding achievement or service in the field of Wildlife Law Enforcement, to NAWEOA executive or outgoing NAWEOA Directors. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given to honor years of service to the profession. This award is distributed on behalf of NAWEOA by regional reps and is not subject to executive review.

AWARD OF VALOUR

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given

en to the officer who performs a heroic act, or risks or receives serious injury, in the line of duty in an attempt to protect him/herself or a member of the public from a dangerous situation or circumstance. It infers bravery in the face of adversity.

LIFESAVING AWARD

Anyone who is eligible to be a regular or deputy member of the association or anyone who is a member of the association may be nominated for this award. It is given for any act at any time which saves the life of another person. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Anyone who in any way is helpful to the association and/or it's members may be nominated for this award. This includes, but is not limited to speakers, conference or workshop hosts, fundraisers, committee or special project members, citizens or politicians.

HONOURARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Anyone who has performed an extraordinary service to the association over a number of years may be nominated for this award. It is one of our most prestigious awards and may only be given in rare circumstances. Anyone who is eligible for regular membership in the association who receives this award shall maintain their voting privileges within the association.

K-9 AND HANDLER "LOYAL PARTNER AWARD"

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full-time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a regular member of NAWEOA.
4. Three years minimum experience and active as a K-9 handler at time of nomination.
5. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th.
6. Both K-9 and handler must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties.
7. Award will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.



NAWEOA