



Dick Frawley, President
Dr. John E. Flaherty Field Trial Association

February 6, 2017

Dear Dick,

This letter will serve as DEEP's Annual Department Message for the 2017 Dr. John E. Flaherty "Field Events Date Schedules" booklet.

2017 Message from the DEEP

Ann Kilpatrick, District Wildlife Biologist
Bureau of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

On behalf of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, I would like to welcome you to the state-owned, Dr. John E. Flaherty Field Trial Area in East Windsor. The 511-acre property is the State's premier field trial site and a valuable wildlife property. The area was acquired in multiple acquisitions dating back to 1947 and has a long standing use as a field trial area. Based upon this historical use and the intent of the transfer of ownership from the "Pelton" family (to continue field trial activities), the area has been managed to provide and enhance these activities, along with other compatible wildlife-based recreation. The most prominent feature of this management area is the extensive grassland/open field habitat which totals approximately 200 acres. This large expanse of habitat makes the site quite unique and serves as a very important open space parcel in a heavily developed industrial and residential community.

A management plan, revised in 2013 through a collaborative effort between the Department and the Flaherty Association, continues to guide the management activities carried out on the property each year. The ten-year plan reviews the attributes and history of the area and established the following goals: (1) Maintain and enhance the property to assure its continued status as a premier field trial area; (2) Maintain and enhance the large expanses of grassland habitat for field trial activities, outdoor recreation, and natural resource values; (3) Maintain and develop a diversity of other wildlife habitats including shrubland-old fields, forest and wetlands; and (4) Enhance opportunities for public use in a manner that is compatible with field trial activities and consistent with sound natural resource management.

Despite budgetary constraints, the Department's commitment to the Dr. John E. Flaherty Field Trial Area remained a priority in 2016. To maintain and enhance both the habitat and operational facilities on the property, management actions included: 1) the selective application of herbicides over a four-day period during the month of July targeting non-native, invasive plants (i.e., autumn olive, barberry, bittersweet and multi-flora rose) to enhance grassland habitat and reduce mowing requirements over the long-term; 2) the regular maintenance of the clubhouse lawn, septic field, parking area, entranceway and road culverts; 3) mowing approximately 150 acres of field habitat during the month of August to control woody and invasive plant growth, and support field trial activities; 4) the administration of three agricultural use license agreements to establish nine food/cover plots for birds and services to conduct various minor facility repairs; and 5) the replacement of three picnic tables. The Department also continued to fund dumpster and year-round porta-toilet services, purchased light fixtures to be installed in the Dearborn barn/shop, and conducted a preliminary review of the Association's proposal to construct a 12 x 12 cinder block storage building next to the bird room behind the clubhouse. In addition, the Department thanks the Flaherty Association for the assistance they provided our Safety Office staff in conducting a safety audit of the clubhouse, and facilitating the State Department of Public Health's inspection of the clubhouse water and sanitary system to ensure the health and safety of field trial participants and observers, Department staff, and other cooperators.

I want to personally thank Rick Murphy and newly-elected President, Dick Frawley, for all of the help they have given me as I have transitioned into my new role serving on the Flaherty Field Trial Management Committee following Paul Rothbart's retirement last February. On behalf of the Department, I wish Rich well and thank him for his sustained commitment to the Flaherty Association's mission and 13 years of dedicated service as its President. It has been an absolute pleasure working with him to meet our cooperative management goals for the property.

In closing, the Department looks forward to working with Dick, the other Association officers, and the entire membership in the years to come to carry on the long-standing, cooperative working relationship that has effectively served to meet the wildlife habitat management goals for this special property and make Flaherty the premiere field trial area on the East Coast. Working together, I am confident we will harness any opportunities presented and meet any challenge the future may hold. We wish everyone lots of fun afield and a successful 2017 field trial season.

Once again, I want to thank you for all your support. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Best Regards,

Ann

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