

Sunset Advisory Commission
Board and Commission Review of Migratory Waterfowl Advisory Committee

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

- 1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.**

The Migratory Waterfowl Advisory Committee (MWAC) meets 2 to 3 times each year. This meeting schedule has been in effect for many years and is well suited to the purpose of the committee. Copies of meeting agendas, notes and other information can be

- 2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.**

There are 5 members to the MWAC and include:

Gary Starr, Chair

Lawrence Pyne

Richard Nelson

Ron Rich

Bill Crenshaw

There are no statutory or required term limits for committee member involvement;

The Commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) is the appointing authority for committee members;

Committee members do not receive per diem or compensation for their participation; their involvement is entirely voluntary.

- 3. Provide an overview of the board or commission's purpose.**

The purpose of the MWAC, as stated in **10 V.S.A. § 4277**, is to provide guidance and consultation to the Commissioner on projects that propose to use funds derived from the sale of the Vermont Duck Stamp. Those funds are specifically for the purpose of wetland conservation, restoration and enhancement to benefit waterfowl and other wildlife in Vermont;

Historically, the MWAC also coordinated the annual art contest for the Vermont Duck Stamp program. However, since 2009 the Vermont Duck Stamp program no longer uses an annual art contest for the sale of duck stamps so this responsibility is no longer applicable;

The MWAC provides important perspective and guidance to the Commissioner and technical staff in the VFWD on potential wetland conservation projects as well as on projects proposed by the VFWD and other organizations such as The Nature Conservancy or Ducks Unlimited. They also serve an important liaison role to the VFWD to ensure that the interests of waterfowl hunters and bird watchers are adequately considered in setting project priorities.

4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

Yes, this is still a useful function for the MWAC to provide to the VFWD. The relationship between the VFWD and the MWAC affords high confidence and to some degree a system of checks and balances on the use of the Vermont Duck Stamp fund. This process requires a relatively minor commitment of time on the part of the VFWD;

If the MWAC were to no longer fulfill this purpose the VFWD would make decisions about the use of the Vermont Duck Stamp fund independently.

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

The MWAC does a good job of performing this responsibility as evidenced by the detailed minutes from the meetings. They actively participate in all committee discussions, they follow Roberts Rules of Order effectively, and they all are dedicated to the purpose of the Vermont Duck Stamp program and as such bring a level of inspiration to the VFWD on the use of those funds.

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

- The VFWD believes that the purpose of this committee is still relevant and important;
- The efforts of the MWAC have been made more efficient in recent years by having them offer opinions and guidance on new projects by email when the

VFWD requires a quick response. The VFWD is interested in exploring a different set of roles and responsibilities for this committee beyond offering opinions on proposed wetland conservation projects. These may include serving as a more active liaison with waterfowl hunters and supporting outreach on the benefits of the Vermont Duck Stamp program, among others.

7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission's functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?

- All land conservation projects are reviewed at multiple levels within the VFWD, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), and by the Governor's office. Ultimately, all land conservation, including wetland conservation, must be approved by the Commissioner, ANR Secretary, and Governor. To some extent, this is an added level of review to a process with numerous layers of review. However, the value provided by the MWAC is specific to the purpose of the Vermont Duck Stamp fund and to the interests of waterfowl hunters. Based on the unique perspective that this committee brings to the unique projects supported by this funding source, they provide a type of input that isn't provided by others.

8. Does the board or commission's enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?

- Yes.

9. Provide a list of the board and commission's last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

- The MWAC does not have spending authority. They serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner of the VFWD and are not compensated for their participation.

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

- No, the MWAC is not obligated to prepare and provide any reports. The VFWD provides administrative support for the MWAC and manages all aspects of the Vermont Duck Stamp fund.

11. How would you measure the performance of the board or commission?

- VFWD measures the performance of the MWAC by the value they add to the deliberations and decisions on the use of the Vermont Duck Stamp fund and wetland conservation. More specifically, VFWD measures the performance of

the committee based on level of participation and demonstrated commitment to and understanding of the history and purpose of the Vermont Duck Stamp program.