



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road | Westborough, MA 01581
MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

Director: Jack Buckley

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: George Darey/Chairman, Michael Roche/Secretary, Bonita Booth, Ernest W. Foster IV, Dr. Joseph Larson, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Fred Winthrop, MaryLee King/Deputy Commissioner/DFG, Jack Buckley/Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Laura Conlee/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Marion Larson/Assistant Director/Public Affairs, Craig MacDonnell/ Chief/Wildlife Lands, Eve Schlüter/Chief/Regulatory Review, Bill Davis/Central Wildlife District Manager, James Burnham/Regulations Specialist, Pam Landry/Conservation Education, Capt. Anthony Abdal-Kabir/OLE; PUBLIC: Dave Morin, John Kellstrand, Deborah Gewertz, Frederick Errington.

DATE: August 23, 2016

LOCATION: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Field Headquarters
Westborough, Massachusetts

Chairman Darey opened the August meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 11:24 A.M.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Larson to accept the minutes from the July 2016 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Winthrop. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Comments

The Chairman welcomed the visitors to the meeting and apologized for the rather late start.

Beginning on the lighter side, Chairman Darey reported that he had received a call from a neighbor that there was a bear in his house. He was out walking at the time, so it took some time to get back to the house. The neighbor called the police and banged some pots. The bear left, having broken open a trash bag in the house. The Chairman ended up in the *Berkshire Eagle* under a headline, complete with photos.

In a more serious vein, the Chairman reported that, in his neighborhood, this bear is causing a lot of problems, with people feeding the bear directly, and indirectly, through garbage left outside. He asked the Director for a staff recommendation, and whether the agency should ask for legislation, given that MassWildlife has done what it can with its regulations.

The Chairman also expressed concern about the Housatonic River clean-up, noting that most of the affected land is under the DFW in the Housatonic WMA.

Deputy Commissioner's Comments

Deputy Commissioner King reported that the Commissioner Peterson was in Pittsfield participating in a MassWildlife fishing event. She reported that the capital budget for land should be announced in the next month, noting that EEA has agreed to the DFG/MassWildlife vetting process, so she doesn't expect the agency will have any trouble obtaining the land monies.

The Deputy Commissioner also reported that she is working to get EEA to set up a meeting with the Chairman and Dr. Larson to meeting with Senator Gobi regarding the timber rattlesnake working group.

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In closing, Deputy Commissioner King reported that there will be major cuts in the state's budget, but the governor and the secretary understand that none will be taken by MassWildlife, given that our funds come from sportsmen and sportswomen, with nothing from the General Fund.

Director's Comments

Director Buckley reported that Tom Decker of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was in Westborough conducting a Trapping Matters workshop, and that the Director took that opportunity to have Mr. Decker present The Wildlife Society's achievement award to retired *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine editor Pete Mirick. Staff joined in for the presentation, which was greatly appreciated by Mr. Mirick.

The Director also reported with regret that Assistant Director for Wildlife Laura Conlee had informed him that she was resigning her position, at a time to be determined within the next several months. He stated that Assistant Director Conlee would be sorely missed.

Director Buckley reported that the planned pollinator event reported previously would take place the following day at the Route 3 rest stop in Plymouth. The Director had secured funds to plant wildflowers to benefit native pollinators in the joint project with MassHighway. The Director also reported that the pipeline road at the McLaughlin Hatchery was completed, and that the work was moving into the hatchery itself. In the same vein, he reported that the Westborough storage facility was almost done, with the paving of the parking lot due to be accomplished the following week.

The Director also reported that the Board would find emails in their meeting packets regarding beaver in Boxford, noting that the writer had requested to speak to the Board at the next meeting.

Looking ahead to the following month, the Director suggested that the Board might like to take a tour of the former Cronin National Salmon Station, which is now the Richard Cronin Aquatic Resource Center, and in which MassWildlife has undertaken a collaborative project with the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the USFWS to support freshwater research.

Director Buckley also reported that, relative to the Great Thicket, he was in discussions with USFWS Region 5 Refuge Chief Scott Kahan, and stated that it has become clear that the two agencies need a broader conversation about resource management, including hunting and fishing access and implementation of the state ESA. He noted that how MassWildlife interacts with refuges is the bigger issue that needs to be addressed; it is not just about the Great Thicket proposal.

Law Enforcement Comments

Captain Anthony Abdal-Kabir attended the meeting representing the OLE. He reported that there is an OLE entrance exam scheduled on September 15, 2016, with over 500 applicants, so there is a lot of interest. He also reported that the Director of OLE had attended the Junior Conservation Camp graduation, and that, for the Boating safety component of the camp, they had a 95% passing rate. Captain Abdal-Kabir reported that the state's tenth boating fatality of the year had occurred recently, noting that that's the 10-year average, so very high. The boats involved in 50% of them were non-powered boats and carried adult males. He also reported that the state had had its fourth OHV fatality earlier in the month.

Captain Abdal-Kabir reported that the Blue Hills meeting was well attended, and was a more well-balanced meeting than in the past, with both supporters and opponents in attendance and giving comments.

The Captain also reported on a joint operation OLE was conducting with the State of Montana and the USFWS; perpetrators living in Massachusetts were committing Lacey Act violations in Montana, and the joint operation had identified targets in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

Referring to the Chairman's bear adventure, he also stated that OLE would like to entertain a review process of Ch. 131 in cooperation with MassWildlife. He stated that OLE was interested in looking at both Ch. 131 and the regulations, especially in light of the Question 1 changes, and that this was partly in response to the elevated levels of large-animal-damage reports and LART incidents. He reported that the OLE will be presenting its ideas and proposed changes through its Director's office to MassWildlife's Director's office.

The Chairman asked for projections on reaching full staffing levels; the Captain stated that he does not anticipate reaching those levels anytime soon; at this point, the OLE is trying to keep up with retirement attrition (roughly five per year), so it is difficult to predict when the agency could hope to return to full operational levels.

Dr. Larson moved that MassWildlife engage in a review process in cooperation with the OLE to examine bear-hunting laws and regulations; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

Assistant Director McCarthy reported that staff had two new employees to recommend to the Board:

Employee	Position	Location
Ian Sypek	Central District Wildlife Technician Wildlife Technician II	West Boylston
David Wattles	Furbearer and Black Bear Project Leader Game Biologist IV	Westborough

Mr. Roche moved acceptance of the Personnel Report as presented; Ms. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

VOTE: Wildlife Lands and Trails Policy (Craig MacDonnell)

After a few very brief remarks from Director Buckley, Chief MacDonnell stated that, having been charged with making certain the District managers were in agreement with the language in the policy, Chief MacDonnell reported that the District Managers were on board with the language as presented, and had actually originated much of it. He offered to respond to any questions or comments. There being none, Dr. Larson moved that the Board approve the policies as proposed; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; it was approved unanimously.

The Chairman stated that he had had concerns relative to specific properties in the Berkshires. He reported that he has met with the District Manager and Wildlife Manager and has had all his concerns met.

Review of MassWildlife's Education Programs (Pam Landry)

Education Coordinator Pam Landry outlined her varied and extensive history with the agency, for a total of 19 years.

She reported in details about each of the programs she coordinates, including Project WILD, which includes Terrestrial WILD, Aquatic WILD, Growing Up WILD: Exploring Nature with Young Children, and Flying WILD; the Junior Duck Stamp art-science-conservation program ("*Connecting Youth with Nature Through Science and Art*"); the Envirothon, North America's leading program for high-school-aged environmental-civic engagement; and the many different kinds of customized wildlife presentations she makes to interested groups in response to requests for programs. Ms. Landry listed the many benefits of MassWildlife's education programs, and then gave the Board a detailed look at each program's history; unique features; levels of scholastic rigor; levels of involvement, for students, teachers, and/or facilitators; and impact nation-wide.

After a brief discussion, Chairman Darey thanked Ms. Landry for her informative presentation.

Central Wildlife District Activities (Bill Davis)

Central Wildlife District Manager Bill Davis reported to the Board in detail on activities, events, and incidents in his district in recent months, including dam repairs at two sites, large-animal-response calls, bald eagle banding and rehabilitation, stream survey work in conjunction with Westborough, land acquisition and stewardship, mowing and signage activities, event support at the Field Headquarters, and infrastructure improvements at the District office.

After a brief discussion, the Chairman thanked Mr. Davis for his interesting and informative presentation.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson reported that the NHESAC did not meet in August, as is usual.

Set Meeting Date

Board members confirmed the September meeting, on Tuesday, September 6, 2016, at 1:00 P.M., at a location to be determined by staff in the Connecticut River Valley, to be convenient to the Cronin Aquatic Resource Center in Sunderland.

Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo, Secretary Roche, and Ms. Booth reported that they had no comments.

Mr. Foster reported that he had attended the second Blue Hills meeting. He stated that it was held at a great venue, and that he thought agency staff did a great job, offering ample opportunities for the public to ask questions and make comments about plan. He stated that he was very impressed.

Mr. Winthrop reported that his district was disappointed in the Board's efforts toward increased moisture, since there had been no rain since the previous meeting.

Dr. Larson observed that the hundredth anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act had been on August 16.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Larson to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Van Roo seconded; the meeting was adjourned unanimously at 1:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Roche
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its MONTH meeting packets

August Agenda

Draft July meeting minutes for review

Personnel Report

AFWA publication handout, "North American Conservation Education Strategy"

Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp program poster and exhibition schedule.

Draft policies for final review: Wildlife Lands and Walking Trails

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2016)

Two emails from Elaine Decoulos RE "Beavers in Stiles Pond," August 23, 2016