



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
April 1, 2011  
Quinsigamond State Park, Worcester, MA

Meeting Minutes

**Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:** *Chairman, Henry Lee, Elisa Campbell, Frank Frey, Whitney Hatch, Laura Johnson, and James Van Dyke* *Excused:* Julian Agyeman, Christina Crowley, and Michael Dutton

**DCR Staff in Attendance:** *Commissioner Ed Lambert, Andy Backman, Lisa Bishop, Gary Briere, Paul Cavanaugh, Peter Church, Stuart Conner, Conrad Crawford, Priscilla Geigis, Paul Jahnige, Evelyn Jimenez, Joe Orfant, Jason Silva, Kevin Whalen*

**Public Attendees:** Ellen Arnold, Friend of Upton State Park - Bill Boles, NEMBA – Jan Geary, Friends of Blue Hills – Robert Geary, Blue Hills – Scott Hunter, Friends of the Mt. Holyoke Range - Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park – Mike Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park – Walter Kittredge, Harvard University – Agnita Knott, Bay State Trail Riders & Friends of Upton State Park – A. Richard Miller, Friends of Cochituate State Park – Jill Miller, Friends of Cochituate State Park – Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon - Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells - Joan Shanahan, Friends of Upton State Park Marilyn Wilson, Citizen - Sylvia Salas, The Esplanade Association - Michael Toomey, Citizen - Steve Warren, Friends of Whitehall/Friends of Upton State Park

**Attachments:** Draft Volunteer Policy Presentation

**Chairman Henry Lee called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.**

**Commissioner's Report –Commissioner Ed Lambert**

**Commissioner Lambert informed the Council on/of the following matters:**

- Commissioner Lambert informed the Council that any questions, remarks, updates, advice and/or feed-back is most welcomed during his remarks. Remarks will be given by prioritization and DCR's most pressing issues.
- Approximately nine million sewer disks from the Town of Hooksett, NH sewer treatment plant were released into the waterways and traveled 40 miles down the Merrimac into the Massachusetts beaches. DEP was involved and determined that the disks had no risk of the presence of bacteria on them; DCR mobilized over 100 staff members to facilitate a clean-up at our beaches from the North to the South shore.
- Massachusetts experienced its first Red Flag warning issued by DCR this past Monday.
- DCR's efforts continue on eradication of the Asian Longhorned Beetle in both Worcester and Boston. USDA has requested EPA's permission to use chemical treatments to 3200 trees in Boston, which is more contained than Worcester. DCR is taking public comments and will begin treatment in June.
- In response to Chairman Lee's request about the Housatonic River and whether or not the Environmental agencies were involved, Secretary Sullivan (DCR), Commissioner Kimmell (DEP), and Commissioner Griffin (DFW) signed a letter to EPA suggesting that any remedy relative to PCB removal focus on that which is necessary to the public health and avoiding any of the intrusive and otherwise ecology damages work that could take place there.
- The current plan relative to the \$1.5m reduction in operations (House 1), presents DCR to continue to unstaff two state parks, two state forests and three ponds. Service changes will include two unstaffed beaches and four beaches with shorter seasons, one state park closed and one unstaffed, one pool closed in Fitchburg, six pools with a shorter season, three wading pools open on weekends with a shorter season and one spray deck with no lifeguard service. DCR is working with DEP that has an inclusion in the DEP line item of revenues that would come from the bottle bill; however it is unclear whether the legislature will choose to act upon that, and, if it does, whether the funds would go only to the environmental secretariat or across other agencies as well.

- Peter Church was announced as our Director of Forest Stewardship this past week. Peter will oversee our conservation of the agency's 300,000 acres of forest land and the ALB eradication program along with many other important tasks.
- DCR held seven public meetings on the Landscape Designation - Draft Selection Criteria and Management Guidelines. With assistance from the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, a second round of public meetings will be scheduled for May and June.
- The Middlesex Fells process has completed seven meetings including workshops. A draft RMP will be provided in May with a formal public comment period to follow.
- The Walden Pond RMP process is in its early stages; a public meeting was held on March 24 to discuss the existing conditions.
- The Horseneck Beach RMP is in its final week of internal review and it is anticipated that it will be provided to the public in May with a 30 day public comment period to follow.
- Myles Standish draft RMP is currently being reviewed by the planning team with a release in May.
- In order to make it a single park system, DCR has submitted, through the Secretariat, language that requests the state to eliminate the distinction relative to Urban and State Parks. This goal is included in an outside section of House 1.
- We have testified in support on the following bills: 1) Pacheco Bill on Dam Safety that would create a \$20m revolving fund that will help those individuals who own dams remove them and also address other dam issues. 2) Downing Bill on Invasive Species to protect our lakes and ponds.
- DCR will be having its Supervisor's Academy: re-think, re-tool and re-commit.
- April 16 is Governor Patrick's Park Serve Day with over 50 parks participating and an anticipation of many volunteers to join in with clean-up projects.
- On April 11, Commissioners Griffin (DFW) and Lambert will be at the Quabbin Reservoir participating in the trout fish stocking.
- DCR is responsible for overseeing 1600 Massachusetts dams with only 3 ½ engineers monitoring them. Many are in bad shape and some could potentially cause a public safety issue. Recently, we have referred two dams (Russels Pond Dam – Kingston and Bell Aire Dam – Pittsfield) to the Attorney General's office seeking assistance from these private dam owners that have refused to repair their high hazard dams. DCR's Office of Dam Safety is not allowed to repair these dams; we do have the authority under Legislation to breach the dam or make emergency repairs if a dam becomes an emanate threat.
  - Chairman Lee believes it is not tenable over the long term to only have 3 ½ engineers and 1600 dams. He suggested to the Council to have a session or a presentation on dam policy going forward.
- Public comments will continue on the Volunteer Policy; DCR does not want to make it harder for people to volunteer.
- DCR is presently trying to carve any amount from our capital budget to work with the CCC buildings and to preserve our historical assets. We are also trying to put money into the CCC buildings on a regular basis as opposed to reacting to incidents when they happen.

### **Committee Updates**

#### ***Policy and Planning Committee***

##### ***Resource Management Planning – Councilor Laura Johnson***

- Councilor Johnson informed the Council that she does enjoy receiving monthly updates in the Commissioners report.
- A brief policy meeting was held at the Armory before this meeting to get an update on the final Blue Hills RMP.
- The Policy Committee recommends to the Council to approve the Blue Hills RMP. Last month it was suggested to delay the RMP until DCR staff met with the Friends of Blue Hills. The FOBH wrote a letter to Chairman Lee expressing their satisfaction with DCR staff, "they had a terrific meeting". The Policy Committee suggests that for some RMP's, a meeting of closure before an approval is a good idea.
- In February 2007, the Council voted to conditionally approve a DCR Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy. The approval was for 6 months conditioned "on the delivery and approval by the Council of a complete OHV program including an enforcement plan that addresses impacts of

unauthorized uses and a plan for funding”. In addition RMPs were to have been completed for properties with designated OHV use by 2010, which has not happened. The Council has, to some extent, been out of compliance with its own approvals and considerations on this issue. The Council has requested from DCR a full report about the set of issues around OHV’s, including new issues arising from the Department of Justice requirements around accessibility. In the interim, the Land Designation process has become part of this, and the Council needs to assess what progress has been made and what gaps still remain and determine what needs to be revised or change the Council votes accordingly. In addition, there was a requirement in the legislation that this Council meet twice a year with Fish and Game. This is one of the things that the Council could cooperate on for issues around OHV use and enforcement.

- The Council should receive this report no later than October and have it on our agenda.
- The Council acknowledges Paul Jahnige for the progress, great work and historical knowledge on the Middlesex Fells RMP. Many tough choices will be made when this RMP comes to the Council for approval.
- Non-motorized bike users are expressing their concerns that their issues are not being recognized in the RMP’s. Chairman Lee would like the committee to research and determine if these matters should be incorporated into RMP’s. Councilor Johnson expressed concern about the Committee’s capacity to address that issue.
  - A motion was made by Councilor Laura Johnson, seconded by Elisa Campbell to approve the Blue Hills RMP. All in favor, motion carried.

#### ***Finance Committee, Whitney Hatch***

##### ***Councilor Whitney Hatch informed the Council on/of the following matters:***

- The committee drafted a letter to the Governor and the House Ways and Means stating that DCR will operate a bare minimum of services if the budget remains at \$75m and will only be able to maintain the same services as last year. A second recommendation for the letter would be to remove the State House Rangers from DCR’s budget; the idea would be to allow DCR to increase the budget by \$700k, however the concern was it could have the reverse effect.
  - The Council held a lengthy discussion concerning the budget
- A unanimous vote by the Council was taken to accept the letter with changed wording to keep both suggestions but also to tone down the language about the State House Rangers so it won’t be as provocative.

#### **Special Business**

##### ***DCR Draft Volunteer Policy- Gary Briere, Chief, Bureau of Recreation***

- Gary Briere presented a brief overview of DCR’s Draft Volunteer Policy that was released for public comment in early March. The draft policy establishes new communication, approval and reporting procedures for volunteer activities. Volunteers receive liability protection from the Commonwealth when operating under the new policy. The public comment period on the draft policy had closed the day before the Stewardship Council meeting. Based on preliminary review of the comments, Gary shared some of the common concerns that had been emerging from volunteers and groups. These included: concerns that the policy seems overly bureaucratic and time consuming; concerns about limits on the use of power equipment; and concerns about the cost of required insurance. There was a general discussion about the draft policy and whether it appropriately encouraged volunteerism and citizen stewardship. Commissioner Lambert reiterated the agency’s goal to support volunteerism on DCR properties. DCR will be reviewing all comments and evaluating the draft policy to address public concerns. (See attached Volunteer Policy presentation)

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor Frank Frey to accept the February, 2011 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.
- Amendments made to the March minutes include:
  - Under the Policy and Planning Committee Updates, changing the word “not” to “delay” the vote of the approval of the Blue Hills RMP.
  - Correcting the proper name “Elisa” under Motion to Adjourn.

- Motion by Councilor Frank Frey, seconded by Councilor Jim Van Dyke to accept the March, 2011 minutes with accepted amendments. All in favor, motion carried.

### **New Business**

- No New Business

### **Public Comment**

#### **The following constituents expressed their opinions/issues/matters to the Council:**

*Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon*

- Thanked DCR for their work regarding the RMP process and the Policy committee for all their work.

*Joan Shanahan, Friends of Upton State Park*

- Expressed her displeasure at DCR's inability to act rapidly to protect the roof (now fallen) of the CCC building at Upton State Park.

*Agnita Knott, Bay State Trail Riders & Friends of Upton State Park*

- Stated that Upton State Park has many riders, and volunteers who enjoy the facilities to help preserve Upton State Park.

*Ellen Arnold, Friends of Upton State Park*

- She asked DCR what are the short and long term preservation priorities of Upton State Park, and if DCR is going to follow through in advertising the Historic Curatorship Program in the spring as planned. Why doesn't the accident to the barn at Upton State Park fall in the category of an anticipated emergency response plan? Why didn't DCR respond promptly after a letter warning of too much snow was sent to the Commissioner in mid February? As an FYI, Upton State Park has become, through legislation, a Historic Curatorship program.

*Silva Salas, The Esplanade Association*

- Thanked DCR for allocating funds to construct a new dock at the Community Dock on the Esplanade. She is glad the Volunteer Policy that is being reviewed; the Esplanade has over 700 volunteers to help maintain its beauty. She also commented on the language of the Volunteer Policy being a bit confusing and would like to pass it along to our General Counsel.

*Mike Ryan, Friends of the Middlesex Fells*

- The FOMF believes the Fells will change from a reservation to an urban recreation park and they have concerns that the RMP does not understand the issues.

*Walter Kittredge, Harvard University*

- He believes a Patch Reserve Proposal should be completed during an RMP process.

*Bill Boles, NEMBA*

- A letter of support from the Friends of Blue Hills in support of their RMP was read. He is also glad to hear that the Volunteer Policy is not "set in stone"; the insurance aspect of the policy must be revisited. He also expressed his concern over the Fells RMP; that goals can only be achieved if we all share some stewardship, despite the fact that we disagree about certain issues.

*Jan Geary, Friends of Blue Hills*

- She expressed her concern that mountain bike riding is a concern at both the Blue Hills and the Middlesex Fells; it has already caused a fatality.

*Robert Geary, Friends of the Blue Hills*

- He is also very concerned about mountain biking at the Blue Hills for safety reasons.

*Richard Miller, Friends of Cochituate State Park*

- Dick expressed his opinion that he does not believe that a volunteer policy should make volunteers pay for their services. He also feels that permits to use the park, especially after maintaining the cleanliness of the park, is ridiculous. In addition, the water chestnuts in Lake Cochituate have become uncontrollable. Finally, a new waterworks museum will have a grand opening to experience what Lack Cochituate is all about.

*Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park*

- She is requesting that the Council focus to protect rare species through the patch reserves process and to protect the sensitive areas from either management or recreation. Her questions to the Council are did either of the RMP's include any designation of a Patch Reserve; if not who does designate them and when are they designated and how can we control any potential damage to a

worthy patch reserve. When and how will patch reserve be designated and are they part of the RMP process?

*Scott Hunter, Friends of the Mt. Holyoke Range*

- In regards to the Volunteers policy; the question is to explain the difference between 100 volunteer cleaning a beach on Park Serve Day versus a couple of people cleaning snow to clear a roof?
  - Commissioner Lambert explained that DCR had a contract for clearing the snow off the roof but unfortunately not in time. And that, while anyone, including the Commissioner, can walk on a beach and look for small sewer disks, no one wants the Commissioner and similar volunteers on a roof.

#### **Closing Comment**

- No Closing Comments

#### **Meeting Schedule**

- Next meeting will be held Friday, May 6 at the Education Center at Chickatawbut Hill, Milton.

***Motion to adjourn by Councilor Whitney Hatch, seconded by Councilor Laura Johnson at 3:35 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.***