



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
September 9, 2011  
Borderland State Park, North Easton, MA

Meeting Minutes

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

**DCR Staff in Attendance:** *Commissioner Ed Lambert, Andy Backman, Jim Baecker, Lisa Bishop, Paul Cavanaugh, Stuart Conner, Conrad Crawford, Don Matinzi, Jack Murray, Joe Rotondo, Jason Silva*

**Public Attendees:** Robert Bendt, Friends of Borderland State Park - Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck/NEMBA - James McCaffrey, Sierra Club – Jill Mallery, Friends of Borderland State Park - A. Richard Miller, Friends of Cochituate State Park - Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon – Norma Urban, Friends of Borderland State Park

**Attachments:** Myles Standish and Horseneck Beach RMP Presentation, Council Oversight Document, RMP Review and Approval

**Chairman Henry Lee called the meeting to order at 1:14 p.m.**

*Chairman Lee called a moment of silence for our “First Responders of 9/11”*

**Commissioner’s Report –Commissioner Ed Lambert**

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

- In celebration of Borderland State Park and Ames Mansion 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Friends of Borderland will host an event at the Ames Mansion on September 17.
- Thank you to staff for a great 2011 end of the summer season.
- Winter recall season began in mid-August; we offered 35 positions, however we had 48 returning employees who exercised their rights through the recall process.
- The tornado clean-up is ongoing at Robinson State Park and Brimfield State Forest. Scope of Services for clean-up was issued; 75% of the clean-up costs are FEMA reimbursable.
- Approximately 100 trees were destroyed during the July storm in Western MA that affected Chicopee State Park; DCR staff conducted the clean-up.
- Tropical Storm Irene had the most significant impact on Mohawk State Forest; given the damage to this area, DCR closed the campground at Mohawk for the remainder of the camping season. In addition, DCR’s Lake Dennison Recreation area has been closed for the remainder of the season due to excessive flooding concerns.
- Following Tropical Storm Irene, the Office of Dam Safety conducted inspections in Western MA in an effort to conduct visual inspections of the 62 High Hazard dams. No serious structural damage was reported. There are approximately 1600 private and public dams in the State.
- The Fall River incident is still under investigation with the DA’s office; DCR has had resignations and is in the process of changing and upholding policies.
- Laurel Lake is the only water body in the State containing the highly invasive Zebra Mussels. In an effort to keep boats clean from the organism, in early August, DCR’s Lakes and Ponds Program opened the State’s first on-site boat decontamination station at the Laurel Lake boat ramp in Lee. All equipment was purchased through a Federal Grant awarded to DCR.
- DCR filed a Tiger Grant for the Neponset Trail.
- Public comment closed on August 26 for the Landscape Designation Process; staff is currently in the process of reviewing the content of these comments.
- DCR Shawnee-Crowell State Forest celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on August 20.
- The DCR Twining Pond Acquisition Celebration in Tolland was postponed due to inclement weather.
- The DCR Middlesex Fells RMP was initiated in late January 2011; since then DCR has had six public workshops and builds on a year-long Trail System Planning Process. This included nine public

meetings as well as stakeholder meetings. The final public meeting will take place on September 16 to present the draft RMP with a 60-day comment period.

#### **Comments:**

- Councilor Campbell, confirmed by Commissioner Lambert, noted that several facilities have damage to roads and campgrounds.
- Commissioner Lambert informed Chairman Lee, and the Councilors, that monies for emergency response costs are covered between FEMA, pre-declarations and the moving around monies in our accounts.
- Councilor Michael Dutton asked whether the agency is decommissioning any dams or whether the agency is ordering private dam owners to decommission dams.
  - Commissioner Lambert responded that the agency has significantly increased issuance of dam safety orders. Oftentimes, dams are inherited but owners who do not have resources to maintain them, though property owners who benefit from a dam can sometimes form a water district. Commissioner has talked with Commissioner Griffin and Commissioner Kimmel about looking at dams that no longer serve their original purpose to see if they can be breached. The Legislature is also looking to create a \$20 million fund to help facilitate repair or removal.
- Commissioner Lambert thanked the Stewardship Council, Partners, and Friend Groups for their advocacy for DCR funding.

#### **BUDGET:**

- | <u>YEAR</u> | <u>ANNUAL BUDGET</u>                                       |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2009        | \$101m (deduct 9c \$92m)                                   |
| 2010        | \$82m (deduct 9c \$78m)                                    |
| 2011        | \$70.6m (additional supp \$72.8m)                          |
| 2012        | \$71.5m (deduct \$1.3m in collective bargaining increases) |

Total cut of 29.3% since 2009  
\$2.6m less in operations for 2012
- DCR lost 170 full time positions (20%).
- DCR cap revenue (re-appropriated) is \$8.4m.
  - Money in these accounts cannot exceed the capped amount even though more has been collected; however if we receive less than the cap amount, only the amount collected is retained/re-appropriated.
  - DCR has had a 75% impact on these reductions: ¾ facilities impacted, 12 facilities unstaffed, and facilities, including historical, are revolving into seasonal facilities. DCR continues to use ARRA monies to avoid layoffs in 2012, DCR cannot back fill positions and the departments are understaffed, which affects the quality and safety of these changes.
  - A lengthy discussion was held concerning various options/opinions "how to create revenue".
  - Between FY07 and FY11, DCR has expended \$470m in capital improvements, with an additional \$86.7m in FY12.

#### **Committee Updates**

##### ***Policy and Planning Committee, Councilor Elisa Campbell***

*Councilor Elisa Campbell informed the Council on/of the following matters:*

- The Committee has not recently met; however the Policy Committee is waiting on draft RMPs for review. The tentative schedule is as follows:
  - Middlesex Fells and Horseneck Beach – November, 2011
  - Myles Standish and For Phoenix – December , 2011
  - Walden Pond State Reservation – February, 2012
  - Pittsfield State Forest, Neponset River, Harold Parker State Forest, Charles River Basin, Holyoke Range and Great Brook Farm State Park - 2012

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

*Please see Commissioner's Report for the Finance Report.*

### ***Future Role of the Stewardship Council Committee, Councilor Michael Dutton***

*Councilor Dutton informed the Council on/of the following matters:*

- Councilor Dutton forwarded the attached “Council Oversight Document” to the Councilors; after a brief description of the document, a motion was made by the Chair to table further discussions and requested from the Councilors their thoughts that will be introduced at the next Stewardship Council meeting. (See attached Council Oversight Document)

### **Special Business**

#### ***Status Update on the Myles Standish Resource Management Plan- Jim Baecker Resource Management Planner (See attached MSSF Presentation)***

- Jim Baecker provided an update on the preparation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Myles Standish Planning Unit, which includes Myles Standish State Forest (12,404 acres) and two Conservation Restrictions (1,533 acres). Over the past year, DCR held three public meetings and participated in five public workshops sponsored by the Friends of Myles Standish State Forest to discuss Forest Management issues. A draft RMP was released on July 14<sup>th</sup> with public comments due September 15<sup>th</sup>. A final draft is scheduled to be provided to the Stewardship Council in December, 2011. The presentation also included a proposed management principle and goals to guide future management of the Forest.

#### ***Status Update on the Horseneck Beach Resource Management Plan – Paul Cavanagh, Resource Management Planner (See attached HBSR Presentation)***

- Paul Cavanagh provided an update on the preparation of a Resource Management Plan for the Horseneck Planning Unit, which includes Horseneck Beach State Reservation (816 acres), Demarest Lloyd Memorial State Park (220 acres), one Agricultural Preservation Restriction (88 acres), and five Conservation Restrictions (431 acres, total). The presentation addressed the following three aspects of the plan: timeline, management principle, and management goals. The project’s timeline has been adjusted to accommodate recent staffing changes; it is anticipated that the draft RMP will be released to the public in late November or early October and provided to the Stewardship Council at the beginning of 2012.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor James Van Dyke to accept the June, 2011 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.
- *Amendment to the July, 2011 minutes: Remove Councilor Crowley from the “in attendance” to the “excused” attendance.* Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor Jim Van Dyke to accept the July, 2011 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

### **New Business**

- Chairman Henry Lee presented to the Council the attached “RMP Review and Approval Process”. Councilor Campbell noted to the Council that she believes the Councilors should not over-ride DCR staff that has specific education in areas of expertise when approving RMPs. (See attachment)
- Chairman Henry Lee presented to the Council the attached “RMP Guidelines” for review. After reviewing the guidelines, Chairman Lee questioned the Council “if any key criteria were left out of the decision guidelines”. After a lengthy discussion, the following the Councilors would like to address the following: (See attachment)
  - RMPs are written with guidelines/goals that should be followed, however due to budget constraints, the agency cannot fulfill these goals. A new guideline should be included stating that once resources become available, the agency will fulfill that obligation. Unrealistic expectations must be made clear.
  - The Stewardship Councilors agree that RMPs are a good opportunity to learn about the property and that the guidelines submitted from Chairman Lee were adequate.

- Chairman Lee proposed to the Council that he will put the guidelines into a question form and he requested that the Councilors, DCR and the public to forward their thoughts to him.

### **Public Comment**

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

#### ***Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck/NEMBA***

- Mr. Boles complimented Commissioner Lambert closing the parks prior to Hurricane Irene. DCR staff from the Southeast worked endlessly clearing dead falls before electricity was restored.

#### ***James McCaffrey, Sierra Club***

- Thanked Commissioner Lambert for a very thorough budget update.
- His agency (Sierra Club) would very much like to add input to the Stewardship Council Oversight Document.
- He is very appreciative of the work being done regarding the RMP Process and he looks forward to sending his comments.
  - Chairman Lee thanked Mr. McCaffrey for his offer of input into both the RMP Review and Process and the creation of the Council Oversight Document.

#### ***Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon***

- A letter with comments was submitted to DCR regarding the planning of the framework to the Landscape Designation Plan. Mass Audubon believes there is an inconsistency to the approval of the plan and there is a lack of strong scientific justification.
- She also looks forward to submitting comments regarding the RMP Review and Process.
- She is concerned about whether DCR has the resources to manage the Management Plans and what about the properties that do not have Management Plans; she suggests that DCR develop a policy on what will and won't the agency do in terms of major new things without resources.
  - Councilor Campbell noted we need to strategize how to get people to stop feeling entitled to these lands and feeling they can do what they want. We need to figure a strategy to enforce policy and regulations.

### **Closing Comment**

- No Closing Comments

### **Meeting Schedule**

- Next meeting will be held Friday, October 7 at Mt. Greylock Visitors Center in Lanesborough.

*Motion to adjourn by Councilor Michael Dutton, seconded by Councilor Elisa Campbell at 3:25 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.*