



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
August 7, 2008
Spectacle Island, Boston, Ma

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chair, Dick Cross; Councilors, Henry Lee, Michael Dutton, John Natoli, Laura Johnson, Dan Wolf and Whitney Hatch.

Public Attendees: Steve Marcus, Friends of Boston Harbor Islands; Steve Olanoff, Friends of the Blue Hills; Bill Hocking, Borderland Advisory Council; James McCaffrey, Sierra Club; Alex Oster, Sierra Club; Jess Bergman, Sierra Club; A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee; Jill A. Miller, Natick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Council; Janet Hankel, Southwest Corridor Park; Cynthia P. Hartdegen, Downtown Arboretum Project; Kathie Bruwninger, Feeding Hills; Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park; Andy Finton, The Nature Conservancy; Mike Ryan, Friends of Fells; Steve Kaiser, Massachusetts Stewardship Initiative.

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Stephanie Cooper, Jeff Daley, Conrad Crawford, Patti Vantine, Gary Davis, Suzanne Wilson, Gary Briere, Paul Cavanaugh, Ken Foley, Andy Backman, Marcelle Valentin, and Joe Rotondo.

I. Call To Order (1:00 p.m.), Chair Cross

- a. Chairman Cross greeted the public and remainder of council. Gave overview of the agenda.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Rick Sullivan

- a. Commissioner Sullivan gave updates on the Accelerated Bridge program, Longfellow Bridge, Storrow Drive repairs, Bowker Ramp repairs, deployed firefighters, community events, pool openings and Nickerson State Park improvements.
- i. **Accelerated Bridge Program** – On August 4th Commissioner Sullivan joined Governor Deval Patrick, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles, Secretary of Transportation and Public Works Bernard Cohen, and others at a bill-signing ceremony marking the approval of a bridge bond bill that will accelerate the repair and replacement of approximately 250 to 300 of the Commonwealth's most neglected and structurally-deficient Massachusetts bridges.
 - ii. **Longfellow Bridge** – On June 28, the inside lanes in both directions on Longfellow Bridge have been closed to all traffic, and all large trucks weighing 20 tons or more have been entirely prohibited from the structure and detoured to alternate routes in Boston and Cambridge. Cars, buses, and light trucks continue traveling on the outside lanes of the bridge and the MBTA at 10 mph. Hopeful by the end of summer to lift restriction.
 - iii. **Storrow Drive Tunnel Interim Repairs** - On July 11th, DCR began the interim repairs to the Storrow Drive Tunnel. The interim repair project is being carried out by SPS New England of Salisbury. Changes in times and traffic patterns will be announced. DCR continues to provide regular updates to the community through our Charles River Basin list serve. To subscribe for email updates on DCR projects in this area, visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/subscribe.htm>.
 - iv. **Bowker Ramp H Repairs** - By the end of the week a floating walkway, fully ADA compliant, will accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists traffic while repairs are underway. Phase I demolition and the closing of the Beacon Street entrance is expected

to begin on Tuesday, August 12, weather permitting. DCR has posted drawings showing the plan for traffic management during ramp closures, on its website, and will be providing advance notice of traffic detours through a media advisory and stakeholder communication.

- v. **Firefighters** – On July 25, DCR deployed 20 state and municipal firefighters to northern California to help fight fires that have been raging over hundreds of thousands of acres in the state of California in the last several weeks. The crew is currently part of a nearly 800-person crew assigned to the Panther Fire in the Klamath National Forest.
- vi. **Community Events** - Last 6 weeks had 8 community events celebrating DCR’s mission of investing in our parks and properties to enhance the visitors overall experience.
 - Three DCR pool openings in the cities of Attleboro, Chelsea and Brockton which were closed for five years. Piloting swim program in the communities.
 - Dedication of Revere Beach Reservation Pavilions: DCR celebrated the completion of the Doris Pavilions on Revere Beach. Dedication plaques were unveiled that named both pavilions for Senator Francis D. Doris. Over 100 persons were in attendance and the Doris Family expressed their appreciation to DCR staff for their support.
 - DCR’s Horseneck Beach Rehabilitation Project (Phase I) Ribbon-Cutting Event: Recognizing the completion of two new bathhouses, two dune-crossing boardwalks, and major utilities, representing Phase I of a multi-year major capital improvements project at DCR’s Horseneck State Beach Reservation. DCR is working on plans for Phase 2 of the rehabilitation, which will include a new beach services building.
 - DCR’s Nickerson State Park Improvements: on July 25th DCR had the park improvements and campgrounds re-opening event. Acknowledged the completion of \$2.4 million in water and electrical system improvements at the facility, as well as \$600,000 in improvements to 12 comfort stations in the campground areas. We also highlighted the improvement to the park’s road systems, the repair of the erosion damage, and the removal of hazardous trees. Nickerson’s campground officially re-opened, joining areas 1-5, which opened seasonally for camping on June 13.
 - DCR’s Lynn and Nahant Beach Interpretive Signage: Marking the completion of four interpretive signs and two welcome waysides, which were funded through the DCR Partnerships Matching Funds Program.
 - DCR’s Watson Pond State Park Improvements: Held a ribbon-cutting event at DCR’s Watson Pond State Park in Taunton to celebrate the latest park improvements and completion of the Phase II beach restoration projects. The improvements include a new playground, lifeguard stands, picnic tables, pedestal grills, and beaches.
 - DCR Park Passport Program: Beginning August 8, 2008, the DCR Park Passport stamps artwork can be seen at the exhibit hall of the Boston Children’s Museum. Next Tuesday, August 14, from 1-3 pm rangers and DCR staff will be presenting fun kids friendly activities, distributing the passports and posters and educating the Museum visitors about DCR .
 - July 4th Celebration: Gave congratulations to all on a very successful Fourth-of-July weekend! Over three-quarters of a million people enjoyed celebrating our national holiday at DCR properties statewide, including not only the Hatch Shell

- in Boston, but Fall River Heritage State Park, Pilgrim Memorial State Park, and many others.
- vii. Commissioner Sullivan briefly mentioned serious issue and concern regarding the Asian longhorned beetle. Introduced Jeff Daley, Senior Policy Analyst to give update.
 - Jeff Daley gave overview about the invasive species, Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) that is currently in Worcester, Massachusetts.
 - The Asian longhorned beetle is native to China and other areas of eastern Asia, where it causes widespread mortality of poplar, willow, elm, and maple trees.
 - The ALB is an invasive species in the United States and it is a serious threat to many species of hardwood trees. During its larval stage the ALB bores deep into a tree's heartwood, where it feeds on the tree's nutrients. This tunneling damages and eventually kills the tree.
 - We assisted in preliminary survey of the ALB core area and DCR is working on various strategies with the city of Worcester and the Federal government.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

a. **Finance Committee**

i. Budget and Bond Update – Councilor Whitney Hatch

- The FY09 budget will shortly be finished following legislative action in response to the Governor's vetoes. Councilor Hatch remarked that he was surprised to learn that funding for RMPs was among the items vetoed by the Governor. Overall, DCR's budget should end up in a reasonably good place, though A&F has initiated very early discussions on budget reductions in light of a slowdown in revenue receipts.
- The Environmental Bond has been passed by the legislature and awaits the Governor's signature. Funding for RMPs is also contained in the bond's provisions. DCR's budget and share of the environmental bond provisions is attributable in large part to the extensive effort of the environmental community and DCR's dedicated Friends network.

b. **Resource Management Planning Committee**

i. Joe Orfant, Bureau Director of Planning gave an overview of the Planning Bureau at DCR and the roles of staff members in regards to operations and the resource management plans. Currently DCR has over 2100 resource management plans to date, problem is getting RMP more relevant to be budgeted. The RMPs need to be living plans that will be modified and the backbone of the management.

ii. Status of RMP surveys

- Andy Backman gave an outline of the RMP statewide survey project.
 - Gave objectives such as identifying common system-wide issues related to stewardship of resources and priority management concerns; identify major gaps in natural, cultural and recreational resources data; prioritizing future DCR planning efforts.
 - RMP staff worked with District managers to identify 86 Planning Units statewide.
 - Ongoing work this summer: Inventory of existing planning documents; survey of field staff administered at the District Manager level; Initiation of Inter-agency Service Agreement (ISA) with UMASS Department of Natural Resources Conservation to administer a

recreation user survey at DCR facilities. In October there will be a draft report for internal DCR review.

- Comments:
 - a. Councilor John Natoli asked for a more detailed review for next meeting.
 - b. Councilor Dan Wolf inquired what can be assured to make the RMPs to go into production.
 - c. Councilor Laura Johnson advised for those who work on the visitor survey to make sure they are clear in their message and inquiries and to make sure the surveys do not get shelved.
 - d. Councilor Wolf inquired if DCR have the resources to develop the plans.

iii. Stony Brook RMP approval

- Paul Cavanaugh went thru a brief power point presentation on Stony Brook RMP. Gave overview of the properties: Stony Brook Reservation, Colella Field & Playground, Camp Meigs Playground, DeSantis Park, Mother Brook Reservation, Weider Playground, and Parkways in Boston and Dedham.
- Brief history of Stony Brook was given on acquisition, road development, WPA projects and active recreation.
- Management goals
 - Create a “gateway” to Stony Brook Reservation.
 - Establish and nurture connections to surrounding communities.
 - Inventory and manage natural resources.
 - Promote the properties’ history and preserve cultural resources.
 - Improve existing athletic facilities, increase their availability for use, and decrease ongoing maintenance.
 - Simplify the trail system.
 - Increase universal access.
 - Develop environmental education programming materials for diverse audiences.
 - Identify and maintain boundaries.
 - Eliminate unneeded infrastructure.
 - Improve administrative and operations facilities.
- Recommendations:
 - 70+ recommendations costing \$1.4–1.7 million.
 - Examples include:
 - a. Prepare a master plan for athletic facilities.
 - b. Seal structures to the elements.
 - c. Conduct re-use studies for two buildings.
 - d. Install crosswalks at intersection of trails and parkways.
 - e. Establish volunteer programs and “Friends” groups.
 - f. Manage wetlands and forests to enhance endangered species habitat.
 - Comment: Councilor Lee said best Resource Management Plan seen in last 4 years and thanked Paul Cavanaugh for the presentation. Stewardship

Council members all in favor for Stony Brook Resource Management Plan.

iv. Forestry RMP Update

- In his report to the Council as chair of the Resource Management Planning subcommittee, Councilor Henry Lee shared the subcommittee's views about a range of forestry issues. Specifically, he stated that the subcommittee recommended that the questions surrounding the optimal use of state forestlands over the next several decades, the determination of what constitutes a healthy forest and how state forest affect the health of communities around them need to be explored and a process established to solicit public input about these questions. Councilor Lee also expressed that at this point in time, the subcommittee does not endorse any particular answer to these questions and also recognizes that there are public benefits from commercial harvesting, including jobs and tax revenues and that there is more support for harvesting in some areas of the state than others.
- Councilor Lee further explained the subcommittee's view that these broad policy questions cannot be ignored and in fact, should be explored; however at the same time recognizing and endorsing the importance of meeting the short term goal of retaining Green Certification. Councilor Lee put forth the subcommittee's recommendation that both goals be pursued, and that undertaking a larger exploration about the use of forests should not preclude maintaining Green Certification for DCR lands. He stated, "The development of a new forest policy reflecting the realities of the 21st century will take several years; the Green Certification process has a shorter timeline. Accomplishing the latter should not preclude the former."
- On behalf of the subcommittee, Councilor Lee urged the full Stewardship Council to endorse the basic principles of the June 16th letter from a group of environmental and conservation advocates. First, that the Council sanction the recommended step that DCR refrain from any timber harvesting, including granting permission for other parties to do the same, on DCR properties that do not have an approved forest management plan. There would have to be certain exceptions such as cuttings essential to ensure access for public safety; cuttings needed to protect the public from imminent safety hazards, or cuttings needed to mitigate threats of fire hazard safety as identified by the local fire chief or for any other emergency as declared by the Secretary of EOEEA. Routine maintenance of landscaped areas and trails and ecological restoration activities should also be exempted. This temporary pause in timber harvesting would remain in effect for 90 days. At the end of this period, it would be reassessed.
- Second, the subcommittee recommended that DCR invest the necessary resources into producing final forest RMPS that are consistent in their presentation of facts and information, written so as to be accessible to the interested public and reviewed by a panel of experts, established by the department in cooperation with the forestry department at the University of Massachusetts.
- Third, the subcommittee recommends that the Department establish an advisory body to identify key forestry policy issues and the criteria that should be used in addressing those issues. These issues should include mechanisms

whereby DCR works more closely with the owners of private forest in developing long term use plans and efforts to protect and preserve areas of unique environmental, economic, and community value.

- Finally, the subcommittee recommends that DCR accelerate its efforts to identify critical site-level habitats of rare species, rare natural communities, vernal pools and other resources identified by the advisory body as having essential ecological value.
- In light of the RMP subcommittee's report as well as an overall significant Council and public interest in forestry issues, the 90-day "temporary pause" was proposed for a vote and the specific parameters around it decided. In addition to the exceptions noted above, Commissioner Sullivan requested that the temporary pause apply to new timber harvesting projects on DCR property and posted for public comment from July 1, 2008 through the present. Chair Dick Cross proposed a vote on the 90-day temporary pause with this provision and the Council voted unanimously in favor.

(Note: the above information does not pertain to forests on watershed lands managed by DCR).

c. Policy Committee

i. OHV Policy Update

- Gary Briere reported on the status of legislation which includes many of the recommendations of the Off Highway Vehicle Enforcement Working Group. This group, convened by DCR and EOEEA in August 2007 prepared legislative language which reelected statutory changes necessary to achieve the group's goals for better enforcement and management of OHV's. The Massachusetts Senate adopted much of the group's recommended language in Senate bill 2772 and added restrictions on children operating All Terrain Vehicles and other provisions. The House did not vote on the bill before the end of the legislative session on July 31, 2008. The bill may still advance in an informal session later this fall or the working group or various members may seek to have a new bill reflecting the working group's recommendations introduced during the next legislative session beginning in January.

IV. Special Business

- a.** none

V. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2008 and May 2, 2008

- a.** approved

VI. Public Comment

- a. Bill Hocking, Borderland Advisory Council** – He stated that he does not feel the council is not taking interest of the grass roots. DCR should work with the advocates of the agency. They will write letters to Legislature on behalf of DCR. Mr. Hockings ask that DCR improve communications.
- b. James McCaffrey, Sierra Club** – Thanked the Stewardship Council for endorsing the June 16th letter.
- c. A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee** – Brought up 2 points. The December 3rd letter went to MEPA from Commissioner on a State Park project. There is a vote

in September in the town of Natick regarding Chapter 40b. Question on the Zoning Board and position of DCR on September 10, 2008.

- d. **Janet Hankel, Southwest Corridor Park** – Questioned if there is a mechanism to ensure an earmark goes to park stated. Inquired if the use of pesticides can be stopped for pest control. It was supposed to be a once a year experiment and now it is on the 3rd year experiment, there is a significant loss of trees and damage due to the pesticides. Commissioner Sullivan said there was a meeting scheduled this week but it was canceled and waiting on the new date. Commissioner Sullivan stated in regards to the bond and earmarks a meeting will be rescheduled to discuss the earmarks. Also an update on the pesticides will be given at the next meeting.
- e. **Andy Finton, The Nature Conservancy** - Andy is grateful that there was a discussion on the struggle on green certification and timber cutting, feels its good idea for pause, but presses to reopen the context to be reviewed by a third party on the forest plans, and ecological issues. The benefit for Forestry RMP it address rare species, trails plan, and evasive species.
- f. **Mike Ryan, Friends of Fells** – He thanked Commissioner Sullivan and the Stewardship Council on the Fells Project Environmental review, which analyzes the details of ensuring environmental review of the parkways, reviewed by the MEPA process, legislatures and Mass Audubon. Values the council coming stronger and having a bigger presence and involvement and having the resources to do their job. Thanked council again for the 90 day pause for the Forestry RMP. Discussed proposal noticed on bio-mass fuel and global warming.
- g. **Steve Kaiser, Massachusetts Stewardship Initiative** – OHV issue he disagrees on value of bill. Feels it is too controversial and needs modification. He was very happy about the news on the Storrow Drive and Longfellow Bridge report. Impressed with Paul Kelly and his presentation on Storrow Drive. This bridge program has the best group.

VII. **Meeting Schedule** – Next meeting will be Friday, September 5, 2008 at the Summit House, Skinner Park, Hadley, Ma.

Meeting adjourned 3:35 pm