



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
November 7, 2008  
Lawrence Heritage State Park, Lawrence, Ma

Meeting Minutes

*Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:* Chair, Dick Cross; Councilors, Elisa Campbell, Frank Frey, Julian Agyeman, Whitney Hatch, Laura Johnson, Christina Crowley, James Van Dyke and Henry Lee.

*Public Attendees:* Andy Finton, Nature Conservancy; James McCaffrey, Sierra Club; Dave Gaffney, Forester; Larry Kiernan, Friends of Wayside Recreational Trail; Bruce Spencer, Forest Guild; Carol Gilmour, Friends of Robinson State Park; Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park; Mike Hurley, Robinson State Park; Carol Berkowitz, Protect Water Resources Natick; Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee; Dan Streeter, New England Bike Association; Paul Karczmarczyk Ruffed Grouse Society; Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck/NEMBA; Maura Camosse, REI

*DCR Staff in Attendance:* Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Stephanie Cooper, Patricia Vantine, Jeff Daley, Conrad Crawford, Suzanne Wilson, Jim DiMaio, William Hill, Gary Davis, David Goodwin, Marcelle Valentin, Bob O'Connor and Joe Rotondo.

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

- a. Chair, Dick Cross introduced John Faro, Park Supervisor who in turn gave a brief history of Lawrence Heritage State Park <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/northeast/lwhp.htm>
- b. Chair, Dick Cross gave particular thanks to the Policy and RMP committee for getting the forestry RMP together. He discussed the evolving planning process, the strides DCR has made in regards to OHV, bridges, public process and RMP. He advised the public to keep in mind that the Forestry Resource Management Plan may not have everything you are looking for but we do have the ability to go back to the plans to review and revise.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Rick Sullivan

- a. Commissioner Sullivan thanked the subcommittees and DCR staff who diligently worked on the Forestry RMPs during the past couple of months. Stated that the revised FRMP is a better product than it was before. There will be an outline discussion on private lands next month.
- b. Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP) – Currently DCR is busy conducting over \$40 million in interim repairs on a number of DCR structures to ensure their health and viability until, in some cases, major reconstruction begins. To get more information please visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/planning.htm> and then click on Accelerated Bridge Program on the left hand side under *Information*.
- c. Back in August, Governor Patrick signed the Accelerated Bridge legislation; allocating nearly \$3 billion to repair and replace the Commonwealth's most neglected and structurally deficient bridges. DCR is poised to receive about 900 million dollars over the next 5-8 years and are charged with the repair of and preservation of over 40 traffic and pedestrian bridges in coordination with Mass Transportation.
- d. Overview ABP-
  - i. There are 42 major projects. We will be hiring more than 100 technical staff over the next three years to manage projects.

- ii. DCR is expecting to spend \$100 Million over the next five years on preservation projects such as painting, joint repair, and other minor repairs.
- iii. Average Project Size (excluding Longfellow) ~\$9 Million.
- iv. Nearly half of DCR's projects are expected to be \$10 million or more. Of those, six are projected to be \$20 million or more. Two projects, Bowker Overpass and Longfellow Bridge are expected to be \$50 million and more.
- v. DCR will be largely adopting Mass Highway's Design Build Program.
- vi. Average annual spending next five years is expected to be about \$160 Million /year
- vii. In addition to design services DCR will have several programmatic consulting projects in areas of expertise unique to our system such as bike and pedestrian access improvement, risk management and project sequencing along the Charles River basin.
- e. Public outreach efforts already underway for the BU Bridge Rehabilitation Project and Craigie Bridge and Drawbridge Reconstruction Project which will be starting soon.
  - i. On Thursday evening, October 16, DCR staff, Jack Murray, Deputy Director of Operations, External Affairs and the agency's design Contractor, STV, held a public meeting at Boston University to discuss the agency's plan to rehabilitate the BU Bridge. Close to 100 people attended.
  - ii. DCR is preparing for an upcoming public meeting regarding the Craigie Drawbridge and Craigie Dam Bridge rehabilitation project, to be held at the Museum of Science in Boston on Monday, November 17.
    - At this meeting, which is being held prior to solicitation of construction bids, DCR and its consultants will share information on the bridges' condition, the scope of the proposed projects, the benefits of the projects, and the estimated schedule for the construction phases.
    - A subsequent public meeting will be held after the traffic management plans are developed by the construction contractor that will be selected through the upcoming bid solicitation process.
- f. Ribbon cuttings - On October 27th, Commissioner Sullivan was joined by Senator Jack Hart, Representative Martin Walsh, Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney's Office, and a group of local kids, for a Ribbon Cutting to mark the official opening of DCR's Meaney Playground in Dorchester.
- g. As of the recent deadline for the Partnership Matching Funds Program, DCR had received an overwhelming 60 applications (33 for state parks/ 27 for urban parks) from across the Commonwealth. Proposed projects would, among other objectives, address invasive aquatic plants, replace existing facilities, design pedestrian crossings, and make roof repairs.
  - i. DCR will begin the application review process and is expected to announce recommendations on Friday, November 14.
- h. On Thursday, October 30, Commissioner Sullivan hosted an event to celebrate the completion and reopening of the \$781,575 pathway rehabilitation project at DCR's Chestnut Hill State Reservation in Brighton. The goal of this project was to improve and add to the existing circulation at the Reservation, primarily by creating a well-built, 1.5-mile, uniform stone dust path around the entire reservoir.
- i. On November 14th, Secretary Bowles will join Commissioner Sullivan, Senate President Therese Murray and other state legislators and Plymouth town officials for the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating completion of the DCR's Plymouth Rock Portico Rehabilitation Project. The event will be held on the waterfront at DCR's Pilgrim Memorial State Park. An invitation has been extended to the Stewardship Council.

- j. The summer of 2008 recreation season at Massachusetts State Parks campground facilities drew to a close in October. Campground reservations were up by 13 percent compared to last year. On Friday, October 17, advanced reservations for the 2009 season began through Reserve America's toll-free reservation line.
- k. On Saturday, October 11, the Friends of Upton State Forest, in partnership with the DCR Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Committee, sponsored CCC Day at Upton State Forest in honor of the 75th anniversary of the Corps.
- l. On Saturday, October 25, Director of Partnerships Conrad Crawford attended the first meeting of the Massachusetts Forest and Parks Friends Network in Worcester, attended by approximately 30 individuals representing 10+ Friends organizations from across the Commonwealth.
- m. Next month DCR will have the final working document on the RMP plans. There will be a baseline data and template available to discuss key areas to focus attention and rebuilding our park systems.
- n. Commissioner Sullivan informed all that the Operating Budget has been loaded in the system and is now available for spending; earmarks have been removed from the budget. The Governor and Secretary Bowles are supportive of DCR's mission and even with the budget cuts, areas in particular in the budget such as line operations to keep services going on the ground is being supported.
- o. In regard to the line item for RMP Planners, the budget might allow hiring of one or two more planners, Commissioner Sullivan is cautiously optimistic.

### III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

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

- i. Councilor Hatch gave the budget update. He informed that the subcommittee would like to pull together a letter to submit to the governor, even though budget cuts were already announced and Commissioner Sullivan has submitted the budget cuts for DCR. The agency ended up ok in this process of the budget cuts. DCR was asked for a 10% reduction and ended up with only an 8% reduction and a chance to still hire staff. The committee would like to focus on this fiscal year to discuss ideas on the revenue. The subcommittee wanted to review FY09 budget documents to see how it really helps the agency. The budget proposals are at the Governor's office now but not adopted, it may be adopted.
  - 1. Councilor Lee asked if there will be additional cuts.
  - 2. Commissioner Sullivan believes the cuts will still get DCR through the fiscal year but there may be a chance of additional cuts. Exercising additional 9C cuts was dropped by the Governor.

#### b. **Policy and Resource Management Plan Committee**

##### i. **Forestry Update, Stephanie Cooper –**

- i. Councilor Henry Lee wanted to note that a lot of work went into the Forestry RMP and he has enormous respect for those who worked on the FRMPs to get accomplished. He gave special thanks to Stephanie Cooper, to her diligence and hard work on moving along the FRMP.
- ii. Stephanie Cooper gave an update on forestry issues. She thanked the Policy and Planning Committee, as well as the full Council for all of the time and effort they have dedicated in guiding DCR's work on the FRMPs--the agency is pleased with the redrafted FRMPs.

- iii. Miss Cooper spoke about planning of the broader, statewide public process to develop a practical vision for DCR forests within the context of DCR properties. She noted the importance of engaging appropriate outside, professional resources to support this effort and that DCR believes it is critical to allow adequate time to plan, develop and follow through on this important process. Furthermore, DCR is committed to re-evaluating current forestry policies based on the outcomes of the public process, including reopening approved FRMPs.
- iv. Miss Cooper addressed the 90-day temporary pause in timber harvesting, which ended as of this meeting, and summarized DCR's policy going forward. For the forestry districts where no Resource Management Plans has been approved, DCR will continue to limit timber harvesting, with similar exceptions to those in place during the 90-day pause (those districts are the Southeast, Northeast, Midstate and Eastern Connecticut Valley). Understanding public concerns about the practice of clear cutting, DCR has put into place internal review for the relatively rare instances where clear cutting is proposed and will also plainly post on the website any such proposals. An onsite meeting to solicit public feedback will also be held for each clear cutting proposal. She noted that Bob O'Connor would present the Southern Berkshire, Northern Berkshire and Western Connecticut Valley FRMPs for approval next.

**ii. Forestry RMP Presentation (Southern Berkshire District, Northern Berkshire District and Western CT Valley District), *Bob O'Conner***

- i. Bob O'Connor gave a power point presentation on the Southern Berkshire, Northern Berkshire and Western CT Valley Districts. Below are the points discussed.
- ii. There was a review of the eight districts and the foundations in the three districts.
  - 1. State Constitution and laws
  - 2. Need to balance active management, reserves, diverse habitats, rare species, recreation, aesthetics, forest products, climate change and invasives management
  - 3. 5 Berkshire Landscape Assessments
  - 4. 50,000 acres of large Forest Reserves dedicated in 2006; same criteria used to map small reserves in the 3 plans
  - 5. Extensive public and inter-agency input
  - 6. Maintenance of FSC "Green Certification"
  - 7. Wildlands and Woodlands vision
- iii. Improvements made in DCR forest management since 2004
- iv. Improvements made in the 3 Berkshire DCR Forest Plans
- v. Why cut trees in DCR Forests?
- vi. Will clear cuts occur?
  - 1. The 3 plans do not call for any clear cuts. Clear cuts (where all trees are removed in one cut in patches larger than 2 acres) could occur as a last resort in heavily damaged forests. However, the plan requires that a public site visit occur before proceeding with a clear cut;
- vii. Distribution of forest management zones
- viii. Building on a proven success: Quabbin Reservoir
- ix. FRMPs recommend management well below sustainable levels

- x. Annual rate of growth in the Northern Berkshire District
- xi. Creating a more natural age distribution: 100 year goal
- xii. What's next?
  1. Eco-regional forest assessments and forest plans will be presented to the public for the Ct River and eastward
  2. Local Forest Reserves will be mapped and dedicated to complement the 50,000-acre large Forest Reserves
  3. More "conservation best mgt practices" will be completed for rare species (10 already done)
  4. More boundaries will be marked; roads repaired; invasive species treated, etc.;
  5. DCR will convene a statewide public process to balance concerns over forest management on DCR lands – plans will be adjusted at its completion
- xiii. Comments:
  1. Chair Dick Cross asked about the gap in operating procedures.
  2. Bob O'Connor said Bill Boles will be working on these operating procedures, the agency is under a microscope and we have a role to educate others. It is a working process and Mr. O'Connor is willing to sit with stewardship Council to discuss further.
  3. Councilor Lee said he has been reviewing the FRMP for the last five to six months. He supports that there is need to look more into the implementation of the plan. Satisfied with the conditions of the FRMPs and felt support from the environmental agencies. Committee recommends approving the three FRMPs.
    - a. The Stewardship Council approved the Forestry Resource Management Plans.

IV. **Special Business, Asian Longhorn Beetle Update, Jeff Daley**

- a. The Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) Incident command team, USDA, DCR & State Inspectors will be performing inspections and surveys for the ALBs within the regulated area, on both public and private property. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services have teamed up with the City of Worcester to help educate and control the Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation. Eradication of the ALB is moving along. Secretary Ian Bowles visited the location to review the seriousness of this issue. Federal funding will be provided to begin eradicating the bugs. The goal is to remove the infected trees as soon as possible rather than later to lessen the spread from increasing.

V. **Approval of Minutes from October 3 and November 7, 2008**

- a. September minutes approved by council.
- b. October minutes will be voted on next month.

VI. **Public Comment**

- a. **Bruce Spencer, Forest Guild** – Explained that he has familiarity with management plans and feels it is very important to have them across the Commonwealth. Feels the prior Forestry Resource Management Plans (FRMP) was too complicated before and feels the current FRMP

are much better. Concerned about ATV usage. It is a hot topic and understands that management plans need to be placed but asked the council and DCR staff to look into the controversy of the ATV usage on DCR property.

- b. **Carol Gilmour, Friends of Robinson State Park** – Thanked Commissioner Sullivan for attending the Friends of Robinson State Park meeting last week on regards to timber harvesting.
- c. **Claudia Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park** – Mrs. Hurley read through the previous Forestry RMP and found section k of the plan interesting to see what was not addressed and what was addressed, particularly on how public comments were utilized. Discussed zoning and one particular area, October Mountain preservation was requested for zoning by the public but it was not addressed. Stated how important it is to address public comments before moving onto next steps. Mrs. Gilmour read an area from the current FRMP and asked for a review.
- d. **Carol Berkowitz, Protect Water Resources, Natick** – Ms. Berkowitz thanked the Stewardship Council and DCR for the superb job on removing the water chestnut from Fisk pond at Cochituate State Park.
  - i. Commissioner Sullivan gave thanks to Jonathan Yeo and Water Supply Division for their diligent work on removing this invasive weed.
- e. **Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhood** – Mr. Kaiser discussed a comparison of sites he created between MDC and DEM before the merge to DCR and noted that there have been a lot of great improvements in the areas that was under MDC but feels the old DEM locations does not get as much attention. He suggested a history of improvements done since the merge be put together for an assessment. In regards to forestry he feels that we should have an 18 month moratorium with a statewide public process during the 18 months. He feels there should be discussion on the direction of the OHV bill before it goes back to the legislature.
- f. **Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells** – Mr. Ryan feels that the public process should not be hurried to begin the timber harvesting cutting plans. Reason for concern is for families and individuals who have moved to the Berkshires are upset with the clear cuts being done. Mayor James Ruberto welcomes the DCR public process. Mr. Ryan says the plans need review before they are made. Moratorium should stay in place during the public process. New legislation and rules are needed for enforcement. If new laws are not placed the biomass industry will eat up our forests, leaving it vulnerable.
  - i. Councilor Henry Lee asked if timber cutting increased in the Patrick Administration.
  - ii. Bob O'Connor said that it actually decreased from the 1980's. Prior to 2003 not all of the timber sales may have been recorded into the database. During the 1990's management foresters conducted a continuous forest inventory for 3 years when less timber sales were conducted.
  - iii. Councilor Elisa Campbell said that DCR and the Stewardship Council does not want biomass to cut over allowable amounts. Ms. Campbell does feel it will not happen.
  - iv. Commissioner Sullivan stated that there will be having a hearing on certain allowable amounts. There will be a certain amount of months to discuss this.
- g. **A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Association** – Pleased with the partnership between the friends group and DCR. Partnerships and the public process are key to the relationship. Inquired if information can be sent to the friends groups to educate the communities on our partnerships and events happening with DCR. Inquired about height requirement for cutting timber. Asked to utilize partnerships for additional funding needed in municipalities.
- h. **Paul Karczmarczyle, Ruffed Grouse Society** – The Ruffed Grouse Society read through the FRMP for the Western CT Valley Berkshire, Northern Berkshire and Southern Berkshire and provided comments which was put into a memo and given to the council. The RGS encourages immediate approval and full implementation of the Western CT Valley, Northern and Southern

Berkshire District draft FRMPs. Thanked the council and DCR staff on their work improving the FRMP and the entire process. RGS would like continual information and updates on the FRMPs.

- i. **Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck/NEMBA** – Noted that DCR promised mitigation work for Wompatuck State Park and wanted to know the status of the project. He noticed that the fences are still up. He said it would be nice to take train and ride a bike onto the bike path but it is closed and would like to know what the next steps are. Informed that there are individuals going through trustees property and camping because can't go thru Wompatuck
  - i. Commissioner Sullivan said there will be a follow next month on this.
- j. **Larry Kiernan, Friends of Wayside Recreational Trail** – A trails committee was created in Wayland and there is lots of enthusiasm. They have a developer donating \$25,000 to help rebuild trails in Wayland. Mr. Kiernan thanked DCR and the council for the leadership on the MBTA trails and making it a possibility to have trails.
- k. **Andy Finton, The Nature Conservancy** – Mr. Finton applauded DCR staff, subcommittee council and Commissioner Sullivan for the attention and work on Forestry RMP. The plans give foundation for new opportunities, challenges, and increasing resources. The plans will evolve over time which gives opportunity for continued public comments. Thanked Commissioner Sullivan for providing the extra two hours for pool opening over summer.
- l. **James McGaffney, Sierra Club** – Thanked the Stewardship Council and DCR on their hard work on the FRMP and tremendous outreach. It was a great opportunity for DCR to get the FRMP right; it needs real transparency on contract permits, numbers where money comes from and clearer understanding on parameters. What is it costing DCR to run this forestry program and what do they receive? DCR should stay responsive with public during the 5 year RMP for this working document. FFC clear green recertification coming up and it seems there will transparency placed in this process. Inquired if there are two separate audits for green certification
  - i. Bob O'Connor said there is an annual audit done. There was an audit in the fall and there will be a more extensive audit in the spring.

**Dave Gaffney, Forester** – Mr. Gaffney has concerns about timber harvesting on our public lands. He feels all the facts are not given in regards to how we do forestry in this state. Mr. Gaffney did his own audits and says there are clear cuts done that shouldn't be. There is a difference in the practice of forestry in the last 30 years. Advised the council to go look at the forests and see in person the clear cuts being done.

- VII. **Meeting Schedule** – Next meeting will be Friday, January 9, 2008, at the Wachusett Regional Headquarter, 180 Beaman Street, West Boylston.

*Meeting adjourned 3:20 pm*