

To: Stewardship Council
From: Michael Dutton
Date: September 9, 2011

Re: Council Oversight Document

Pertinent M.G.L. sections:

Chapter 21, Section 2G:

The stewardship council shall develop an oversight strategy of park management plans, capital planning and policy development. Such oversight strategies will be published annually and after a 30 day public comment period will be finalized and submitted to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. Such oversight plans must be prepared and submitted 45 days prior to the submission to the legislature of the governor's annual budget.

Chapter 21, Section 3C:

The commissioner shall, with the approval of the stewardship council, prepare an annual budget of the department, and shall file the same pursuant to section three of chapter twenty-nine. Within ninety days after the end of each fiscal year, the commissioner shall render a complete detailed report of all activities, revenue and expenditures of the department and each division thereof, to the stewardship council, the general court and the governor and council.

By law, the Council has the obligation to develop and submit a yearly "oversight strategy" to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The document is to be prepared and submitted 45 days prior to filing of the Governor's budget. Unfortunately, in eight years, only one oversight strategy has ever completed and submitted.

Now the questions are:

1. What is the oversight strategy? What is its purpose?
2. Given seven years without an oversight strategy and no sign of impending doom, should the Council recommend eliminating the requirement to submit an oversight strategy altogether?
3. Should the Department instead of the Stewardship Council have the responsibility for completing the oversight strategy?
4. Could/should the oversight strategy be the Department's version of goals and objectives by which it could track its yearly progress?
5. Would it be appropriate to measure the Department's performance against the oversight strategy and the budget?