



### Meeting Minutes

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

**DCR Staff in Attendance:** *Commissioner Rick Sullivan*, Lisa Bishop, Gary Briere, Stuart Conner, Stephanie Cooper, Conrad Crawford, Susan Hamilton, Mike Mitchell, Andrew Regan, Jessica Rowcroft, Patti Vantine

**Public Attendees:** Bill Boles, NEMBA – Joe Dorant, President of MOSES – Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon – Dan Streaker, NEMBA - Lisa Vernegaard, Chair of the FFVP Technical Steering Committee and TTOR.

**Attachments:** Northeast Overview Presentation, Forest Futures Implementation

**Chairman Henry Lee called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.**

#### **Commissioner's Report - Commissioner Rick Sullivan**

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

- The past month, state parks and pools have had a 20-25% overall increase in visitors compared to last year. DCR staff has received an enormous amount of kudos for their dedication and hard work.
- Public events included: 1) Short Beach in Winthrop/Revere ground breaking event celebrating the \$3.5m improvement project that includes new sidewalks, repaving Winthrop Parkway, replacing the deteriorated seawall cap and beach ramps, new street lighting, new parking lot with improved crosswalk connection to the beach; new pathway connection to Belle Island Marsh, 2) Freetown State Forest in Assonet ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the new Wading Pool, 3) Horseneck Beach ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the \$8.5m facility improvements, 4) Scusset Beach State Reservation in Sandwich celebrating the opening of a new accessible boardwalk, 5) a celebration at Maudslay State Park in Newburyport and, 6) a celebration at Southwest Corridor.
- Most state pools and beaches were extended until August 29; Boston pools closed today, 9/2 and 9/3 due to the threat of Hurricane Earl. They will reopen until September 6 (Labor Day).
- Five metro Boston area rinks will be operated under new partnerships this 2010 season; the remaining eight rinks will continue under DCR jurisdiction.
- DCR is in full deployment in preparation of Hurricane Earl, DCR is taking precautions that include beach and campground closures as of 5:00 p.m. today; campers will either receive a full refund or reschedule their reservation. DCR is working with MEMA activation and flood control preparation. The Governor has declared a State of Emergency; in return, the Commonwealth will get reimbursed up to 75% of actual spending.
- Suzanne Wilson, Director of External Affairs, has accepted a position at New England Conservatory as Chief of Staff.

#### **Committee Updates**

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

*Resource Management Planning and Forest Futures Implementation – Councilor Laura Johnson*

- As stated last month, Joe Orfant and team are developing a template to speed up an RMP process, 2) the RMP for Blue Hills and Horseneck Beach will be available by December, 3) the Middlesex Fells full RMP should be ready for review by the next spring, 4) the Myles Standish RMP will begin this fall and, 5) the anticipated FFVP landscape zoning public process will begin this fall and wrap-up by late winter or early spring.

### **Finance Committee - Councilor Whitney Hatch**

*Budget Update – Patti Vantine, Director of Administration and Finance*

*Patti Vantine informed the Council on/of the following matters:*

- State House News tax revenue article was distributed last week claiming that revenue has increased.
- In terms of the Administration's priorities for FMAP funding, DCR is definitely on the short list of what it will advocate for. Parks and seasonal accounts are top priorities.
  - MOSES will forward their support to the Governor for DCR; Senator Panagiotakos strongly advocated for replenishing DCR with \$5m.
  - Commissioner Sullivan thanked the Council, and all other advocates, for all their support and input to the Governor and Legislators.
- DCR's finance team finished the final payouts for the year; DCR spent 99.6% of our allocated Capital monies.
- As of today, the counts for DCR voluntary incentives are: two voluntary retirements, three voluntary layoffs, two voluntary furloughs (one manager and MOSES); the last day to opt in is September 10, MOSES have until October 1 (*MOSES voluntary furlough was only offered to DCR, EEA, and DEP*). The other option is to submit a reduced work schedule; each volunteer will be reviewed individually.

*Joe Dorant, President of MOSES, urged the Council to support restoration of any funds into the supplemental budget under Watershed, Safety and Parks.*

### **Special Business**

#### **Northeast Overview - Susan Hamilton, Regional Director**

- Susan Hamilton presented to the Council the background of the Northeast Region which includes three districts – Atlantic, Great Brook and Metro West. It has four campgrounds, four pools and one wading pool, one beach, five designated freshwater swimming areas and one commercial working dairy farm. (Attached Northeast Overview Presentation)

#### **Forest Future Implementation – Update on Landscape Zoning Process – Jessica Rowcroft, Resource Management Planner**

**Stephanie Cooper, Chief of Staff, informed the Council on/of the following matters:**

- Lisa Vernegaard, Chair of the FFVP Technical Steering Committee was present to answer any questions and offer her perspective.
- Hiring process for Director of Forest Stewardship is moving forward. The visioning process recommended replacing the Chief Forester with a broader natural resource professional that will have knowledge about silviculture, conservation biology and the broader spectrum of land management. The hope is to have this position filled before the end of the year.
- Implementing the recommendations was not only guided by the TSC, but also a policy directive from Secretary Bowles. Secretary Bowles immediately embraced the report, in particular the landscape zoning, which will shift our land management paradigm and allow us to prioritize the values for which we are managing the land and zone it into woodlands, parklands and forest reserves. The TSC came up with a broader vision for managing the land and the Secretary encouraged us to move forward. He also validated and accepted the Steering Committee recommendations for how to allocate the zones, and established a target of at least 60% for parkland and reserves, and 40% toward working woodlands.
- Introduced Jessica Rowcroft who is project manager for the Landscape Zoning. Noted that the TSC recommended DCR integrate and unify planning efforts and sharpen our focus on resource protection as the foundation for a quality visitor experience. We have begun to do this with the Internal Working Group Jessica is leading, which brings together planners and staff from a variety of different disciplines.

***Jessica Rowcroft presented to the Council an update to the Landscape Zoning Process recommended by the Forest Futures Visioning Process.***

***The following is a summary of her report: (See Attached Forest Future Implementation)***

- Out of 308,000 acres in state and urban parks, they will be categorized into three zones statewide.
- Parklands: Management focus will be on support of recreational assets and their uses protect/maintain cultural resources and landscapes/vistas, and maintaining safe facilities.
- Reserves: Management focus: protection of large swaths of forested land representing different ecological settings, provide a very different experience for users than what can be found in parklands, natural processes will dominate and determine structure, diversity, etc., with ongoing monitoring.
  - 40,000 acres are already currently considered reserves – similar management will be practiced here. No commercial harvesting, salvage or preemptive logging due to disturbance. Some interventions to restore habitat or other address a specific threat will be reviewed carefully with a team of experts.
- Woodlands: Management focus: these are areas where active forest management are appropriate and can be compatible with other recreational uses at these facilities.
  - Application of best management practices (including the marking of individual trees, and matching equipment appropriate to each site and roadways, etc), combination of uneven-aged and even-aged management, depending upon the ecological needs of a site and the silvicultural BMPs. Uneven-aged management - allowing small openings up to 1/3 acre. Even-age and over-story removals for early successional habitat or other exceptional circumstances (e.g. storm damage, insect infestation) allowable up to 5 acres with consultation and Commissioner approval.
- A survey was sent to the appropriate elected official in each community in the state with several intentions; to seek their feedback about DCR land management in general, to find out from these municipalities about the best ways to engage this group of stakeholders as we plan the next phase of implementation for the zoning process, and also to get some idea of their level of familiarity with the work the FFVP to date.
- Public workshops are scheduled for the fall to obtain input on selection criteria and on the development of management guidelines to ensure the implementation exercise is a collaborative process.
  - Several Council members made comments about the presentation and plans for implementing the landscape zoning.

**Approval of Minutes**

- No quorum to approve August minutes.

**New Business**

- No New Business

**Public Comment**

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

*Andrew Regan, DCR Northeast Fire Warden*

- Andrew asked the Council what is the use of prescribed fire for hazardous fuel mitigation and habitat restoration and fire suppression in the different zones?
  - *Lisa Vernegaard explained the TSC's intention to recognize the importance of public safety issues and the need to address them.*

*Lisa Vernegaard, FFVP TSC Chair and Trustees of Reservations*

- Lisa shared her perspective with the Council about the importance of looking forward in implementing the FFVP recommendations, rather than revisiting the many issues that were thoroughly discussed during the Visioning process.

*Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon*

- She stated she is happy to acknowledge the plan is moving forward with the Landscape Zoning which will include public outreach and agrees that it is important to move forward and not start the Visioning process over.
- She raised an issue about the relationship of Landscape Zones and the Land Stewardship Zoning mandated by law, and suggested the latter should be covered in the upcoming statewide process.

*Bill Boles, NEMBA*

- Mr. Boles stated that the final decision from the visioning process of the percentage of land allocation recommended the Technical Steering Committee, parkland and reserves at 60% and DCR 40% parklands. Out of the 60%, what percentage is for parkland and reserves?
  - *Commissioner Sullivan informed Mr. Boles that the higher percentage will likely fall in reserves.*
- Mr. Boles questioned the Council of when were the uniform guidelines going to be released and implemented, and when is the Middlesex Fells Trail rehabilitation and signage plan begin?
  - *Gary Briere informed Mr. Boles that he would be happy to talk at the end of meeting. A public meeting for the Fells is scheduled for late September.*

### **Closing Comment**

- Chairman Lee requested from Jessica Rowcroft to send a copy of the survey results to each Council member.
- Due to facility issues, Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that our October meeting location will be changed. Information will be forthcoming.

### **Meeting Schedule**

- Next meeting will be held Friday, October 1 in the Central Region.

*Motion to adjourn by Councilor Laura Johnson, seconded by Councilor Frank Frey at 3:10 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.*