



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
February 4, 2011
Wompatuck State Park, Hingham, MA

Meeting Minutes

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

DCR Staff in Attendance: *Acting Commissioner Jack Murray, Andy Backman, Lisa Bishop, Gary Briere, Ron Clough, Stuart Conner, Stephanie Cooper, Conrad Crawford, Steve Gammon, Jeanne Gilleney-DeCenzo, Paul Jahnige, Jim Lindsey, Joe Orfant, Joe Rotondo, Brian Shanahan, Kevin Whalen*

Public Attendees: Bill Boles, NEMBA - Carl Casale, Friends of Wompatuck – Jane Goldberg, Friends of Wompatuck - Sharl Heller, Friends Network – Pam Johnson, Friends of Wompatuck – John Kenney, Friends of Wompatuck – Eric Reaman, Citizen - W. P. Von Ryan, Friends of Wompatuck

Attachments: Parkway Study Presentation

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

Commissioner's Report – Acting Commissioner Jack Murray

Acting Commissioner Murray informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- Acting Commissioner Murray announced DCR's new commissioner, Ed Lambert, who will officially begin on Monday, February 7. He also expressed his honor at serving as Acting Commissioner for the past several weeks. "I appreciate everyone's support and cooperation during this transition. I, am also looking forward greatly to Commissioner Lambert's arrival."
- Acting Commissioner Murray welcomed everyone and thanked Steve Gammon, Supervisor of Wompatuck State Park, Brian Shanahan, Southeast Regional Director and Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck for their hospitality hosting us at Wompatuck State Park.
 - A brief background/description of the park was described to the Council by Acting Commissioner Jack Murray.
- Snow storms have been an active top issue; DCR's priorities have been to clear primary roadways and parkways, vehicular bridges, potential flood zones, and State Police barracks, and to create safe passages to schools. We have had 15 snow events since November, deployed a couple of hundred pieces of equipment and had over 200 staff in our clearing efforts. We used 20,000 tons of salt and 150,000 tons of sand. Our snow budget has been exhausted and the Governor has submitted a supplemental budget for \$25m. DCR does continue to own and manage seven ice skating rinks; a major concern is the cost of snow removal at these rinks.
- The Governor's office has released the FY12 budget proposal. The proposed budget represents a 2.3% reduction from operating from FY11. Accounts that have been reduced are \$1.2m reduction in seasonal accounts, \$600k in park operations.
- This year, \$1m is being awarded for 32 projects statewide from the Partnerships Matching Funds. The projects approved include the historic red oaks along DCR parkways in the Emerald Necklace, and repairing and improving the wooden dock at Moody Street in Waltham.
- We recently issued an Urban Forestry Challenge Grant of \$51,614. The funding is from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. DCR has awarded grants to the city of Fall River and two nonprofit groups in Boston to support tree and forestry projects.
- In December, DCR awarded the Great Brook Farm Cross Country Ski Concession contract to Mr. Johnstone. In a move that became somewhat controversial, DCR had introduced the idea of a new walking trail parallel to one of the ski trails as part of the RFP. DCR and the concessionaire produced a joint letter explaining our shared goals for managing public access while ensuring protection of the unique skiing opportunity at Great Brook, and since then, only a few issues have arisen and the concessionaire seems to be all-around quite pleased.

- In January, DCR had two successful public meetings for the partnership with Jackson Square Playground, a \$400,000 project, which is being totally funded, designed, and constructed by Children's Hospital. The planned completion date is June.
- DCR recently received a unanimous approval for the conceptual design of the Esplanade Playspace, a privately funded playground from the Boston Landmarks Commission. The Playspace is expected to be completed by mid-June, and is budgeted at \$1.2 million, including an endowment.
- DCR staff members attended a meeting of the Boston Park Advocates, a group of more than 40 people representing Friends groups from both city and state parks, including some with selected Matching Funds projects. Our staff's message of a renewed focus on program and capital project partnerships was welcomed, and follow-up workshops on Social Media and Fundraising are scheduled in the coming weeks.
- DCR held a well attended public meeting on January 31 at the McGlynn School in Medford to talk about the Resource Management Plan for the Middlesex Fells Reservation. DCR will now hold a series of five Wednesday night workshops in partnership with several environmental, recreational, and cultural organizations to discuss various topics relating to the RMP, including Wetlands and Water Resources, Flora and Fauna, Cultural Resources, Education, and Enforcement and Recreation.
- The Universal Access Program was offering a free Accessible Recreation Fair to highlight all our adaptive outdoor recreation opportunities, however due to the forecast, the fair has been cancelled.
- During the week of February 20 (school vacation week), DCR will offer a variety of free activities at various locations including bird watching at Halibut Point State Park in Rockport, hikes at Breakheart Reservation in Saugus, a guided outdoor exploration walk at Mt. Tom in Holyoke, It's Your Nature story time at Camp Nihan in Saugus, and Family GPS Workshop at Waquoit State Park in Falmouth.

Edward Lambert was introduced and welcomed by Chairman Lee; Mr. Lambert thanked the Council and looks forward working with DCR and the Council.

Committee Updates

Policy and Planning Committee

Resource Management Planning – Councilor Elisa Campbell

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

- RMP Update: The Blue Hills RMP is in its final comment period and will be ready for Stewardship Council review and vote within the next month. Horseneck Beach RMP is due soon, and Middlesex Fells held its first meeting and a draft plan should be ready in late May. The following RMP's are on the list for this year; Myles Standish, Middlesex Fells, Walden Pond, Fort Phoenix, Pittsfield, Neponset, Harold Parker, Mt. Holyoke Range, Charles River, Lower Basin and Great Brook Farm.
- The Volunteer Policy will be going out for a 30 day public comment period once it has its final review from Legal and we are hoping to have approval and a vote from Stewardship Council in April.
- The Landscape Designation process for the state forest park reservations has finished its meetings with over 350 public comments. Staff is now working through those comments and will be refining the criteria for the designation in the near future; the council will not be deciding on which facilities fit with which criteria, the criteria is going to be deciding which facilities are to be in which designation.

Chairman Lee informed the Council that he and Stephanie Cooper have been working on a calendar/schedule of all RMP's and any suggestions should be sent to him.

Chairman Lee thanked Stephanie Cooper for the enormous amount of work she has put into the projects of Stewardship Council. "She has worked endlessly on the Forest Vision Process and at anytime the Council had an issue or a problem, Stephanie was always responsive; we look forward to continue working with her. This is a good opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for the work she has done."

Finance Committee

Councilor Whitney Hatch informed the Council on/of the following matters:

- To reiterate from the last meeting, letters were submitted to the Governor, Senate and House Ways and Means requesting to restore \$6m out of the \$8m that was cut from DCR's FY2011 budget. Meetings were held at the state house with Whitney, Henry and then-Commissioner Sullivan to

deliver the historical picture of DCR's funding adjusted for inflation, which shows the agency's FY2011 \$70m+ appropriation was at an all time low, and that low was not sustainable.

- In large part due to then-Commissioner Sullivan's effectiveness at the state house, DCR received good news that the legislator and the governor passed supplemental funds of an addition \$2.1m. The supplemental funds will allow us to open pools on schedule, however the agency will still have to trim other activities from now until June 30. FY2011 budget is \$72.8m with supplemental funding and FY2012 House 1 budget is \$71.3m without supplemental monies.
- DCR will need to consider other means of managing the FY2012 budget; government is actively looking at the use of trusts funds. The agency has two major trust funds; state and urban parks with approximately \$6m in each one. The agency also has 10 to 15 small trust funds that are dedicated to specific activities. All trust funds provide very little return and historically have been used for capital improvements, refurbishing parks, etc. Regulations of trust funds do not have many restrictions.
 - A lengthy discussion was held on what the Stewardship Council should recommend to the legislators -
 1. If there is a way to increase the budget by using trusts funds, which have been used primarily for capital, do we feel comfortable for DCR to use those trust funds for operating expenses?
 2. Do we want to take the position that is significantly different than that of what the governor has taken?
 3. Do we want to look at different revenue options?
 - After input from each Councilor, it was unanimously decided that a letter would be drafted to the Governor, Senate and House Ways and Means outlining our budget concern. The Council will be silent regarding the trust funds until the administration is not silent on the issue. In addition, the Finance Committee will begin to look at the revenue streams.

Special Business

Parkway Study, Joe Orfant, Chief of the Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection

- Joe Orfant gave a report on the current status of the legislatively mandated Parkways Report. Sec. 177 of Chapter 25 Of the Acts of 2010 directed DCR and MASSDOT to prepare a report for the Legislature on the status of the remaining DCR parkways that would include recommended Standards for Parkway management and identify any additional parkways that would be appropriate for additional transfer to MASSDOT. The draft report is currently in the Governor's Office awaiting approval and submission to the Legislature. The report drafting was initiated by DCR staff that collaborated with DOT personnel. DCR staff evaluated parkways against criteria that weighed their integrity as parkways, scenic, recreational, historic and programmatic significance to the overall park system. DOT evaluated Parkways for their transportation role and integration with the state highway system. (*Attached Parkway Study Presentation*).

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Councilor Elisa Campbell, seconded by Councilor Frank Frey to accept the December, 2010 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

New Business

- No New Business

Public Comment

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

Pam Johnson, Secretary of Friends of Wompatuck

- Friends of Wompatuck (FOW) have been very successful due to leadership, cooperation and coordinator between DCR and their community. They have a large group of volunteers along with a large community connection. She would like the Council to please use the FOW as an example when sending our message to the legislature.

Bill Boles, President of Friends of Wompatuck

- The FOW feel that they are a great regional resource with over 100k visitors per day.
- Friends groups must complete a Form 5013C, and it would be great if DCR would assist potential friends groups filling out this form.
- The draft of the Volunteer Policy states that Friend Groups must have a \$2m insurance liability (\$1,000) coverage to have volunteers work at the park. FOW are requesting that DCR provide this coverage since it is difficult for Friend Groups to raise this money.
- FOW are offering any new Friends Group their assistance starting a group.
- Mr. Boles requested that the bike path in Wompatuck State Park be opened to the public; this bike path leads from the train station into the park.
 - Councilor Frank Frey informed Bill Boles that then-Commissioner Sullivan informed him that there are abandoned buildings in the area and was uncomfortable with the public having access to the buildings. Fencing around the perimeter was being assessed.

Carl Casale, Friends of Wompatuck

- Mr. Casale would like to reiterate that the bike path should be opened to have access to Cohasset. He also agrees that there should be more help getting Friend Groups started.

Sharl Heller, Friends Network

- Myles Standish State Forest RMP will have its final workshop on Infrastructure and Operations. She is very pleased with the process. During the final workshop, Peggy Baker from the Plymouth 20-20 committee will extend the invitation to the 400th anniversary celebration of the Pilgrim Landing and Randy Parker will lead an effort to reuse the historical bathhouse at Fearing Pond. In addition, Plymouth Captain Rogers, Environmental and State Police, Fire Patrol and Rangers will speak about their role, clarifying enforcement, and make suggestions. The Friends Group will review and prioritize its recommendations.
- On February 12 at 1:00 p.m., all are invited to tour the buildings at Myles Standish.
- The Friends of Myles Standish received matching funds to purchase a green house.
- The OHV Management Working Plan from the Friends was distributed (4) that includes 99 recommendations drawn from past work that was completed by DCR. The Friends will share it for the next 30 days and then resubmit it to DCR as the final version of recommendations.

Closing Comment

- No Closing Comments

Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting will be held Friday, March 4 at *Willowdale in Topsfield*.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Whitney Hatch, seconded by Councilor Frank Frey at 2:55 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.