



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
February 6, 2009
Breakheart Reservation, Saugus, MA

Meeting Minutes

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

Public Attendees: Nathaniel Beagan - Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee, Bill Boles – New England Mountain Bike Association, Kathie Breuninger - Friends of Robinson State Park, Ron Coler – Coler & Colantonio, Inc., Joseph DiStasio – D&B Tree Service, Inc., David Gafney – Citizen, Carol Gilmour – Friends of the Robinson State Park, Claudia Hurley – Friends of the Robinson State Park, Cinda Jones – Cows and MA Forest Landscape Association, Steve Kaiser – Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods, Kent Lage – Mass Wood Producers, Chris Matera – MA Forest Watch, A. Richard Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee, Jill Miller - Citizen, Chris Morton – The Esplanade Association, Heidi Ricci – Mass Audubon, Mike Ryan - Friends of the Fells, Ray Weber – Friends of Robinson State Park

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Lisa Bishop, Stuart Conner, Stephanie Cooper, Conrad Crawford, Jeff Daley, Gary Davis, Jim DiMaio, David Goodwin, Anthony Guthro, Bill Hill, Tom LaRosa, Bob O'Connor, Joe Rotondo, Suzanne Wilson, Patti Vantine, Marcelle Valentin

Chairman Dick Cross

Meeting was called to order by Richard Cross, Chairman, at 1:06 p.m.

- Chairman Cross opened the meeting by expressing his appreciation for attending and all the hard work that is put into these meetings.
- Chairman addressed the issues on the agenda (1) Budget (2) Forestry, and (3) Asian Longhorned Beetles. He expressed his delight of the progress regarding forestry update.
- It was stated that the April meeting will coincide with the Supervisor's Academy, same as last year. The April meeting will be held on April 3 in Devens, MA.
- Chairman Cross thanked Marcelle Valentin for her support as the contact person and Lisa Bishop as the new incoming contact person.
- Chairman Cross confirmed that the December minutes were issued, however the January minutes are on hold until the March meeting.

Commissioner's Report - Commissioner Rick Sullivan

- Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that a Park Caucus was established three years ago by the Legislature with the sole mission to support the parks in Massachusetts and DCR's mission. It is chaired by State Rep. Rush and includes over 81 House members.
- The Commissioner demonstrated to Council the slide show presentation that he presented to the Parks Caucus, including 45 legislators and staff at the State House.
- Commissioner Sullivan informed Council of DCR's efforts related to the federal Economic Stimulus Program.
 - **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:** DCR has worked closely with Governor Patrick through Secretary Bowles as active participants on the State Facilities, Municipal, Procurement and Transportation Task Forces. The result is the identification of \$694 million in potential projects.

- **Transportation** - 49 Projects totaling \$413 million. Projects included park roads, parkways, bridges, pedestrian bridges, interior park trails, bike paths, multiuse paths, docks and piers. In addition DCR submitted a number of projects for the Seaport Council which will benefit communities of the Commonwealth.
- **Facilities** - 58 Projects totaling \$281 million. Projects covered all aspects of DCR responsibilities outside of transportation while addressing the deferred maintenance backlog and addressing the need to improve, enhance and upgrade existing facilities.
- Commissioner Sullivan briefed Council regarding forestry by providing the Council with the following update.
 - The Commissioner informed Council that the federal government is allowing a limited window of time to reimburse states for clean-up costs related to damage from the December ice storm, which caused severe damage at approximately 30 DCR properties and widespread damage in the Central and Western parts of the State.
 - The Commissioner explained that in order to take advantage of this opportunity, he has directed DCR staff including the Forestry Bureau, to complete a full assessment of the damage and move forward with clean-up efforts in order to ensure these areas are safe and ready for the recreation season.
 - The Commissioner stated that resources of the Forestry Bureau have been redirected to focus on storm damage, supporting the Asian Longhorned Beetle effort in Worcester and gathering information for forest resource management plans; and that as a result, staff resources are not focused on moving forward with the harvesting projects that were posted for comment in July 2008 or January 2009.
 - The Commissioner noted that public comments were still being solicited for these proposed projects, in order to adhere to the public notification policy; however DCR does not anticipate moving forward with these projects in the near future.
 - The Commissioner noted that there may be some exceptions for emergencies, including work related to storm clean-up.

Questions

- *Councilor Henry Lee asked the Commissioner if we had a hiring plan in place for the Accelerated Bridge Project.*
 - *The Commissioner informed Council that one person has been hired to date and the program is currently being run with our existing staff. The staffing plan is to hire 100 more employees for a five to eight year plan.*
- *Councilor Elisa Campbell inquired about Mt. Greylock; if it will be operable on opening day.*
 - *The Commissioner informed Council that in a week or so we will be awarding the curatorship program bids. The roadway will be open for the 2009 season.*

Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

Finance Report - Patti Vantine, Director of Administration and Finance

- FY09 - Additional 9C cuts taken 1/28/09 = \$884,755 which consisted of \$750,000 this is all of the remaining earmarks except our \$1 million beaches earmark and \$134,755 which was managers raises & TPL raises.
- FY10 - The Governor's budget (House 1) included 2 "game changing initiatives" - Moving IT to the Secretary level and moving Well Drillers to DEP. The total = \$89,071,759.
- We have been directed to submit to ANF our Ways & Means budget on 2/9. They have asked for:
 - Maintenance budget = \$96,254,127 - the only increases that covers are step raises, 1% for contracted raises that are on the table and a 5% utility increase.
 - 10% across the board reduction = \$86,628,715 - layoffs estimated at 92 FTEs/impacting 37 locations
 - 15% across the board reduction = \$81,816,009 - layoffs estimated at 130 FTEs/impacting 58 locations

Policy and Planning Committee

Resource Management Planning – Councilor Henry Lee

- Councilor Henry Lee updated Council on RMP survey data received by the Committee.
- Councilor Henry Lee made the statements that we need to know budgetary aspects to reach the goals outlined in the survey. The subcommittee reviewed the process recommended by the survey and concluded that it could not be done in less than 26 years, which is not politically viable.
- Six options were identified:
 - Develop RMP's comparable to the Stony Brook RMP approved by the Stewardship Council.
 - Develop light versions of the RMP.
 - District RMP's.
 - Adopt "park vision" process similar to forestry vision process.
 - Outsource the preparation of the plans.
 - A statewide citizen effort to identify natural and cultural assets.

Forestry Update – Tom LaRosa, Deputy General Counsel

- Counsel LaRosa reported to Council what laws provide forest management policy on state-owned forestlands and what other legislative guidance shapes the program.

Forestry Public Process – Stephanie Cooper, Chief of Staff

- The Chief of Staff updated the Council about the work of the UMass Boston Office of Dispute Resolution and Public Collaboration (MODR). She provided handouts outlining process goals and a memo from MODR regarding the process design and an illustration.
- MODR team has been synthesizing input from staff and 20 stakeholder interviews, receiving informative information on areas of agreement, a clear direction about the process.
- MODR report summarizes their input and their recommendations for process design.
- The MODR team will attend an upcoming Council meeting to discuss the process and will independently provide feedback to the stakeholders they have contacted.
- Issues that surfaced in MODR's stakeholder interviews:
 - clarity regarding current forest management,
 - importance of being informed by science and a variety of disciplines to establish criteria for forest management, including important values and other public interests,
 - and to be transparent to the participants and the public.
- The process will include several interconnected components:
 - involvement of broad cross section of public through surveys, site visits and forums,
 - an expert steering committee to develop recommendations based on their expertise, dialogue and input from the process.
 - dialogue with stakeholder community, to surface issues, and provide suggestions to technical steering committee regarding recommendations,
 - MODR will share info, i.e. meeting summaries and coordinate all aspects of the process.
- MODR will coordinate selection of the Technical Steering Committee:
 - Based on input from stakeholders, DCR, the Council and others, MODR has developed a list of possible committee members. MODR will solicit qualifications from all suggested names except for DCR and EEA staff and Council members.
 - Representative stakeholders from the forestry profession, landowners, environment and citizen stewardship communities, will be consulted in the committee selection process.

Comments/Questions

- *Councilor Henry Lee thanked Tom and Stephanie for their work.*

- *Councilor Whitney Hatch asked whether the recent delays in moving forward with harvesting contracts and that the fact that FRMP's have not been completed for all areas, could impact FSC certification.*
 - *Commissioner Sullivan commented that we will not be submitting any new FRMP's to the Council for approval in the near term. This would not necessarily preclude continued Green Certification, though obviously that determination will be made by the outside auditors. This year's annual FSC audit noted DCR has cut less than levels included in FRMP's.*

Special Business

Asian Longhorn Beetles – Jeff Daley, Senior Policy Advisor

- Working with FEMA via the ice storm management, we have spent \$1 million as of today for storm damage cleanup and will be reimbursed 75% of those funds from FEMA.
- So far, over 13,000 trees have been cut down; this does not include the thousands of other infested and host trees that still have to be cut down before summer.
- FEMA has mentioned that this is the first time they have managed a crisis within a crisis with the same material and have mentioned they may be interested in doing a case study
- The Lieutenant Governor's goal is to do aggressive replanting with up to 30,000 trees within the next five years via private/public funding. This will not impact the ALB project budget.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Henry Lee, seconded by Whitney Hatch to accept the December 2008 minutes.
Motion Carried

New Business

- No new business.

Public Comment

Bill Boles, New England Mountain Bike Association

- Mr. Boles believes with the budget cuts, it is a good time to solicit friends and visitors at parks to get involved in the public lands.

Steve Kaiser, Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods

- Mr. Kaiser introduced section 55 of the Senate bill stating that the roadways over parklands are not roadways, they are parkways. These parkways are over DCR lands and are not supposed to be touched. This is a conflict in the bill.
- Mr. Kaiser commented on his satisfaction with the transportation improvements from DCR.
- Mr. Kaiser feels DCR has left pieces out in the forestry management plans and has made a mistake with its plans.

Dick Miller, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee

- Mr. Miller discussed the Johnson plan. He now feels that DCR is more responsive with their concerns and issues; however continued flow of information is needed.

Nathaniel Logan, Cochituate State Park Advisory Committee

- Mr. Logan would like to get a copy of the notes for matching funds. He noted that the deterioration is serious and feels that Natick can get up to \$40k funding for a boat since it is not in the grant.

Cinda Jones – Cowsls Lumber and MA Forest Landscape Association

- Ms. Jones mentioned that there are 600 forest owners who would like to participate in decisions related to managing public lands.

Kent Lage – Mass Wood Producers

- Mr. Lage understands the concerns on forestry; they have looked at chapter 132, section 40 of the General Laws. He believes this is in conflict with the Legislation enacted in 2003 and he would like to assist DCR to get information needed.

Claudia Hurley – Friends of Robinson State Park

- During today's meeting, Ms. Hurley was happy to hear that the July 1 and January 5th timber logging proposals by DCR are not going forward.

Dave Gafney – Citizen

- Mr. Gafney informed the Council that he has read the Federal, Senate and House legislation version on State Forest and it is interesting.

Ray Weber – Friends of Robinson State Park

- Mr. Weber informed Council that he read legislation regarding even age management on clear cuts and recited sections to Council.

Mike Ryan - Friends of the Fells

- Mr. Ryan produced photos from 2008 and reviewed each picture with the Council. Mr. Ryan spoke regarding the forestry bill, section 1040. He stated that this bill does not apply retroactively(?); the purpose of the act is to conserve public forest land and other forms.

Chris Matera – MA Forest Watch

- Mr. Matera informed the Council that he believes there is a problem with the Council overseeing DCR management plans. He continued by clarifying some facts regarding a report from DCR that states a logging plan will reduce logging, which in fact it has increased.
- Mr. Matera also addressed that the environmental organizations, including Sierra Club, are at odds with the FSC. The Sierra Club has a no commercial logging policy, while the FSC wants to sacrifice MA forests.
- Mr. Matera questioned the Council as to whether the moratorium was for all forest lands.
 - Commissioner Sullivan made it clear that the word "moratorium" was his word, not DCR's. There is no "moratorium" on any state properties under the care of DCR.
- Mr. Matera questioned the line item in MA Audubon's budget that, as Mr. Matera said, DCR funds MA Audubon to cover some expenses, therefore creating a conflict of interest because they receive funds from DCR.
 - Commissioner Sullivan and Chairman Cross made it clear that there are no donations from DCR to any non-profit, and that DCR has a relationship with MA Audubon where it provides services at DCR's trailside museum. After a lengthy disagreement, Mr. Matera was ruled out of order.

Ron Coler – Coler and Colantonio, Inc.

- Mr. Coler expressed his opinion that he disagrees with MODR; he would like involvement to count for the energy concept and would appreciate not to shut down the forest.

Joseph DiStasio – D&B Tree Service, Inc.

- Mr. DiStasio expressed his gratitude for a great job done in Worcester.

Heidi Ricci – Mass Audubon

- Ms. Ricci thanked DCR for their great work and how the Commissioner looks at both financial and other issues at hand. She is also grateful that new cuts are being put on hold until there are site visits for public input.
- Ms. Ricci mentioned how Forestry resources have been dedicated to ice storm recovery and the Asian Longhorn Beetle process.

Closing Comment

- Richard Cross, Chairman, informed Council that meetings are getting more interesting and he respects all input.

Meeting Schedule

- Next meeting will be held Friday, March 6, 2009 at the Dunn Pond State Park in Gardner, MA

Motion to adjourn at 3:41 p.m.