



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
September 10, 2009  
West Region Headquarters, Pittsfield, MA

**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Public Attendees:** Gene R. Goebel, Western Mass Geocachers – Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures – Mike Hurley, Friends of Robinson State Park – Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon – Bruce Spencer, Forest Guild – Jane Winn, BEAT

**DCR Staff in Attendance:** Commissioner Rick Sullivan, Kevin Allen, Andy Backman, Lisa Bishop, Stuart Conner, Stephanie Cooper, Conrad Crawford, Jeff Daley, Dan Driscoll, Patrice Kish, Bob Mellace, Joe Orfant, Joe Rotondo, Patti Vantine, Suzanne Wilson, Tim Zelazo

**Chairman Dick Cross called the meeting to order at 1:25 p.m.**

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

*Commissioner Sullivan apologized to the Council for the late start and the confusion of driving directions.*

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

- Pools were closed state wide on August 16 which was the same scheduled amount of time as last year. Due to the heat wave the following week, DCR entered a partnership with the City of Cambridge, in which they paid half the costs of operating two pools in their city. Lifeguards were reassigned that gave DCR the ability to keep five pools and 18 coastal and inland beaches open through August 30. Most wading pools and spray decks stayed open, as well as 16 beaches with guards through Labor Day. The time frame of pools and beaches will be analyzed for 2011.
- Over the last 60 days many public meetings were held including Patten's Cove and Mt. Vernon Street Bridge Rehabilitation, Schell Bridge, Nonantum Road Improvements, Canton Airport, Blue Hills Reservation RMP and Newton Lower Falls Pedestrian Bridge.
- During the month of July, DCR was very busy with our special events including the Park Passport Kickoff, Salisbury Beach, New England National Scenic Trail Designation in Hadley, Sand Sculpting Festival in Revere, Tully Trail Anniversary, Westport River Dredging Project and the Anniversary Celebration of ADA.
- Due to the invasive Zebra Mussels found in Laurel Lake, under the direction of DCR, the Quabbin Reservoir had been closed to private boats for 45 days. During the closure, DCR used dive teams to inspect and test the water and the WMRA infrastructure for the mussels. Working with WMRA and Fish and Game, protocols have been put in place for private boats to go through the approved decontamination process and have intact seals to enter the Quabbin or Laurel Lake.
- DCR was awarded \$4.487m in federal stimulus funds for the ALB tree replanting efforts in the surrounding Worcester area including, if any, other infested areas. The Commissioner thanked Eric Seaborn and Jeff Daley on their efforts for this grant.
- DCR will be issuing 1000 hunting permits for the Quabbin Reservation.
- DCR deployed firefighters to Alaska, Canada and other parts of the Northeast this year to help battle wildfires and assist in aid. All expenses are reimbursed by the Federal Government.
- DCR has \$40m worth of construction for bridges in the Accelerated Bridge Program even though we are in constant discussions directed by the legislator and the governor to move our bridges and eight specific parkways to the new MassDOT for care, custody and control.
  - Bridge repairs at the BU and Craige have started.

- A hearing was held on OHV, Smizik Bill #HB3368 with testimony from DCR and others on behalf of the recommendations that were part of our working group. The Senate has not acted on this bill.
- To date, the Forest Future Visioning Technical Steering Committee has met six times, the Advisory Group has met three times and they have had one joint meeting with the next joint meeting scheduled for September 16. There have been two public forums that were very well attended.
  - Both the Technical Steering Committee and the Advisory Group will continue to meet through the fall and have established working groups to look at various aspects of forestry practice. Additional public forums are planned to seek input and feedback on the Technical Steering Committee's recommendations before they are finalized. The process is expected to conclude with final recommendations issued in early winter.

### **Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules**

#### **Finance Committee**

##### *Finance Report – Councilor Whitney Hatch*

- Councilor Hatch informed the Council that the Stewardship Finance Committee had discussions with Patti Vantine regarding the FY10-11 budget with an optimistic direction; however the first two months of the States fiscal year had a shortfall on revenues.
  - The State is requesting from all agencies to go back to the drawing board from the 9C cuts and further reduce their budgets, in addition to begin and prepare a spending plan for next year.
    - The Finance Committee recommended that this exercise should be initiated from a priority and public perspective, “what is the most important work DCR performs”.

##### *FY10-11 Budget Update - Patti Vantine, Director of Administration and Finance*

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

- DCR was instructed to begin to internally roll out the capital expenditure plan. Capital has been reduced, fortunately not as bad as envisioned.
- The magnitude of the current (2010) operating 9c cut is 4-6%, \$3.5m additional cut from the \$11.5m 2010 9c cut.
- Agencies have offered employees an early retirement (no years added) and volunteer layoff incentive to help curb numbers. HR must be informed by October 1. The retirement incentive savings will not be seen until fiscal year 2011.
- DCR capital plans prioritize the categories and then prioritize within the categories.
  - A lengthy discussion was held on a variety of ways to proceed with the reduction exercise.

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

##### *Resource Management Planning – Councilor Henry Lee*

##### *Beaver Brook Reservation RMP – Dan Driscoll, Project Manager*

- Dan Driscoll presented an overview of the Beaver Brook Reservation RMP.
  - Beaver Brook Reservation was the first reservation in the Metropolitan Park System. Established in 1893, it has been determined by MHC to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Impetus to prepare a Resource Management Plan came from the transfer of the 254-acre former Metropolitan State Hospital property to DCR (now Beaver Brook North Reservation) to form the Expanded Beaver Brook Reservation. The Expanded Beaver Brook Reservation is part of an important regional open space system, called the Western Greenway. The size and continuity of this greenway is unique for the dense western suburbs of Boston.
  - The Beaver Brook North Reservation, 254 acres, was purchased by the City of Waltham for \$600k and was put into a DCR trust fund. Each fiscal year, the interest from this fund is rolled over and can be used for this property. DCR retained a permanent conservation easement over this parcel.
  - The Governor has signed a bill to protect the Western Greenway (LOT 1) open space property.

- The protection and enhancement of the ecological system will be a guiding principle in developing this plan. Both passive and active recreation opportunities will be promoted and enhanced, while protecting and enhancing the Reservation as a living system.
  - After a lengthy discussion concerning the underserved property, it was suggested that DCR should have another public meeting, create a long range action plan on operations, resources, budget, leadership and update the RMP after this study. DCR will submit an updated RMP plan for Beaver Brook for the Council's approval.

### **Special Business**

*Curatorship Program Presentation – Patrice Kish, Director of Historic Resources - Kevin Allen, Preservation Planner*

- Patrice Kish spoke about "What is Curatorship".
  - Under the Historic Curatorship Program, DCR enters into a long term lease with a Curator/Tenant who pays rent in the form of services, specifically the rehabilitation and maintenance of the property. The reuse of these significant properties must be compatible with the surrounding community while enhancing the visitor's experience of the public park. We presently have 34 properties with 14 under agreement.
- The Council viewed a presentation given by Kevin Allen outlining the Historic Curatorship Program.
  - After the presentation, a lengthy discussion was held concerning financing and leasing. As stated, there is no financing through DCR. The tenants use the long term lease to leverage outside financing.
    - The Commissioner thanked Patrice and Kevin for the phenomenal success of the Program and how well legislative encourages the existence of this Program.

*Asian Longhorn Beetles –Jeff Daley, Senior Policy Advisor  
Jeff Daley informed the Council on/of the following matters:*

- We presently have 1200 standing infested trees in the Worcester area.
- Until the next budget cycle, DCR has approximately \$800k remaining from the \$24.5m appropriated.
- The Obama Administration has submitted \$10m for the Worcester program for FY10; we are revisiting the CCC (emergency grant) for an additional \$24.5m for FY10.
- DCR was awarded \$4.487m in federal stimulus funds for tree replanting efforts in the Worcester area.

### **Approval of Minutes**

- Minutes were not accepted by the Council.

### **New Business**

- No new business

### **Public Comment**

*Public comments informed the Council on/of the following matters:*

*Bruce Spencer, Forest Guild*

- Mr. Spencer expressed his concern and questioned the Council of the status, revisions and reforms proposed on Chapter 132 - Forest Practice Regulations.
  - Commissioner Sullivan informed Mr. Spencer that there will be a public process for Chapter 132 Regulations once they are released. In addition, he stated there is an exception to cutting to locations that do not have forestry management plans; fuel sales – there will be notice for public comment on home wood sale cuts to limit each individual to five (5) cords per home.
- Mr. Spencer asked the Council for more information regarding the present moratorium.

- Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that DCR has not posted any new cuts for locations that do not have approved forestry management plans; nothing has gone forward in other areas.
- The Commissioner anticipates that there will be strong recommendations from the FFV process in regards to what type of cuts and where they might be taking place. Clear cut postings will not be seen anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Commissioner strongly suggested not to influence the diverse and extensive process.
- The Commissioner reiterated that the plans have been completed, approved and voted upon; this body has been clear that they would reopen the plans if the process changed them.

*Claudia Hurley, Stakeholder for Forest Futures*

- As a Stakeholder of the FFV concerning Chapter 132 - Forest Practice Regulations, Ms. Hurley expressed her concerns to the Council of who is responsible and where is the information requested.
- Ms. Hurley informed the Council that information was released from DCR stating that DCR forestry will be creating a "Biomass Demonstration Area" interpretive trails in selected forests and funded through grants.
  - Commissioner Sullivan informed the Council that this is federal grant money and no decision has been made. Stephanie Cooper explained that before anything could move forward, appropriate public process will take place and DCR trail guidelines will be followed.
- Ms. Hurley presented with hope that DCR will not promote the taking of excess amount of forestry products for biomass.
  - Councilor Henry Lee asked the Council if this Council is involved in the process of whether or not forest resources get used in biomass.
    - Councilor Elisa Campbell noted that FRMP's establish limits on timber harvesting regardless of the use.
- Ms. Hurley invited Councilor Frank Frey and the other Councilors to attend the Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on October 24 at 9:00 a.m. at the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission Conference Room, 2 Washington Square, Worcester, MA. This meeting will focus on the OHV Survey Results.
  - Commissioner Sullivan informed the council that Conrad Crawford will be representing DCR.

*Gene R. Goebel, Western Mass Geocachers*

- Mr. Goebel requested from the Council that he would like Mt. Greylock to permit geocaching, however he has been informed that there is not a policy.
  - Commissioner Sullivan informed Mr. Goebel that other sites do geocaching but a policy was not in place. Mr. Goebel was directed to speak with Conrad Crawford.

*Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon*

- Ms. Ricci informed the Council of her excitement that Stewardship is moving forward to work with communities to engage partnerships and volunteers to help at our properties.
- Ms. Ricci noted to the Council that, even though she is not opposed, she would like the policy from DEM regarding high ground facilities to be revisited. Presently the policy states that communication facilities on high ground prohibit the placement of new commercial communication facilities because of the concerns of sensitivity at some of the sites.

**Closing Comment**

- No closing comments

**Meeting Schedule**

- Next meeting will be held Friday, October 2, 2009 at Skinner State Park, Hadley, MA.

*Motion to adjourn at 3:15 p.m.*