

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee
October 24, 2011
7:30 PM

Location: DCR Blue Meadow Conference Center, Belchertown, MA 01007

Members Present: Tom Barnes (NWC Quabbin Anglers Association), Elisa Campbell (Sierra Club), Craig Cortis (Worcester County League of Sportsmen's), Bill Lafley (Citizen at Large), Art Miner (Quabbin Fisherman's Association), Mason Phelps (FOQ)

DCR Staff Present: Justin Gonsor, Bill Pula

Public Attending: Lexi Dewey (WSCAC), J.R. Greene (MWRA Advisory Board), Ralph Lapinskas

Superintendent's Report

Meeting Start Time: 7:31 PM

Approval of Minutes from June 6, 2011

Elisa Campbell suggested a change to the June 6th minutes. The person she talked to about the National Scenic Trail was Josh from AMC; the minutes have been changed to reflect this. Minutes from the June 6th, 2011 meeting will be voted on for approval at the next QWAC meeting, when there is a quorum in attendance.

Director's Report

2011 Quabbin Access Plan Evaluation: Bill Pula mentioned that there weren't many changes made to the Access Plan. A flow chart was added, which was done to get QWAC more involved in the decision-making process on issues. J.R. Greene noted that if any proposal is found to be in conflict with water supply protection mandate, the proposal is denied without the need for QWAC's review. Bill Pula responded by saying that QWAC will mainly be consulted for proposals that seek to add a new activity at Quabbin. Most changes made to the Access Plan were just simple corrections.

Fishing Area Wrap Up: Bill Pula presented Paul Lyons summary of the 2011 fishing season. 596 season passes were sold this year, up 13 from last season. Overall, total revenue was \$216,079, the lowest in the past 5 years. Elisa Campbell mentioned that this could be due to it being a bad fishing season with all the rain we got. Bill Pula said that Area 3 was still the most popular spot, even though it tends to be the hardest to find. This past year, DCR decontaminated roughly 254 boats. Elisa Campbell asked about what we are specifically looking for when doing the decontaminations. We are looking for weeds, oil/gas leakages, and excessive rust. Bill Pula said the Cold Weather Quarantine (CWQ) program, which is separate from the boat decontaminations done throughout the fishing season, will be done Nov. 19th in New Salem, December 17th and January 7th in Belchertown, and December 10th in Natick if demand warrants it. The reason we wait a month after the fishing areas close is that it gives fishermen a chance to fish other bodies of water in October/November and then get their boat ready for Quabbin next spring. Art Miner asked about whether people are allowed to have carpeting on their trailers. People who go through the CWQ program are allowed to have carpeting on their trailers because it ensures their boat will be out of water in freezing temperatures for a minimum of three months, effectively killing anything in or on that carpeting. Carpeting is not allowed on boats that go through our boat decontamination program that is done throughout the fishing season because there is no way to ensure that everything that is potentially in that carpet gets killed. The only thing fishing area attendants need to do to make sure a boat is okay to be launched at Quabbin is to ensure that they have a Quabbin Boat Seal, they should not be concerned with whether a boat has carpeting or not.

New Moose Enclosures: Elisa Campbell pointed out that the meeting agenda said new moose “enclosures” would be discussed, but should have been written as new moose “exclosures”, as we are keeping moose out of the plots, and has been subsequently changed on the agenda. Bill Pula said there are exclosures currently set up in New Salem and the Ware River Watershed. Stephen DeStefano, a professor at UMass, and Dave Wattles, a UMass graduate student, are heading the study. They have 3 different types of exclosures; one is just a laid out plot that allows both moose and deer inside, another keeps moose out but lets deer in, and the third keeps both moose and deer out. Motion cameras are set up inside the plots as well. Also, students conduct thorough vegetative surveys when the exclosures are first set up, and annual monitoring surveys will be done as well.

We will learn more about what deer are eating compared to moose. Bill Pula is trying to get Dave Wattles to give a presentation on the study at the next QWAC meeting in December. Dave generally thinks that we are at the southern limit of moose, and doesn't expect their population to explode like the deer have. Warm weather in the winter is more stressful for moose than warm weather in the summer because they have a thick winter coat in the winter, with no way to cool off when the weather gets warm. A new type of radio collar is also being used that utilizes blue-tooth, and is making it easier to get good data.

Member Questions and Comments

Elisa Campbell asked if we would be giving out moose survey cards again this year to hunters participating in our annual controlled deer hunt. Bill Pula confirmed that all hunters will get a moose survey card, and record any moose sighting with as much detail as possible. UMass students then analyze the data and eliminate any instances of multiple people seeing the same moose. For the first time, a random subset of hunters will be given low-cost GPS units, which will give us good data on where hunters are frequenting. It will hopefully help us learn which areas are receiving less hunting pressure, and allow us to direct other hunters to those locations in the future.

Elisa Campbell asked for an update on the status of the STAC report. Bill Pula let everyone know that the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee wrote Paul Barton and Secretary Sullivan a letter asking when the report would be ready. Paul Barton said that he expected to have the draft report back to the committee by October, review it with the committee by November, and present it to the advisory committees by December.

Bill Lafley asked if there were any updates to the National Scenic Trail. Bill Pula said the new commissioner was very hesitant to go against the wishes of the advisory committee. There has been no action recently.

Craig Cortiss wanted some further clarification of the moose exclosure study. Bill Pula reiterated that they are about 1/10 of an acre and that they are built in a way that keeps moose and deer out of a given plot of land. This will allow us to get a better sense of how moose and deer affect vegetation/regeneration in the forest and what species they prefer to eat. There are 3 types of test areas, one that lets everything in, one that excludes moose but allows deer in, and one that

excludes both deer and moose. Currently, it is against the law in the state to hunt moose. Tom Barnes wanted to know how long the study is scheduled to go on for. As long as Stephen DeStefano has money and graduate students to do it he will, but at least 10 years would be a good goal. J.R. Greene wanted to know who determined the placement of the exclosures. Bill Pula said that it was a collaborative effort and that we wanted it fairly random but not close enough to roads that it can be easily seen and interfered with by the public.

Bill Pula briefly mentioned an encounter with the State Police that happened within the past week. A large group of state police on motorcycles rode out onto the dam and continually circled at the south end of the dam. We at DCR were not notified that they would be doing this, and when Bill questioned them he was told that they were “patrolling”. They said that they were state police and that they could patrol anywhere they wanted.

Meeting End Time: 8:14 PM

The next QWAC meeting is scheduled for December 12th, 2011 at 7:30 PM.

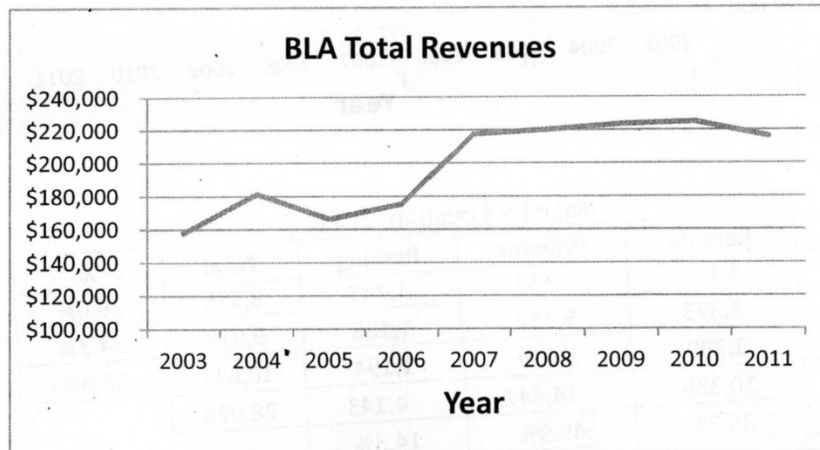
Summary of 2011 Quabbin Boat Launch Area activity
Prepared for Oct. 24 QWAC meeting

Season pass sales and revenue, 2010 and 2011.

Category	2011		2010	
	# Sold	Revenue	# Sold	Revenue
Regular	325	\$16,250	326	\$16,300
Senior	247	\$6,175	238	\$5,950
Handicapped	24	\$600	19	\$475
Totals	596	\$23,025	583	\$22,725

BLA revenues by year.

Year	BLA Revenue	Season Pass Sales	Total Revenue
2003	\$157,764	\$0	\$157,764
2004	\$181,141	\$0	\$181,141
2005	\$166,272	\$0	\$166,272
2006	\$175,109	\$0	\$175,109
2007	\$217,535	\$0	\$217,535
2008	\$220,176	\$0	\$220,176
2009	\$198,328	\$25,025	\$223,353
2010	\$202,095	\$22,725	\$224,820
2011	\$193,004	\$23,075	\$216,079



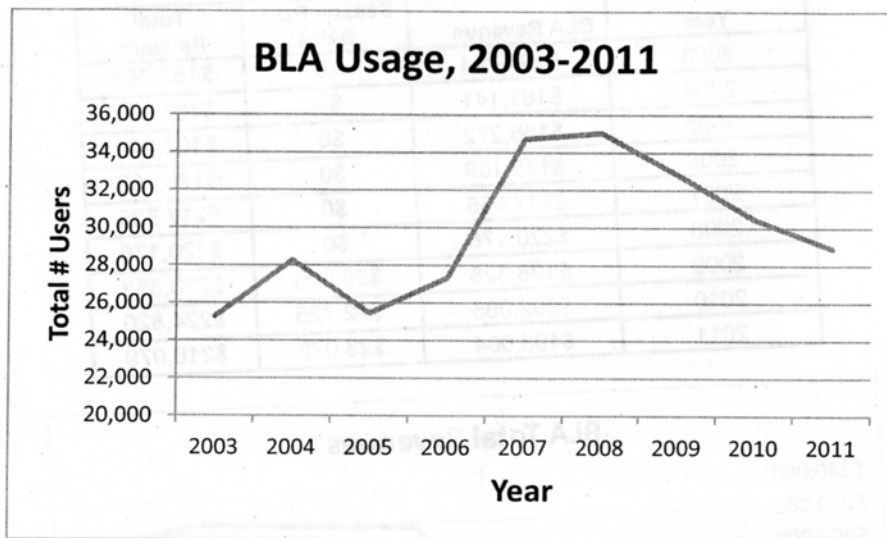
BLA Revenue* by Location, 2010 and 2011.

BLA #	2011	%	2010	%
1	\$58,043	30.1%	\$62,265	30.8%
2	\$61,919	32.1%	\$63,531	31.4%
3	\$73,042	37.8%	\$76,299	37.8%
Totals:	\$193,004		\$202,095	

*not including season pass sales

Number of users by category at BLAs, 2003-2011.

Year	Parking Shore	Parking Other	DCR Rentals	Private Boats	Total
2003	2,918		7,120	15,232	25,270
2004	3,574		8,381	16,322	28,277
2005	3,091		7,624	14,743	25,458
2006	2,908		8,215	16,202	27,325
2007	4,128		11,388	19,195	34,711
2008	4,226		11,234	19,586	35,046
2009	4,234		11,349	17,233	32,816
2010	3,988	100	11,049	15,317	30,454
2011	3,629	514	10,335	14,447	28,925



Usage by Location, 2011

BLA #	Rentals	Privates	Parking	Total	%
1	3,163	3,451	1,761	8,375	29.0%
2	3,373	5,357	1,188	9,918	34.3%
3	3,799	5,639	1,194	10,632	36.8%
Totals	10,335	14,447	4,143	28,925	
%	35.7%	49.9%	14.3%		

Rentals by type:

Type	# people	% of total
Rowboats	316	3.1%
Motorboats	9,721	94.1%
Canoes	179	1.7%
Kayaks	119	1.2%
Total	10,335	100.0%