

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee**  
**December 13, 2010**  
**7:30 PM**

**Location:** DCR Administration Building, Belchertown, MA

**Members Present:** Tom Barnes, Tom Berube, Jim Boyko, Tony Brighenti, Elisa Campbell, Craig Cortis, Dennis Duguay, Larry Gates, Bill Elliot, Tom Lautzenheiser, Art Miner

**DCR Staff Present:** Justin Gonsor, Lisa Gustavsen, Bill Pula, Dave Small

**Public Attending:** Lexie Dewey (WSCAC), Jeff Schaaf (Chairman of Ware River Advisory Board)

**Meeting Start Time: 7:33 PM**

**Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2010**

Elisa Campbell brought up some grammatical errors in the previous meetings minutes and the changes were noted. Minutes were then unanimously approved for the September 13, 2010 meeting.

**Quabbin Public Access Plan Evaluation**

Lisa Gustavsen presented an evaluation on the current Public Access Plan at Quabbin. DCR staff has decided to add an annual evaluation report to respond more quickly to public access problems/issues. Currently, the Public Access Plan is only updated every 8 years and annual updates would better respond to changing conditions.

Some errors and omissions have been found in the 2006 Plan. A Quabbin Park Map, a Watershed System Map, corrections for bicycle access gate listings and information on the Boat Seal Program will to be added to the plan. Lisa also talked about some areas in the Plan that requires further clarification. These topics include: Quabbin Park hours vs. DCR Gate hours; islands and exposed

shorelines that are restricted during times of low water levels; allowed/prohibited shoreline fishing areas near Rte. 32; and deer hunting on off-reservation lands for land management purposes.

Lisa then talked about some issues that we would like input on from QWAC.

The first issue deals with the process for evaluating Public Access Proposals within Quabbin. Lisa handed out a draft process in the form of a flow chart for dealing with newly proposed activities. Bill Pula mentioned revising our mission statement to be more explicit in how we evaluate proposed activities. Proposed activities are reviewed in-house; if a request is a clear denial, evaluation by QWAC may not be needed.

The next issue was night access for fishing. Bill Pula said the police have been complaining about all the cars parked on Rte. 9 at night by the Swift River. Currently, permits are not needed for night access to fish at the Y-Pool, but DCR is considering implementing a self-permitting system. The permit would be free and would allow the police to know who is on our land. Tom Berube commented that he feels things are getting too secure and it is getting to the point of harassment. Tom Barnes asked whether you will have to call the rangers before going to night fish the Y-Pool. You will not have to call the rangers if this new permitting program goes into effect. Bill Pula said that next season we will stop charging \$3 for night access permits and begin issuing the permits at the fishing areas in addition to the Visitor's Center.

Whether to ban felt-bottom waders was the next issue. Felt soles are particularly good at transporting Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). DCR feels it would be a good idea for Quabbin to take the lead on this policy of educating fishermen about felt-bottom waders. Tom Berube didn't see the problem with felt-bottom waders because he thought people weren't allowed to wade in the reservoir anyway. Bill Pula said the West Branch of the Swift River and the Y-Pool could potentially cause problems.

Lisa then talked about changing the access restrictions for the baffle dams from Nov. 15-June 15 to November 15-April 15. These restrictions are in place because that area is a winter roosting area for eagles. The restriction to June 15 conflicts with the fishing season. Mass Wildlife is in agreement that changing the date to

April 15 will not adversely affect the eagles. Larry Gates said a sign should be put up to clarify where fishing is allowed near the baffle dams.

User conflicts relating to group access requests have been becoming a bigger issue as well. Bill Pula said we already have two large events scheduled for the following year. People sometimes want, or expect, exclusive rights to an area, but the Visitor Center staff tells them that we cannot grant exclusive rights. Bill Pula said that we are looking for input on how to better manage these groups. Elisa Campbell said that with the Summit House now closed, Quabbin may get increased requests for group activities. Jim Boyko thinks that Quabbin needs to get back to the basics; this is a watershed, you just have to say no sometimes, and that there are other places people can go. Tom Barnes asked if it would make sense to come up with a short list of activities that we allow at Quabbin, and deny any activity that is not on that list. Elisa Campbell thought it would be very hard to come up with a comprehensive list that includes every activity we want to allow. Dennis Duguay wanted to specifically talk about motorcycle groups; he feels that they pose an environmental problem.

Lisa then discussed the next steps in the evaluation of the Public Access Plan. Written comments/suggestions should be sent to Bill Pula by January 15, 2011. A copy of Quabbin's Public Access Master Policy and a copy of Ware Rivers Public Access Master Policy will be attached to these minutes. A report will be produced regarding the evaluation of the Public Access Plan, and then e-mailed to QWAC members. Tom Berube felt that the more issues we put in front of people to comment on, the more things people will have to complain about. Elisa Campbell felt that there needs to be further clarification on proposed new activities. Revising the Master Policy Statement seems to be a good idea. Bill Pula said the Public Access Plan is set to be re-written in 2014. Tom Berube commented that a problem occurred when MDC and DRC combined because MDC was concerned with water supply protection while DCR was concerned with recreation.

### **2010 Deer Hunt Results**

Bill Pula presented the preliminary data for the 2010 Deer Hunt. It was the 20<sup>th</sup> successful season of the Quabbin Deer Management Program and was one of the most efficient years ever. The hunt ran smoothly, there were very few problems, and we had a successful hunt, with 116 deer taken over the four days of the hunt.

Roughly 1,200 hunters were selected to hunt and about 10% of hunters got a deer. The biggest deer taken was a 197.5 lb. buck from New Salem. The moose survey was conducted again this year, and the data collection was very successful, but it will take some time for the data to be analyzed.

One of the only issues was that a hunter left their gun in the woods by mistake, but our rangers were able to find and return the gun to the owner. Bill Elliot inquired about why there is such a large difference in the number of deer taken on the 1<sup>st</sup> day versus the 2<sup>nd</sup> day. Bill Pula responded by saying that there are always more deer taken on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the hunt than on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. This year, it was mainly due to fewer hunters on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day and the cold weather. Bill Pula mentioned that there is a Professor at UMass who is testing a new method of assessing the impact of moose on the watershed.

Dennis Duguay asked about the first year Petersham was hunted. Dennis hunted Petersham in 1993, 7 years ago, and this past year. He talked about how drastically forest health has improved in Petersham over the years as a result of the Deer Hunt. He also thinks the increased regeneration has caused the forest to become so thick that it is tougher to spot the deer when hunting.

### **2010 Quabbin Fishing Area Report**

Bill Pula went over data from the 2010 Quabbin Fishing Area Report. Revenue did increase a small amount from 2009, but was expected to be higher because the reservoir was closed to private boats a portion of 2009 and the private boat seal program that was implemented. Revenue increased from 2009, while people renting boats, launching private boats, and parking all went down from 2009. Possible reasons for this could be the rate increase for renting boats and parking that went into effect July 1, 2009, as well people not renting boats due to the poor economic situation. Area 3 was the most popular, followed by Area 2, and lastly, Area 1. 72 canoes and 80 kayaks were rented throughout the 2010 season.

Larry Gates was interested in knowing which fishing area rented out more canoes/kayaks. Area 3 by far rented the most. Bill Elliot asked if we thought most people are aware of the private boat sealing program. It seems that the majority of people who use the reservoir are aware of the private boat seal program. We do get the occasional out-of-state boater who is unaware of the program, but it is

a rare occurrence. Bill Pula also mentioned that Marker Buoys will be placed in the channel leading out of Area 3 next spring to alert boaters of shallow areas when the water level is low.

### **Cold Weather Boat Decontamination**

Bill Pula gave an update on the Cold Weather Quarantine (CWQ) Program that is being conducted during the winter at Quabbin. The CWQ is a free program that allows people to get their boat inspected and sealed to be ready for the 2011 fishing season. The days committed to inspecting boats are/were November 20, December 18, and January 8. So far, roughly 50 people have scheduled to have their boat sealed, and everyone that has called has been able to get an appointment. Bill Elliot asked about how many boats have gone through our program more than once. Up to this point, we have sealed about 1,000 boats, with only 40 getting sealed more than once. That means over 95% of the people appear to be only using their boats at Quabbin.

### **Joint Meeting with Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee**

This joint meeting was suggested to discuss the recommendations from the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) about the Forestry Plan. Paul Barton, the Chairman of the STAC, is requesting postponement of the January 13 meeting. The STAC has a meeting on January 14, 2011, and would like to reschedule the joint meeting in February at the Barre Town Hall. Bill Pula thought a better idea would be to wait until the STAC committee meets on January 14<sup>th</sup> to determine when to schedule the Joint Meeting. It was decided to cancel the Joint Meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup> and reschedule it at a later date.

### **Member Issues**

Jim Boyko suggested that the foresters go through the Quabbin Park Cemetery and assess some of the trees that could pose safety risks to visitors. Bill Pula agreed, but said that a crane would be needed for that job.

Tony Brighenti asked why people who are buying a new boat and trailer still have to pay to get their boat cleaned and sealed before launching at Quabbin. Bill Pula responded by saying that if someone gets a boat from a local dealer, and gets in

contact with us, we can send someone down to the dealer to seal the boat to the trailer on site. Bill Pula reiterated that this would only possible if the boat is bought from a local dealer and has not been in any body of water.

Tom Lautzenheiser asked about the status of the Quabbin Invasive Species Management Plan. Bill Pula said that DCR was working on the plan, and that the big issue was whether or not to use herbicides. The consensus of DCR staff appears to be that herbicide use would be limited addressing critical infestations over small discrete areas of the watershed. It was suggested that Thom Kyker-Snowman give a presentation on terrestrial invasive species at Quabbin.

Dennis Duguay mentioned that this was the first year where no fish tags were returned to the Quabbin Anglers for the bounty. Tom Brighenti let everyone know that the membership cards for the Quabbin Anglers have a message on them alerting people about helping to curb the spread of all invasive species. He thinks it is important for other organizations to stress this message as well.

**Meeting End Time: 9:20 PM**

**The next QWAC meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2011 at 7:30 PM.**

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee**

**April 4, 2011**

**7:30 PM**

**Quabbin Visitors Center  
485 Ware Road, Belchertown MA**

**Agenda**

Approval of minutes of December 13, 2010

Update on Terrestrial Invasive Plant Program at Quabbin

Update on Science and Technical Advisory Committee

Landscape Maintenance at the Quabbin Park Cemetery

2011 Fishing Season

Members Questions or Comments

## **Quabbin Public Access Master Policy – 2006**

### **Public Access to the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System**

Public access to and the recreational use of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System, the Quabbin Reservoir, and DCR/DWSP/OWM-managed land, are limited, controlled, and monitored to protect the public drinking water supply by reducing public health risks. Public access to, and recreation within, the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System will be consistent with all applicable legislation. Except for those activities specifically authorized by statute or existing DCR/OWM regulations, any new access and/or new recreational activities or significant changes to existing access and/or recreational activities may be permitted only when they do not conflict with ongoing watershed management activities or authorized research, and do not degrade the following values:

- Public drinking water supply protection,
- Apparent wilderness character,
- Natural resources (forest health, biodiversity), and
- Historic and pre-Columbian sites.

Existing authorized activities, whether authorized by statute or regulations, will be periodically evaluated to determine if they conflict with the above values. If conflicts are identified, appropriate efforts to eliminate or minimize negative impacts will be made.

## **Ware Master Policy**

### **Public Access Philosophy**

DCR-Watershed controls over 25,000 acres in the Ware River Watershed – part of a public drinking water supply system for over 40% of the state. In managing this resource, our primary goal is to insure a safe and adequate water supply while protecting natural and cultural resources of the Commonwealth. DCR's public access philosophy is to balance reasonable public access, legally mandated activities, and long-term resource protection. To evaluate new or expanded activity requests, DCR considers the following: potential water quality impacts, user benefits and potential conflicts, DCR land management activities, long-term ecosystem health, and biological diversity.

### **Annual Plan and Policy Evaluation**

Starting in December 2010, DCR staff will prepare annual reports to evaluate the Plan in general, as well as any policy concerns or conflicts that arose during the year. This review will be coordinated through the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee during their regularly-scheduled meetings. These meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss, evaluate, and, if necessary, adopt any minor policy changes (proposed by DCR or by user groups), and will include a public input component. This annual process will inform the larger Plan and Policy update process that is conducted every ten years.

### **10-Year Plan Update Process**

DCR updates its *Public Access Management Plan* every 10 years. Approximately one year before the 10-year Update deadline, DCR staff review and provide field input to an internal working group on issues or needs related to public access policies. Following this general issue identification, the DCR staff begins data collection in consultation with the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee. In addition, DCR consults with federal and state agencies operating within the watershed (e.g., Army Corps of Engineers, DCR-Parks, Fish & Wildlife) to address inter-agency concerns or policy conflicts, and to enhance coordination. Typically, survey data is collected regarding abutters', recreational users', and other stakeholders' views on existing recreation policies. A literature review is conducted simultaneously to inform and update recreation policy decision making and formulation. A draft Plan Update is submitted for review to MA DEP. Following DEP review, the draft Plan and associated maps are presented at public meetings or public workshop(s), and posted on-line. All public input is considered and final modifications are often made based on the applicable input. The completed ***Public Access Management Plan Update*** is posted on the Web, and hard copies or electronic copies are distributed to staff, and stakeholders.