

Appendix E – Media Coverage and Letters to the Editors

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THE SENTINEL • THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2005

DCR to hold workshop on Quabbin Reservoir's Public Access and Recreation Management Plans

BELCHERTOWN – The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will hold a workshop on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 to update the community on the Public Access and Recreation Management Plan for the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed. The workshop will begin at 7 p.m. and will be held at the Chestnut Hill School Auditorium in Belchertown. Staff from the DCR/Division of Water Supply Protection will present the plan, followed by an extensive period for Q & A and discussion of the issues with the aid of a moderator.

The DCR was formed in 2003 by the merger of the old Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) both of which previously oversaw aspects of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed.

The Division of Water Supply Protection, under the new DCR, is now responsible for the management and protection of drinking water supply watersheds for nearly 2.2 million residents of Massachusetts in 47 communities which represents approximately 40 percent of the state's population. The Quabbin Reservoir, Ware River and Wachusett Reservoir watersheds are the sources of drinking water for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).

The workshop will provide an update on the public access and recreation management plan and is an essential tool in the management and protection of these drinking water supply watersheds.

The event is free and open to all; for further information or directions please call the Quabbin Visitor Center at 413-323-7221.

**Belchertown's
Town Calendar**
Scheduled Meetings and Events
• Mon. April 4... 7 p.m. Senior Assessment

More
NTH CD
8%
Annual Percentage Yield*

More
NTH CD
10%
Annual Percentage Yield*

ch

Boating policies at Quabbin Reservoir are questioned

By Bradford L. Miner TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
bminer@telegram.com

BELCHERTOWN— Don't expect to see kayaks on Quabbin Reservoir or horseback riders on the dirt and partly paved roads of the 58,000-acre reservation anytime soon.

More than 60 people — all with an interest of one kind or another in Quabbin — gathered Tuesday night in the Chestnut Hill Community School auditorium to make their feelings known to staff members of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply Protection.

Some wanted increased access for one activity or another. Some wanted less activity and voiced frustration that motorboats are allowed on the reservoir, while other seemingly less detrimental activities are not.

William E. Pula, whose title recently changed from Quabbin superintendent to regional director, said the issue of boats on Quabbin cannot be explained logically or rationally.

"This was a political decision made back in the 1950s and has since become a fact of life. The Swift River Valley was an area known for its fishing, and that's one thing that we can give back to those who gave up so much to make the reservoir possible," he said.

Mr. Pula added that boating has been monitored since it was first allowed on the reservoir and because of the distance from the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct and the Shaft 12 intake works, it doesn't pose any threat to water quality.

The 412-billion gallon reservoir — as of yesterday 2 inches below spillway capacity — and the surrounding 58,000 acres of watershed represent the heart of the water system that provides unfiltered drinking water to 2.4 million people in 47 cities and towns.

Of the total 82,538 acres of land and water, 71 percent is accessible to the public.

Monday night's hearing represented a starting point for establishing a third public access plan.

The first plan, established in 1988, was superceded by a revised plan in 1998, and that plan is currently being reviewed and tweaked.

Mr. Pula cautioned those present that no one within the Division of Water Supply Protection is expecting any major changes in public access.

He explained that many of the recreational activities prohibited at Quabbin are not within the discretion of the Department of Conservation and Recreation to change.

Because Quabbin is an unfiltered reservoir that delivers water to residents of Chicopee, Wilbraham and South Hadley the same day via the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct beneath Winsor Dam, some activities are prohibited

 print article

 email article



Grace Zuhusky, 2, of Belchertown, enjoys a late afternoon stroll with her family atop Winsor Dam at Quabbin Reservoir. (T&G Staff/ DAN GOULD)

 Enlarge photo

"I can tell you that there will never be horseback riding within Quabbin, because that's one of the activities prohibited by the federal Clean Drinking Water Act," he said.

He reminded participants that Quabbin was established as a source of drinking water for Metropolitan Boston and that remains its primary mission today.

"There are many large public drinking water supplies where public access is prohibited altogether," he said.

In a letter read by an aide, state Sen. Stephen M. Brewer, D-Barre, alluded to the delicate balance of allowing public access, especially to those families and descendants displaced when Enfield, Dana, Greenwich and Prescott were submerged, while still providing pristine drinking water to the customers of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority who pay the bill for clean water.

Some touched upon Quabbin as a managed wilderness area and called for continuing the same level of public access or less, while others petitioned for mountain biking, looped bicycle trails, sailing, kayaking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

Mr. Pula suggested that while some activities could not be allowed, the Department of Conservation and Recreation would consider suggestions for specific additional uses in specific areas at specific times.

He noted that regulations governing activities in the Ware River watershed are much less stringent because the watershed is a good distance from either the Wachusett or Quabbin reservoirs and can only reach either via the aqueduct.

Mr. Pula said federal water quality regulations prohibit all domestic animals from the reservation, which means that no one is allowed to walk his dog at Quabbin.

He said that since Sept. 11, 2001, the only security changes have been the prohibition of cars driving across the Winsor Dam, the Goodnough Dike and the road to the power station at the base of the dam.

"When you look at it, only a couple of acres of Quabbin Park are off-limits to the public," he said.

J.R. Greene of Athol, author of more than a dozen books about Quabbin and a member of related advisory committees, noted that while many had favorite activities they'd like to enjoy at Quabbin, the current level of access is working and the status quo should be maintained.

"If there's one common thread here, it's the fact that everyone loves Quabbin to the extent that if we're not careful, we'll love Quabbin to death," he said.

At least one fisherman raised the issue of the equity of parking fees. He noted that while parking fees are charged at the three fishing areas at Gates 8, 31, and 43, there is no charge for parking at the Quabbin Visitor Center and no fee associated with driving through Quabbin Park.

Some have suggested that a fee might be appropriate for generating additional revenue for the department.

Petersham Selectman Alfred M. Berry said a letter had been sent to state Rep. Anne M. Gobi, D-Spencer, and to Mr. Brewer asking them to consider an exemption from the 40B law for towns within the watershed.

That law deals with the siting of clustered, low-income housing.

Jonathan Yeo, director of Water Supply Protection, said the department is working with communities to provide technical assistance and options.

Lisa Gustafson of the Division of Water Supply Protection said written comments would be collected and combined with the comments from the hearing in preparing a draft.

That draft, to be prepared this summer, will be distributed, reviewed and revised during the fall with a public hearing sometime early next winter to finalize the third public access plan for Quabbin.

Greenfield Recorder, Monday April 18, 2005

Better use of the Quabbin

Some regulations don't make much sense

It's getting to be spring, and everywhere in the area that you see some open water — river or lake — you'll see recreational boating going on.

Small sailboats will be setting out to catch a steady breeze, motorboat engines will settle down to a steady roar as their owners plan a day of cruising, water skiers will don lifejackets and limber up their legs.

Except, that is, on the Quabbin Reservoir. The artificial lake, which holds 412 billion gallons of water and straddles the border between Franklin and Worcester counties is off limits.

Back in 1939, when the Swift River was impounded and the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott were flooded to create the reservoir, the goal was to supply water to Boston which did not need to be filtered.

Since then, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection, which runs the reservoir, has clung to that goal.

As a representative of DCR wrote to me recently, "Quabbin Reservoir is part of a major, unfiltered water supply system that provides pure drinking water to more than 2.4 million Massachusetts residents.

"Its purity, in large part, is a result of the undeveloped nature of its watershed, plus the controls that the DCR maintains over potentially harmful uses on the reservoir and the surrounding watershed lands.

"Those controls have allowed us to maintain very high drinking water quality that exceeds state and federal standards and thereby avoid the need to construct a costly water filtration plant."

Tim Blagg



A few years ago, the EPA essayed to force the state to filter, or otherwise treat, the water, but was not able to accomplish its goal.

There has been some slight erosion of DCR's stand against usage of the reservoir.

In the early 1960s, responding to public pressure and a request from the then-governor — Paul Dever — the agency instituted a limited boat fishing program.

The regulations limit boating to fishing only, and the size and type of the boat, and its motor, are strictly limited.

You can make a case, I think, that not allowing canoes and sailboats, while allowing two-cycle outboards and fishing gear, doesn't make much sense.

But it was the fishing lobby that pressed for entrance first, and, I guess, Gov. Dever must have liked to fish.

The DCR rep said that "allowing sailboats on Quabbin would require a change in current regulations, which DCR would very likely oppose for water quality protection, public safety, logistical and other reasons. "Further, it is highly likely that the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (to whom DCR delivers the water from Quabbin for distribution to the 47 user communities), the Department of Environmental Protection (whose regulations also govern public water supplies in Massachusetts) and the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (which administers federal drinking water laws and regulations), would also strongly oppose such a change."

So much for sailing.

But I think the question shouldn't be limited to whether sailboats ought to be allowed.

There's a larger question here and that involves the proper use of the land.

Think about what the Quabbin region would be like if Boston hadn't grabbed it seven decades ago.

Think Lake Winnepesaukee.

It's about twice the size of the Quabbin, but it's a veritable economic engine for the area, bringing millions of dollars into the New Hampshire economy.

I think it's time that this part of the state demanded some compensation for the seizure of that land.

True, there would be a price to pay — Boston and the eastern part of the state would have to start paying for filtration and treatment of the water, just to make sure it's OK.

And steps would have to be taken to make sure that recreational use didn't destroy the very natural beauty of the area that makes it so desirable. That could be tricky.

But the transition could be made slowly, with care.

And the result could be the formation of a Quabbin region recreation industry, providing much-needed jobs in an area hard-hit by the retrenchment of manufacturing.

How can we get this movement started?

Blagg has been Editor of The Recorder since 1986. He lives in Greenfield and is an active local historian. He can be reached at: tblagg@recorder.com or (413) 772-0261 Ext. 250.

Greenfield Recorder – Letter to Editor – Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee – May 2005

touch for so long with what was happening in the shelter kennel. No one wants a child to be bitten by a dog, but a responsible shelter places dogs one at a time in appropriate homes after they have received a fair evaluation. This takes time and dedication and serves to underline what is humane in a humane society. The plastic hand method used at PVHS is considered archaic and inaccurate as a final evaluation by many update to date shelters. The protesters did not waste their time last week end. They successfully brought the problems at the shelter to the attention of the community.

ALLAN and KENDRA DANIEL
Colrain

The Quabbin

Your enthusiasm to use Quabbin Reservoir and watershed lands ("Better use of the Quabbin," April 18) caused forgetfulness —, the land grab from Boston resulted in Quabbin being there!

The Swift valley towns otherwise might have become like other Hilltowns out here; no economic engines at all.

As for being an economic engine, Quabbin already does its share through logging, fishing and passive recreation and education. We all would inadvertently love Quabbin to death: "Think" Miami and Cape Cod.

Quabbin's highest use is as a drinking water supply and created wilderness. A filter plant for another \$200-\$300 million would not

open Quabbin up. Springfield and Worcester reservoir systems, both fully filtered, are closed to public access! Rather two things would occur: the watershed would remain controlled, to reduce cost of treatment, and recreation that consumers currently support would likely be more frowned upon and more restricted.

You should be stirring your readers to lobby state effort to buy park and recreation land and press for more state initiative to bring good commerce to our watershed towns, instead of proposing to destroy one of our world-class places.

The consumers of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) pay the full bill for drinking water from Quabbin, all land acquired, and all DCR staff that run things (no state tax money involved) MWRA also pays every watershed town for the land that was taken (PILOTS) and in no year can MWRA pay less than the prior year. The town's open watershed lands actually save money. Every new house that has a child costs a town between \$5,500 to \$8,000 per child per school year. Few homes pay that much a year in local taxes.

Future local generations will be more land squeezed than ever, making land around Quabbin even more precious as "wilderness" and a special quiet place.

EILEEN SIMONSON
co-executive director
Water Supply
Citizens Advisory Committee

Helping with a loss

The holiday commercial hype is now at Mother's Day, soon to be cruising smoothly into Father's Day. Classrooms will craft gifts for moms and dads, but there are children in our community whose parents have died and these kids need our understanding. Grief counseling for children did not get off the ground in this country until 1982 and now a network of centers exist to help children and teenagers cope with the loss of parents and or siblings.

This work is a lifeline for young people slammed by the news that a parent has died. Often we cannot see the damage so we continue living as if there isn't any, but it's important to know that children do grieve and that their grief doesn't look the same as adults' mourning.

We are fortunate to have a fabulous local resource in The Garden – A Center for Grieving Children and Teens. At 13, I received a phone call during summer vacation that my older brother had been killed in a house fire. On my first day of eighth grade I was asked how my summer went. "Not good; my brother died," I calmly answered. No one knew how to talk to me after that. Twenty years later, I became a volunteer at The Garden.

If you know of any family whose children have been rocked by the loss of a parent, tell them about The Garden. The program is free and provides incredible support for kids and surviving parents. Best wishes for everyone's holidays.

REBECCA BELOFSKY
Northampton

She was alone

A very young pregnant woman was working ALONE; somebody strangled and murdered her and her unborn child. I want to start a law so that people, especially women, should not be working alone anywhere. Even as a security guard somewhere, NOBODY should be alone. This young woman was looking forward to giving birth in a few short months and becoming a good mother; working and supported herself and baby. Now she has nothing, no life, nothing. The business where she was did not even have any kind of cameras to watch customers or employees. There are no houses or other businesses near this place. I have a friend who works in a grocery store with two other people and she does not feel safe sometimes.

CAROL LAVOIE
Turners Falls

Using the Quabbin

Tim Blagg's op-ed piece in the April 18 Recorder titled "Better use of the Quabbin," asks us to "think about what the Quabbin region would be like if Boston hadn't grabbed it seven decades ago." He thinks the result could be like Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. However, if the Quabbin region had remained as is, there would be no lake at all, since the reservoir was formed by damming the Swift River for drinking water. He also states that it's time that this part

of the state demanded compensation. Apparently, he is not familiar with the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program mandated by state law. The PILOT program transfers money from rate-paying communities that use Quabbin to each community in the Quabbin watershed. In fiscal year 2004 alone, the 15 towns in the Quabbin Reservoir and Ware River watersheds received a total of \$2.3 million as compensation for the land.

True, the current recreational access policy is illogical and inequitable. As long as motor boats for fishing are allowed but other activities perceived as less damaging to water quality are banned, there will be pressures from other user groups for additional access.

The answer is not to make Quabbin another Winnepesaukee (which is frequently over-run with motorcraft). The purpose of Quabbin is to maintain a pure drinking water source for millions of Massachusetts residents. People who want more places to sail, kayak, ride horses and mountain bike (myself included) should put pressure on the commonwealth and support local land trusts to protect more land in the state for these purposes. Clearly, there is a need for more recreational land that is not being met. And, with the statewide push for more and more housing, this situation is not going to ease up unless we take action.

ANDREA DONLON, River Steward
Connecticut River Watershed Council
Greenfield

The skate park

I am writing in regards to the skate park closing. Mayor Forgey said many people have volunteered to make the necessary repairs, but she will have the Department of Public Works do the work. I just want to ask, why won't she let volunteers work on the park so people can come back sooner than two weeks? I think that the Department of Public Works being hired to do it is a bad idea because they don't have the ambition to do anything, even when it is on the highest priorities list.

I am a skateboarder and don't like any of the mayor's decisions because I hang out with friends at the park almost every day. This has ruined my vacation because of the fact that I haven't been able to skate anywhere else other than the skate park without cops hassling me and my friends. Why would Greenfield build such a expensive skate park and not watch over it from time to time?

The mayor also stated that "the backs of ramps as well as some of the structural underpinnings had been ripped out of several ramps and in some cases it appeared they had been used to start fires and some ramps appear to have been lived in over the winter." This is not true. The ramp wood had been ripped out to hang out under when it was too hot outside to skate. I care about the park, so trying to get punks that don't care about the park to stop vandalizing and starting fires is very hard for some reason. I guess they just can't get it through their very thick skulls. I think this whole situation is not right and kind of bizarre.

JAKE HASELTON
Greenfield

Toward the 'better' use of the Quabbin?

Some regulations don't make much sense

By TIM BLAGG
Recorder staff

It's getting to be spring, and everywhere in the area that you see some open water — river or lake — you'll see recreational boating going on.

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BLAGG

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Continued on next page

Status quo (with tweaking) best for area

By J.R. GREENE
Special to Quabbin Valley Voices



GREENE

night access (by permit only) and bicycling in the Quabbin.

This was done in spite of the opposition of representatives from Mass. Audubon, which has a seat on the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Council (QWAC), and indifference by some other groups.

In contrast, representatives on QWAC from the North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers have consistently supported these two activities.

Large scale changes in the access regulations at Quabbin would open up the place to what Mr. Blagg calls "destroy (ing) the very natural beauty of the area that makes it so desirable."

It would also bring down the wrath of federal regulators, who might deny the waiver exemption the MWRA has received under the clean water acts.

Metropolitan Boston has already been "paying the price" (as Mr. Blagg puts it) for preserving the quality of Quabbin's water.

The MWRA has just spent a large sum of money to build a plant in Marlboro to treat the water coming from the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoir by ozonation.

While this is not "filtration" in the traditional sense, it is a form of water treatment.

This was the result of regulations issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the federal clean water acts.

The limits placed upon access and recreational use of the Quabbin Reservoir and its watershed were deemed by the EPA to be compatible with the protection of the water quality there, along with the ozonation treatment plant in place.

Mr. Blagg mentions forming a "Quabbin region recreation industry." A small version of this already exists around the Quabbin.

Bait shops, motels and B&Bs, and country stores all serve fishermen, hunters, birdwatchers, hikers, bicyclers, and others who enjoy the Quabbin.

His concern for the economy of the Athol - Orange area north of the Quabbin is laudable.

The "North Quabbin" area could certainly use more economic development.

However, this region is going to have to see improvements made to Route 2, and more small business generated to create jobs.

Its economy cannot be stimulated by any great expansion of recreation at the Quabbin.

Around 1960, the then publisher of the newspaper serving Athol and Orange expressed a similar point of view to Mr. Blagg's about using expanded recreational opportunities at Quabbin to spur tourism to that area.

Continued on next page

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I find Mr. Blagg's column about the Quabbin rather curious, and in need of a rebuttal. I am a lifelong resident of Athol, and the author of 12 books about the Quabbin Reservoir and the towns it flooded.

I have been a member of the Swift River Valley Historical Society (based in New Salem) since 1975, and served on its board of directors in the early 1980s.

A charter member of the Friends of Quabbin (based in Belchertown), I have been the chairman of its board of directors for five years.

Since 1991, I have been the gubernatorial appointee representing the Quabbin and Ware River watershed towns on the Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Advisory Board.

The first issue Mr. Blagg raises is the fact that motorized fishing boats are allowed on Quabbin Reservoir, but not sailboats or canoes.

There are three small areas on the reservoir where canoes are allowed to be launched, provided one has a fishing license.

The "fishing lobby" is large, which is why motorboat fishing has been allowed on the Quabbin since 1953.

However, the areas open to fishing, the number of boats launched, and their horsepower is limited to protect the water quality.

Sailboating is forbidden because those who practice it are more likely to try to swim off of their boats, and swimming is not allowed on the reservoir.

Canoeing is not appropriate in the areas where it is not allowed, as the water is dangerous for such craft in windy or stormy conditions.

In a letter responding to the column, Eileen Simonson, of the Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee, quotes the phrase "loving Quabbin to death."

I take credit for originating this phrase, but do not use it in the sense that she does.

My concern is that those who have managed the lands and waters of the Quabbin over the years have included some people who would like to ban almost all public access to it.

Some members of nature organizations, such as Audubon and the Sierra Club, want to "love Quabbin to death" by limiting public access only to members of their own groups, or to those who would only engage in activities that are "approved" by their groups.

The current rules and regulations on public access at Quabbin have evolved over several decades.

They became formalized in 1988, when the first official plan on access and recreation was issued.

It has been a struggle to maintain



Regional Calendar

Things to do Places to go Events to watch
 Adventures to have Flavors to savor Things to do
 Places to go Events to watch Adventures to have

Ongoing

Sweet Dreams Story Time: Wednesdays, at 6:30 p.m. Stories, hand plays, creative dramatics and a craft activity come together to underscore a different theme each week. This event is for parents/caregivers to enjoy with their children. Children are invited to come in their pajamas with their favorite bedtime friend(s). Wheeler Memorial Library, 49 East Main St. Orange. For more information, call 978-544-2495 or: <http://www.orangelib.org/>

Story times: Regularly scheduled Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening story times continue at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., in the Children's Room of Wheeler Memorial Library. Stories, creative dramatics, songs and a craft activity come together around a weekly theme. Open to children of all ages, story times will continue throughout the spring and summer. In addition, on Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:30, the Cosmic Knitting Wizards will meet for knitting lessons and homework help. Newcomers of all ages are welcome. Wheeler Memorial Library, 49 East Main St.

Orange. For more information, call 978-544-2495 or: <http://www.orangelib.org/>

"Picturing Our Past: The Colonies Come of Age 1720-1775." Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., Fitchburg, from noon to 4. Free with admission. Explore the exciting and challenging middle years of 18th century New England and learn about the dramatic events that preceded the start of the American Revolution. More than 100 original objects bring this formative period in American history to life. For more information, call 978-

345-4207. Kids at the Heron Program learn to give thanks for nature, one hike at a time. The Heron Program, for kids ages 7 and up, is held every Friday at the Hitchcock Center for the environment, 1 mile from downtown Amherst. Children go out onto the trails into the forest to explore animal tracking, edible and medicinal plants, wilderness living skills and naturalist training. Frank Grindrod, the founder of Earthwork Programs, facilitates

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Quabbin - Greene

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That was when many industries now long gone were still operating in those two towns.

Nothing came of that initiative, as the water supply function was (and still is) the prime concern at Quabbin.

Many water supply reservoirs and watershed lands are closed to ALL forms of public access and recreation.

Residents of central and western Massachusetts are lucky that the

Quabbin Reservoir is so large that it can accommodate some passive activities, and has done so since being filled in 1946.

There is an inherent illogic in the last part of the column, regarding the comparison of Quabbin with Lake Winnepesaukee in N.H.

That lake is a natural body of water, so it is open to many uses (including local water supply).

If the Swift River valley hadn't been taken by Metropolitan Boston for a water supply reservoir, there wouldn't be a huge body of water in that valley,

only the three rivers, a few lakes, and the small towns that were there before the reservoir drowned them.

I attended the first public meeting on the latest revision of the Quabbin Access and Recreation Plan held in Belchertown on April 12.

At that meeting, I stated that the regulations could be "tweaked" a bit to allow more roads to be opened up for bicycling, and perhaps opening a limited area for cross country skiing could be studied.

In general though, I see maintaining the status quo of the access and recre-

ation policies at the Quabbin to be in the best interests of the quality of the water supply, and the natural beauty of the reservoir and its watershed lands.

Quabbin Reservoir is more than just another state reservation or park.

It is the major water supply reservoir for almost half of the people in the state, a wonderful place to experience nature, or to appreciate the history and sacrifices of the 2,500 people who had to lose their homes and livelihoods in order for this "accidental wilderness" to be created.

© 2005 by J.R. Greene

Quabbin - Blagg

Continued from previous page

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How can we get this movement started?

Blagg has been Editor of The Recorder since 1966. He lives in Greenfield and is an active local historian. He can be reached at:

blagg@recorder.com or (413) 772-0861 Ext. 250.

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Greater access to Quabbin sought

State working on third 10-year public access plan

By Bradford L. Miner TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
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PETERSHAM— Mountain bike and horseback riders, kayakers, and a fisherman whose boat is powered by a 50-horsepower outboard each made a pitch for increased access to the Quabbin Reservoir and surrounding watershed land at a public hearing last week in town hall.

William E. Pula, regional director of the Quabbin and Ware River watersheds for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, described for the 50 people present the challenge of balancing increasing demands for public access for recreation with the Division of Water Supply Protection's mandate to provide pure drinking water to 2.5 million residents in 47 communities.

State Sen. Stephen M. Brewer, D-Barre, told those present they are fortunate to have the access allowed at Quabbin, given that nationwide 95 percent of the watersheds protecting drinking water supplies are entirely off-limits to all uses and are posted with "no trespassing signs."

The gathering included about a dozen DCR and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority personnel and more than three-dozen Central Massachusetts residents with an interest in either increasing public access or maintaining the status quo.

Mr. Pula said there have been some instances of damage to the watershed, citing a mountain bike trail off Gate 35 in New Salem that traversed a wetland area and crossed a stonewall that had been dismantled.

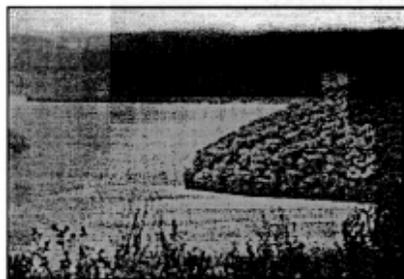
Mr. Brewer, a longtime advocate of public access to the 412 billion-gallon reservoir, said, "When issues relating to Quabbin come before the Legislature, I have one vote. There are considerably more votes in the Senate and the House representing the people who pay the bills and whose primary interest is in what comes out of the faucet."

The Petersham workshop, Mr. Pula said, was in direct response to requests made at the public access hearing held in Belchertown last spring for a meeting at the northern end of the reservation.

The former Metropolitan District Commission Division of Watershed Management put the first Quabbin public access plan in place in 1988, revised it in 1998 and is currently working on the third 10-year plan.

Mr. Pula said he did not expect any significant changes in public access in the next plan, but the staff would attempt to clarify some existing policies and fine-tune others.

"We know the philosophy that many drinking water reservoirs take with surrounding watershed land is a simple one — 'Keep Out.' In light of Quabbin's history, and the sacrifice that the former residents of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott made to



[Enlarge photo](#)

“As we’ve said from the outset, managing Quabbin as a wilderness area that everyone may enjoy is a balance between use by the public, and maintaining water purity.”

William E. Pula,
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE
QUABBIN AND WARE RIVER
WATERSHEDS FOR THE STATE
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND RECREATION

make this reservoir possible, the issue of public access is one we take very seriously," Mr. Pula said.

He said that since Sept. 11, 2001, much of the initial lockdown of the reservation for security reasons has been scaled back.

Mr. Pula said that while people may walk or bicycle across Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike, vehicle access will never be permitted again, and the hydropower station at the base of the dam and area surrounding the Quabbin Aqueduct intake works at Shaft 12 will continue to be off-limits.

Of the 82,538 acres of land and water that make up the Quabbin reservation, 71 percent is open to the public, Mr. Pula said.

Since the spring hearing, Mr. Pula said, the issues in the forefront of discussion among DCR personnel working on the plan are requests for an increase in designated and looped bicycle trails, a designated snowmobile trail on Quabbin-owned land beyond the reservation boundaries, the impact of geocaching on the reservation, and the increase in requests for use of the Quabbin Park area for such events as weddings or other group activities.

Addressing the issue of allowing 50-horsepower, four-stroke outboards on fishing boats, Mr. Pula said the 25-horsepower limit had been approved by the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee and found acceptance among the majority of those who fish the reservoir on a regular basis.

Anthony Brighenti, a member of QWAC and an environmental police officer, said, "Speed on the water is not always a good thing."

"If something's working — as this is — then there's no need to fix it," he said.

For everyone interested in riding horses within the Quabbin reservation, Mr. Pula said there was no room for discussion, stating that state law prohibited bringing any domestic animals onto the reservation.

He noted that the most frequent violation of Quabbin regulations was "people walking their dog."

Mr. Brewer said he didn't believe there would be much legislative support for any significant changes in regulations allowing greater access, success as horseback riding.

Mr. Pula noted that regulations governing the Ware River watershed were much less restrictive, and many of the recreational activities prohibited at Quabbin were allowed in the 25,000 acres of the Ware River watershed.

Alfred M. Berry, a Petersham selectman and a member of the New England Mountain Biking Association, asked why more of the reservation could not be opened up to mountain biking, saying that most of the gravel roads beyond Quabbin's gates are not suitable for street bicycles.

Bob Bishop, head of Quabbin's environmental quality lab, said that as a general rule, "the closer to the intake the less you can do, and the further you are from the intake the more you can do."

He said the issue with mountain bikes and bicycles was in large numbers of people being able to get to the shore of the reservoir more quickly.

David Zaganiacz, chief Quabbin park ranger, said that one of the violations rangers patrol for during the summer season is swimming illegally in the reservoir.

Mr. Pula said that on warm summer days, the reservoir is like a magnet drawing people to the shore for a swim.

"People on mountain bikes and bicycles can cover far greater distances on foot than people hiking or walking the roads and trails," Mr. Bishop said.

Turning to water issues, Mr. Pula said that opening more of the reservoir to kayaks and canoes would be a logistical nightmare and create management as well as safety issues.

"At the three fishing areas, the boats we rent and the boats we allow on the water present few safety issues. Unless someone is a very experienced kayaker or canoeist they could quickly get into trouble on the open reservoir, and we just don't have the staff to deal with that," he said.

Other issues raised were the restrictions on cross-country skiing, the proximity of the Hardwick landfill to the reservoir and logging and forest management practices as they relate to scenic vistas.

Mr. Pula said the DCR's concern with the landfill was primarily as a food source for herring gulls which would roost on the reservoir.

He said recent water tests since the start of the rain a week ago that brought the reservoir level up more than a foot showed evidence of coliform contamination.

10/17/2005

Mr. Pula said the contamination may have come from gulls and it may have been a result of runoff from the watershed.

"As we've said from the outset, managing Quabbin as a wilderness area that everyone may enjoy is a balance between use by the public, and maintaining water purity," Mr. Pula said.

Comments on public access may be mailed to the Quabbin Visitor Center, 485 Ware Road; P.O. Box 628, Belchertown, MA, 01007.

Worcester Telegram & Gazette – October 2005

Paper: Worcester Telegram & Gazette (MA)
Title: A delicate balance - Quabbin access desirable, but water quality is priority
Date: October 22, 2005
Section: EDITORIAL
Page: A14

COLUMN: In our opinion

State officials working on the third 10-year public access plan for the Quabbin Reservation are properly cautious about opening the area for additional recreational use: The reservoir is the primary source of pure drinking water for 2.5 million residents of 47 communities. That said, consideration of expanding access in ways that do not threaten that irreplaceable resource is warranted.

The delicate balance between access and watershed protection was the theme of a public hearing in Petersham last week. The state Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority are seeking public comment as they prepare the public use plan. The first access plan was put in place in 1988 and in 1998.

The public already has far greater access to Quabbin than is the case with the majority of public water supplies. Some 71 percent of the 82,538-acre reservation is open to the public.

However, advocates of relatively low-impact pastimes - including mountain biking, horseback riding, kayaking, fishing - are pressing the state to open additional areas for recreation. Proposals for looped bicycle trails, a snowmobile trail on Quabbin-owned land outside the reservation boundaries, and increased access to the Quabbin Park area for weddings or other group activities deserve consideration.

At the Petersham hearing, William E. Pula, regional director of the Quabbin and Ware River watersheds for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, put the department's position succinctly: "We know the philosophy that many drinking water reservoirs take with surrounding watershed land is a simple one - 'Keep Out.' In light of Quabbin's history, and the sacrifice that the former residents of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott made to make this reservoir possible, the issue of public access is one we take very seriously."

We agree. Expand recreational access where prudent, but watershed protection must remain paramount.

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Ware River News 10/29/05

Fishing for answers at Quabbin

BELCHERTOWN – Why are 25-horsepower motorboats allowed to troll the waters in fishing season at Quabbin Reservoir, but un-motorized canoes and kayaks are not? Why can hunters patrol the area's forests, and mountain bikers must stay out?

I understand the reservoir waters can be quite choppy and winds high at times, and the fear of erosion and pollution from overuse exists, but most of today's fisherman stand in more precarious stances than the low slouches of simple paddlers, and many hunters wade through sensitive environmental areas no pedaler could ever trek.

It's a tad unfair, really, that folks like William Pula, regional director of the Quabbin and Ware River watersheds for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), admittedly use the smallmouth bass fishery there quite often, and someone like me with some rare spare time on a Saturday morning isn't allowed to truck my LL Bean craft down a gate for a cruise on one of New England's most beautiful water-

ways. Pula says it's too dangerous, even for experienced boaters. I say baloney.

While my all-time favorite legislator, Sen. Steve Brewer, D-Barre, feels we're lucky to have the limited public access currently enjoyed at Quabbin – considering more than 95 percent of our nation's reservoirs are basically closed to public use – that doesn't mean there can't be more activities allowed. Quabbin is unlike 95 percent of our nation's reservoirs. We all know the old story of how the state sank the former towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott to create it. But the Commonwealth also



Tim Kane
Citizen Kane

flooded thousands of acres of incredibly useful recreational lands, too. It's payback time. And therein lies the challenge of who to allow in and who to keep out. Certainly, state legislators representing the 2.5 million eastern Mass. residents who drink from the Quabbin daily could give a hoot about increasing public access.

No one can argue that preserving water quality is top priority

there. But there hundreds of million of dollars now invested in MWRA state-of-the-art filtration technology 50 miles down the Quabbin pipeline in Framingham just waiting to catch the errant microorganism or wayward lunch bag.

But today is not a day for complaints. It is a time to offer potential solutions, and I have one that could easily be employed when Pula and his DCR staff are finished reviewing their 10-year public access plan hearing testimony transcripts.

If DCR staff charged a one-day user fee for all recreational access (say \$5 bucks a day or \$20 for a season) – like the state does at many of its parks – and put a cap on the daily number of users allowed, you could solve many of the logistical challenges facing the DCR today. I'm sure some will say baloney, Tim, you're way off the mark here. But if we really think about it, the \$5 fee could offset the cost of hiring additional rangers for water patrols and clerical staff. The \$5 fee could be used to conduct a recreational educational outreach campaign. The \$5 fee could cover the cost of planning and maintaining a long sought after bicycle loop trail around the reservoir proper. And the \$5 fee could even cover the expense of building a few storm shelters for cross-country skiers and snow-shoers. Sorry snowmobile and ATV enthusiasts, you're not part of my proposal.

The reality is that 99.9 percent of those who choose to recreate in the outdoors respect the heck out of nature. They love it, and therefore are the last folks in the world who would want to ruin it or not behave responsibly while immersed within it.

At a recent Quabbin public access hearing held by the DCR in Petersham, we heard all the reasons why the aforementioned access enhancements just aren't possible. I respect the DCR's position that safety and lack of staff are primary concerns, but I believe

a one-day recreational use fee could resolve all those concerns. For example, Petersham Selectman Alfred Berry said the gravel roads beyond reservoir gates are not good for biking. As someone who has trekked a lot of Quabbin's territory on foot and skis, I agree. An inner Quabbin loop bicycle trail far enough away from the water to avoid illegal swimming wouldn't hurt a fly. A little WD-40 ain't gonna harm any deer, bear or bald eagles. And more user fees would mean more money to enhance ranger patrols. I also liked an idea voiced at the hearing for wedding parties and other events to be held within the gates, which in turn would generate more money for additional staff resources. And just think of the tremendous tourism opportunities that would open up for nearby inns, restaurants and retail businesses, if we, well, opened up Quabbin in a controlled, logical way.

The truth is not much of anything will be done to revise the current public access plan unless you write to Pula and his DCR comrades and let them know you want more access. Be specific.

Someone once said that in order to end apathy, we must educate, and in order to educate, we must be willing to take risks. Actually, I just made that up, but it serves the point. Dear DCR: Please add this column fodder to your public testimony records. And I encourage the three folks who actually read my entire column to do the same. Otherwise, things will remain basically the same at a hugely untapped Mecca for outdoor recreation right in our own backyard.

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Tim Kane is executive editor of the Ware River News and Turley Publications.

LETTE

Continued from Page 4

Hoorah for our Indians

To the Editor:

I'd like to address to the Ware High School for I want to express to each citizen of this year's team personally proud of their citizen of Ware and as a sports fan (and yes even school cheerleader).

They have come to year as a team under ms First, the team needed grips with the idea of hav the outside (something th been done in the histo High) to join forces w school in order to even I ball team this year. Th for Quabog Regional I being willing to work order to achieve a goa towns wanted: a foot Surely a win-win situati yet still a transition noet

I'm sure parents and both sides have had to n ments and changes in or this changeover a succ easy task, living in diff and playing and practici ent places. Secondly, ju team had a fairly good their first and only scrip and just prior to the W opening game, the tei abrupt notice from their that he can no longer co year-and must resign. N want to go into what I pe about this particular sit needless to say, this plac unnecessary burden on

FOTY, from Pa

muster day when area peted. There were game drink for all. People neighboring towns for it that went on all day o mon.

One weary celebran all night. Near daybreak home, passing the tow Another young man, up to his work, took a short the cemetery. The tired

NEWS BRIEFS

Community policing grants available for local communities

REGION – The Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has announced the availability of FY06 Community Policing Funds for local communities. These grants will aim to increase cooperation between local police and private citizens through education and training, with the aim of decreasing crime in our communities.

Applications for FY06 Community Policing funds are now available on the Executive Office of Public Safety Web site. Police chiefs should apply no later than Oct. 31.

Library, Cultural Council team up to offer workshop in pastel painting

The Ware River News – Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor
Ware River News and Turley Publications

Citizen Kane's piece on increasing recreation at Quabbin was full of error and inappropriate innuendo. The biggest error is that the system is "filtered in Framingham." It has a nice ring to it but is wrong. The Quabbin-Wachusett Reservoir system is one of the largest in the nation to remain unfiltered. It does so because it is well-protected, has controlled uses, and meets all standards without it. The new treatment facilities are ozone disinfection. On the small-error side is the fact that only four-stroke motors may reach 25-hp, all others are limited to 20.

We agree that motorboats on the water, to the exclusion of other activities, causes everyone to get angry. But *adding* recreation is a problem. You may want to try and "substitute" something for fishing. Small watercraft easily dump occupants, a body-contact no-no for drinking water supplies. Boat-fishing is continually monitored and some day, as this amazing 60-year old lake ages, that too may have to stop. In the meantime, current levels of passive recreation and motorboats show no negative quality impacts.

Expanding recreation will see an industry grow up right against the watershed. If Quabbin becomes a mountain biker destination, and wedding parties needing sanitation, and more tour buses seeing the foliage from Quabbin's look-outs, the water quality burden will become unacceptable as will the cost to supervise it.

Quabbin has become a sort of wilderness that may some day be a last bastion of quiet forest walks, snow-shoeing, and birding in the central part of our state. Presently, all towns in the watershed with state-owned water-system lands receive Payments in Lieu of Taxes - from the users, not the taxpayers - 44 towns running east to Boston and three towns, 80,000 users, out here, directly on Quabbin). Every watershed town receives money to keep the space open - open space does not send children to school or require town services. It is a bargain, but not so if the towns do not zone/plan to attract profitable business - that is up to each town.

Looking to users of the water system to provide for your tax base and your recreation takes effort away from improving our state parks system where the recreation belongs, instead of at one of the purest water supply systems in the world.

Contact: Eileen R. Simonson
Co-Executive Director of the Water supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Based in Hadley, MA

P.O. Box 478, Hadley, MA 01035
413-586-8861 email: wscac@rcn.com

Fishing for answers at Quabbin

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