

FINAL MINUTES

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC)

July 8, 2021

DFW Field Headquarters, Southwest Meeting Room #103
1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581
Meeting held virtually via Zoom

MEMBERS:

Present: Wayne Petersen, Kevin Powers, Dave Small, Bill Brumback, Tim Flanagan

Absent: Mark Mello, Joseph Larson

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Present: Russ Hopping

Absent: Andy Finton, Bryan Windmiller (Eve announced that Bryan has stepped down from the Committee)

AGENCY STAFF:

Present: Eve Schlüter, Caren Caljouw, Alex Entrup

OTHERS:

Present: Aldo Vallini, Kendra Sultzer

– The meeting was called to order at 1:38 P.M. –

1. Approval of the Previous Month Minutes

Dave Small motioned that the April 8, 2021, minutes be accepted, Kevin Powers seconded, and members voted unanimously to approve.

2. Chair's Comments – Mark Mello was absent, and Tim Flanagan served as Acting Chair

No comments.

3. Board Member's Comments – Joseph Larson

No comments since Joe was absent. Eve noted that the public comment period on the proposed license fee increase has concluded.

4. NHESP Report & Assistant Director's Report – Eve Schlüter

- NHESP Atlas comment period closed and is slated to be published August 1, 2021.
- BioMap3 is underway and funding for the second year has been approved and is in place. Goal is to finish by June 30, 2022.

- Eve continues participation on the Governor's mosquito control task force. Progress is being made and updates to follow.
- Eve presented the tax donations to NHESP by zip code over the last several years. These were in the form of maps that showed how much was donated (and by how many donors) from across the state.
- Status of the natural heritage budget is still unknown as the state's budget is still going through the various committees.

5. *Prescribed Fire: Statewide Priorities and Spring Accomplishments* – Caren Caljouw (Prescribed Fire Program Manager) and Alex Entrup (Seasonal Prescribed Fire and Habitat Restoration Ecologist)

- Link to MassWildlife's prescribed fire webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/prescribed-fire-for-habitat-management>
 - For more general habitat program information: <https://www.mass.gov/working-for-wildlife-masswildlifes-habitat-programs>
- The presentation included: Why we burn, where we burn, resources - training - tools, planning and prioritization, accomplishments, and challenges.
 - DFW fire management teams burned 566 acres in 17 burns on 9 different wildlife management areas.
 - Properties burned in 2021 included: Penikese Island Sanctuary, Frances A. Crane WMA, Birch Hill WMA, Southwick WMA, Noquochoke WMA, Leyden WMA, Muddy Brook WMA, Herman Covey WMA, and Montague Plains WMA.
 - Good follow-up discussion including the upcoming establishment of a prescribed fire council to share information and coordinate efforts with all the various partners in the prescribed fire community.

6. *Member's and Associate Member's Comments*

Wayne Petersen – No comment

Bill Brumback – A new report, *Conserving Plant Diversity in New England*, has just been published. The project is a collaboration between Native Plant Trust and The Nature Conservancy. The report denotes the amount of resilient land present in 43 habitats and shows that 2.3 million more protected acres are needed to reach the benchmarks in the U.N.'s Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the world-wide Global Deal for Nature (30 for 30 plan adopted by the current administration). Report can be found at <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org/plant-diversity-report/>

Tim Flanagan – No comment

Dave Small – Interesting invertebrates from our South have been recently reported, including the Great blue skimmer (*Libellula vibrans*) seen several times in Norfolk County and yesterday nice photographs of Zebra Swallowtail (*Protographium marcellus*) were reported from Huntington. With all the climate news, it is interesting to note the presence of southern species appearing in Massachusetts.

Kevin Powers – Kevin showed several images and videos of forage fish interactions with sand lance and mackerel off the coast of Chatham. Interesting interactions between the forage fish, shearwaters, and gannets as well as humpback whales.

Andy Finton – Absent

Russ Hopping – A new report of an Eastern box turtle on a Trustees property in Essex county. A positive interaction with Andover officials requesting information on important plant and animal habitat along a potential rail trail.

Kevin motioned to adjourn, which was seconded by Wayne with unanimous vote.

– The meeting adjourned at 3:24 P.M. –

Drafted & Submitted by: David H Small