

FINAL MINUTES

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC)

November 14, 2019

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

MEMBERS:

Present: Mark Mello, Joseph S. Larson PhD., Wayne R. Petersen, William E. Brumback, Timothy Flanagan, David H. Small, Kevin Powers

Absent:

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Present:

Absent: Andy Finton, Bryan Windmiller, Russ Hopping

AGENCY STAFF:

Present: Jesse Leddick, Marion Larson

OTHERS:

N/A

– The meeting was called to order at 1:35 P.M. –

1. Approval of the October Minutes

David Small motioned that the October 2019 minutes be accepted, Wayne Petersen seconded, and members voted unanimously to approve, 7-0.

2. Acting Chair's Comments – Mark Mello

Mark expressed an interest in current status information regarding Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Jesse Leddick gave an overview of the related NHESP processes and will provide a summary sheet to committee members.

3. Board Member's Comments – Joseph Larson

MassWildlife and the Fisheries and Wildlife Board have conducted a review of policies and regulations associated with coyote hunting and contests. Public comments have been collected through listening sessions, phone calls, and email, and through public hearings to consider the MassWildlife recommended regulatory changes. Preparation of staff responses and summaries is to commence next week. Marion Larson added that details of the current proposal are available online.

Agency staff are participating in the Wildlife Management Institute "Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow" professional development program. (editorial note by T.F.: description is available at <https://wildlifemanagement.institute/project/conservation-leaders-tomorrow>)

The year 2020 will mark the 30th anniversary of the MA Endangered Species Act (MESA). Dr. Larson invited a discussion of opportunities to celebrate the occasion. Committee members and staff discussed a variety of ideas including newsletter articles and a special issue of the Massachusetts Wildlife magazine. The topic will be continued as an agenda item for a future meeting.

4. NHESP Report – Jesse Leddick

Staff updates: Eve Schlüter and TNC are working to include climate change resiliency and aquatic systems concerns in the BioMap3 project. Jason Carmignani has started in his new position as Aquatic Ecologist. Peter Hazelton is now available to resume more work in Conservation Science.

Regulatory review: Two large MESA violation sites are under investigation. The NHESP “take determination” regarding a campground in Truro has been upheld on appeal.

5. Vote on Officers

In a compound motion by David Small, Kevin Powers, and Wayne Petersen, with a second by Wayne Petersen, the following members were recommended for officer positions, with the understanding that minute-taking duties will be shared or rotated each month:

Chair: Mark Mello
Vice Chair: Timothy Flanagan
Secretary: Kevin Powers

The motion was approved unanimously, 7-0.

6. Member’s and Associate Member’s Comments

Dave Small – although the Quabbin Park vegetation is vulnerable to deer browsing, the area has been removed from the annual controlled deer hunt. DCR cited the need for more research in announcing the decision.

Kevin Powers – described the importance of sand lance in marine ecosystems and called attention to the value of research efforts concomitant with discussions of ocean wind energy development and sand extraction for beach nourishment activities. The Boston Globe has published a set of articles on climate change. More than 1000 Manx Shearwater were observed south of Chatham on October 25th.

Wayne Petersen –noted that the sand lance ecology, and observations of shearwaters, could be seen as examples within a larger pattern of recent significant change.

– The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M. –

Drafted by: Timothy Flanagan
Submitted by: Jennifer Longsdorf