

FINAL MINUTES

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC)

October 10, 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, David H. Small, Kevin Powers

Absent: William E. Brumback, Timothy Flanagan

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Present: Russ Hopping

Absent: Andy Finton, Bryan Windmiller

AGENCY STAFF:

Present: Eve Schlüter, Lynn Harper, Peter Hazelton, Sarah Maier

OTHERS:

N/A

– The meeting was called to order at 1:36 P.M. –

1. Approval of the September Minutes

Dave Small motioned that the September minutes be accepted, Wayne Petersen seconded, and members voted unanimously to approve.

2. Acting Chair's Comments – Mark Mello

No comment.

3. Officer Elections

The following members were recommended for officer positions:

Chair: Mark Mello

Vice Chair: Timothy Flanagan

Secretary: Kevin Powers (Caveat that minute taking be shared or rotated by month.)

There was a motion to accept these recommendations for review, and there will be an official vote at the November meeting. Since Tim Flanagan was absent, he needs to be consulted about the Vice Chair position. Additionally, members noted that they would like clarification on the terms of office.

4. Board Member's Comments – Joseph Larson

There was a discussion on property ownership for the Norcross property in Templeton. The Division is now the caretaker of the 465 acre site, which is now a Wildlife Management Area called the Norcross Hill WMA. The title and ownership are now settled on behalf of MassWildlife.

Two public hearings will be held on predator hunting contests and wanton waste regulations.

- October 22: 7 p.m. at the Lenox Town Hall, 6 Walker Street
- October 29: 7 p.m. at the MassWildlife Field Headquarters in Westborough

Depending on the complexity and volume of comments, the hope is to bring these issues to a final vote at the November Board meeting.

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

Articles included in the member's packets were discussed, including an article about the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center at UMass Amherst with a 5-year \$4.5 million commitment as the host campus.

The new Aquatic Ecologist, Jason Carmignani, will begin in a few weeks. Pete Hazelton was operating as the acting Aquatic Ecologist. Jason holds is coming to us from the UMass Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

Initial discussions on BioMap3 have begun with TNC as BioMap2 is 10 years old.

There is proposed legislation that would exempt wildlife rehabilitators from the statutes and regulations regarding veterinary medicine. Although the current language in the bill is ambiguous and overly broad, it could allow rehabilitators to perform all kinds of procedures whether or not in an emergency situation as long as a veterinarian signs off on a protocol.

6. *Using iNaturalist for MassWildlife Projects* – Lynn Harper, Habitat Protection Specialist

- iNaturalist is both a website and an app
- A photo of the observation, identification, and location are required for submission, which can be reviewed by other iNaturalist users
- Required: 1) observer name, 2) take photo, 3) guess what it is, 4) phone's location, 5) time stamp taken from phone
- Allows for more observers, wide audience, and easier central feedback
- Tool for learning new species and regions
- 'Research grade' observations discussed
- Currently 26-27 million observations in the database worldwide
- Users have personal dashboard with messages relative to their postings
- You can follow (like Twitter) other naturalists to trade their posts
- More of a learning tool than a research tool
- WMA iNaturalist project, MassWildlife's All Wildlife Biodiversity Project
- Online demonstration provided

7. Member's and Associate Member's Comments

Wayne Petersen – Showed a couple of recent books published, including a children's book called "Owling: Enter the World of the Mysterious Birds of the Night" by Mark Wilson, and "Urban Raptors: Ecology and Conservation of Birds of Prey in Cities" by Clint Boal and Cheryl Dykstra. Wayne also noted an enormous tree swallow roost with thousands of tree swallows on the North River.

Dave Small – Attended the Norcross Hill WMA event. Dave also attended a lecture by Charley Eiseman, who has a blog called BugTracks. There was a discussion on leafminers, as Charley published an e-book in June called "Leafminers of North America." There were 64 people in attendance at the lecture.

Kevin Powers – Noted a recent lawsuit by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) against the US Department of Commerce for a conflict of interest in the protection of North Atlantic right whales.

Russ Hopping – Noted a banded American oystercatcher on Martha's Vineyard with a broken wing. Implicated kite boarding as a potential cause for oystercatcher interactions.

– The meeting adjourned at 4:14 P.M. –

Drafted by: Kevin Powers
Submitted by: Jennifer Longsdorf