



Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chairman Hatch, Nate Walton, Michele Hanss, Dennis Smith, Toni Pollak, Elisa Campbell, Walter Bickford, David Murphy, Wayne Klockner, Heather Clish

DCR Staff in attendance: Priscilla Geigis, Jonathan Yeo, Andy Backman, Joe Rotondo, Griffin Budde

Stewardship Councilors Absent: Jim Van Dyke

Attachments: Blue Hills State Reservation Deer Management Program Slide Deck

Chairman Hatch called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM, and introduced David Murphy as a new member to the council

Commissioner's Report – Nick Gove, Deputy Commissioner of Operations

- Historical background of Breakheart Reservation, the importance of its Friends Group detailed
- Leo J Martin Ski Track facility has been making artificial snow, and will open this weekend
- First natural snowfall being expected this weekend, and background of DCR's snow removal operations provided
- Over Thanksgiving weekend, DCR hosted several successful and well-attended guided hikes at various locations
- 10,000th tree of the Greening Gateway Cities program planted in Lynn during November
- Construction of the Wayland/Weston section of the Mass Central Rail Trail has broken ground
- Two new facilities seeking curators under DCR's Historic Curatorship Program: Farmhouse at Lake Wyola, and the superintendent's house at Mount Wachusett
- Morrissey Boulevard Re-design civic meetings have concluded

- Blue Hills deer hunt has concluded.

Responses/Inquiries from Councilors, answers from Deputy Commissioner Gove

- Toni Pollack asked what percentage of snow removal is handled by contractors
 - Approximately 10% of snow removal is handled by contractors or Department of Corrections crews, with the determining factor being the proximity of x location to a DCR depot/labor yard (not included: portions handled by DOT)
- Chairman Hatch noted that snow removal still does not have its own line item in the DCR budget
 - Although 2009 was the last year DCR's budget included a line item for snow removal, MassDOT covers most of DCR's snow removal expenses through an accounting arrangement.
- Elisa Campbell thanks DCR, Nathaniel Lloyd, and Priscilla Geigis for their presentation on improving GIS capabilities at 11:00, and Chairman Hatch requests that the link to GIS maps be circulated among the group

Special Business introduced by Chairman Hatch

- Dennis Smith reviews the intent behind varying Stewardship Council meeting locations, and says that, by changing locations, DCR may interact with staff from a variety of locations, Council members may see new locations, and it equalizes travel time for council members living in different area of the Commonwealth
- Dennis Smith recommends a meeting take place in Boston, with the potential for legislators to sit in, so that they can improve their own grasp of, and appreciation for the scope of DCR, as it relates to budget allocation
- Chairman Hatch proposes that a noon start time may challenge the ability of distant councilor's ability to arrive on time, and that a later start time might be better
 - Dennis responds that anything later than noon could result in heavier traffic on the trip returning from Council meetings
 - Chairman Hatch resolves to keep 12:00p.m. start time going forward and reviews upcoming meeting locations [below indicates final dates post December meeting]:
 - February: Wachusett Regional Office, West Boylston
 - March: Myles Standish S.F., Carver
 - April: Leadership Academy – Leominster
 - May: Community Rowing, Brighton
 - June: Willowdale Estate, Topsfield
 - July: Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls
 - August: NO MEETING

- October: Western Gateway Heritage State Park, North Adams
 - November: Friends Group Meeting - Location T/B/D
 - December: Dillaway-Thomas House, Roxbury Heritage S.P.
- Chairman Hatch moved to accept the October 2017 minutes with the caveat to amend attendance for Michele Hanss and Wayne Klockner as “not in attendance”
 - The motion was seconded. All in favor, motion carried
 - Chairman Hatch moved to accept the November 2017 minutes
 - The motion was seconded. All in favor, motion carried
 - Heather Clish provides a legislative update: Nature Conservancy, AMC, and other environmental groups (independently of Stewardship Council) have requested a meeting with Governor Baker on budget issues related to DCR
 - Chairman Hatch provides a progress update on asset management report, and suggests a public “dashboard” that would encompass capital funding allocated for future projects, and updates on construction schedules for active projects
 - Elisa Campbell displays the book *The Water Will Come* by Jeff Goodell, and urges DCR to use realistic numbers in planning for sea level rise (6-12 feet increase)
 - Toni Pollack seconds Elisa’s suggestion, and recommends that DCR collaborate with research groups and universities on climate change planning
 - Priscilla speaks about her and Jonathan Yeo’s role in DCR’s climate change vulnerability survey, their upcoming meeting with the Nature Conservancy, their planning process for year 2070 projections, and says that any materials the Council would like to submit prior to upcoming meeting are welcome.

Chief Ranger Jenn Stowe presents on Blue Hills Deer Management Program

- Stresses importance of tree regeneration and species diversity for forest health
- Explains enclosures, and their function in modeling/measuring species growth in areas where deer cannot browse, compared to the “control” group (rest of reservation)
 - Enclosures installed by DCR in 2011 and 2015, and two more by Mass Wildlife in 2017
- Overview of deer abundance survey: strengths and weaknesses of distance sampling versus pellet-group counts using transects
 - Led to the estimate of 51.6 deer/sq. mile, with highest concentrations in Fowl Meadow and around Little Blue
- Public outreach plan
- Addition of archery exemplifies DCR’s “phased approach”
 - First time shotgun hunts were not on consecutive days

- Explains selection/vetting process for applicants, and that not all applicants received permits
- Details new phone “app” used by hunters that allows them to mark their exact location for (1) emergencies, and (2) reports of any problems like illegal dumping sites and abandoned tree stands
- Wayne Klockner inquires how determination was made for what areas allowed archery, and what areas allowed shotguns
 - These decisions revolve primarily around mandatory setbacks for shotguns in residential areas
- A member asks about overall appearance of deer that were harvested
 - Smaller than prior years, with bucks around 120 lbs. (dressed) and does around 90 lbs. (dressed)
- Wayne Klockner asks how access was handled for recreationalists
 - Parking lots in non-hunted areas (Audubon Center, Ponkapoag) were very full, and, as a theme, most calls to the command center were not complaining, but asking informational questions about how they can still use the park

Stefanie Covino (Project Coordinator, Mass Audubon) and Sara Burns (Water Resource Scientist, the Nature Conservancy) deliver presentation entitled “Climate: Nature-Based Solutions”

- Using nature-based solutions to prepare for conditions such as sea level rise, as well as the intensification of both storms and droughts
- Preservation of natural space considered an adaptation, which can mitigate hazards such as flooding, erosion, drought, and heat islands
 - Correlates forest protection with water hazard protection
- Highlights Governor Baker’s Executive Order 569, which empowers EEA to help municipalities by organizing community resilience building trainings
- Describes two case studies in Taunton that employed (1) protection of natural spaces in the Taunton River Watershed, and (2) building methods that focus on climate resiliency in downtown Taunton
- Notes the website www.nrcsolutions.org, which can give recommendations for resiliency improvements based on region and environment type
- Fun facts:
 - Mature trees in your neighborhood can increase property values by 10-30%
 - Trends that consider stormwater as a resource, not a waste product
 - MA forests sequester 14% of state’s gross annual carbon emissions (2014 data)
- Elisa Campbell asks if pervious paving material can handle action of snow plows

- Selectivity in use is important for pervious material, because plows can damage them easily
- Toni Pollack asks how progress in individual communities can be tracked
 - Thirteen municipalities have worked with groups like Mass Audubon and Nature Conservancy to complete a review of their bylaws to make sure development regulations/building codes reflect the need to plan for climate change, and this is an ongoing process
- Walter Bickford asks if GIS can be used to analyze how much of coastal infrastructure is “green”
 - State’s Coastal Zone Management Office, as well as the City of Boston, working on this, to determine which coastal areas are most at risk
- Toni Pollack recommends that an analysis on how resiliency planning would affect insurance costs
- Chairman Hatch asks to what extent does DCR work with municipalities on their planning for changing environmental conditions due to climate
 - Jonathan Yeo responds that, while DCR makes these considerations within its own resources, EEA has made progress working with municipalities within non-state lands
- Chairman Hatch, noting the amount of questions, encourages the meeting to move forward and save additional questions for later so that anyone from the public may speak for 4-5 minutes each

Public Comments

- Richard Stefurski, zoologist, circulates a packet and speaks against the Blue Hills Deer Management Program, advocating for the presence of “ethical vegans” in the deliberative body for continuing or ending this program
- Sharl Heller of Massachusetts Coastal Pine Barrens Partnership announces their award of a landscape scale restoration grant, which will fund interpretive signage at facilities in DCR’s Southern Region, and she thanks Paul Gregory and Pete Church for their help and guidance in the grant application process
 - Sharl also highlights action items for the Friends Group Network: support ELM in telling DCR’s story to advocate for budget increases, engage friend groups in creating “storybook trails” at DCR properties
 - Thanks Nick Connors for organizing a Friends Group Conference, and hopes that DCR will be able to host this meeting
 - Says that camping advocates are coalescing to lobby DCR to bring back its former camping schedule

- Tim Timmons, ecologist, announces formation of Manny Correlus Friends Group on behalf of Bob Woodruff, who could not attend
- Bill Boles, biking network advocate and member of a friends group, speaks in favor of the deer management plan in the Blue Hills, and recommends that it be expanded into Wompatuck
- Peter Rosetti, Chair of Breakheart Friends Group reasserts his group's mission to work with DCR, and mentions completion of a couple improvement projects, including rebuilding the gazebo outside the visitor's center
- Heather Clish mentions the competition DCR faces within Boston for lifeguard recruitment, mainly, that the City of Boston offers higher wages for lifeguards than the state; to reach Boston's wage level, she says, would cost DCR \$700,000 annually

Next Meeting Schedule

- February 9, 2018 – West Boylston HQ Office, 180 Beaman Street, Clinton, MA

There being no objection, Chairman Hatch adjourned the meeting at 2:15 P.M.