



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting *in conjunction with*
Friends Network Annual Gathering
Saturday, November 10, 2018 | 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.
MassWildlife Headquarters
One Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA, 01581

November Meeting Minutes

Council Members Present: Elisa Campbell, Heather Clish, Whitney Hatch, Kate Sharry and Nate Walton

Council Members Not Present: Michele Hanss, Melissa Harper, David C. Murphy and Dennis Smith

DCR Attendees: Lisa Barstow, Priscilla Geigis, Jennifer Norwood and Joe Rotondo

Public Attendees (and stated affiliation): Sarah Freeman, Arborway Coalition; Bill Boles, New England Mountain Bike Association and Friends of Wompatuck and John Bescherer, Friends of Myles Standish State Forest.

Welcome and Call to Meeting

Chairman Hatch called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He thanked the Friends Network for allowing the Stewardship Council to, “Crash their party,” and asked council members to briefly introduce themselves and provide background on their reason for participating on the DCR Stewardship Council.

Chairman Hatch also noted that it was an honor for him to again, “fly the flag for DCR” competing in this year’s Head of the Charles Regatta [placing at 19 out of 39 overall and at 5 out of 13 in his category].

Commissioner’s Report

Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship, Priscilla Geigis welcomed the assembly to the MassWildlife Headquarters, one of the Commonwealth’s only LEED Platinum Rated facilities, where the design and construction goal was minimal environmental impact. She said Commissioner Roy was sorry he could not be here but asked her to provide the following update.

Shorebird Program

- DCR recently completed an After Action of its shorebird monitoring program to plan for next year. As background, DCR initiated the first formal, coordinated statewide program for Piping Plover and other shorebird conservation in 2007. Piping Plover is a protected species under the Endangered Species Act.

- Since 2012, DCR has particularly focused efforts on habitat restoration and management, local staff training, increased biology monitoring, equipment and material improvements, and active stewardship and public education.
- This past season, DCR protected 539 Piping Plovers (breeding adults and juveniles)—up from 208 in 2007.
- Using 2017 numbers, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was the breeding ground for one-third of the world Piping Plover population, and DCR sites hosted five percent of the overall world population.

Greening the Gateway Communities, in Brockton

- Just one week ago, Commissioner Roy helped plant the one-thousandth tree in the City of Brockton as part of DCR's Greening the Gateway Cities program, a significant milestone for the city, which joined the tree-planting campaign in 2017.
- This was the one-hundredth tree DCR's urban foresters planted within the Brockton school district, sharing the message that planting healthy urban forests improves the quality of water, air and builds a sense of community pride.
- The program also creates job skills and employment in the 13 urban communities it operates including Pittsfield, Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Fitchburg, Lawrence, and Haverhill.

Pilgrim Memorial State Park Improvements

- Commissioner Roy was at Pilgrim Memorial State Park last week to share the successful completion of the \$2.3 million landscape improvements. The project focused on improving the visitor experience park-wide.
- Additionally, specific and extensive landscape work was done to South Park, Coles Hill, The Portico, North Park, and Pilgrim Mother Garden. This major undertaking comes after conservation and repair efforts concluded on the stone sarcophagus, the National Monument to the Forefathers, and to the iconic Plymouth Rock.
- In total, the Baker-Polito Administration has invested approximately \$3 million for improvements at Pilgrim Memorial State Park in preparation for the 2020 celebrations. The DCR is honored to protect the park's important natural resources and the cultural and historic landmarks that are an important part of United States' history.

North Point Park and Revere Beach Maintenance Facilities Ground Breakings

- Commissioner Roy joined with DCAMM Commissioner Gladstone to break ground for a new maintenance facility located at North Point Park in the City of Cambridge. The \$23.4 million project will provide the agency's Boston Region Park Operations staff with a permanent work location, following twenty years of utilizing temporary trailers in North Point Park. The project is expected to conclude in early 2020.
- Commissioner Roy also joined with Speaker DeLeo and other state and local officials to break ground on the DCR's new maintenance facility in the City of Revere. The \$11.4 million project will provide the agency's operations staff for Revere Beach State Reservation and the surrounding region with a permanent work location following many years occupying temporary facilities.
- Recognizing the need for increased public recreation opportunities, the new facility incorporates an additional pedestrian path way to Revere Beach, public restrooms that will be open year-round and the addition of drinking fountains, bike racks and benches, while enabling DCR staff to better maintain properties in the area.

Field Replacement Projects

- The DCR recently announced two field replacement projects. One at Lake Park in the City of Worcester, and the other at Foss Park in the City of Somerville.
- DCR will replace the football field and the existing track at Lake Park, the \$1.2 million project follows recent investments at the state park, which includes the installation of field lighting, resurfacing of the parking area, and entrance upgrades.
- Currently, Lake Park's football field features natural turf that has been used by the Worcester Wildcats, a semi-professional football team, and the Worcester Cowboys youth football program.
- The DCR also will replace the multi-sports field and field lighting located at Foss Park in the City of Somerville. The \$1.2 million project will include synthetic field turf installation, field drainage improvements, and field lighting and pathway upgrades and installation.
- The field replacement projects at both parks are expected to be completed in the fall of 2019.

Blackstone Heritage Visitor Center

- Last month, an official ribbon cutting took place celebrating the completion of the Blackstone Heritage Visitor Center in Worcester. It will serve as DCR's Central Region Headquarters, presently in Clinton, better positioning the DCR to serve the region as it is closer to major routes. The project was a collaborative effort that included federal, state (MassDOT), and local partners.
- The building's design reinforces themes of industrial history and environmental conservation, and reclaimed vital resources. It is a LEED Certified Silver structure. Features include:
 - Reclaimed brick walls;
 - Reclaimed wood flooring;
 - A furnace powered by sustainable wood pellets; and,
 - Solar panels that supply electricity and provide shade.
- Additionally, bioswales (vegetated areas designed to filter stormwater by capturing pollutants) will filter all the water runoff from the building and parking lots, cleaning the water before it is released into the environment. Contained within the building will be:
 - A welcome area;
 - Historical and cultural exhibits;
 - A theater;
 - Restroom facilities; and,
 - Classroom space.
- DCR expects to move-in during December.

Head of the Charles

- As Commissioner Roy reported last month, the [54th annual] Head of the Charles Regatta brings athletes of all ages taking to the waters of the Charles River, as well as over 250,000 spectators. This international event takes DCR staff significant preparation and organization to implement. Our permit and park operations staff work with multiple organizations throughout the year to ensure a smooth, safe event.
- Thanks to Whitney and his brother for sporting the DCR logo, as well as Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton for competing.

Veterans Day Free Parking

- On Sunday, the Nation will be celebrating Veterans Day. To honor the women and men who have served and continue to serve, the DCR and the Baker-Polito Administration once again will waive parking fees for all park visitors. Interpretive programming will be offered at several state parks. Log onto the DCR website for information about programs.
- The Commonwealth has a long and storied military history. Many state parks offer important cultural sites that bring our shared military history to life, including Wompatuck, Castle Island and Halibut Point State Parks.

Black Friday Hikes After Thanksgiving

- Deputy Commissioner Geigis announced DCR's annual, "Go Green on Black Friday" campaign. All parklands will be open for the holiday and six state parks are holding guided hikes on Friday after Thanksgiving, November 23. Those six state parks with guided hikes are:
 1. **Mount Tom State Reservation**, *Holyoke, MA* – 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
 2. **Bradley Palmer State Park**, *Topsfield, MA* – 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
 3. **Borderland State Park**, *Easton, MA* – 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
 4. **Revere Beach Reservation**, *Revere, MA* – 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
 5. **Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve - Quashnet River Trail**, *Falmouth, MA* – 10 am-12pm
 6. **Blue Hills Reservation - Ponkapoag Golf Course**, *Canton* – 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- DCR is again joining with America's state parks across the nation to use this day to experience the outdoors. Our "Go Green" hikes are a way for visitors to enjoy a hike after Thanksgiving traditions as a healthy alternative to the traditional Black Friday activities.

Deputy Commissioner Geigis acknowledged the Thanksgiving holiday and thanked the Stewardship Council for their support and leadership. She also thanked the friends groups gathered for the time, energy and resources (human and financial) and said that she and Jenny Norwood would be distributing DCR's 125th anniversary pins at the conference for people who had not previously received them.

This concludes the Commissioner's Report.

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Commissioner Q&A

Heather Clish asked if there was an Article 97 project regarding a proposed rink in the Middlesex Fells. Deputy Commissioner Geigis said there an idea has been proposed to DCR but that DCR is not reviewing a formal proposal.

Chairman Hatch asked to put the Middlesex Fells on the agenda for the next meeting.

Policy Committee Update

Elisa Campbell commented on her being at the DEM 100th Anniversary at Mount Greylock and her long-standing participation representing the Western part of the state. She provided background on Resource Management Plan (RMP) process for the benefit of Friends Network participants. Councilor Campbell said the focus of the two-person office at this time is the Myles Standish State Forest (MSSF) RMP. She said that independently the DCR Forestry Bureau has worked on an Fire Management Plan (FMP) for Pitch Pine and Scrub Oak for fire safety. A public meeting is planned for December 5 to present the FMP.

Finance Committee Update

Heather Clish thanked the “Friends” for their advocacy on the FY 19 budget. Spoke of excellent progress over FY18—a \$10 million increase includes a new special projects line of \$5 million and \$3 million for snow and ice removal. The additive increase being \$2 million for additional staffing. Councilor Clish plans to regroup in January with the Finance Committee for the FY 20 budget.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Hatch noted lack of quorum so there would be no vote on the minutes.

Other Business

Chairman Hatch commented on contents of their packets including the new meeting location for December and proposed dates and locations for January - March of 2019. He saw no reason not to accept the proposed dates.

Chairman Hatch encouraged members to read through the additional materials included that are distributed to DCR staff. He thanked Councilor Dennis Smith for his email reviewing the governance procedures for the Council as it relates to the enabling legislation. Chairman Hatch thought it useful to consider what this Council wanted to put in place for good governance, including an orientation for new members. He suggested this be a topic for discussion at the January or February meeting.

Public Comment

Sarah Freeman of the Arborway Coalition stated that the Arborway is part of the Emerald Necklace and one of the few breaks in that chain. She has been advocating for the Arborway for twenty years and still remains optimistic, despite four teams of consultants having looked at it and there has yet to be a full explanation where we are in the planning. The Arborway Coalition along with the Boston Cyclists Union coalesces with the Emerald Necklace Conservancy calling for action after the last hit and run. She displayed a lengthy list of crash data from the state police.

Bill Boles of the New England Mountain Bike Association and Friends of Wompatuck State Park said he was pleased the Stewardship Council and Friends Network could meet jointly. He asked that Council meetings be posted clearly on the DCR website Stewardship Council page so more Friends could attend ([note: meeting dates are posted on the Stewardship Council page of the DCR website](#)). He also noted NEMBA opposition to any plan for a skating rink in the Middlesex Fells and the issue be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

John Besherer, Friends of Myles Standish, came to speak on a bridge closure for 25 years within the MSSF reservation. His main objective is for the management plan to get the landowners to fix and reopen the bridge. He also reported that the Friends of MSSF this year rebuilt two boardwalks. He was disappointed they were ineligible for DCR Partnership Matching Funds because the areas were not on DCR land. He said these are areas within the forest where DCR should engage with landowners.

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Chairman Hatch motioned to close the meeting at 10:18 a.m. The motion was seconded, all in favor, the motion carried.

The next meeting will be held December 7, 2018 at Camp Nihan Education Center, 131 Walnut Street, Saugus from noon to 2 p.m.