



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth/Secretary, Bob Durand, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Eve Schlüter/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Elizabeth Wroblicka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Jason Zimmer/Supervisor/Southeast Wildlife District, Andrew Madden/Supervisor/Western Wildlife District, Chalis Bird/Wildlife Manager/Northeast Wildlife District, Nicole McSweeney/Outreach and Marketing Manager, Major David Loos/OLE; PUBLIC: Stan Andriski, Elizabeth Manger, James Nishan

DATE: August 28, 2019

LOCATION: Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Field Headquarters
Westborough, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the August meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 10:00 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Sears to accept the minutes from the July meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Roo. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he had no comments.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reviewed the highlights of his recent schedule of meetings and reported upcoming meetings and events that may be of interest to the Board.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that he and the Commissioner had attended the Mass. Junior Conservation Camp graduation earlier in the month, and said that it is always a pleasure to see the young people out enjoying the traditional activities the Camp offers, like shooting, fishing, water sports, and camping.

The Director reminded the Board that MassWildlife's annual Employees' Conference was being held the next day at the Herm Covey WMA behind the Conn. Valley District office in Belchertown, noting that this was the only day of the year to bring together most of the staff from the installations around the state.

Director Tisa also reported that he had attended the AFWA [Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies] Business Summit, and was the featured speaker to discuss how state agencies use the money generated by Pittman-Robertson and Wallup-Breaux. Industry leaders are now getting questions from their board members and shareholders, asking what those taxes are and how they are being used to benefit their

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respective industries. The Director explained to them that these funds are used to restore wildlife and fish populations, acquire lands open to the public for hunting and fishing, build shooting ranges, and provide public access to fishing waters, in turn providing places for people to recreate and activities to engage in when consumers buy their products and want to go out and use them. The Director thought it was a great chance to get to know each side better and share concerns and issues; he reported great conversations and that he had established a number of good contacts.

Director Tisa also reported that he would be attending the AFWA Annual Meeting the following month for national meetings with other directors on issues that impact all state fish and wildlife agencies. The Director reported that he serves on the Federal Aid Trust Fund committee and the Joint Task Force on Federal Aid.

Asked about attendance at the Mass. Junior Conservation Camp, the Director and the Commissioner reported that there were about 110 youngsters this year. Director Tisa reported that attendance is down, likely because there are so many competing activities and interests in the modern world. He noted that the limiting factor is not sponsorships but rather interested students. The Board discussed ways that the Conservation Camp might have increased advertizing.

Law Enforcement Comments

Major David Loos reported on calls for service since the first of the year, with 105 calls to assist MassWildlife, 182 Bear calls, 162 Coyote calls, and 181 Deer calls. He also reported 952 Freshwater Fishing inspections, 573 ATV complaints, 850 boat safety inspections, and 412 motorboat violations cited. The Major noted that at this point we are more than halfway through the boating season.

Major Loos also reported that the OLE had also participated in the Mass. Junior Conservation Camp, and that officers were going to be a presence at the Mass Outdoor Expo (the Big MOE) in late September. He reported that the OLE is also working with the Office of Fishing and Boating Access about issues at ramps such as signage, boater education, etc., and noted that controlling the ramp works well to control activities on the river.

The Major informed the Board that officers were working to contain and control a bear in Fitchburg, that they were working closely with Furbearer and Bear Project Leader Dave Wattles, and that the incident was ongoing.

Personnel Report (Jon Regosin)

Deputy Director Jon Regosin submitted the following personnel report for the Board's consideration and vote:

Promotion

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Holly Hubert	Bitzer Fish Hatchery Manager Fish Culturist III	Montague

New Hires/Backfills

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Andrew Blajda	McLaughlin Hatchery Technician Wildlife Technician II	Belchertown
Jason R. Carmignani	Aquatic Ecologist Conservation Biologist IV	Westborough
Kevin Magowan	Roger Reed Fish Hatchery Assistant Manager Fish Culturist II	Palmer

Mr. Sears moved acceptance of the report, Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Year-end Review of FY 2019 Land Acquisitions (Elizabeth Wrobicka)

Chief of Wildlife Lands Elizabeth Wrobicka provided the Board with an overview of projects and accomplishments of the land acquisition program in FY 2019. She reported that the lands committee and the land agents together worked to close on 41 projects, protected a total of 2,429 acres statewide, and that \$6.23 million was spent, with 50% of the money coming from the Environmental Bond, 22% in Land Stamp monies, 21% from the EEA, and 7% from the ILF. She showed a map of the state with the towns where the parcels are located highlighted. Ms. Wrobicka also listed and spoke about the tremendous contributions of MassWildlife and DFG partners, which in FY 2019 included many land trusts; numerous other state, federal, and municipal agencies; and a private foundation. She then showed landscape photos of and detailed some of the highlights of the year's acquisitions, including 365 acres in Templeton that became the Norcross Hill WMA, 315 acres in Worthington that abut the Fox Den WMA, and a 61-acre conservation restriction abutting the Southwick WMA. Ms. Wrobicka also looked forward to the rest of FY 2020 and stated that land-acquisition staff for DFG and MassWildlife was in the process of identifying the most significant parcels for acquisition based on a revised list of factors that came out of a strategic planning retreat. She also reminded the Board members that the year's parcel ranking meetings would begin on September 5, and that they were welcome as always to attend and observe.

When asked about the impact of occurrences of state-listed species, Ms. Wrobicka noted that they were very important, because a property without state-listed species or priority habitat would not even rank to get out of committee for consideration to purchase. In response to another question about the openness to hunting of acquired land, Ms. Wrobicka states that, in general, all lands acquired by MassWildlife were open to hunting, with only a very few specific areas and sanctuaries exempted because of habitat or species sensitivity or because they were acquired long ago specifically as sanctuaries. It was noted that solar fields and pot farms having an impact on price and availability of land are becoming an issue in the Southeast, and a member asked about the effect of land donation on neighboring parcels and prices in general.

The Board members and the Chair commended Ms. Wrobicka's presentation and thanked her for providing it.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson reported that the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee doesn't meet in August so he had no report.

Set Meeting Date

Members confirmed the September meeting on September 18, 2019, at 1:00 p.m., in Westborough. Members also discussed dates for the next several meetings. After some discussion, the Board members chose Tuesday, October 29, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.; Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.; and Wednesday, December 18, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

Director Tisa stated that it may be desirable to adjust the times some of the meetings would be held, but that he would confirm with the Board members and the public well in advance of any changes.

Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo asked about the mosquito spraying in her area that commenced with little notice beforehand to the residents. NHESP Assistant Director Schlüter confirmed that the turnaround on the

emergency permits was not days but hours so there was no notification time, and that this was not unusual in emergencies of that type.

Vice Chair Roche and Secretary Booth reported no comment.

Mr. Foster reported that he volunteered in a Ruffed Grouse Society training course for novice hunters to become more familiar with upland bird hunting, and he wanted to take the opportunity to extend the same offer to MassWildlife staff with no experience or that are interested in the sport of upland bird hunting.

Mr. Durand reported that he's giving talks to area sportsmen's clubs and leagues in the coming weeks. He also asked about the recent uptick in donations to the Heritage Fund. Deputy Director Regosin reported that MassWildlife cannot get donor data on the state income tax refund contributions that are reported every month to the Board, so it is impossible to trace them back to any specific social media posting or web page to have a sense of what is behind them.

Mr. Sears reported he is getting repeated requests to reconsider the issuing of Antlerless Deer Permits in Zone 2, including possibly a lottery system based on how recently the applicant had received an ADP, to give hunters who had been unsuccessful in the award process a better chance. He reported also receiving many comments in his district that MassWildlife should explore more ways to share the burden of wildlife and habitat conservation with non-hunters.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing certain land acquisitions and to not return to open session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Chief of Wildlife Lands Wroblicka presented 2 proposed acquisitions, which were each reviewed and each unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its August meeting packets

August Agenda

Draft July meeting minutes for review

Commissioner's written comments to the Board

Personnel Report

Copies of the hearing notice and the proposed regulations for the public hearing on proposed MESA List changes scheduled for 1:00 p.m. the same day

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2018)

Documentation for the executive session