



DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890

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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, Mary-Lee King/Deputy 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, Marion Larson/Chief/Information and Education, Jason Zimmer/Supervisor/Southeast Wildlife District, Joe Rogers/Supervisor/Conn. Valley Wildlife District, Pat Huckery/Supervisor/Northeast Wildlife District, Todd Olanyk/Supervisor/Central Wildlife District, David Wattles/Project Leader/Black Bear and Furbearers, Elizabeth Wroblicka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Nicole McSweeney/Outreach and Marketing Manager, Jim Pollock/Operations Specialist; PUBLIC: Dave Morin, Elizabeth Magner

DATE: December 18, 2019

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

Chair Larson opened the October meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 10:05 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to accept the minutes from the November meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson pointed out two letters that were included in the Board's meeting packets for the previous meeting. The Chair reported that the letters were addressed to representatives in the Massachusetts Delegation to Congress, asking them to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which the Board members have been kept informed about over the past two years. Mr. Durand moved that the Board members sign the letters of support as presented; Mr. Sears seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous. Chair Larson thanked the members.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that his office had completed a 2-month search for a Legislative Director, and he was pleased that Mark Reil had accepted the position. The Commissioner reported that Mr. Reil, who was not present, has worked as a District Director and Assistant Legislative Director for Senator Ryan Fattman for the past five years, where he gained experience in state and local government affairs while serving the Senator's 14-town district.

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Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that the gift the Board had requested for retired Chief of Hatcheries Ken Simmons was ready and that Dr. Simmons was present. The Director spoke of Dr. Simmons' decades of dedication to the agency and the hatchery system as a hard-working employee, and stated that he was responsible for the high quality and consistent annual output of the entire culture system. Mr. Durand reported that he had worked on hatchery improvement projects with Dr. Simmons, that he was a real professional in all ways, and that the agency was still stocking the Assabet River after Mr. Durand had asked Dr. Simmons to look into the possibility.

Dr. Simmons thanked the Director and the Board for the framed photographs, and praised the entire hatchery staff of 27 employees who give 110% in all weathers and conditions to nurture and protect the fish they raise. He said it had been a privilege to lead such a crew.

Law Enforcement Comments

Chair Larson introduced Major David Loos. Major Loos thanked the Chair for his welcome and reported entries of interest to the Board from the log of the Office of Law Enforcement's calls for service. He stated that through November 31, 2019, there were a total of 198 calls to Assist MassWildlife, 299 bear calls, 229 coyote calls, 263 deer-related calls, 1225 freshwater fishing inspections, and 241 freshwater fishing violations. The Major also reported 9 hunting accidents and provided a few details about them. He also cited an investigation in Southeastern Massachusetts that was firearms-related in which a canine officer recovered a shell casing from a water body to confirm location of shooter. He also reported 43 moose calls and 199 pheasant hunter inspections that yielded 16 violations.

Major Loos also reported recent trainings for incident-investigation led by a Connecticut DEEP [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection] officer and Sue Langlois. He stated that recent hirings included three candidates going into the police academy and two more that the OLE was hoping would be joining them. The Major explained that the OLE was in the process of background checks on five more candidates. He also noted that four candidates were in officer training now, and in a month would go into field training.

The Chair thanked Major Loos for giving the meeting his time and for his detailed report.

Comment and Review and Vote: Proposed Furbearer Contest, Wanton Waste, and Fox and Coyote Harvest Reporting Regulation Changes (David Wattles)

Black Bear and Furbearer Project Leader David Wattles provided the Board with an in-depth review of the comments received in the public-hearing process. He began his presentation with a review of the biological and management concepts and the specific language in the proposed regulations. He then analyzed the comments received.

Dr. Wattles reported that, from the formal posting of the proposed regulations on September 20, 2019, to the close of the public comment period on November 12, 2019, staff received 1,031 comments, including oral comments at the two public hearings and written comments in letters and emails. Of the 1,031 comments received, 930 comments were in support of the proposed regulations and 101 comments were in opposition:

Dr. Wattles detailed the public-hearing comments:

- Lenox: October 22, 2019; 41 people attended:
 - 13 spoke in favor of the proposed regulations
 - 11 spoke in opposition to the proposed regulations

- Westborough: October 29, 2019; 61 people attended:
 - 22 spoke in favor of the proposed regulations
 - 14 spoke in opposition to the proposed regulations

Dr. Wattles also provided the staff's analysis of the written comments, first those in support and then those in opposition.

Written Comments in Support:

- 353 form letters and emails
 - Language originating from HSUS, MSPCA, and Animal Legal Defense Fund websites and emails
- 131 petition-style letters (exact origin unknown)
- 396 original letters and emails
 - Includes 5 from individuals that identified themselves as sportsmen; four in support of the regulations and one in support with revisions
- 11 letters of support from conservation and/or animal welfare organizations
 - Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Town of Wellesley Natural Resources Commission, Town of Stow Conservation Commission, Mass Audubon, Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Humane Society of the United States, Project Coyote, Animal Legal Defense Fund, and Animal Welfare Institute
- 1 letter of support from a sportsmen's organization
 - Worcester Country League of Sportsmen's Clubs

Dr. Wattles also reported 1 oral comment of support from an organization, the Western Mass. Animal Rights Advocates.

Written Conditional Supporting Comments:

- Letters of conditional support from sportsmen's organizations
 - Plymouth County League of Sportsmen's Clubs
 - MA Conservation Alliance
 - Sportsmen's Alliance

Written Comments in Opposition:

- 76 letters and emails in opposition
 - 45 form letters and emails
 - Language originating on Powderhorn Outfitters' Facebook page
 - 28 original letters and emails
 - Including 25 from individuals who identified themselves as sportsmen
 - 3 Letters of Opposition from Sportsmen's Organizations
 - Barnstable County League of Sportsmen's Clubs
 - Lenox Sportsmen's Club
 - Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Dr. Wattles also reported 1 oral comment of opposition from an organization, the Gun Owners Action League.

Dr. Wattles reported that a number of recurring themes emerged from the staff's analysis of the comments. He outlined those themes and the staff's responses to each one.

Public comment: *The proposed regulations will negatively impact livestock farmers.*

Agency response: The proposed regulations maintain all currently available options for farmers and others negatively impacted by furbearer depredations. MassWildlife staff remains 100% committed to working with farmers to resolve wildlife issues. The first option staff advises is allowing hunting or trapping on the farm during the regulated season, and this is done specifically so that the animal is utilized and not wasted. If the problem was not or could not be resolved during the hunting season or occurs outside the regular hunting season, there are options available to farmers. M.G.L. c. 131, § 37 allows the property owner, a family member, or employee to remove an animal in the act of depredation, year-round, and exempts the take from the wanton-waste requirements. Depredation permits are also an option for farmers, and would not require utilization. Dr. Wattles repeated that hunting does not control coyote populations and cannot eliminate livestock depredation.

Public comment: *We understand the need for a prohibition of certain contests, but the ban should only apply to contests where participants compete to take the greatest number of animals or to contests sponsored by commercial entities.*

Agency response: The contest prohibition only applies to furbearers. Contests for quantity are fundamentally different from big buck contests or contests for species with bag limits. Contests for quantity specifically incentivize the taking of more animals or the most animals for the contest. A contest for the largest animal is the same as a contest for the most animals when the species is without bag limits, because the contestant can continue to take successive animals in pursuit of a larger or the largest one. Dr. Wattle reported that, while arbitrary bag limits might address this issue, their use is not consistent with MassWildlife's statutory obligation to maintain hunting opportunity. Further, it would set a negative precedent to arbitrarily establish bag limits with no scientific basis. The idea that a contest prohibition should only apply to those held by commercial entities does not address the fact that the objections to contests are not to the type of entity holding the contest but to the nature of the contest itself.

Public comment: *Although we support the principle of opposing wanton waste, the requirement to use harvested coyotes places an unreasonable burden on the hunter or trapper because most hunters who take coyotes don't have the knowledge or skills to prepare a coyote pelt and/or tanning or taxidermy is too costly.*

Agency response: Utilization of animals that are harvested is a core principle of the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation and a principle that MassWildlife emphasizes in every Basic (mandatory) Hunter Education course. It is not difficult or time-consuming to skin an animal and prepare the pelt, and both skills are similar to the many other skills that hunters must learn, regardless of the species they are hunting, if they want to utilize the meat and other parts. Further, knowledge of skinning and tanning skills is readily obtainable, including through scores of online videos, free trapper education classes, and learning from other sportsmen. Further, these processes are not cost-prohibitive: Pelts can be skinned, prepared, and sold without tanning and at no cost; there is no additional license or permit needed; and tanning can be done inexpensively oneself or for \$25-\$35 through a fur processor. Based on MassWildlife data, 75%-80% of successful hunters harvest only 1-2 animals per year and 90% harvest 5 or less, so processing that many pelts is not an unreasonable burden.

Public comment: *Hunting reduces human-coyote conflict in cities and towns and prevents depredation on pets; the proposed regulations will reduce coyote hunting, thereby exacerbating the problem.*

Agency response: Coyotes are at saturation levels in Massachusetts and occupy all suitable habitats and territories, including in all towns, suburbs, and urban areas. Hunting does not control the coyote population and does not and cannot prevent coyotes from occupying these areas. Depredation of pets and other conflict does occur, but while hunting may randomly remove problem animals, it cannot target them with certainty. Further, there are many impediments to hunting in these areas and the proposed regulations do not increase those impediments in any way. Some conflict with coyotes in these areas is inevitable, and MassWildlife staff works with the public throughout the year on prevention and conflict mitigation.

Dr. Wattles then reported that MassWildlife recommends that the Fisheries and Wildlife Board adopt the regulations as previously submitted with three minor changes, all of which emerged from the comment responses received from the public. Staff recommended changing the word “fur” to “the pelt” in response to comments that merely a piece of fur or a tail could count as “use.” He stated that furbearers have always been valued for their pelts, and that the expectation was that the pelt would be utilized. Staff also recommended removing all occurrences of the word “birds” from 321 CMR 2.17 because the concept of “animals” includes birds and staff felt it would avoid unnecessary confusion or questions to remove the redundant phrase. Staff also recommended inserting the word “such” into 321 CMR 2.17(2), as shown below, to clarify and reinforce the reference back specifically to the retrieved animals referred to in the previous section.

The final form of the recommended regulations was the following:

321 CMR 2.16: Prohibition on Contests for the Capture, Take or Waste of Predator and Furbearer Animals

It shall be unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, promote, conduct or participate in a contest in which participants compete for prizes or other inducements that results in the capture, take or waste of those predatory or furbearing animals regulated by the Division pursuant to 321 CMR 3.02(3) or 3.02(5)(b)(2.) and (5.-11.).

321 CMR 2.17: Prohibition on the Waste of Certain Game Animals

(1) It is unlawful for any person while hunting or trapping in accordance with 321 CMR 3.02 to waste an animal. For the purposes of 321 CMR 2.16 and 2.17, “waste” means to intentionally or knowingly leave a wounded or dead animal that the person has hunted or trapped in the field or the forest without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the animal and use it.

(2) Each such retrieved animal shall be retained in the individual’s possession or transferred to another and retained in their possession until processed or used as food, or for the pelt, feathers, or for taxidermy.

(3) Each retrieved animal shall be checked in accordance with 321 CMR 3.02.

(4) The requirements of 321 CMR 2.17 (1) and (2) shall not apply to animals that are unfit for consumption or use. For the purposes of this section, “unfit for consumption or use” shall mean animals or their parts that are damaged, destroyed, decayed, rotting, diseased or infected.

(5) The prohibition of waste in 321 CMR 2.17(1) and (2) shall not apply to:

- (a) any animal-taken pursuant to M.G.L. c. 131, § 37; or
- (b) those animals identified in M.G.L. c. 131, § 5 except for fox and wildcat, the take of which are regulated pursuant to 321 CMR 3.02(3); or
- (c) any animal taken in accordance with 321 CMR 2.08 or 2.14.

321 CMR 3.02(3) Hunting of Bobcat, Fox and Coyote in Massachusetts

Coyote and fox shall be sealed no later than 48 hours after the animal is killed.

321 CMR 3.02(5) Hunting and Trapping of Certain Mammals

Coyote and fox shall be sealed no later than 48 hours after the animal is killed.

In conclusion, Dr. Wattles reported that MassWildlife recommends that the Fisheries and Wildlife Board adopt the regulations as previously submitted with the three minor changes he had explained, prohibiting contests for the take of predators and furbearers, prohibiting wanton waste, and changing the harvest reporting requirements for fox and coyote.

Mr. Durand stated that he had several questions. He asked staff what would be the penalties for a violation. Assistant Director Huguenin reported that penalties would be the same as for any other violation of a regulation.

Mr. Durand stated that he takes issue with the prohibition against wanton waste and that 90% of the supporters that commented didn't mention wanton waste. He also asked why the regulations are treating coyotes different from dogs. There is a protocol to deal with dogs running deer, but not coyotes. Dr. Wattles reported that one of them is a wild animal. Mr. Durand asked how many attacks on humans there had been in the state in the last 25 years. Dr. Wattles reported that 13 coyotes have attacked humans in that period; in recent years, it has been one per year. Mr. Durand asked whether the Board members can be sued for an attack after passing the regulations. Director Tisa replied that anyone can sue anyone, but that there would be no basis for liability.

Mr. Durand reported that he wanted to read a statement into the record and that he would provide a copy of it to staff after the meeting:

Our core constituency is losing faith in MassWildlife!

After attending the hearings and reaching out to numerous Sporting clubs, County Leagues and statewide Sporting organizations over the last few months they have the impression that we are caving in to a national effort promulgated by national animal rights organizations.

Our core constituency who pays for our programs, our staffing and land acquisition projects were caught off guard.

First they heard MassWildlife was having informational meetings on coyotes. They didn't participate in an organized way because they didn't know it would turn into new coyote regulations.

When they realized that new regs may be proposed, they believed it was around the issue of coyote contests. In fact so did the animal rights community judging by the emails and comments of over 700 of them where 90% asked to stop the "coyote killing contests."

Our core constituency were totally caught off guard on the wanton waste provision. Most didn't understand the ramifications of the new wanton waste rules for coyotes.

Coyotes are not fit for human consumption like game animals, The cost of processing and tanning a hide is more expensive than the pelt is worth and taxidermy is cost prohibitive.

Our Director in his Summary of Proposed Draft Regulations under Background page 2 last paragraph. These regs can be promulgated, and I quote, "without reducing the opportunity for hunting coyotes or furbearers,". This is simply not true. No one will hunt coyotes because it's too expensive. But maybe that's the real intent?

Meanwhile a carefully orchestrated effort led by national animal rights groups were able to better organize, using social media, mass mailings, advertisements, emails and a letter writing campaign and were able to convince MassWildlife to not only end these contests, but to add a wanton waste provision. When most of the letters in support of ending "coyote killing

contests “didn’t mention wanton waste at all.

Yes, Our core constituency were outgunned, an older demographic that isn’t used to using social media and campaign tactics to influence this board.

Why ? Because we have had their back and they ours for so long. To my friends in the sporting community. Things have changed!

The last thing this board needs now , in our history, at this time, is not to have the confidence of our core constituency. We will need them as we proceed to more pressing issues , that will enhance the future of this agency and both game and non game programs in the months to come. Thank You Mr. Chairman and I would like to offer the following two amendments . Amendments attached. Bob Durand

Mr. Foster stated that he acknowledged that fellow board member Bob Durand’s comments were accurate; the County League sportsmen were caught off guard by the inclusion of wanton waste, that they attended the listening sessions and wrote suggestions in their comments. Mr. Foster also commented that today’s younger hunters are not “club” joiners; younger hunters he knows didn’t join the protest, but demonstrated that they understood the ethical issues as they were trained by the MassWildlife Hunter Education Program and embrace the concept of wanton waste. Mr. Foster stated that he does support the changes and believes that older hunters are listening as their children and grandchildren grow up with different perspectives.

Dr. Van Roo stated that, speaking as the wildlife biologist member of the board, the proposal is biologically sound and therefore we are fulfilling our mission of protecting the resource. We are upholding a principle of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation by prohibiting wanton waste. Further, the staff have considered and addressed each concern brought forward by the public, point by point, so our public process has worked well. Therefore I will certainly be voting for the proposal.

Ms. Booth stated that most of her constituents in Worcester County are her age but she found that most of them know they need to and are willing to change. She noted that we are in changing times, and most hunters she talked to accept that times have changed, including because they hear it from their youngsters, who have different attitudes toward wildlife. Ms. Booth noted that the Worcester County League expressed its support and stated that she accepts and supports the changes.

Mr. Sears offered his thanks to the staff for its hard work over months on this process, in particular [Western Wildlife District Manager] Andrew Madden and the other district managers. He acknowledged that the focus on wanton waste did come somewhat late in the process and some sportsmen may have been unaware of it, but he stated that he believes creating the regulation is the right thing to do. In his opinion, people who missed the opportunity to comment didn’t listen or didn’t engage in the process that was offered to them by MassWildlife staff’s outreach efforts multiple times. This outreach included meetings with the county leagues prior to any of the listening sessions. He added that the problem came from the sporting community and that the fault rests with them. He also stated that the Mass Wildlife staff reached out and visited the company who was hosting the contest early in the process in an effort to try to avoid having them escalate the situation. Unfortunately the company did not heed the advice and the situation did unfortunately get worse. He stated that he strongly supports the regulations as the staff has amended and presented them to the Board at the day’s meeting.

Mr. Durand stated that the process was a mass campaign by animal-rights organizations, and that the older demographic was outgunned by social media. He repeated that he wanted to know what the penalty is and would propose an amendment to have a first-time warning. Assistant Director Huguenin reported that EPOs [Environmental Police Officers] always have discretion to issue warnings, as they see

fit. If citations are issued, it would be a matter for the courts, as with any regulation. He also confirmed that fines for fish and wildlife violations are generally in the range of \$25-\$50.

Vice Chair Roche noted that he was probably the only person on the Board that had made a study of and actively hunted coyotes. He stated that he had worked very hard on the skills and tactics needed, and yet had killed zero coyotes. He stated that he has had a lifelong belief that if you kill something you use it. He reported that his father's generation believed that anything that kills game should be killed. Vice Chair Roche stated that he understands that sentiment but doesn't believe it is still valid. He reported that, from the beginning, while he wasn't entirely comfortable with the extension of wanton waste to all animals hunted, he wasn't happy with the wanton waste associated with the contests. He stated that those individuals that believe differently should understand that there is widespread public opinion that sees these issues very differently. He noted that he had read all the comments, and while both sides made valid points, there was nothing said that changed his belief that if you kill an animal you must use it. With the provisions for exemptions that he thought were reasonable and proper, Vice Chair Roche stated that he believes the proposed regulations are the right thing to do.

Mr. Durand reported that he hunts and kills coyotes, and that he believes the agency is going to regret the decision and that people will get hurt.

Chair Larson stated that he would like to comment on the proposed coyote regulations within a broad context:

Unlike many other countries, wildlife in the U.S. is owned by all citizens, not just the landowner on whose land wildlife is found. MassWildlife is the state agency charged with the protection and management of all species of wildlife and their habitats. This responsibility covers over 400 species of animals and plants.

In my youth, a much larger percentage of Massachusetts residents lived in rural towns where hunting, fishing, and trapping were common activities, and a natural part of life. In some towns boys would bring their shotguns in the school bus, lock them in their school lockers so that when school closed they could hunt on their way home. One year I kept my shotgun in a locked trunk, under my bed in my university dormitory. A friend and I would be out hunting while everyone else was still sleeping and come back to the dormitory after most everyone had left for morning classes.

Times have changed. The percent of people who today hunt, fish, or trap is a much smaller segment of the population and the average age is much older. If members of the public at large come to a conclusion that some aspect of these sports does not meet the ethical standards that are taught in our public education courses, they can petition the legislature to enact legislation to satisfy their position. If the drafted legislation is not passed into law they have the right to get enough signatures to put the issue on a state election ballot. We saw this happen some years ago when use of soft-catch leg-hold traps was banned. Once a piece of proposed legislation is placed on a ballot, all state agency personnel are barred from making any public spoken or written comments on the matter.

MassWildlife needs to pay careful attention to concerns raised by any portion of the public, especially if the issue is contrary to the ethical standards we teach or are not based on the best science available to our staff.

Dr. Van Roo noted that the issue is getting inflamed, but the Board needs to remember that there are PAC [Problem Animal Control] agents and other remedies for people who are experiencing conflicts with wildlife, including coyotes.

Chair Larson asked for a motion on the proposed regulations. Secretary Booth moved that the Board approve the regulations as proposed; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion.

Mr. Durand repeated that he had brought two amendments that he wanted to propose to change the regulations. He provided the amendments to staff in writing: Mr. Durand moves to amend Section 2.16 by adding language at the end of the section: Organized Sporting Clubs are exempt from this section. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster.

Mr. Sears asked Mr. Wattles to explain again the nature of the comments received on this issue. Mr. Wattles stated that the objections raised in the comments were to the activity, and not the nature of the entity doing the activity. Director Tisa clarified that the regulation applies only to furbearers, with mostly coyote, fox, and raccoon at issue; that very few clubs hold such contests; and that therefore very few club contests would be impacted.

After a brief discussion, Chair Larson called for a vote. In favor: 1; opposed: 6. The motion failed.

Mr. Durand proposed a second amendment: Mr. Durand Amends Section 2.17 by striking out the language in 2.17 pertaining to wanton waste. He proposed taking the wanton waste provision out and taking it up at a later date by a subcommittee; no second; the motion failed for lack of a second.

Chair Larson asked whether the Board was prepared to vote on the entire package of regulations. Mr. Durand asked staff whether the 2020 regulations had already been changed; Mr. Wattles reported that they had not. Mr. Sears asked what the effective dates would be. Director Tisa reported that the tagging and reporting requirements for fox and coyote would take effect for the Fall 2020-2021 season, and that the prohibitions against contests and wanton waste would go into effect as soon they can go through the promulgation process.

After another brief discussion, Dr. Van Roo moved the vote: In favor: 6; opposed: 1. Chair Larson clarified that the regulations would go into effect immediately they were promulgated, as staff had recommended; In favor: 6; opposed: 1.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Chair Larson stated that the Advisory Committee had wanted to know the effect of lake drawdowns on fish, wildlife, and habitats. At its January meeting, the Advisory Committee heard a presentation from a new staff member, James Carmignani, the Aquatic Ecologist, which was very interesting. Chair Larson reported that there is only one legal way to affect the timing or size of drawdowns: where a state-listed animal or plant would be negatively impacted. Mr. Carmignani had reported that a thorough search of the scientific literature showed that there was nothing in the literature as to the effects of drawdowns. The Chair reported that MassWildlife had supported a study that looked at effects of reducing water levels and when, and asked that the same presentation be given for Board at a future meeting.

Mr. Sears reiterated that it is a huge problem that MassWildlife has no regulatory authority for unlisted species in the context of a drawdown. Mr. Durand stated that a multi-agency approach to working on the issues would be best. Chair Larson agreed that working with the agency with most regulatory authority, the DEP [Department of Environmental Protection], was the way to proceed. Dr. Van Roo stated that, as a conservation commissioner, she saw that conservation commissions need to know that they have review authority for drawdowns, because many don't. Assistant Director Richards commented that MassWildlife staff still has work to do, but that biologists are working actively on outreach. Dr. Van Roo stated that a presentation at MACC [Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissioners annual conference] to tell conservation commissioners that they have that authority would be very

helpful. Assistant Director Schlüter reported that there is information in the courses offered, and Director Tisa agreed that staff should make a presentation to tell commissioners about this authority.

Confirm Next Meeting Date

Members confirmed the January date of Wednesday, January 15, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., at the Field Headquarters.

Member's Comments

Mr. Durand reported that the Northeast Wildlife District had tagged a 450-pound bear. He spoke highly of [District Manager] Pat Huckery, who he said was doing a fine job in her district.

Vice Chair Roche shared some words of reminiscence about wildlife artist, conservationist, and outdoor writer Randy Julius, who died earlier in December. Famous for the wildlife art he created and won [state hunting] stamp contests with over the years, he will be greatly missed.

Dr. Van Roo reported that she has two students (bow deer hunters) looking for mentors, if anyone is interested, please ask her. She also reported that five of her students would be working deer check stations during biological deer check week. She was almost finished with northern saw whet owl banding for the year. She stated that it was a very low year for numbers. On the other hand, she reported that Boreal owls are having a very good year, so she and other Barred Owl researchers have been asked to try to band them as well; she couldn't report any at her stations so far.

Secretary Booth added that Randy Julius had been a great supporter of BOW [Becoming an Outdoor Woman] programs, and had brought his band to entertain at a number of BOW events.

Mr. Foster stated that Mr. Julius lived down the street from Mr. Foster's print shop, where Mr. Foster did printing for a lot of the stamps. He also reported attending the recent Plymouth County League meeting.

Vice Chair Roche stated that he would move to adjourn in memory of Randy Julius.

Mr. Sears offered his thanks to Director Tisa for attending the recent meeting of the Berkshire County League, where he gave his biography and vision going forward. He stated that the Berkshire County League members are very concerned that the legislature gets the crossbow bill pushed through; he noted that anything anyone can do to get it out of Ways and Means and up for a vote would be great, noting that there doesn't seem to be any opposition; it seems to be just bogged down. He also brought again the Berkshire County League's request for a different point system for the ADPs [Antlerless Deer Permits], for people who haven't drawn a tag within a certain number of years, for example.

Secretary Booth reported that the Mahar Fish and Game Club students had lost their pheasants, and commended the Worcester County League for stepping in and providing birds to the young people. She reported on the BOW [Becoming an Outdoors Woman] deer hunt, noting that a 10-point buck was taken at 8:00 a.m., the first deer ever for the hunter. She also noted that the hunt was the day after the recent big snowstorm, but the hunters did manage to get in to the hunt area at Devens. She reported that two out of 16 women were successful. Secretary Booth also gave Central Wildlife District Technician Ethan LaPlante accolades, having had lots of very complimentary comments from sportsmen about him.

Mr. Foster stated that he was happy with the process staff had followed dealing with the contest issue and with the Board, which showed in the process how it should function and did function, and he thought the Chair's comments in particular perfectly encapsulated the issues for him.

Chair Larson asked whether the Board wished to recognize Randy Julius and his accomplishments in some way. Vice Chair Roche stated that members should take some time to consider an appropriate action. Chair Larson asked Mr. Foster and Vice Chair Roche to take the lead and report back to Board on the best way to honor Julius' life and work in the conservation community.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to go into executive session and not return to open session, then to adjourn in memory of Randy Julius. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Roo. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief of Wildlife Lands Wroblicka presented 11 parcels for acquisition or protection. Each was reviewed and each unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned in memory of Randy Julius at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

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

December Agenda

Draft November meeting minutes for review

Draft letters to congressmen in support of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)

Proposed regulations package

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

Documentation for the executive session