



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, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Assistant Director/Information and Education, Elizabeth Wroblicka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, David Wattles/ Todd Olanyk, Andrew Madden, Major David Loos/OLE; PUBLIC: Dave Morin, Stan Andriski

DATE: September 18, 2019

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

Chair Larson opened the September meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 1:00 p.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Sears to accept the minutes from the August meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roche. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson stated that he did not have any comments.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon detailed his meetings, site tours, and events for the previous month and informed the Board about his upcoming schedule.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa highlighted the Norcross WMA event that the Commissioner had mentioned and reported that it was well attended and went very well.

The Director updated the Board on the public hearing dates for the proposed coyote regulations, stating that the first hearing would be held on Tuesday, October 22, 2019, at 7:00 p.m., at the Lenox Town Hall; and the second on Tuesday, October 29, 2019, 7:00 p.m., at the Westborough Field Headquarters. He also advised the Board that staff requested rescheduling the Board meeting on October 29 to 3:00 p.m. because of the evening hearing. He reported that all the hearing materials (the public hearing notice, supporting information, and draft regulations) would be posted online on the Friday following the Board meeting, September 20, 2019.

Director Tisa stated that all proposed regulations have to go through a comprehensive process before they can be released to the public. The process starts with the Board, staff develops regulations based on the Board's approval of draft recommendations, the draft regulations move to the Commissioner's

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office for legal review, to EEA for review, and to Administration and Finance for its legal review and sign-off, then the regulations are ready to go to public hearing and be reviewed and commented upon by the public.

Asked what happens if the draft regulations are changed by anyone in that process, Director Tisa reported that there may be wording changes here and there, but substantive changes from what the Board approved would have to go back to the Board for re-approval, and that this rarely happens. In answer to another question, Director Tisa gave examples of the changes to the regulations for lead sinkers and regarding zebra mussels and stated that, in all cases, no proposed regulations are ever made available before the process is finalized. The Director further explained that written comments are accepted after the regulations have been posted until the hearing, oral and written comments are accepted during the hearing, and written comments are accepted for 2 weeks after the close of the hearing. He stated that, after the written comment period on the coyote regulations, staff may or may not bring final recommendations to the Board for a vote at the November meeting, depending on the complexity and/or volume of comments to be analyzed and the amount of time available between the October and November meetings.

Director Tisa then related a story about meeting Little Dewey, a young man who is a champion archer and an Eagle scout. Chief of Wildlife Lands Elizabeth Wroblicka met Little Dewey through his family, was impressed with the boy, and told the Director he had to meet him. Director Tisa explained that he had met Director Dick Cronin when he was Dewey's age and that the Director told him at the time to study work hard and he (the Director) would give him a job after college. Director Tisa stated that he felt he was paying back the time and attention Director Cronin had paid him in encouraging Dewey and making him the same offer. The Director also noted that there was an article about their encounter in the upcoming *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine issue.

Law Enforcement Comments

Major David Loos provided the Board with an update to the Office of Law Enforcement's year-to-date call log, up to August 31, 2019. He also reported that OLE is monitoring a nuisance bear in Fitchburg area. The Major stated that OLE participates in the Massachusetts Outdoor Expo (Big MOE) every year, too, and look forward to the interactions with young people and their families. He noted that the officers bring a piece of equipment, a boat or ORV, and answer questions for the day. He also reported that OLE is participating in a Sled Expo, November 16-17, where officers will have a registration van to register snowmobiles and answer questions. Major Loos also highlighted one enforcement case in bear season: there were two subjects charged with unlawful hunting of bear and several other charges; officers seized the bear and donated the meat to the Franklin Technical high school for its annual game dinner. Asked whether total fatalities thus far this year is a high number (6), he reported that it is actually very low; the OLE would like to have zero fatalities, but the number can be much higher by this time in the year.

Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

Associate Director of Administration Kris McCarthy submitted the following personnel report for the Board's consideration and vote:

Promotion

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Travis Drudi	Northeast District Stewardship Specialist Game Biologist I	Ayer

Ray Bressette

Western District Wildlife Technician
Wildlife Technician III

Dalton

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

Comment Review and Vote: Proposed MESA List Changes (Eve Schlüter)

Assistant Director for NHESP Dr. Eve Schlüter reviewed the comments received on the recommended changes to the MESA List that were the subject of a public hearing on August 28, 2019, and a written comment period for 2 weeks thereafter.

Dr. Schlüter began by reminding the Board members of the steps in the process of developing recommendations for the MESA List and of the broad categories of proposed changes. She then reviewed the public comments received, stating that there were five in all, and provided the evidence and analysis that NHESP staff used to evaluate the species in question and the suggested changes in the two comments that disagreed with the staff's recommendations.

After a few questions from Board members and a brief discussion, Mr. Sears made a motion to accept the MESA List changes as recommended; Mr. Foster seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC) Report

Dr. Larson reported that the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee's September meeting was very interesting, with a report from staff on the NHESP Data Improvement Initiative. He explained that at the start of the MESA and NHESAC staff had to go through a very detailed, almost tedious process in a major effort to identify and list species in need of conservation. Most of the data is and was on paper, and it is very challenging to process and use the data. He reported that he has watched the process mature over the years to where staff has developed a massive amount of data, on paper and in a digital database, and are finding different ways to organize and use it to conserve species and habitats. Vice Chair Roche added that the agency owes a specific debt to former Chair Gige Darey for his support for rare species and the Heritage program.

Mr. Sears commended the updated graph of Heritage donations received and asked about possible efforts to increase marketing of the program and the donation option at the time of tax filing, stating that he assumes the staff is exploring and trying to maximize exposure at that time.

Confirm Meeting Date

Members confirmed the date for the October Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting: Tuesday, October 29, 2019, at 3:00 p.m., at the Field Headquarters.

Member's Comments

Vice Chair Roche stated that he wanted to make a pitch for improved participation of grandparents, who are always looking for things to do with their grandkids. He suggested that staff develop things to do with grandkids and promote them to grandparents.

Mr. Foster reported that the League meeting season was started and that he went to the Plymouth County League meeting after the last Board meeting where there was a lot of conversation about coyote, which was very productive.

Mr. Sears thanked the Director and his staff for scheduling one of the public hearings in the Berkshires, and he stated that he had attended the last Berkshire County League meeting. Mr. Sears also told the Board that he had been sent a picture taken in Windsor of a huge moose with an enormous rack.

Mr. Durand said that he seconds involving grandparents in activities they can share with their grandkids, and he reminded the Board of an Angler Education Program for grandparents and grandkids that he took his grandchild to and had a great time. He encouraged staff to figure out how to replicate the program at senior centers around the state. Mr. Durand also reported that he was speaking in the coming week at the Essex County League meeting, and he said there have been lots of discussions on coyotes.

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 Wroblika presented 1 proposed acquisition, which was reviewed and unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

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

September Agenda

Draft August meeting minutes for review

Letter to the Fisheries and Wildlife Board from the Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs
Board of Directors, dated September 16, 2019

Commissioner's written comments

Office of Law Enforcement: Calls for Service List; January 1—August 31, 2019

Personnel Report

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (Tax Years 1992—2018)

Documentation for the executive session