

Gurnet-Saquish Workgroup Meeting

October 22, 2019, 6 – 8 pm

Fogg Library, South Weymouth

See participant list [\[attached\]](#).

- A. Future meeting locations – Most Gurnet-Saquish (**G-S**) property owners are in SE Mass. over the winter. SmartPak Equine Corporate Facility, Plymouth, is a potential location for future meetings. Will have virtual capability for long distance participation.
- B. Frequency – monthly. Could use a conference line if necessary. Start at 6 pm.
- C. Ground rules (10 min) – develop as group
 - a. Stay on topic
 - b. Use parking lot
 - c. Be respectful of each other's time and opinions
 - d. May establish a time limit for speakers, if necessary
 - e. One person at a time
 - f. If using phone, introduce speakers, check in with long distance participants as well
- D. Note taking – at least one primary note taker, with a back-up. Notes should be major points, action items, not necessarily detailed notes, to reduce time spent editing them. Look at Google meeting templates: helps ID who attends, when meeting started/stopped, action items. Helps manage meetings. Susi von O. will talk to Casey M. about Google meetings and whether this will help manage future meetings.
- E. Presentation [\[attached\]](#) – Jerry E. – Residents had pre-meeting work session. Objective: to introduce the G-S community's issues and needs. Covered history of G-S, residents – full time/seasonal, access requirements...
 - a. Gurnet Saquish Corp (**GSC**) – non-profit, not all property owners belong: Road maintenance (starts at guard shack, runs between Gurnet and Saquish, breakwater fencing, snow fencing, grass planting to preserve dunes, Beach Management Plan through the Plymouth ConCom (covers road, dunes, fencing, etc. to cover an Order of Conditions), Gatewatch security, fundraising
 - b. Saquish Beach Land Trust (**SBLT**; Casey M.) – 58 private members, to be a member must own a cottage on Gurnet or Saquish, owns 9 unbuildable lots on the front beach (extending from centerline of Boulevard SE to mean low waterline, separated by 8 lots privately owned, under water at high tide, has a Board of Trustees. Mission – primarily allows access to the property (beach).
 - c. GSC and SBLT are independent of each other.

Access (see slide) – covers access to G-S. Note, issued 1,500 stickers issued in the past 3 years. Gurnet-Saquish provides the stickers (free) to manage the traffic to facilitate residents' passage through checkpoints, limit trespassers. Guest passes issued to frequent visitors. Rentals supposed to get a Guest Pass from the host. Gatewatch – Memorial Day through Labor Day. Memorial Day through June weekends only, July 4th – 7 days/8 am to 1 am. After July 4th – September, weekends and extra random 3 days (hours based on tide, days may be based on weather) with gatekeeper scheduled around tides. After Labor Day, keep weekend coverage 8 am – midnight.

See overall total numbers through the entire season (slide) – 1136 hours of gatewatching close to 7000 vehicle passes, an underestimate of the total since vehicle counting did not occur 24/7. 4400 cars/residents, 1856 guests, 54 contractors, 7 lighthouse visitors, 4 shellfishermen, 337 trespassers/turnarounds (verify from slide).

Slide of Issues and Concerns –

- Access rights to their property
- Resident participation – 100% participation in anything, including an HCP, highly unlikely.
- Discontent – solution to protecting ES species and restrictions could result in discontent
- Fear of the unknown
- Liability – without participation in an HCP?
- HCP Participation – unmanageable or unrealistic requirements may result in financial burdens, penalties
- Increasing plover population – increases point to unsustainable management
- Lack of Alternative Measures of Protection (other than restricting access)
- Lack of Funding – residents taxed (property tax), not getting benefits from paying the taxes

See Outstanding Questions slide

- What are highest risks to birds?
 - Predation/Sea Level Rise-Climate Change causing nest/chick loss/the road
 - Cris L. will provide estimates of nest loss/chick mortality
- What alternative methods can be considered (other than restricting access) to aid population growth?
 - Nest/chick management – symbolic fencing, predator management (lethal/non-lethal), control dogs (no dog restrictions/leash laws), education/outreach, managing beach raking to maintain wrack line (food source), trash removal, habitat management/restoration. Plover conservation is about managing people and habitat.
 - An option under an HCP – small, temporary barriers
- What is being asked of G-S residents?
 - Asking residents to work with agencies to identify ways to minimize “take” of plovers. No end point in mind, could discuss general scenarios of what could be implemented. In order to develop a sustainable resolution, need to understand all sides of the issue (regulatory, residents’ needs/objectives, plover management/conservation objectives).
 - Issue areas – King Arthur Road and the Boulevard (intertidal driving, primarily DEP issue, but may have chicks in the vicinity of the Boulevard, are they at risk of being impacted by vehicles?) Have had nests at the curve. Have closed a crossover to reroute vehicles away from chicks. Minimal monitoring/management due to lack of funding
- Habitat Conservation Plan – See item (G.), general paths forward
 - Suggesting an HCP?
 - Could Duxbury Beach Reservation’s (DBR) COI be modified to include G-S?
 - Separate HCP for residents?
 - What protections would that provide under the DBR COI?
- Where would funds come from to support an effort?
- Why are participants in the MA HCP being penalized for the increase in plover population?

Discussion –

- Who/what did Jerry E. and Casey M. represent: themselves or their organizations (GSC, SBLT)?

- This working group should figure out where to go, then take to all of the residents.
 - Historical relationship to DBR – Bill H. – since 2000 Bill was on the advisory committee for DBR and then the Board for DBR. Also president of the GSC. There is collaboration/info exchange between DBR and GSC.
- F. Question and Answer period about info that was emailed (40 min) – led by property owners
- G. Identify general paths forward, pros and cons of each (15 min) – agency-led; to be discussed in more detail in future
- a. No action (status quo)
 - b. Adhere to Guidelines; develop vehicle management plan that avoids take – not likely since that requires no night driving among other things. Difficult/impossible to get 100% participation
 - c. Conform to current Mass. Statewide HCP – reviewed the different covered activities. Focus on use of roads and parking lots in the vicinity of unfledged chicks (improved roads such as King Arthur) – vehicle management, no night driving, barriers, etc.
 - d. Modify statewide HCP to address essential vehicle use
 - e. Develop new HCP specific to G-S
 - f. Individual, low-effect HCP(s) for case-specific driving (particularly at night)
 - g. US Fish and Wildlife Service website with information on Habitat Conservation Plans:
 - i. Overview: <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/hcp-overview.html>
 - ii. Fact Sheet: <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/hcp.pdf>
 - iii. Frequently Asked Questions: https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/HCP_Handbook_Q&A.pdf
- H. Identify major issues to be tackled in upcoming meetings (15 min) – develop as group
- a. Did not have time to discuss
- I. Communication with property owners (20 min) – group discussion
- How to keep property owners informed of efforts/meeting notes if they aren't part of work group?
- MADFW can potentially post materials online, then one last time send hard copy letters with how to access the information.
 - post meeting notes on G-S Facebook page
 - add notes to the billboard on the G-S road
 - Heather E. will email notes to residents on her list
 - Casey M. can email/mail notes to SBLT members
 - Word of mouth.
- J. Wrap up (10 min) – discuss potential dates and topics for next meeting – group discussion

Recommendations and action items coming from discussion:

- Encourage Town of Plymouth to participate in these discussions. *[Done; Plymouth was unable to attend 10/22 meeting, but plans to attend 11/25 meeting.]* What would Plymouth's role be in this? Have had some limited discussions re: plover monitoring when nests are found. Look to Sandwich beaches management of plovers on private property, model for Plymouth? What are the legal responsibilities of Plymouth for enforcing trespassing? Does Plymouth allow access to Plymouth properties?

- Duxbury Yacht Club (DYC) – reach out to encourage participation in the working group. *[Done; DYC plans to attend 11/25 meeting.]* Access to their property and events that may occur during the plover season. How do they control access to their property?
- Add website URL for USFWS HCP information to notes *[Done]*
- Investigate if G-S residents can have an HCP that covers the road traversing the DBR property
- Have a group get together prior to the next meeting to draft a name and protocol for participation of existing/new members. Present at next meeting? Send out prior to next meeting?
- DBR will provide a Q and A for King Arthur Rd. and legal links either prior to the next meeting or at the next meeting.

Next Meeting –

- Identify major issues to be tackled in upcoming meetings
- Go over Pros and Cons of each “general path forward.”
- Identify this working group as an entity – name? G-S resident advisory working group? Residents will work on this before next meeting.
- Develop working group participation protocol.
- How to manage consistent participation? Commitment letter? Rule that new participants need to be bring themselves up to speed prior to coming to meeting: we will not revisit issues that have already been sufficiently addressed.

Location of next meeting – Monday, November 25th, 6 – 8 pm, SmartPak Equine, 40 Grissom Rd. #500, Plymouth. (Darryn M. is group contact for the facility.) <https://goo.gl/maps/GGF7cc9rjkc7e1QP8>
Zoom Call-in number will be sent later.

