



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION
100 CAMBRIDGE STREET, BOSTON MA 02114

Meeting Minutes for July 10, 2025

Meeting conducted remotely via Zoom meeting platform, 1:00 p.m.

Minutes approved October 9, 2025

Members in Attendance:

Vandana Rao	Designee, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
Chris Kluchman	Designee, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)
John Scannell	Designee, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Kathleen Baskin	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
Tyler Soleau	Designee, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
Todd Richards	Designee, Department of Fish and Game (DFG)
Hotze Wijnja	Designee, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR)
Christine Hatch	Public Member
Kenneth Weismantel	Public Member

Members Absent

Thomas Cambareri	Public Member
Vincent Ragucci	Public Member
Samantha Woods	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Aimee	Graeber	DCR	Jenna	Pirrotta	MassDEP
Albelee	Haque	MassDEP	Jennifer	Pederson	Massachusetts Water Works Association
Alicia	Geilen	MassDEP			
Allison	Richards	EEA	Jerica	Washington	DCR
Amber	Carr	DER, DFG	Jess	Richard	Wright-Pierce
Andreae	Downs	Wastewater Advisory Committee	John	Sheppard	DMF, DFG
			Joy	Duperault	DCR OWR
Andy	Backman	DCR	Justin	Guerra	DCR
Ann	Lowery	MassDEP	Kate	Bentsen	DER, DFG
Bailey	Mullins	DCR	Katelyn	Shultz	DCR
Becca	George	EOHLC	Katherine	Miller	EEA
Bert	Comins	MassDEP	Kathleen	Mason	CZM
Dahlia	Tympanick	MassDEP	Katie	Paight	DCR OWR
Duane	LeVangie	MassDEP	Kimberly	MacPhee	Franklin Regional Council of Governments
Hannah	Shestack	MassDEP			
Heidi	Davis	MassDEP	Louis	Ragozzino	Wright-Pierce
Hila	Eitam	Department of Public Utilities	Lydia	Olson	Mass Rivers Alliance
			Marcel	Belaval	United States Geological Survey
Hillary	Monahan	Massachusetts Water Resources Authority	Michael	Grega	Littleton Water Department
Hotze	Wijnja	MDAR	Mikhaila	Hurley	DPU
Jaime	Iannelli	MassDEP	Moussa	Siri	Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee
Jason	Duff	DCR OWR			
Jen	Keegan	DPU	Nadia	Madden	DCR OWR

Nathan	Maybach	MA Department of Energy Resources	Sara	Cohen	DCR OWR
Nathan	Vu	MET intern	Stephanie	Berkman	DMF, DFG
Nicholas	Moreno	MA Environmental Policy Act	Stephanie	Kelley	MassDEP
Nicole	Keleher	DCR	Tara	Manno	MassDEP
Pine	duBois	Jones River Watershed Association	Tom	Janicki	DCR
Purvi	Patel	EEA	Toni	Stewart	DCR OWR
Richard	Bradley	Superscape Landscape	Trina	Wantman	MassWildlife
Robert	Braza	EEA	Vanessa	Curran	DCR
Robert	Kearns	DER, DFG	Viktoria	Zoltay	DCR
Ryan	Hale	MassDEP	Whitney	McClees	MassDEP
			William	Anderson	Swansea DPW
			Zayla	Jacobsen	DOER

Rao called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Introductions

Rao announced that the meeting was being recorded for the purpose of meeting minutes and all votes would be taken by roll call. She invited those who wish to speak during the meeting to indicate this in the chat window.

Agenda Item #2: Executive Director's Report

Rao started by reviewing the remaining drought conditions on Cape Cod and the Islands where recovery is lagging compared to the rest of the state. At yesterday's Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) meeting Cape Cod was moved from a Level 2 – Significant Drought to a Level 1 – Mild Drought. Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket have been experiencing differing conditions with differing precipitation patterns, so separate recommendations were made for the two islands which represent two counties. The DMTF can make recommendations based on county delineations and after much deliberation they unanimously recommended that Martha's Vineyard/Dukes County move from Level 1 to Level 0 – Normal Conditions and Nantucket/Nantucket County be kept at Level 1. Staff will need to adjust their analyses to allow for assessment at the county scale.

EEA had a new grant program last year on drought resilience and water conservation which was well subscribed, resulting in 13 funded projects. The program will repeat this year, and the notice of intent will be put out soon and then the request for proposals with a timeline that will allow for more time for project completion.

Staff have multiple interns helping this summer. Two of them are working on drought and water conservation matters, one on a drought retrospective, one on the Massachusetts Environmental Trust Program, and one whose project is being finalized now. These students come with different expertise and much enthusiasm. They will learn about how government works while the state benefits from their creativity, analysis and time. A few of them are in attendance today.

Agenda Item #3: Update: Hydrologic Conditions and Drought Status

Rao introduced Zoltay to present the Hydrologic Conditions for June 2025.

- *Temperature*: Monthly average temperatures were mostly above normal. According to the Northeast Regional Climate Center (NRCC), Massachusetts had its 11th warmest June on record.
- *Precipitation*: June precipitation was mostly below normal.
- *Evapotranspiration*: As of June 30, 2025, the 2-month and 1-month EDDI regional percentiles were in the normal to above-normal range.
- *Keetch-Byram Drought Index*: At the end of June, all Regions were at Index Severity Level (ISL) 1 except the Islands Region.
- *Streamflow*: June streamflow ranged from one gage below normal in the Cape Cod Region to above normal mostly throughout the Western, CTRV, and Central Regions.
- *Flooding*: The Boston/Norton NWS E-5 Monthly Reports of Hydrologic Conditions did not indicate any river flooding at forecast points in the Boston/Norton service area nor were there any river flood nor areal flood warnings issued in Massachusetts. In total there were four flash flood warnings issued in Hampshire and Middlesex Counties on June 6th and 7th. In addition, there were local storm reports of minor flash flooding and flooding in Charlemont, Warwick, Orange, Athol, Westfield, Northampton, Dalton, and Waltham.
- *Groundwater*: May groundwater levels were mixed and ranged from below normal to above normal. The Cape Cod Region is at ISL 1 and the Island Region is at ISL 2.
- *Lakes and Impoundments*: At the end of June, six of the 15 reporting lake and impoundment sites were below their 30th percentile. The Western and Northeast Regions are at ISL2 and the Cape Cod Region is at ISL 1.
- *MA Drought status*: The Drought Management Task Force met earlier in the week and made a recommendation to the Secretary.
- *U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM)*: At the end of June, the USDM showed areas of D1 (Moderate Drought) and D0 (Abnormally Dry) in the Cape Cod and Islands Regions, which was the same as the end of May.
- *NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlooks*: The monthly outlook issued 6-30-25 shows chances likely for above-normal temperatures and chances leaning for above-normal precipitation. The seasonal outlook issued 6-19-25 shows chances likely for above-normal temperatures and equal chances for above-normal, normal, or below-normal precipitation. Both the monthly and seasonal drought outlooks released 6-30-25 shows drought removal likely from the Mid Cape to the Outer Cape and on Nantucket.
- Additional precipitation data shows departures at the 12-mos lookback in the Central, Northeast, Southeast, and Cape Cod Regions.

Agenda Item #4: VOTE: Meeting Minutes, April 2025

Rao invited motions to approve the meeting minutes for April 10, 2025.

V	A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Wijnja to approve the meeting
O	minutes for April 10, 2025.
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E	A roll call vote to approve was unanimous among those present.

Agenda Item #5: Presentation: Draft Staff Recommendation for the Town of Swansea's Request for Determination of Insignificance under the Interbasin Transfer Act

Rao explained that the staff recommendation for the Town of Swansea's Request for Determination of Insignificance under the Interbasin Transfer Act was not included in the meeting package because it was a last-minute request from the town with a short turnaround time to meet the SRF deadline and for the town to receive principal forgiveness. We are accommodating this special request as a one-time courtesy. She added that the staff recommendation would be sent for review as soon as possible and that the presentation would be given today, with the vote scheduled for the August meeting. Rao then introduced Curran to give the presentation on the project.

Curran noted that Jess Richard and Louis Ragozzino (Wright-Pierce, consultants for Swansea) and William Anderson (Town of Swansea DPW) were also present. She reviewed the existing conditions in Swansea, including their land area in the Narragansett and Taunton River Basins. Swansea's water supply is sourced from wells in the Narragansett Basin (approximately 79%) and a desalination plant in the Massachusetts Coastal Basin (a little over 20%). The desalination plant did not require WRC approval under the ITA when it was built because it only supplies Swansea (i.e. no municipal boundary crossed). Swansea has no centralized wastewater treatment facility.

Curran showed a map to orient everyone to the location of Swansea, relationship to the two river basins, and the location of the groundwater wells and desalination plant. She explained that Swansea is proposing to construct a sewer collection system along the Route 6 corridor in the Narragansett Basin. Wastewater will then be sent to Somerset's wastewater treatment facility which discharges to the Mass Coastal Basin. The total jurisdictional maximum daily flow has been calculated to be 28,850 gallons per day, which meets the streamflow criterion for insignificance because the previously approved transfer is less than 5% of the unimpacted 95th percentile exceedance flow as estimated at an appropriate flow in the donor basin. The portion of Swansea's water supply that is sourced from the desalination plant will be discharged to the Mass Coastal Basin, so it is not jurisdictional for this review.

The other criteria for insignificance are also met, including: the transfer is less than 1 mgd; the project is not temporary; it is not a transfer from a lake, pond, or reservoir; there are no wastewater treatment facilities downstream of the transfer location; there are no anticipated special resource values being affected; measures to protect instream flow have been taken; and lastly, the evaluation of cumulative impacts also meets insignificance. Therefore, the staff recommendation is that this project meets all criteria for insignificance and proposes a vote at the next WRC meeting in August.

Anderson thanked the WRC for expediting the process and is hopeful that the town can meet the deadlines for all permits needed for the project.

Comments, questions, and responses:

Richards commented on the determination that the previous ITA approval for Fall River is hydrologically disconnected from the transfer being discussed in this review and suggested that it would be good to have a more fully vetted process for determining hydrologic disconnection.

Curran agreed but noted that the specific transfer in the previous Fall River approval was from reservoirs that are quite separate from the groundwater sources involved in the current review.

Weismantel asked about the reasoning for the phasing of this project. Curran explained that there is a longer-term plan to connect a larger area than what is being reviewed now. However, the longer-term plan is not as developed because the sewer side has advanced ahead of a potential water supply transfer that may be coming from Somerset. For the time being, the only proposal is for the sewer associated with the parcels that are able to connect now to deal with immediate need for water quality improvements. There is the potential for another review in the future as the project progresses.

Richards noted that the streamflow criterion is only being met by a small margin and asked if that meant that any additional projects in the future would most likely require a full review and not another review for insignificance. Rao and Curran responded that that was correct.

There were no other questions or comments.

(see exhibits listed at the end of this document).

Agenda Item #6: Presentation: Flooding in MA – Overview, Planning, Coordination – Part 2

Rao presented an overview of the legislative authority of the WRC over flooding, noting the role of coordination around flood prevention played in the establishment of the WRC in 1956, the Acts of 1983, Public Law 566, EO 149 and the establishment of the Flood Hazard Management Program (FHMP).

Rao introduced Duperault as the presenter, along with Madden and Paight. Duperault explained that the FHMP's role in MA is to assist local communities on how to implement the National Flood Insurance Program. The program provides technical assistance to local communities, engineers, surveyors, residents, realtors and others. She also shared some statistics on the services that the program provides. Madden gave an overview on the FHMP annual training program that has been developed, including a monthly series for municipal officials on basics in floodplain management. Paight gave an overview of the FHMP communications plan and the outreach work that the program has done to raise awareness on flood risk and the need for flood insurance in the state. New work is planned to use MBTA ads for the promotion of flood insurance in Greater Boston.

Duperault then provided an overview of the 2019 state assessment of floodplain management regulations for state-owned properties and the need identified in the 2023 ResilientMass Plan for better interagency coordination and the State Floodplain Framework, a collaborative network of state entities concerned with floodplain management and coordinated flood loss reduction. This spring, the group engaged a contractor to build a consensus report and to outline a ResilientFloodplains strategy. Duperault also presented some of the results of a recent audit by American Rivers assessing the Commonwealth's readiness for implementing Integrated Floodplain Management. Rao noted that the next steps are to think about the actions that can be done at the local and regional scale to help prevent flood damage in the future.

Rao also noted the MA Flood Vulnerability Assessment for Environmental Justice Communities wrapped up at the end of June. Madden highlighted a few additional project results from the Flood Vulnerability Assessment, including a roadmap approach that communities can take for equitable public engagement to co-design flood mitigation solutions from the outset. Madden also shared some examples of story maps used for community engagement around flooding in Brockton, Everett, and West Springfield. One topic this project could not address was flood vulnerability in rural areas, which have specific needs that are different from the cities engaged for the pilot projects.

Clish from Mass Rivers Alliance asked where the materials for the flood vulnerability assessment could be found. Duperault noted that the materials will ultimately be posted on mass.gov and offered to share them as requested. Pederson noted that using recharge for flood mitigation can also increase groundwater flooding risks. Rao noted that Zoltay has been leading our work on groundwater flooding and that the study results will be available soon. Zoltay noted that green roofs and flood storage ponds were additional alternatives to recharge.

Agenda Item #7: Presentation: River Restoration Design and Permitting in Massachusetts: A Guide for Inland Rivers

Rao introduced MacPhee from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

MacPhee introduced the River Restoration Design and Permitting Guide, providing background on the project. The Guide was created by FRCOG, though work for the project started several years ago with Tropical Storm Tammy in 2005. Following that storm, in 2008, FRCOG received funding to complete a multi-year Non-Point Source Pollution Assessment for the Deerfield River Watershed. MacPhee described that as part of that Assessment, findings of significant bank erosion were occurring in the North, Chickley, Green, and South River Watersheds. Photographs of damage seen along the rivers after Hurricane Irene in 2011 were provided.

MacPhee noted that since the Assessment was completed, FRCOG has been able to conduct several fluvial geomorphic assessments for these watersheds as well as gather habitat data, which resulted in a list of potential restoration projects. These projects utilize nature-based techniques with the goal of creating an equilibrium condition for the watercourse. MacPhee provided an example of a river restoration project identified in the Town of Conway.

MacPhee explained that only two of these restoration projects have been completed to date due to challenges with the amount of environmental permitting required. For that reason, FRCOG worked to create this Guide to help ease the process. MacPhee further presented the Guide in the format of an infomercial, with the following highlights:

- The Guide was developed with input and feedback gathered during meetings and workshops held by a Blue Ribbon Panel. This panel included representatives from regulatory agencies, regional commissions, state and federal bodies, and non-profit organizations.
- Section 1 of the Guide serves as an introduction with details on how the document should be used.
- Section 2 outlines the key steps for planning and development through the initial phases of a restoration project.
- Section 3 covers regulatory fact sheets for each regulation that may be applicable. It includes common challenges, streamline processes, and permitting exemptions.

- Section 4 covers 12 typical design details for river restoration. Each detail is two pages in length, providing context and engineering specifications.
- Section 5 covers access, erosion control, water control, sediment management, and engaging a contractor.
- Section 6 provides information on post-project monitoring and maintenance.
- The guide includes four appendices, which include tables, checklists, and templates.
- The published Guide is available on the FRCOG website.

Richards noted that his agency participated on the Blue Ribbon Panel and expressed their support for this Guide, noting that the product gives transparency of what the restoration process requires. Kluchman added that she appreciated the infomercial presentation.

Pederson asked what impacts would occur with the Guide under the MassReady Act. MacPhee described that the intent of this document was to represent the existing regulatory framework in place at this time. It is hoped that the Guide will be updated as needed in the future. Rao noted that it will take time for these changes to go into effect and the Guide can help applicants navigate the current regulations.

V O T E	<p>A motion was made by Weismantel with a second by Kluchman to adjourn the meeting.</p> <p>The roll-call vote to approve was unanimous among those present.</p>
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Meeting adjourned, 3:08 pm

Documents or Exhibits Used at Meeting:

1. WRC Meeting Minutes: April 10, 2025
2. Quarterly Update on WRC Special Projects
3. Notice of Receipt of a Request from the Town of Swansea for Determination of Insignificance Under the Interbasin Transfer Act, MGL Chapter 21 Sections 8b-8d
4. Correspondence from the WRC to MEPA, including letters with the following dates and content:
 - a. Aquarion Water Company of Massachusetts Interconnection to Dedham Westwood Water District (DWWD)/Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Project, July 1, 2025
 - b. 830 Lynnway Project in the City of Lynn, June 20, 2025
 - c. Weld Pond Dam Lowering Project in the Town of Dedham, June 20, 2025
5. Interbasin Transfer Act project status report, June 30, 2025

Agendas, minutes, and other documents are available on the web site of the Water Resources Commission at <https://www.mass.gov/water-resources-commission-meetings>. All other meeting documents are available by request to WRC staff at 10 Park Plaza, Suite 6620, Boston, MA 02116.