# **March 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Council Members Present: Dicken Crane, Susan Smiley, Ann Canedy, Jack Buckley, Jeff Collins, Laura Jasinski, Kevin O’Shea, Melissa Harper, Dennis Smith, Jennifer Wilson, Ted Dooley

Council Members Absent: Phil Doherty, Vivian Ortiz

DCR Staff Attendees: Brian Arrigo, Matthew Perry, Chloe Gotsis, Mackenzie Greer, Paul Fahey, Paul Cavanagh

Public Attendees as Registered: Alexis, Bill Boles, Chip Jones, Chris Redfern, Chris Reilly, Chuck Anastas, Denis Laforce, Jun Lee, Karen MB, Kim Tilas, Christine Liu, Michale Norton, Lawrence Tucker, Pete Sutton, Rick Burtt, Sarah Freeman, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Tina Langill, Wendy Machmuller

## Call to Meeting, 9:00am – Chair Dicken Crane

Councilor Crane welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He did a roll call of councilors.

## DCR Report – Commissioner Brian Arrigo

Commissioner Arrigo thanked the Council, and said that with spring in the air, staff has been working hard getting ready for the park’s busy season.

### Summer 2025 Recall

Commissioner Arrigo said that the agency wrapped up the summer 2025 recall process. Over the two-week open recall period, 645 staff members with recall rights participated and were placed in positions for the upcoming season. The planning for this season began in early November, with coordinators collaborating closely with managers and senior staff to create accurate rosters that support our summer needs. Commissioner Arrigo said that this is a huge undertaking each year and thanked staff that was involved in the process this year.

### Successful Suppression of Southern Pine Beetle Infestation on Washburn Island

The Commissioner reported that staff came together to tackle a southern pine beetle (SPB) infestation on Washburn Island in Falmouth. The team included a mix of experts from the Forest Health Program, Forestry and Fire Control, and the Waqouit Bay Reserve. The infestation was detected in late fall 2024 and affected a small cluster of pitch pine trees along the eastern coastline. The team began cutting infested trees to reduce the beetle population and limit further spread. This quick action is crucial for minimizing tree mortality, limiting expansion, and reducing wildfire risks. The beetle’s population is native to the southern U.S. but has been expanding northward due to climate change. DCR has been monitoring SPBs since 2015, with infestations now observed on Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, and in the Waquoit Bay Reserve. The Forest Health Program will continue monitoring and DCR encourages anyone suspicious of SPB activity to report it to the team through the forest health website.

### Maple Sugaring Events

DCR held four maple sugaring events at the Blue Hills Reservation, Breakheart Reservation, Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, and WBNERR. These events were a sweet success all around welcoming thousands of visitors to participate and learn about the history and process of making maple syrup. Commissioner Arrigo thanked the DCR staff and volunteers that helped make these programs a success, including Sherine Hamade, Jessica Narog-Hutton, Dan Byrnes, Simon Schrier, and Jayne DiCandio. He also recognized Indigenous Peoples Partnership Coordinator Leah Hopkins who attended the Breakheart event to showcase Indigenous techniques for making maple sugar and explained the long history of maple sugaring by Native communities in the Northeast.

### Park Serve Day

Over the last few weeks, parks have been getting projects together for Park Serve Day, and this year there will be over 60 different events across the state to get properties ready for the busy spring and summer season. Registration forms are being prepared now so the public can begin signing up for these events.

### New Water Supply Protection Forestry Home Page

The DCR Division of Water Supply Protection has a new public facing [Massachusetts DCR-DWSP Forestry Home Page](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/84f744ec96e54b93bab86a11ebd4b511/). DWSP staff, spearheaded by Quabbin watershed forester Rich MacLean, worked on the page to enhance transparency and public engagement around forestry and land management activities on the divisions’ more than 100,000 acres of land. The page details DWSP’s forest and land management approach and uses an interactive map to display details about proposed forest management projects and current and past timber harvests.  The public can also use the site to submit public comments on proposals during public comment periods and contact DWSP forestry and natural resources staff with questions.

### Feb Break Wrap Up

Despite the cold, icy weather during February Vacation week, approximately 1,500 visitors attended more than 80 programs held for families throughout the state. Programs and activities included animal tracking, guided hikes, craft making, and maple sugaring.

### EEA Article 97 Meeting

On March 26, EEA will be holding a virtual public hearing on proposed new regulations authorized by *An Act to Preserve Open Space* passed in 2022. EEA is seeking public comment on the proposed regulations. The proposed regulations are required by the Act and provide procedures and requirements for proposals to change the use or dispose of land or interests in land subject to Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth. Registration is required to obtain access to the virtual hearing room on the 26th, which will be provided via Zoom, and written comments can be submitted until 5 p.m. on March 26, 2025. [More information is available on the EEA website](https://www.mass.gov/event/march-26-2025-notice-of-public-hearing-on-the-open-space-act-regulations-03-26-2025).

### Councilor Questions and Comments

Councilor Canedy asked for more information on the March 26meeting regarding Article 97. Mr. Perry shared the link to the information in the Zoom chat.

Councilor Buckley asked how federal cuts to the National Park Service (NPS) may affect DCR and their relationships with NPS like at the Boston Harbor Islands.

Commissioner Arrigo said that they are monitoring the situation, noting that DCR works closely with NPS and Boston Harbor Now at the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park, and it has been a top priority to continue this relationship. He said that they have been coordinating prior to the changes that have been happening over the past year, coordinating with Boston Harbor Now and NPS and they continue to be in contact about impacts and changes. The goal is to make sure that services are not interrupted. He said that there are other collaborations that DCR has with NPS, and that they continue to monitor those as well. He said it is important to be strategic and thoughtful about how they fill gaps because it won’t be possible for the state to take on all of the potential gaps created at the federal level.

Councilor Wilson said that Article 97 is one of the few areas where the Stewardship Council has a specific legislative role, and that it is important for someone from the council to attend the meeting on March 26 to report back to the full council.

Chair Crane asked about the 2022 legislation that is prompting the meeting on Article 97.

Commissioner Arrigo said that he doesn’t have a lot of knowledge on the legislation, but that he can get the council a rundown on the information.

Councilor Buckley asked if Mr. Perry could share the information about the proposed changes.

## Regular Business I

### Presentation on the Massachusetts Environmental Trust – Kim Tilas, Director of Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET)

Ms. Tilas presented on the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, giving a history and overview of the program.

### After the presentation concluded, Councilors were given the opportunity for questions and comments.

Chair Crane thanked Ms. Tilas for her presentation and said that for $20 a year contributed to MET by buying a license plate, it used to add up to well over $1 million a year for the trust. Now that there are more plates available, it does not generate as much money, but the goal of raising funds in other ways fits in with the legacy of the trust.

Councilor Buckley asked how much of the $40 dollars paid for the registration of the license plate goes to the MET.

Ms. Tilas said that if you were to get a plate today, $28 would go to the trust, but when renewals happen, the entire $40 goes to MET.

Councilor Buckley asked if they have ever thought about adding a state park plate added to the ones offered by MET.

Ms. Tilas said that something like that always can be done.

Councilor Buckley said that he has always wanted to see one.

### Approval of Minutes

Councilor Buckley moved to approve the January meeting minutes as amended.

Councilor Canedy seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call on the Approval of the Minutes

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Canedy – Yes

Councilor Jasinski – Yes

Councilor Smith – Yes

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Harper – Abstain

Councilor Dooley – Yes

Councilor O’Shea – Yes

Councilor Buckley – Yes

Councilor Crane – Yes

The February 13, 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

### Public Comment

[Guidelines for Public Comment are available on the DCR Stewardship Council website.](https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-stewardship-council-public-comment-guidelines/download)

Chair Crane invited members of the public for comment. The following members of the public gave comments:

* Lawrence Tucker, Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
* Karen Mauney-Brodek, Emerald Necklace Conservancy
* Chip Jones, Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
* Wendy Machmuller, Friends of Fairsted

## Regular Business II

### Letter to Commissioner Arrigo Advocating for Vision Zero

Mr. Perry shared a draft of the letter with the council prior to the meeting.

Councilor Buckley said that he is in favor of sending the letter to the Commissioner, and that it would show leadership and fellowship on the part of DCR.

Councilor Wilson said that she sent a couple of comments on the letter and shared informational links that Mr. Perry sent to the council on Vision Zero. She noted that this is an important issue for DCR to take on.

Councilor Collins thanked everyone who worked on the letter. He said that this takes the issue from aspirational to actionable.

Councilor Buckley moved that the council approve the letter and have Chair Crane sign it and send to the Commissioner.

Councilor Harper seconded the motion.

#### Roll Call on the Approval of the Vision Zero Letter to Commissioner Arrigo

Councilor Smiley – Yes

Councilor Canedy – Yes

Councilor Jasinski – Yes

Councilor Smith – Yes

Councilor Wilson – Yes

Councilor Collins – Yes

Councilor Harper – Yes

Councilor O’Shea – Yes

Councilor Buckley – Yes

Councilor Crane – Yes

The letter was approved and will be sent to Commissioner Arrigo.

### Committee Updates

#### Policy Committee

Councilor Wilson said that the committee is planning to hold another joint meeting with the Conservation Committee with Peter Church and Jessica Rowcroft on the modeling of landscape designations as the council prepares to fulfill its role of diligence and approval of the designations.

#### Stakeholders

Councilor Smiley said that there was not a quorum at the committee’s last meeting, but they informally spoke with Director of Partnerships Paul Fahey and learned about his priorities as he works to fill out his team. She said that they look forward to meeting additional team members as they come on board and to understand how the committee can work with them to help friends and partners.

She also noted that there is a time change for the June meeting at the Boston Harbor Islands from 1pm to 11am and asked if that would work for councilors.

Mr. Perry will send out an email to everyone and they will let him know if that time works for them.

#### Conservation Committee

Councilor Collins said that they plan to meet with the Policy Committee on Landscape Designations and they continue their conversation on rodenticide use and look to talk more with Deputy Commissioner Rob King for updates.

## Adjournment

Councilor Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Smiley seconded the motion.

Councilor Crane thanked everyone for joining and adjourned the meeting.

Please check the DCR Stewardship Council webpage for notice of upcoming meetings. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dcr-stewardship-council>