



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Steve Sears/Chair, Bob Durand/Vice Chair, Ernie Foster/Secretary, Sasha Dyer, Emma Ellsworth, John Organ, Matthew Sisk, Mark S. Tisa/Director, Eve Schlüter/Deputy Director, Mike Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Pat Huckery/Northeast Wildlife District Manager, Todd Olanyk/Central Wildlife District Manager, Joe Rogers/Connecticut Valley Wildlife District Manager, Raymond Bressette/Central District Wildlife Technician, Devon Harrington/Endangered Species Review Biologist, Beth Lambert/Director/DER, Alyssa Sciuto/Assistant Director for Operations/DER, Major Kevin Clayton/OLE, Captain Tynan/OLE; PUBLIC: Jim Wallace, Dave Harbison, Joe O'Neil

DATE: August 20, 2024

LOCATION: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newburyport, Massachusetts, and on Zoom

Chair Sears opened the August business meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Durand to approve the minutes from the July business meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sisk; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Chair's Comments

Chair Sears reported receiving written requests from the Plymouth and Barnstable county leagues regarding upland bird hunting on the Cape Cod National Seashore. He announced that a meeting has been set by Director Tisa for October 3 with the leadership of the Seashore to discuss reestablishing upland bird hunting opportunities on the Seashore. He reported that he had invited representatives from the Plymouth and Barnstable leagues to join the meeting.

The Chair reported that the local paper in the Western District had announced that zebra mussels have been confirmed in Onota Lake, which will change how boating is conducted on the lake. He noted that there is a controversy around a chemical used to kill zebra mussels at power plant intakes. He believes the local conservation commission has allowed the use of it, so he will be watching further developments.

Chair Sears also announced that the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will hold two public listening sessions on Zoom on Thursday, October 17, 2024, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening, to gather public input on fisheries management in the upper third of the Deerfield River. The Board is looking for public input from everyone who is interested in that water body.

The Chair recognized Commissioner O'Shea and his team's accomplishment in having published *Connections*, the Department's Strategic Plan, which was just received by the Board members in the mail.

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Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported a few updates. He confirmed that the September 11 business meeting at 1:00 p.m. will include the bear review, as previously reported, and that the Board will get an update on the new gun law from the co-chairs of the staff committee that is working to determine the effects of the new law on MassWildlife and its constituents. Noting that the Chair had mentioned the planned listening sessions coming in October, Director Tisa reported that his staff will disseminate the details as soon as they are available. Looking ahead to the November business meeting, the Director reported that there will be a review of the trout program. He also notified the Board that they will need to reschedule the November meeting so that Assistant Director Richards can attend.

Law Enforcement Comments

Major Clayton introduced Captain Erik Tynan, who became a captain a week previously and is heading up the Special Ops bureau for the MEP. The Major reported that two other new captains had been appointed, including Captain Woytek, former MassWildlife Deer and Moose Project Leader, who leads the Inland West bureau. Major Clayton reported that the OLE still has no colonel, but that the appointment process is continuing. Major Clayton reported that he will be meeting with tribal members in September on the lands of the Mashpee-Wampanoag Tribe for the first time and is looking forward to it.

Personnel Report

Deputy Director Eve Schlüter presented two new staff members that were hired at the previous meeting.

Introductions

<i>Employee</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Location</i>
Devon Harrington	Endangered Species Review Biologist Conservation Biologist III	Westborough
Raymond Bressette	Central District Wildlife Technician Wildlife Technician II	West Boylston

Ms. Harrington and Mr. Bressette both said a few words about their backgrounds and stated that they were excited to have joined the agency. Assistant Director Richards reported that the other person hired at the last meeting would not begin their employment at the McLaughlin Hatchery until later in the month and would be introduced at the September meeting. The Board members welcomed Ms. Harrington and Mr. Bressette and wished them well in their new positions.

Introduction to the Activities of the Division of Ecological Restoration (Beth Lambert)

Director Beth Lambert of the DFG's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) provided an in-depth report on her division's origins, mission, programs, funding sources, and staff. She gave detailed examples of the types of projects DER undertakes directly and discussed the numerous programs it offers that provide technical assistance and/or funding to other state agencies, municipalities, and organizations that are conducting wetland restoration projects, both coastal and inland.

After a brief discussion, the Chair and members thanked Director Lambert for her agency's work and her interesting report.

Confirm the September Meeting Date

Members confirmed the September business meeting on September 11, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., in Westborough, and the October meeting on October 2, at 10 a.m. Director Tisa had reported that Assistant Director Richards has a conflict on the proposed November date, so the members changed the date to November 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., also at the Field Headquarters.

Members' Comments

Mr. Sisk reported no comments.

Ms. Dyer reported that she attended the Junior Conservation Camp as she usually does and provided an evening program for the campers on comparative fish anatomy. She offered her thanks to the Sunderland Hatchery for providing trout that she was able to compare with barramundi from her own facility. Ms. Dyer also announced that she had organized another women's pint night, on September 4, 6-8:00 p.m., at the Stone Cow Brewery in Barre. She has invited a group of young adults, including a young woman who has attended the Conservation Camp, and wants to spread the word to encourage other young women to attend and share their outdoor experiences.

Mr. Foster reported that he had attended the Junior Conservation Camp for the first time this year and volunteered a program on safe gun handling. He had attended the Huntstock hunting expo and festival in Westminster for the first time and explained that families go for 2-3 days in a festival environment that was very enjoyable. He was particularly impressed by a series of demonstrations that handled a deer from harvest through butchering, cooking, and tasting. He also reported that the Town of Hanson wants to establish an American chestnut grove, and he had come to Westborough to tour the one outside the Field Headquarters, which he thought was very impressive.

Mr. Durand reported that he spoke recently to Geof Day of the Sea-run Brook Trout Coalition, and it was a good conversation. He offered his thanks to Director Tisa for forming the staff committee on the new gun law. He also echoed the previous praise for the Conservation Camp as a former camper and one of a whole family of campers.

Ms. Ellsworth reported that she also went to Huntstock and really enjoyed it. She offered kudos to Ms. Dyer for all her work to pull together another pint night, reporting that over 30 women participated last year, and many are still very enthused. She applauded Ms. Lambert's focus on gearing up to combat climate change with wetlands restoration, noting that land trusts can get caught up in protection, while habitat restoration and monitoring are vital and need more attention. Ms. Ellsworth stated that she looks forward to MassWildlife increasing its potential to do more restoration and getting more resources to keep up with the increased amount of WMA acreage that needs to be monitored.

Dr. Organ reported that he had been invited to attend the science meeting at Berkshire East that Trout Unlimited was holding the following day, noting that Assistant Director Richards had told him Coldwater Fisheries Resource Project Leader Adam Kautza will also be presenting at that meeting on his work on the Deerfield River. He also reported that Wildlife Biologist Susan McCarthy would be defending her master's thesis later in the week, applauded her scholarship and work ethic, and wished her the best of luck. He offered his accolades for the Coop program and MassWildlife's staunch, long-time support for it. Dr. Organ reported that he also was an instructor for 2 days at the Junior Conservation Camp; he stated that the students came away with knowledge and enthusiasm and he felt his effort was well worth it.

There being no further business, Mr. Sisk moved to adjourn. Mr. Durand seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernie Foster
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its August business meeting packets:

August agenda

Draft July minutes

August personnel report

Copy of letter to Director Tisa from the Greater Boston Chapter of Trout Unlimited *RE* catch-and-release fishing