



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, Mary-Lee King/Deputy Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/CFO, Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Eve Schlüter/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Chief/Information and Education, John Scanlon/Habitat Program Leader, Nicole McSweeney/ Outreach and Marketing Manager, Lt. Col. David Loos/OLE

DATE: December 22, 2020

LOCATION: Via Zoom Meeting

Chair Larson opened the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Dr. Van Roo to accept the minutes from the November meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Sears.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he had attended the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation, and that the board of directors elected a new president, former MassWildlife Director Wayne MacCallum. Vice Chair Roche suggested that an article be done in the magazine to publicize the work of the Foundation to assist MassWildlife in protecting and restoring habitat, conducting research, and promoting conservation engagement in young people and the general public.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported about the DFG awardees in the Performance Recognition Program for 2020. He reported that Doug Cameron was honored for his work with DMF [Division of Marine Fisheries] staff on fishing piers and landings. Other honorees included Daane Cooke, nominated by Northeast District Land Agent Anne Gagnon; MassWildlife Systems Analyst Rob Morley, nominated by Assistant to

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the Federal Aid Coordinator Deb Chamberlain; DFG's In Lieu of Fee Program Administrator Aisling O'Shea, nominated by DFG Director of Land Policy Christy Edwards; the DMF shellfish team, nominated by DFG CFO Kevin Creighton; the entire DER [Division of Ecological Restoration] team, nominated by DER Director Beth Lambert; the entire DFW 2020 Trout stocking team, nominated by MassWildlife Assistant Director of Fisheries Todd Richards; and the DMF Mass CARES Act fisheries relief team, nominated by DMF Habitat Program Manager Kathryn Ford. The Commissioner reported that the DMF Mass CARES Act team also received the Carballo Award from the Governor for its stellar work when that Act was established. They were the first program of their kind in the nation to propose its plan for distribution of fiscal relief to NOAA, the first to be awarded the funds, the first to begin making their awards to affected fishermen, and the first to make all their awards. He stated that the team worked extraordinarily hard and that the award was very well-deserved.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa stated that he would like to hold his comments until the presentation.

Law Enforcement Comments

The OLE's Lieutenant Colonel David Loos reported a busy deer season, but a relatively safe one. Most issues involved baiting. There were some tagging violations, and he reported that officers had to seize a number of deer as a result. Other violations included hunting within setbacks and for turkey during the closed turkey season. The Lt. Colonel also reported a predictable uptick in snowmobile activity, that the OLE is working with SAM [the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts] on their trail pass program, and that it's going well.

He also reported that three officers have graduated from field training and are now deployed in their own patrols; two are working on the North Shore and one in the New Bedford area. He added that there are currently two officers in the MEP academy and the agency has eight more hires to do.

Lt. Colonel also reported that he had elevated a proposal to the Secretary's office, relative to signage around the state. The OLE is proposing adding a QR code that would link to a language translation of the given signage, given the number of issues with language barriers, especially at boat ramps and state parks.

Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

CFO Kris McCarthy submitted the following report for the Board's approval:

Promotion

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Steven Richardson Mattocks	Aquatic Connectivity and Fisheries Outreach Biologist Aquatic Biologist III	Westborough

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to accept the Personnel Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Secretary Booth.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

MassWildlife Habitat Management: Past, Present, and Future (John Scanlon)

Director Tisa introduced Habitat Program Leader John Scanlon and reported that Mr. Scanlon is retiring at the end of the month after 34 years with MassWildlife. The Director stated that Mr. Scanlon was the consummate scientist who had transformed the former Forestry program into a true Habitat program, bringing the science of habitat management to MassWildlife from the beginning of his tenure. Director Tisa stated that the agency could not have found a better biologist anywhere and that Mr. Scanlon was truly an individual who made a significant impact in his role. The Director also stated that Mr. Scanlon definitely made a difference over the decades in much of MassWildlife's work even beyond his program. His retirement was a tremendous loss to the agency, but the Director wished him health, happiness, and fun in his retirement.

Mr. Scanlon began with a sweeping review of the many habitat-management milestones in MassWildlife's history, from 1966 when the first timber sale was held on 80 acres of the Crane Pond WMA in Groveland; through the eighties when the first forester was hired, the Forestry Program was established, and the first prescribed burn was conducted on MassWildlife lands; to the nineties and the creation of the MassWildlife Biodiversity Initiative and habitat-type goals; to the Board's approval of specific early-successional habitat goals and Forest Reserves in the 2000s; the 2010s when the Board approved the Prescribed Fire Policy and Handbook and reviewed the carbon budget of MassWildlife lands, and up to the present with the report given to the Board earlier this year on Why We Manage.

Mr. Scanlon also detailed the Habitat Program's metrics, for the various habitat types and the numbers of acres targeted and managed each year in the staff's work to meet the agency's management goals; for carbon storage and the minimization of carbon release; and for its Forest Reserves, both existing and potential future additions, as well as the function and importance of Patch and Matrix reserves.

Mr. Scanlon closed with a discussion of the Habitat Program's future needs, including the need to stay current on climate-change impacts and adaptations, completing and maintaining the training of agency staff that participate in prescribed burning, and continuing and potentially expanding MassWildlife's partnership with the DCR Bureau of Fire Control to achieve prescribed fire management on more than 16,000 acres statewide. He also expressed his hope and explained the potential conservation benefits if a "mass timber" market was established in southern New England, to enhance long-term carbon storage in the wood in high-tech building materials such as Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT).

After a brief discussion, Chair Larson and the rest of the Board members thanked Mr. Scanlon for his work establishing and implementing a rigorous scientific approach to the management of MassWildlife's habitat lands and wished him well in retirement.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Chair Larson pointed out the handout in the Board's packets showing the Heritage Fund taxpayer donations. He reported that the agency is still seeing a tremendous increase in participation and resulting dollar amounts, which was very gratifying.

Set Meeting Date

Members confirmed the January Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting, scheduled for January 14, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. At the Director's request, the February meeting will be set at a later time.

Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo reported that she had in the Christmas bird count, a national winter bird survey, in Worcester. Her usual survey circle was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Worcester circle followed protocols and she participated in that one. She found it very encouraging that the birds are doing great and stated that she saw a lot of birds. She was also grateful for the opportunity to conduct field work with students, who need field experience that has been difficult and very limited this year. Dr. Van Roo praised Mr. Scanlon very highly, saying that anyone who can translate forestry to biologists is rare and valuable.

Mr. Durand reported his thanks to Deputy Director Jon Regosin for his help in addressing the questions raised at the previous meeting about the BU deer hunting survey. He reported that sportsmen in the state have been advised that the survey was not sanctioned by MassWildlife.

Mr. Foster expressed his regrets that the Board cannot conduct its usual holiday luncheon.

Mr. Sears expressed his thanks to the entire staff for all its work throughout the year.

Vice Chair Roche reported that two separate deer hunters complained that there are too many deer, too many tracks in the forest to track, and asked if the Board could do something about that.

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 Secretary Booth.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Deputy Director Jon Regosin and DFG Director of Land Policy Christy Edwards presented one proposed acquisition, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:0 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

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

Agenda

Draft November meeting minutes for review

OLE Calls for Service log: MassWildlife: YTD November

Personnel Report

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2019)

Documentation for the executive session