



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, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Bob Durand, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Chief/Information and Education, John Scanlon/Supervisor/Habitat Program, Lynn Harper/Habitat Protection Specialist, Captain Cameron Davis/OLE

DATE: July 14, 2020

LOCATION: Via Zoom Meeting

Director Tisa opened the June meeting at 1:00 p.m. Chair Larson welcomed the participants to the meeting.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Durand to accept the minutes from the June meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster.

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 didn't have any comments.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that the past month had been very busy. He stated that he had toured the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge with the USFWS Regional Director and the Secretary of EEA. He reported that he was scheduled to tour the Assawompset Pond complex to review an area that has received funding to determine the best way to manage the water system. The Commissioner also thanked John Scanlon and Brian Hawthorne for leading a site tour for the Secretary and her senior staff to highlight the need to continue funding for active forest management.

MASSWILDLIFE

Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that McLaughlin Hatchery Manager and Chief Culturist Jim Hahn had retired at the end of June. He reported that Mr. Hahn had worked for the agency since 1983. The Director stated that Mr. Hahn is a low-key person but you can't say enough about how hard he has worked over the years modernized the facility and building a great team. Director Tisa went to undergraduate school with him, then joined the agency not knowing that Mr. Hahn was already working at the McLaughlin Hatchery. The Director stated that he would like very much to tour the hatcheries with the Board, stating that if you don't know other states and culture systems, you may not realize how professionally Massachusetts' system is run or truly appreciate the consistently high quality of its production. Director Tisa stated that Mr. Hahn was instrumental in turning around the entire culture system, and he marveled at the change from when he used to fish and catch 8-9-inch trout; now, 70% of fish we stock are 12 inches or larger. The Director thanked the Chair for sending a letter from the Board commending and congratulating Mr. Hahn on his many contributions and well-earned retirement.

Law Enforcement Comments

Staff experienced technical difficulties with Office of Law Enforcement Captain Cameron Davis' computer audio, so this agenda item was moved to after the staff presentation.

Coldwater Climate Change Refugia (Rebecca Quinones)

River and Stream Biology Project Leader Dr. Rebecca Quiñones was introduced by Assistant Director of Fisheries Todd Richards. Assistant Director Richards reported that Dr. Quiñones has been doing great work not only as a fisheries biologist but also as the agency's lead on climate change research.

Dr. Quiñones reported to the Board on climate change in the northeast, particularly as it has affected coldwater fish habitats; the changes to existing habitat that have been documented by MassWildlife and others; fish species' responses to those changes; and the climate-adaptive management that has been developed to try to conserve habitats and species at risk; and the identification of coldwater climate change refugia, which are networks of different kinds of refuges, such as drought refuges, cool water refuges, disease refuges, and flow refuges, to provide population persistence in the region.

After a brief discussion and questions from the Board members, the members and Chair Larson thanked Dr. Quiñones for her excellent work and interesting presentation.

Law Enforcement Comments

Office of Law Enforcement Captain Cameron Davis was still having audio difficulties, so his report was postponed again.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson reported that the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee's June meeting was held the previous week on Zoom, and went very well. The Chair reported that the Advisory Committee had a presentation at its last meeting on the salt marshes in the Northeast, and he asked staff to try to secure a copy to share with the Board members.

Law Enforcement Comments

Office of Law Enforcement Captain Cameron Davis reported another huge increase of calls for service, with OLE receiving over 20,000 calls already this year. He reported that because of the health emergency some officers have been reassigned to other more traditional law-enforcement duties.

Captain Davis reported on a Springfield deer case, in which a Springfield resident allegedly went to New York and shot 2 fawns, bringing them back to Massachusetts. He reported that the investigation, including testing, is ongoing. The Captain also reported that a moose was found being chased by a dog in Savoy State Forest, and the owner was issued a citation for an unleashed dog, and he reported on a bear relocation in cooperation with Connecticut River Valley Wildlife District staff at I-91 in Holyoke.

On a happy note, the Captain reported that OLE officers saved six people from a boat fire. OLE has also seen increases in nuisance-animal calls, participated in a rehabilitated bald eagle release, and is experiencing an uptick in fishing violations. Captain Davis reported increased ATV patrols, including one in Ashburnham, to try to address a spike in illegal ATV use on WMAs.

Confirm Meeting Date

Members confirmed the date and time of the August meeting, August 25, 2020, at 12:00 p.m.

Member's Comments

Mr. Durand reported that there's currently a bill before the legislature to set up a mosquito task force but that it doesn't seem to have a MassWildlife or NHESP member. Director Tisa reported that staff works with the mosquito control board regularly, so staff is in the loop on all spraying decisions. Secretary Booth commented that she represents the Board in the farm community and is keeping up with these issues. Commissioner Amidon commented that the Department and MassWildlife staff work closely with all the parties involved in those discussions.

Vice Chair Roche reported that the Hunter Education Program has been extremely impacted by the pandemic. He reported that he has been following the situation and reported that staff has protocols in place to help people finish existing classes, including field days. He stated that he is confident that the program is conducting classes in accordance with the state norms for class sizes and other COVID containment measures, and is beginning to roll out new classes with its instructors as quickly as it can.

Secretary Booth cited what she said was a very good article in the morning's *Worcester Telegram and Gazette* by Mark Blazis on all the recent changes to the hunting seasons for the different species affected. She noted that the article also reminded people that the last day to apply for an antlerless deer permit is July 16 this year.

Mr. Foster reported a great fishing trip on the Housatonic River, especially for warmwater species. He said it was very enjoyable and that the river is a real gem for anyone who hasn't visited.

Mr. Sears was very glad to see the use of staff presentations by Gene Chague in an article in the *Berkshire Eagle*, and that hopefully other writers will be using them in newspaper articles. He recognized Assistant Director of Fisheries Todd Richards, Western Wildlife District Manager Andrew Madden, and Western Fisheries Biologist Leanda Fontaine, who met with him and Berkshires' lake and pond management permitholders about best practices for weed control, draw-downs, and other techniques for managing lakes and ponds.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing certain land acquisitions whose negotiations would be compromised by discussion in open session and to not return to open session afterward. 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

Habitat Protection Specialist Lynn Harper presented 3 proposed acquisitions, which were each reviewed and all unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth

Secretary

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

July meeting notice with agenda and Zoom access information

Draft June meeting minutes for review

PDF copy of the Coldwater Climate Change Refugia presentation

NHESP report on state tax form donations to July 1, 2020

Documentation for the executive session