



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, Bob Durand, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/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/Retired, Pat Huckery/Northeast Wildlife District Manager, Todd Olanyk/Central Wildlife District Manager, Jason Zimmer/Southeast Wildlife District Manager, Andrew Madden/Western Wildlife District Manager, Joe Rogers/Conn. Valley Wildlife District Manager, Captain Scott Amati/OLE

DATE: March 22, 2022

LOCATION: Zoom

Chair Larson opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to accept the minutes from the February meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Roo.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson asked the Board members to think about in-person meetings moving forward.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon had notified the Chair that he would be unavoidably late to the meeting. Director Tisa reported that he had heard from Commissioner Amidon and he had reported that he will have no comments but would be joining the meeting in about 30 minutes.

Director's Comments

The Director asked Assistant Director of Fisheries Todd Richards to say a few words about a new revenue source. Assistant Director Richards reported that the Fisheries Section has always had input into the grants issued for fisheries-related projects from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET).

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Now, brook trout plate monies are available to MassWildlife and the agency has the ability to direct funding to specific projects, including to our own work and that of partners. Assistant Director Richards cited recent project examples from Coldwater Fisheries Project Leader Dr. Adam Kautza, Aquatic Connectivity and Fisheries Outreach Biologist Steven Mattocks, and Rivers and Streams Project Leader/Climate Change Specialist Dr. Becca Quiñones, all of which would be eligible for the brook trout plate funding.

Law Enforcement Comments

Captain Scott Amati reported that as the seasons shift the MEP is shifting its work to monitoring trout stocking, boating, and off-road vehicle use and other enforcement issues for the sister agencies. He provided the Board with an overview of actions connected to the current hunting and other recreational seasons and activities; a detailed report on recent OLE activities, including numerous fish-and-wildlife-related examples of calls for service that Environmental Police officers had responded to in the previous month, both inland and marine; and the outlines of ongoing and recently completed investigations of suspected violations and infractions.

The Chair and Board members thanked Captain Amati for his detailed report.

Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

CFO Kris McCarthy presented the Board with the following nomination:

New Hire:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Cynthia Pratt	Hunter Education Administrative/Program Assistant Program Coordinator I	Westborough

A motion was made by Mr. Durand to accept the Personnel Report 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. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and MassWildlife (Marion Larson)

Director Tisa reported that the following report and the activities detailed are critically important if state fish and wildlife agencies want to scale wildlife conservation and be relevant to the people of Massachusetts and around the country. The Director stressed that these activities are vitally important to continue working on for the entire agency. He introduced retired I&E Chief Marion Larson, who provided the Board with a report on MassWildlife's efforts and activities related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice (DEIJ).

After reviewing MassWildlife's conservation and public responsibilities and offering brief definitions of the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice, Ms. Larson reported that DEIJ applies

both internally, in MassWildlife's workplace culture, and externally, in the agency's public engagement and outreach. She highlighted the inherently inclusive vision behind the Public Trust Doctrine, which simply says that wildlife is a public resource and we manage all wildlife on behalf of all people. She stressed the relevance of fish and wildlife conservation to DEI, noting that conservation is essential and connected to important aspects of people's lives, such as their physical, mental, and spiritual health and well-being; their access to clean air and water; protection from severe weather; and the economic prosperity of their communities.

Ms. Larson acknowledged that despite the natural biodiversity and the rich human diversity of Massachusetts, MassWildlife itself is not as diverse as its staff would wish. She pointed out that overcoming conservation challenges requires diverse approaches, values, and perspectives. Some of the benefits to embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice internally are better problem solving, a deeper connection to the agency's mission, having different skill sets among employees, and increased innovation in approaches and strategies. Ms. Larson also stated that diversity in our workforce is a better reflection of the people we serve, and she observed that one area where great strides have been made is in the number of women in technical positions within the agency, which has risen dramatically in recent decades. Externally, Ms. Larson pointed out that working to create greater diversity in our constituency will enhance conservation through broader engagement, increased relevancy to people's lives, and greater support for our mission. She stressed that it's always good and healthy for state fish and wildlife agencies to be as diverse, welcoming, and inclusive as they can.

Ms. Larson then detailed MassWildlife's internal DEI efforts, which include using the National Relevancy Roadmap to identify barriers and strategies for agencies to serve broader communities; employing best practices for recruiting and retaining a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workforce at all levels; staff training devoted to unconscious bias, diversity, inclusion, and disability awareness; and committing to diverse partnerships with new partners in the community.

She went on to state that MassWildlife's external efforts to create diversity, equity, and inclusion include its outdoor skills clinics, wildlife education workshops, presentations, and online resources, which are designed to provide everyone a greater understanding and appreciation for wildlife conservation. She reported that, historically, I&E Sections have been the focus of public outreach as agencies tried to cast a wide net by organizing DEI-related efforts such as meetings, programs, and workshops from time to time. What is different at this time, she noted, are the recent events in the nation and the fact that fish and wildlife directors and other leaders at top levels are focused on DEI both internally and externally. This leadership commitment will help agencies learn from and build new constituencies, with the goal of increasing understanding of and support for wildlife conservation, on the one hand, and welcoming new perspectives and partners with their own goals for their communities.

Ms. Larson then turned her focus to MassWildlife's work to support and enhance environmental justice (EJ), and she began by noting that in Massachusetts EJ is a principle that pertains to communities that meet specific criteria. She stated that EJ essentially says that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. This principle is a natural outgrowth of and highly relevant to the missions and priorities of state fish and wildlife agencies. EJ is also a process to enhance meaningful community involvement in decision-making and to maintain or enhance environmental quality in negatively-impacted neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are identified in Massachusetts through criteria relating to median household income, minority populations, and/or a lack of English-language proficiency. Ms. Larson explained that in many cases these neighborhoods or population blocks are in areas where environmental degradation is high and access to greenspace is limited. She showed a map of the state indicating communities that contain EJ

blocks, and demonstrated that MassWildlife's core functions of wildlife management, research, and monitoring; land protection and habitat management; outdoor recreation; education and outreach efforts; and regulation development are carried out throughout the state, including in many communities with EJ populations.

Ms. Larson closed her analysis by summarizing that DEIJ is receiving elevated attention nationwide, that MassWildlife is benefitting from the Relevancy Roadmap and the work of others on strategies to address the internal and external barriers to relevance and DEIJ, that much work remains to be done, and that MassWildlife has assembled a team of staff to prioritize efforts that effectively engage and serve broad constituencies.

After some discussion among the Board members with additional insights and strategies for increasing MassWildlife's DEIJ effectiveness, the Chair thanked Ms. Larson for coming back and sharing her report with the Board.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC) Report

Chair Larson reminded the Board that the NHESAC is now meeting only four times a year, but he reported that Heritage staff has been very busy working on mapping projects, BioMap3, etc., so there will be a lot of work for the NHESAC to review when it meets in June.

Confirm April Meeting Date

Members confirmed the date for the April Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting: Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. Director Tisa also confirmed that the public hearing for the 2022-2023 Migratory Game Bird Seasons will be held in the same meeting, at 10:00 a.m.

Member's Comments

Secretary Booth, Mr. Durand, Mr. Foster, and Dr. Van Roo reported no comments.

Vice Chair Roche noted that he thought it an excellent, productive meeting and stated that he looks forward to in-person meetings and moving around the state to visit with constituents.

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 Mr. Foster.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously at 10:20 a.m.

Executive Session

Deputy Director Jon Regosin presented eight parcels for review and potential approval by the Board. Each parcel was discussed, voted on, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, Mr. Durand moved that the session be adjourned. Secretary Booth seconded the motion.

Chair Larson: yes

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The vote was unanimous, and the session was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth

Secretary

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

Agenda

Draft February minutes

Personnel Report

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2021)

Executive Session packet