



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, Mary-Lee King/Deputy 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, Astrid Huseby/R3 Coordinator, Robert Morley/Business Analyst, Nicole McSweeney/Outreach and Marketing Manager, Joseph Rogers/Supervisor/Conn. Valley Wildlife District, Todd Olanyk/Supervisor/Central Wildlife District, Lt. Col. David Loos/OLE, Bob Greco/Chief of Staff/DFG, Mark Reil/Legislative Director/DFG;  
PUBLIC: Gene Chague, Henry Sweren

DATE: October 27, 2020

LOCATION: Via Zoom Meeting

Chair Larson opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m.

### Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to accept the minutes from the August meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. 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 no comments.

### Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon that the OFBA is working on the Medina Street boat ramp (Chicopee), which is the largest boat ramp on the Connecticut River, and that it will be an approximately \$1 million project. The Commissioner reported that he had participated in a young-forest walk with Habitat Biologist Tom Wansleben and Connecticut Valley Wildlife District Supervisor Joe Rogers and about 30 members of public who were all very interested. He also reported several recent conversations with Secretary

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Theoharides in which she indicated that she and the Governor recognize the tremendous amount of work that DFG staff are doing and are very appreciative.

#### Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that MassWildlife held its annual employee conference the previous week, in a Zoom meeting, with 150 staff present, which is the most that has ever been able to participate. He was very pleased with how well the day went and how engaged staff were throughout, noting that at the end of the conference almost 50 employees stayed on the call after the closing remarks for further discussion, which shows the high level of interest across the agency in these topics. The Director reported that the keynote speaker the conference organizing team had invited is a national leader in R3 and Relevancy, Matt Dunfee at the Wildlife Management Institute, and that the Director wanted to give the Board members an opportunity to hear Mr. Dunfee's remarks directly.

#### Law Enforcement Comments

The OLE's Lieutenant Colonel David Loos reported that on the last day of bear season an individual was charged with OUI. He also reported an emerging trend: A lot of nonhunters have found the WMAs (Wildlife Management Areas) and they are continuing to use them without hunter orange during the hunting seasons. The Lieutenant Colonel also reported an uptick in OHV encroachment on state lands where they are prohibited, which, he noted, is normal at this time of year.

On the personnel front, Lieutenant Colonel Loos reported that OLE has sworn in two new EPOs who had graduated from the police academy and are moving into the in-house portion of their training, while three other new recruits are already through their specialized training and are currently driving with senior officers.

Chair Larson thanked the Lieutenant Colonel for attending the meeting and for his report.

Before introducing the presentation video, Director Tisa reported that Deer and Moose Project Leader David Stainbrook was leaving the agency to become a research deer biologist with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The Director also reported that Lynn Harper, the longtime NHESP Habitat Protection Specialist, was retiring from state service at the end of the month, noting that Ms. Harper had acted as staff to the Lands Committee; responded to municipal and nonprofit requests for land-protection and species information; had organized and coordinated two SWAPs (State Wildlife Action Plan) to completion for MassWildlife, resulting in significant federal aid for state species of conservation concern; worked with other staff on the BioMap and BioMap2 products; and established the agency's iNaturalist profile with multiple 'projects' in WMAs across the state, among many other projects and initiatives during her tenure. Director Tisa wished Ms. Harper and Mr. Stainbrook great success in their new endeavors.

#### How Many Rs Can an Agency Handle? (Video: Matt Dunfee, Wildlife Management Institute; Keynote Speaker, MassWildlife 2020 Employee Conference

The Director then introduced the video presentation. He thanked and congratulated the team that put together the employee conference and executed the workshops. Hats off to all of them in their tremendous job – the whole day went off without a hitch. The team also reached out to the keynote speaker, a leader in both Relevancy and R3 for many years, who was kind enough to agree to join from Colorado. The Director reported that R3 Coordinator Astrid Huseby then gave staff her talk about R3 and the agency's draft R3 Plan, which was presented to the Board in September, immediately afterward.

Matt Dunfee of the Wildlife Management Institute spoke to staff at some length about recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts around the country and some of the outcomes that other states have

seen from those efforts. He also teased out the key aspects of each of the Rs from an agency's perspective, saying that they differ in different areas of the country and in rural versus more urbanized areas because of the very different demographics you find across the country and from city to small town. Mr. Dunfee also discussed Relevancy in detail, noting that R3 is just a special case or a particular application of Relevancy. He explained what it means in a modern agency's relations with its constituents, why it's important to focus on in the longer term, and how states are beginning to figure out how to measure accurately whether their efforts are yielding concrete results.

At the end of the video, Director Tisa welcomed the Board back to the meeting and reiterated that he thought this was an important message for the Board to hear. He then suggested a 5-minute break before continuing the meeting.

#### Implementing the Massachusetts R3 [Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation] Plan (Astrid Huseby)

R3 Coordinator Astrid Huseby reviewed some of the basics of R3 and its importance to MassWildlife as life gets more busy and people have less and less time for all the competing activities and obligations in their lives, making them less likely to hunt and fish and consequently less likely to buy the hunting and fishing licenses that support the traditional conservation and management efforts of state fish and wildlife agencies.

Mr. Huseby reported that implementing the draft R3 Plan, which is currently being amended based on the Board's review, would involve three different sets of tasks or activities. To effectively implement the Plan, she explained that the agency would need to engage its partners, engage its staff, and implement annual R3 workplans.

Engagement of partners will involve collecting feedback from a range of stakeholders to inform the details of the Plan; holding a Massachusetts R3 Summit to generate momentum and formulate next steps; and creating an R3 Task Force to help with implementation, measurements of success, and periodic Plan updates as needs and circumstances evolve. Ms. Huseby went on to report that engagement of staff continued most recently with the agencywide R3 and Relevancy workshop during the 2020 employee conference that the Director spoke of, which engaged 150 staff in discussions of how we can better connect our R3 efforts across the sections. This will be followed by facilitated Section meetings with the R3 and Relevancy leaders in the agency. Finally, implementing the R3 Plan involves identifying annual goals and target audiences for each; Ms. Huseby reported that project recommendations will be created by the five workgroups: Coordination and Partnerships; Learning Resources and R3 Skills Programs; Access and Opportunity; Outreach and Customer Experience; and Acceptance of Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports. Ms. Huseby then gave detailed examples of each aspect of the implementation strategy and how they will work together to advance the agency's R3 goals and objectives.

She closed by summarizing four key takeaways: Active partners are essential for effective R3 efforts; the 5 Year R3 Plan is meant to help guide R3 efforts; the Annual Workplan will identify specific projects for that year; and, overall, the process will help staff be strategic in its R3 planning. After a brief discussion, the Chair thanked Ms. Huseby for her work and for her detailed reports.

#### Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Chair Larson reported that the Advisory Committee has agreed to reconsider the frequency with which it meets and reduce it to four times a year. It is now considering when during the year it needs to meet, based on the need for work to evaluate listed species, new listings, etc.

The Committee also received the final report for the 2019 state income tax donations, and is now exploring whether perhaps the Massachusetts Department of Revenue can give the agency zip code information about the donors, whose identifying information is not available due to privacy concerns. Chair Larson explained that since names of contributors cannot be revealed, the distribution of donors across the state might be useful.

#### Set Meeting Date

Members confirmed the scheduled November meeting date and discussed dates for the December Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting. Members selected December 15, 2020. [Secretary's Note: the date of the meeting was later changed, at the Director's request, to December 22, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.]

#### Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo reported that the saw-whet owls she's seeing in her research are doing well; it was a good hatching year and they are halfway through migration. She reported that she had appreciated the fall hunting tips that she was sent in the newsletter and found the "turkey hunting in the fall" information very helpful. Dr. Van Roo asked that staff also provide grouse and pheasant hunting tips. In particular, she's looking for information on hunting without dogs, so it would be nice to provide that to the public if we can, and she emphasized that this information will be helpful toward R3, for people who can't commit to everything involved in buying and training a dog. She reported that it is hard to find any information on this issue, even given who she is and the resources she has as existing hunter who's also on the Fisheries and Wildlife Board. Dr. Van Roo also noted that bird hunting is so much more accessible for new hunters because they are not overwhelmed by the prospect of gutting and processing an entire deer; just dealing with a small bird is so much easier.

Mr. Durand reported that he will confer with the Director and Commissioner Amidon about approaching Mass. DOR regarding the zip codes of Heritage Program donors. He also reported taking his dog hunting on the Wayne MacCallum WMA and seeing many people not hunting and without hunter orange.

Secretary Booth reported no comments.

Mr. Foster reported woodcock hunting and harvesting a bird with a transmitter. He was able to access the data and found it very interesting, and he offered to share it with anyone who is interested.

Mr. Sears thanked Ms. Huseby and other staff for the R3 talks, stating that he was looking forward to sharing the plan with the NGOs in his district.

He reported that he had had input from his constituents on the bear season. Suggestions include: if bear can be included during the Youth Hunt currently only for deer; have the second bear season coincident with deer for the whole Archery season; and consider scheduling two Youth Hunts for deer (and possibly bear), as weather and scheduling can significantly hinder this opportunity as it is only once per year.

Mr. Sears thanked Assistant Director for Fisheries Todd Richards, Western Wildlife District Supervisor Andrew Madden, and Western Wildlife District Fisheries Biologist Leanda Fontaine for their assistance developing a new Notice of Intent to be presented to the DEP for use with drawdowns. He reported that the draft came out very well, and will be a model for other types of notice going forward. Mr. Sears wanted to also acknowledge the contributions of Dan Miraglia of the Berkshire County League, who did a lot of work to forward the effort to work with lakes and ponds on drawdowns. Mr. Sears added that he wished Lynn Harper and David Stainbrook all the best for their respective futures.

Vice Chair Roche reported that he had hunted by permit on a national wildlife refuge, had a very enjoyable experience, and saw the benefits of that access, knowing that Deputy Director Jon Regosin has been working on this issue. He also reported that the Commissioner had taken him bird hunting on the Birch Hill WMA to an area Mr. Roche realized he had first hunted over 50 years ago.

Assistant Director for NHESP Dr. Eve Schlüter was asked to give the Board a brief synopsis of the latest issue of the *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine, which has multiple articles highlighting the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MESA and all the work it has accomplished in habitat and species conservation and management over the years. Members stated that they looked forward to receiving the issue.

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

Land Protection Specialist Lynn Harper presented one proposed acquisition, which was reviewed and approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth

Secretary

#### List of documents presented to the Board in its October meeting packets

Agenda

Draft September meeting minutes for review

OLE's Calls for Service list through September 30, 2020

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

Documentation for the executive session