



## DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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### COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD GOVERNANCE MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Steve Sears/Chair, Ernie Foster/Secretary, Sasha Dyer, Emma Ellsworth, John Organ, Matthew Sisk, Mark S. Tisa/Director, Tom O'Shea/Commissioner/DFG, Eve Schlüter/Deputy Director, Nicole McSweeney/Assistant Director/Outreach and Education, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Olanyk/Central Wildlife District Manager, Andrew Madden/Western Wildlife District Manager, Jason Zimmer/Southeast Wildlife District Manager, Jim Pollock/Operations Specialist

DATE: September 13, 2023

LOCATION: MassWildlife Field Headquarters, Westborough, Massachusetts

Chair Sears opened the discussion meeting at 3:00 p.m.

#### Acceptance of Minutes

Dr. Organ moved acceptance of the August minutes as submitted; Mr. Sisk seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

#### Chair's Comments

Chair Sears reported that he had attended the Western District lands committee meeting and that Mr. Madden had explained the minimum acreage requirements for the EEA Landscape Partnership Grants Program. He stated that Berkshire and Franklin counties have higher minimums than the other counties.

He also reported that he plans to combine the Board members' goals with those of the Director and the Commissioner and that the Board's goals should be matched to the Director's and Commissioner's.

#### The Director's Priorities for MassWildlife for the Next Five Years

Director Tisa thanked the Board members who had provided comments at the listening session the previous evening and underscored that there would be more upcoming listening sessions, which will be even more important for the members to engage in. The Director then reminded the members of the Non-lead Partnership demonstration being provided the following week by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Hadley and encouraged them to attend. Director Tisa also briefed the Board on his upcoming participation in regional and national meetings, which are important because they are the Director's opportunity to represent and advocate for the interests of Massachusetts in issues at different levels.

Director Tisa briefly recapped the accomplishments of the previous 5 years, including the license fee increase and multiple examples of the expansion of opportunities for hunting and fishing he and his staff have created in Massachusetts. He then reported that every one of his current priorities points back to his slogan, "All Wildlife," which is another way of talking about biodiversity conservation. He then outlined his major priorities for the coming 5 years:

Relevancy. When talking about relevancy from the wildlife-conservation perspective, efforts to enhance wildlife and habitat conservation through broader public engagement, especially through working with partners among the NGOs and nonprofits in the state and regionally.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice, and Access, which as a broad effort and as individual actions is critical to Relevancy, but also important in its own right as we continue to try to broaden our partnerships.

Landscape-scale Conservation. For habitat connectivity and functioning ecosystem processes, we need to identify and target key landscapes, both in-state and regionally. The Director stressed that actions to promote climate resiliency, land protection, and habitat management are all critical to protecting our biodiversity.

R3. Continue to promote wildlife-related recreation, whether hunting, fishing, trapping, birdwatching, etc. MassWildlife needs to continue to provide and expand opportunities for people to connect with nature in whatever way they want to.

Communications and Outreach. Getting the messages out to people so that they can understand them, engage with them, and share their own perspectives on our work and how we can support them.

Working closely with the Healey-Driscoll Administration to advancing the Governor's biodiversity executive order.

Director Tisa reported that he has never seen an administration that is more supportive of MassWildlife's and the larger Department's work and he stressed the importance of that support and cooperation to the Board members.

A general discussion ensued about the Board's involvement in furthering the Director's goals. Commissioner O'Shea stated that he has been working very hard to make sure the Secretary of EEA and the Administration know what DFG and MassWildlife are working on, because they didn't previously know.

#### Free License Reimbursement Report

Mr. Sisk reported that he has identified several legislators who are interested in the issue, some of whom were not aware that the reimbursement had not already been codified in statute.

Members discussed the Board's annual election of officers and decided to hold it at the November meeting because it will be on Zoom.

Chair Sears reported that Dr. Organ has shared some very helpful information recently. One action item that the Chair wanted to put forward was for the Board to develop and adopt a vision statement. A general discussion of how to do that was held. The Commissioner cautioned that the Board should wait for the Department's and EEA's goal-setting processes to be completed because the Board's vision will need to align with those of MassWildlife, the Department, EEA, and the Administration. Dr. Organ stated that the Board has to determine how to make an impact on or contribute to the larger vision.

#### Set Next Meeting Date and Time

The Board members discussed its next discussion meeting. They decided that the next discussion meeting could be held at 12:00 p.m. on November 15, 2023.

Mr. Foster made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Sisk seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernie Foster  
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its September governance meeting packets

September governance meeting notice with agenda  
Draft minutes from the August governance meeting