



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, Mark S. 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, 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, Dan Koch/Information Technology Coordinator/DFG, Mitch Strobl/Kalkomey, Chet Van Dellen/Kalkomey, Zack Lambert/Kalkomey

DATE: September 28, 2021

LOCATION: Via Zoom Meeting

Vice Chair Roche opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. Chairman Larson had connectivity issues for several minutes and did not join the meeting immediately.

Acceptance of Minutes

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

Vice Chair Roche: yes

Secretary Booth: yes

Dr. Van Roo: yes

Mr. Foster: yes

Mr. Sears: yes

Mr. Durand: yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that he had attended some very good events during Climate Week. He joined the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club on the Childs River with where a dam had been removed and visited the sites of a new culvert installed to provide passage for aquatic wildlife and where work was done on the restoration of three cranberry bogs. He stated that the events were well-attended and all examples of the excellent work the Department is doing to adapt to climate change.

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Law Enforcement Comments

Captain Scott Amati provided the Board with an Office of Law Enforcement personnel update; an overview of actions for current and preparations for upcoming hunting and other recreational seasons; 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 joined the meeting during Captain Amati's comments.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee

Chairman Larson stated that there was no Advisory Committee report because the Committee is on a quarterly meeting schedule and did not meet in the previous month.

Set Meeting Date

Members discussed possible dates for the October Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting. Members agreed to Tuesday, October 19, at 9:00 a.m.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa briefly reviewed the agency's activities of the past several months related to the license fee increases, reiterating that MassWildlife had just finished an extensive process, beginning in January, with a total of nine public meetings to share information with constituents and get their feedback. The Director reported that one remaining piece needed to be completed, the creation of a pheasant/quail permit. He noted that it is confusing to some folks because the fee has already been approved in the ANF license process, but it is solely up to the Fisheries and Wildlife Board to create the actual permit and the requirement for it in the MassWildlife regulations.

At 9:30 a.m., Vice Chair Roche moved to hand the meeting to the Director as Hearing Officer and go to the public hearing; Mr. Foster seconded.

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.

9:30: Public Hearing: Proposed Regulatory Amendments to 321 CMR 3.02(6): Hunting of Pheasants, Quail and 3.03(2): Special Regulations for Northeast Wildlife Management Area (Martin H. Burns Wildlife Management Area)

Vote: Proposed Regulatory Amendments to 321 CMR 3.02(6): Hunting of Pheasants, Quail and 3.03(2): Special Regulations for Northeast Wildlife Management Area (Martin H. Burns Wildlife Management Area)

After the close of the public hearing, Vice Chair Roche moved to amend the regulations as proposed; Secretary Booth seconded the motion.

In discussion, Mr. Durand asked for clarification regarding the hearing comment about the impact of the recent prescribed burn at the Southwick WMA on pheasant hunting there. Deputy Director Regosin reported that the prescribed burn conducted recently on a section of the grasslands at Southwick was relatively small compared to the total grassland area that is stocked, that it was necessary to stay on schedule with MassWildlife's habitat management commitments and stated goals, and that the burn meant the area would be even better for pheasant hunting the following year. Regarding the pheasant stocking schedule, about which there had also been some comments, Director Tisa reported that, on major WMAs, the agency used to stock three times a week, and that staff trying to stock for Saturdays were stocking the birds out Friday evenings after legal shooting hours. The Director reported that the staff understands that most people can only hunt on Saturdays, and he said he would confirm with the Assistant Director of Operations that the major WMAs are still stocked on Friday evenings.

Vice Chair Roche moved the vote.

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.

MassFishHunt Modernization (Trina Moruzzi et al.)

Director Tisa reported that the search for and process with the new vendor for the MassFishHunt licensing system was almost as extensive as that for the licence fees. He noted that it was a Department (DFG) project because it also includes the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF).

Assistant Director of Operations Trina Moruzzi opened the presentation. Ms. Moruzzi reiterated that this is not just a MassWildlife system but rather a department-wide system, and its development has been a team effort with MassWildlife, DMF, and DFG. She reported that the current online licensing contract expires and the new system will come online on December 1, 2021, and she provided an overview of the process the MassFishHunt team went through to develop its criteria, solicit ideas for required and desired functionality, solicit bids for the new system, and finalize the contract with Kalkomey Enterprises, the new contract vendor.

Ms. Moruzzi then reviewed highlights of some of the functionality of the new system. She asked Dan Koch of DFG, the MassFishHunt project lead, who said he was most impressed, from the Department's perspective, with the adaptability of the new system and the support team it would have to make changes and updates in real time throughout the life of the contract. Mitch Strobl from Kalkomey also spoke briefly, providing the history and corporate structure behind Kalkomey, which he said started in hunter education sphere, kept evolving over time to offer online hunter education, and, in 2017, began to look at entering the licensing market. He said the structure and organization of Kalkomey make it so the entire customer experience is in one system: from basic hunter education through specialized courses and events to licence-buying and annual renewals. He reported that Kalkomey developed an online licensing system in Nevada first, then in New York, and now in Massachusetts, where the

company has a well-rounded team to support the Massachusetts system. Kalkomey Project Manager Chet Van Dellen, a 10-year veteran who started at the Nevada Dept of Wildlife as a computer specialist, described the system and how it is structured to continually provide feedback and improve the application throughout the life of the contract. Zack Lambert, the Kalkomey customer service team leader, reported that a liaison has been assigned to continue to work closely with Massachusetts after the system goes live. He stressed that the relationship stays active after go-live with support and continuing development throughout the life cycle of the contract. He gave examples from Nevada of programs Kalkomey developed during the contract to help improve existing systems to adapt to new needs, and from New York, where Kalkomey created a stand-alone app to sell licenses and report harvest. Mr. Lambert pointed out that those innovations and improvements in other states' systems are also brought to the Massachusetts system, so everyone benefits. Mr. Van Dellen closed Kalkomey's presentation with details of the integrated system for education, events, and license sales that they've developed over time.

After an extended discussion, the Board thanked Ms. Moruzzi and the entire team for its work on the Massachusetts system and for providing an excellent, detailed presentation.

Chair's Comments

The Chairman had no comments.

Member's Comments

Bonnie Booth reported no comments.

Vice Chair Roche very significant day: pheasant program continues and modernization of online licensing.

Dr. Van Roo reported that she had sent an outline of her ideas around an investigation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to the Board members as requested by the Chair, which includes asking staff about its impressions and opinions of DEI currently in the agency. Reiterating that the effort is long overdue, Dr. Van Roo stressed that it needs to be a priority to ask for staff input and find out if the Board has a role to play in increasing DEI in the agency. Noting that diversity has to be viewed both for our constituency and our staff, Dr. Van Roo stated that staff needs to feel safe and fully included in the process. She also stated that showing the diversity of staff will also increase the diversity of our customers. Dr. Van Roo acknowledged that there are existing mandates but stated that the Board and the agency should start with those and try to do more. Chair Larson reported that he had discussed the process with the Director and believes there needs to be a framework within which to work and that the next step is to invite someone from the state Human Resources Division to address the Board and define the framework that needs to be met around the issues.

Mr. Foster reported that he had lost power during the meeting due to the stormy weather and was told that the Antlerless Deer Permit sales process was compromised during the morning, likely from the same cause.

Mr. Sears stated that he felt it was important to clarify, in response to a comment made during the hearing, that all of the license-fee public presentations were held in the evenings, not during the day when most people have to work, so that as many people as possible could attend if they wished. He stated that it also needs to be emphasized that the Sunday hunting issue is not in the agency's or the Board's hands but in statute. He opined that the more people hear from the Board members how things work, the sooner they will help with efforts to make constructive changes. Mr. Sears also reported that

he is still concerned about many issue with lakes and ponds, including pesticide use in the wrong season and illegal or inappropriate use of boat ramps.

Mr. Durand reported that he had also been given a complaint about persons privatizing an access ramp on a pond by keeping private boats on the ramp. Commissioer Amidon asked that Mr. Sears and Mr. Durand bring those specific complaints to him and he would work with Fishing and Boating Access and OLE to resolve them.

There being no more comments from the Board members, a motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Durand, who asked to adjourn in memory of Larry Roy, sending his condolences to Mr. Roy's family.

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.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

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

Agenda

Draft August meeting minutes for review

Handout: Proposed pheasant and quail regulation changes

Written comments received RE the proposed pheasant and quail hunting regulations

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