

**Community Advisory Council to the  
Environmental Management Commission  
Building 1805  
Camp Edwards, Massachusetts  
October 1, 2024  
6:00 p.m.  
Meeting Minutes**

**CAC Members:**

Andrew Campbell  
Heather McElroy  
Maj. Gen. Virginia Gaglio  
Shawn Cody  
Robert Prohett

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**Attendees:**

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MassWildlife

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**Handouts Distributed at Meeting:**

1. Community Advisory Council Draft Meeting Minutes, October 11, 2023
2. Community Advisory Council Draft Meeting Minutes, May 9, 2024
3. Letter, US Fish and Wildlife Service re: Camp Edwards Recognized with 2024 Northeast Region Military Conservation Partner Award, September 10, 2024
4. Environmental Management Commission Environmental Officer Update, October 2024
5. Camp Edwards Update, 1 October 2024
6. Camp Edwards Natural Resources Update
7. Camp Edwards/MassWildlife Conservation through Partnership
8. Wildland Fire Discussion, Burning Questions from the Spring Meeting

**Agenda Item #1. Welcome – Ms. Heather McElroy, CAC Chair**

Ms. McElroy welcomed everyone to the Community Advisory Council (CAC) meeting. Community Advisory Council members present at the meeting: Ms. McElroy, Cape Cod Commission; Andrew Campbell, Bourne; Maj Gen Virginia Gaglio, Military Representative; Shawn Cody, Military Representative; and Robert Prophett, Upper Cape Regional Water Supply Cooperative. Community Advisory Council members not present at the meeting: Ralph Vitacco, Sandwich; Mimi McConnell, At-Large; James Cummings, At-Large; James Dishner, At-Large; Mark Harding, Wampanoag Representative; John Phelan, Mashpee; and Ernest Virgilio, At-Large.

**Agenda Item #2. Review of CAC Minutes and Approval – Ms. Heather McElroy, CAC Chair**

The draft minutes from the October 11, 2023, and the May 9, 2024 CAC meetings will be reviewed and approved at the next meeting where there is a quorum.

**Agenda Item #3: CAC Membership Vacancies – Ms. Heather McElroy, CAC Chair**

CAC members discussed vacancies on the CAC and the Science Advisory Council.

- Three CAC seats are vacant: the Town of Falmouth, the US Coast Guard (JBCC Family Member), and an At-Large seat. In addition, there are three At-Large seats currently filled by members who have not attended meetings in several years. There is a process to request the Environmental Management Commission (EMC) Chair contact the Governor's office and request they be replaced. Mr. Pinaud will provide a list of potential members to forward to the Governor's office.
- The current Town of Sandwich Representative was recently selected as the Town Administrator for Dighton. Ms. McElroy suggested reaching out to Sandwich to see if they would like to make a different appointment to fill that seat.
- Five SAC seats are open. SAC seats are filled by subject matter experts. Mr. Pinaud asked any recommendations to fill those seats be sent to him.
- Ms. McElroy and Mr. Pinaud will proceed with sending the request to the EMC that they contact the Governor's office to have the three At-Large members be replaced.

**Agenda Item #4: Environmental Officer Update – Mr. Leonard Pinaud, EMC Environmental Officer**

Mr. Pinaud, Environmental Management Commission (EMC) Environmental Officer (EO), summarized the activities related to the Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve (the Reserve).

- The EMC and Camp Edwards Environmental & Readiness Center conducted 14 range inspections between May and September 2024.
- Eight non-standard training requests were reviewed and approved for pyrotechnics for training, removal and detonation of munitions items and other maintenance activities in the Camp Edwards Training Area/Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve.
- Range Operations and Control Area (ROCA) on India, Sierra, and Tango ranges, support buildings will be replaced or added; there is no significant change in use at these ranges.
- The Operations, Maintenance and Monitoring Plans (OMMPs) for the small arms ranges are required to be updated every three years and reviewed annually. Mr. Pinaud is working with the MAARNG to determine the frequency and degree of range maintenance; to do that, each range's specific environmental impact, intended use and quantities and types of ammunition expended on the range. The SAC Ad Hoc discussed recommendations for determining the frequency and degree of range maintenance, primarily applied with the EPS requirements for the prevention of fragmentation and ricochet. The SAC Ad Hoc, US EPA and the Association to Preserve Cape Cod have provided recommendations to the EMC incorporating those into the OMMPs. The

EMC will be focusing on adaptive management, making decisions as part of continuing the process of monitoring, review data, assessing the health of the environment and environmental risk, rather than action levels.

- On May 15, 2024 US EPA Region 1 requested information from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environmental Management and Restoration on the occurrence and content of PFAS and fluorinated polymers in munitions items including propellants, explosives, pyrotechnics, and other components of munitions, used or potentially used at Camp Edwards by the military or government contractors.
  - The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense responded to the US EPA's request on June 24, 2024. The response indicated that the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense does not have documents concerning munitions used or potentially used at Otis Air National Guard Base or Army National Guard Camp Edwards. They noted that the Office of the Secretary of Defense is researching DoD wide for PFAS presence in certain explosives in the binding materials and whether PFAS are destroyed during normal use.
  - The Impact Area Groundwater Study Program is completing its PFAS report that will summarize all the Army's investigative work into PFAS at Camp Edwards. The draft report is currently in internal review and is scheduled to be submitted to the US EPA and MassDEP in the fall. Mr. Pinaud said there appears to be no PFAS problem at Camp Edwards.

**Agenda Item #5. Camp Edwards Update/Natural Resources Update** – *Mr. Matthew Porter, Base Operations Manager/Mr. Jacob McCumber, Natural Resources and Training Lands Manager*  
Mr. Porter presented an update on activities at Camp Edwards.

- The Camp Edwards Natural Resources Program was awarded the 2024 Northeast Region Military Conservation Partner Award from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- A new Title 5, civilian position, range operations manager has been hired.
- A one-day gathering of selected experts and governmental officials for the National Academy of Sciences will be held October 30 at Camp Edwards.
- Twenty-two units were trained at Camp Edwards during Annual Training; the 1-182 Infantry shifted to Camp Edwards due to lack of availability at Ethan Allen firing range. The focus for the next fiscal year is individual Weapons Qualification. An estimated 2,600 soldiers will train over four weekends in October; an estimated 2,300 soldiers will train over three weekends in November.
- Range Operations and Control Area (ROCA): for Sierra, Tango and India Ranges are training support facilities, usually a covered mess shelter, a building for breaking down/issuing ammunition and a storage building. Construction is ongoing and projected to be completed in early 2025.
- Range sampling was conducted on Sierra, Echo, Tango, India and Lima Ranges. The samples were sent to the lab and results are pending.

Mr. McCumber provided an update on the Natural Resources Program:

- Outreach efforts continue and include the Cape Cod Natural History Conference, tours and speaking engagements.
- Flora projects include annual vegetation surveys, forest stand surveys including the pine beetle risk assessment, surveys and an updated protocol for the Few-flowered Nutsedge, invasive plant mapping and partner survey assistance for endangered plants.

- Wildlife surveys and monitoring are being conducted for the Spotted Turtle and Eastern Box Turtle, bird surveys are being conducted for Woodcock and grouse. The program is going through Endangered Species Act consultations for bats including formal consultation for growing season prescribed fire.
- The program continues reporting and annual plan submission for Agassiz's Clam Shrimp. Two major puddle repairs were completed; Clam shrimp were found back in the puddles within a week of repair. A new puddle complex was added at the Unit Training Equipment Site facility.
- There has been a dramatic increase in the Whip-poor-will population on Camp Edwards; the per point count has been doubled through management.
- Frosted Elfin butterfly has been confirmed at 11 of 15 survey sites from the last three years, comparing to 1 of 14 sites in 2017. Skid roads, fire breaks, roadsides, and other openings are essential within the barrens habitat.
- The Fall deer hunt runs over a number of dates September through December, ending with the muzzleloader deer hunt December 18-19.
- The Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan s being finalized. The program is preparing for the fall fire training and the spring burn season, targeting 1,200 acres.
- Upcoming restoration projects include the Battle Position 14/16 Landing Zone, collaborative habitat restoration and aviation support, a 16-acre harvest with sandplain grassland/heartland species, and continuing efforts to build resilience for species and habitat off powerline rights of way.

**Agenda Item #6. Camp Edwards/MassWildlife Conservation through Partnership – Mr. Jason Zimmer, Southeast District Supervisor**

Mr. Zimmer gave a presentation on Camp Edwards and MassWildlife's Conservation through Partnership.

- MassWildlife is responsible for the conservation of freshwater fish and wildlife in the Commonwealth, including endangered plants and animals, and restores, protects, and manages land for wildlife.
- There are five districts including the Southeast District, which Mr. Zimmer manages. Fifty-thousand acres are managed in the Southeast District and includes fish and wildlife research, habitat management, hunting, fishing and trapping oversight, public service and outreach and education.
- Chapter 47 of the Acts of 2002 established the Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve and gave DFW underlying care, custody and control of that 15,000 acres, subject to various licenses and leases to the Department of Defense. MassWildlife has a tie in overseeing the Environmental Performance Standards. The Sykes Act, a tri-party agreement among DoD, USFWS and MassWildlife, formally ties them together in formally reviewing natural resource issues on military installations. MassWildlife was heavily involved in the development of the first INRMP and continues being engaged in the INRMP annual review process. There is constant coordination and consultation with National Guard staff on Camp Edwards.
- The habitat at Camp Edwards along with Myles Standish and Francis Crane Wildlife Management Area represents a critical natural landscape important to the state's biodiversity goals and the agencies' missions and MassWildlife and Camp Edwards cooperate and coordinate management. Strong partnership is key to achieving conservation goals.
- The controlled hunting program (deer and turkey hunts) on Camp Edwards dates back to the mid-1950s and supports conservation, public safety and public access for recreation.

- Fish and wildlife research activities are conducted on Camp Edwards as part of MassWildlife's statewide index and research project, including rough grouse surveys, turkey surveys, and deer surveys.
- MassWildlife partnered with the EMC and the base in 2019 to mark the boundary of the entire Training Area/Reserve. Boundary marking signage helps with trespassing and encroachment enforcement.
- MassWildlife's Hunters Share the Harvest program, which allows hunters to donate harvest deer meat, has donated more than 20,000 meals to individuals in need; a large proportion of the donations go to veterans in need.

**Agenda Item #7. Prescribed Fire at Camp Edwards – Mr. Jacob McCumber, Natural Resources and Training Lands Manager**

Mr. McCumber gave a presentation on prescribed fire at Camp Edwards.

- Fire is essential to a healthy system, including the forests; it is shown in the monitoring data. The prescribed fire program has complex planning on a variety of scales: looking regionally at fire hazard, smoke shed, conservation and managing specific areas, scaling down to the burn operation and understanding fuels and vegetation within a unit, the weather conditions, and the smoke from that specific operation and how that fits into the bigger picture context.
- Planning is the key element of the prescribed burn program. Prescribed burning requires complex programmatic planning and program management as well as extensive interdisciplinary training, education and experience.
- Modeling is used to strategically place treatments on the landscape and actively see the reduction in hazards and actively see the protection of the surrounding communities. Modeling is important to facilitate sound planning; smoke modeling is completed for every prescribed burn. During a burn, a trained fire effects monitor actively tracks weather conditions to evaluate relative humidity and winds and how it relates to putting fire on the landscape and what the smoke will be doing compared to sensitive receptors.
- There are national standards for prescribed fire fighters at every level from training level through burn boss and higher. Training is a key element and the MAARNG has hosted training at Camp Edwards for almost 30 years.
- Climate resilience is a key focus for Camp Edwards and is important that defenses and resilience are built in to fight against threats like the Southern Pine Beetle, gypsy moth and drought and seasonal extremes. Wildland fire is a natural process, just like decomposition. Decomposition happening in the woods also produces carbon, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Fire is doing the same, on a different time scale. While fire consumes leaf litter and small debris, fire opens up the stand and is refreshing the understory vegetation. Young growth has high rates of carbon sequestration that much more rapidly pulls carbon out of the atmosphere to be stored in roots and woody material. Fire plays that role reinvigorating the understory vegetation, providing healthier trees and better density so that carbon may be drawn out of the atmosphere at the highest rate possible, and also provides a healthy ecosystem that is going to withstand threats and store carbon for generations. Fire is a natural tool that provides major carbon benefits over the short and long term. Research in the New Jersey pine barrens show that after just two years, the carbon lost from a prescribed burn is recouped and carbon sequestration and storage are improved.

CAC members discussed the information and one member noted that there could be opportunities for shared learning surrounding prescribed fire and the community that may be beneficial to the new superintendent of Cape Cod National Seashore, who is interested in exploring wildfire management.

**Agenda Item #8: Public Comment** – *Ms. Heather McElroy, CAC Chair*

There was no public comment.

**Agenda Item #9. Adjourn** – *Ms. Heather McElroy, CAC Chair*

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.