

**Environmental Management Commission
Building 1805
October 19, 2023
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

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Commissioner Tom O'Shea
Commissioner Bonnie Heiple
Commissioner Brian Arrigo

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Attendees:

COL Matt Porter
MAJ Alexander McDonough
COL John Bagaglio
Nathan Wilder
Paulo A. Baganha
Paul Rendon
Kathleen Kolva
Jake McCumber
Erin Hilley
Mike Ciaranca
Emily Kelly
Heather McElroy

Organization:

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Handouts Distributed at Meeting:

1. EMC Draft Meeting Minutes: June 15, 2023
2. Eversource Joint Base Cape Cod Update
3. Environmental Officer Update – October 2023
4. Camp Edwards Update, 19 October 2023
5. Natural Resources & Training Lands Management Update
6. Small Arms Range Projectile Removal at Camp Edwards

Agenda Item #1. Welcome – *Commissioner Tom O'Shea, Environmental Management Commission Chair*

Commissioner O'Shea welcomed everyone to the Environmental Management Commission (EMC) meeting.

Agenda Item #2. Review of EMC Minutes and Approval – *Commissioner Tom O'Shea, Environmental Management Commission Chair*

The June 15, 2023, EMC minutes were reviewed. Commissioner Heiple commented on page 4, second bullet, the first two sentences should be removed. Commissioner Heiple made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; Commissioner Arrigo seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #3. Eversource Update – *Eversource Staff*

Mr. DeFusco, Eversource Senior Environmental Specialist - Licensing & Permitting, gave an update on Eversource's work on Joint Base Cape Cod (JBCC), which is part of the "Cape Cod Solution," a multi-phase transmission program to improve electric reliability on Cape Cod and allow for the integration of offshore wind energy.

- Eversource's clean energy strategy, the electric grid and how energy is transmitted, and the benefits of transmission were discussed.
- The Cape Cod Solution Phase I project schedule, which will run through the third quarter of 2024, was reviewed. During Phase I, Eversource will install an additional line on their existing right of way through JBCC to the Bourne Switching Station.
- Phase II of the project will involve constructing a new substation in Bourne and upgrades to the West Barnstable substation that will enable the transmission line to operate at 345-kV. It will be able to accept energy from offshore. On JBCC, a new 345-kV switching station will be built next to the existing 115-kV station located in the Camp Edwards Training Area/Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve (Training Area/Reserve). The new station will stay mostly in the existing footprint.
- The Bourne Switching Station construction was substantially completed in Fall 2022 and line cutover work will be completed by the end of 2023. He said decommissioning of the old station is planned for late October/early November 2023 to March 2024.
- Project planning and communications were discussed, including best management practices including straw wattle and slope diversions. Precautionary measures were taken for box turtles with a turtle ecologist on the project.

Agenda Item #4. Environmental Officer Update – *Mr. Leonard Pinaud, Environmental Management Commission Acting Environmental Officer*

- Nine inspections were conducted from July to October. Camp Edwards training cycle was a standard cycle this year, with no major training events. Inspections are usually geared towards the use of training ranges and small arms ranges. Instead, inspections were geared toward determining the number of projectiles in the range backstop berms. The Operations, Maintenance and Monitoring Plans (OMMPs) need to be updated and that is key information for those documents.
- Two or three non-standard training requests were made this year; usually there are more. Non-standard training request are exceptions to policy for use of a range in a nontraditional way.
- The Infantry Squad Battle Course a operational inactive range, which the MAARNG wants to update similar to what had been done with Tango Range. The MAARNG will approach the EMC Environmental Officer and ask him to review that; the EMC Environmental Officer reviews and provides comments. When the MAARNG is ready, the range will come before the EMC for a request for approval. That may happen in the spring.

- The OMMPs are currently under review; there is an obligation to upgrade the OMMPs to ensure the operations of the ranges are still protective.
- Camp Edwards has conducted public tours over the last three years showing the good working happening there and to help the community become familiar with what happens in the Training Area/Reserve. New Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) hires joined a tour earlier in the year and two senior staff from the Southeast Region will join the last tour. If staff from DCR and DFG would like to participate, they can join one of the community tours or a separate tour may be arranged.
- There are three open seats on the Community Advisory Council (At-Large representative, US Coast Guard community representative and Falmouth representative) and several on the Science Advisory Council. Science Advisory Council (SAC) seats are open to subject matter experts. Mr. Pinaud has reached out to the US Coast Guard and Town of Falmouth to let them know those seats are vacant. Two letters for the At-Large member were received by the Governor's Office. Mr. Pinaud has reached out to the Department of Public Health to work with them for a subject matter expert for the SAC. He also is working with current SAC members to see if they have peers who may be interested in being appointed.
- House Bill 919, An Act Relative to the Environmental Protection of Joint base Cape Cod, sponsored by Representative David Vieira, was heard by the Joint Committee on Environmental and Natural Resource on September 27. The bill would update the name of JBCC from the Massachusetts Military Reservation, updates the names of the agencies sitting on the EMC, makes changes to Section 6, which is how the CAC and SAC members are appointed and how they serve. Appointments to the CAC and SAC would be changed to three-year appointments and proposes changing appointments from the Governor's office to the EMC.

Ms. Heiple asked is there a cadence to when OMMPs are reviewed and updated? Mr. Pinaud said the OMMPs are living documents and may be changed at any time. The current OMMPs are each slightly different; there are certain things consistent between each small arms range but each range is different and so each OMMP is slightly different. The OMMPs will be integrated to ensure consistency. The plans are reviewed and approved by Mr. Pinaud on the EMC's behalf.

Ms. Heiple asked if the ISBC range is at desktop review. Mr. McDonough said the ISBC is in the design phase now; once that is in place and the environmental review and permitting is started, it will be brought to the EMC. The EMC may grant Mr. Pinaud authority to approve the design and the OMMP.

Ms. McElroy, CAC chair, introduced herself and noted that the CAC had a discussion around projectile recovery at during its last meeting; there were no real concerns from CAC members.

Agenda Item #5. Camp Edwards Update – *Mr. Alex McDonough, Deputy Base Operations Manager, MAARNG; Mr. Jake McCumber, Natural Resources and Training Lands Manager*

MAJ McDonough provided a Camp Edwards update to the CAC.

- A tour was held for the JBCC Cleanup team, and Camp Edwards has held monthly tours from May to October. A tour for Sandwich town staff will be held next week.
- This year, Camp Edwards is supporting standard National Guard training such as weapons qualification, land navigation, and maneuvers.
- The ISBC range, a historic range in caretaker status, is planned to be renovated to current standards. The range is in the design phase and when that is complete, it will be presented to the EMC for design approval.
- The EPA's Sole Source Aquifer Review is continuing.
- Range monitoring and sampling was conducted from October 2 to October 6.

Mr. McCumber provided an update on Natural Resources/Training Lands Management.

- An external, state-wide environmental assessment gave a positive review for natural resources planning and management at Camp Edwards; there are ongoing environmental review and permitting efforts.
- Mist netting and acoustic surveys were completed for bats during the summer where no state-listed bats were caught; analysis and consultation efforts are ongoing for training and conservation efforts. The tri-colored bat is expected to be listed this winter.
- Frosted Elfin were documented colonizing the habitat restoration site at C-14. Clam shrimp are showing rapid colonization of repaired and new puddles and recolonization was also observed.
- One doe was taken during the fall deer youth hunt. A fall turkey hunt will be held next week.
- The rare plant survey is ongoing with two new Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) listed and watchlist species found.
- A vernal pool effort for creation, planning and cultural investigation is underway; Natural Resources Program staff are coordinating with the towns. An archeological survey is being conducted for cultural sites.
- The fall burn season is underway and has been a challenge; a 2.5 acre burn was conducted in the grassland area. One hundred-eighty acres were burned in the spring. Updates to the Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan are ongoing.
- There is ongoing trapping, planning and preparedness around the Southern Pine Beetle, along with holistic resilience and ecosystem health planning and outreach.
- The program is doing extensive outreach for MAARNG including six public tours; events with the Massachusetts Butterfly Club, public grassland bird tours, and participation in public meetings and presentations on rare species and conservation.

Commissioner O'Shea noted that US Fish and Wildlife Service had reached out and said they have \$36 million national wide with Department of Defense to fund the kind of work the Natural Resources Program is doing to prepare for climate change and they want to tie it into offsite projects, whether it is DCR or MassWildlife, we are happy to support and participate in some of the work that could be continually funded through this opportunity.

Agenda Item #6. Projectile Recovery at Camp Edwards Small Arms Range – Mr. Alex McDonough, Deputy Base Operations Manager, MAARNG

Mr. McDonough discussed projectile removal at Camp Edwards small arms ranges.

- It is required by the Environmental Performance Standards (EPSs) and the OMMPs. Environmental Performance Standard 19 governs the small arms ranges and states that projectiles must be recovered to the maximum extent practicable.
- Projectile removal prevents fragmentation and ricochets and prevents subsurface percolation of range residue.
- The MAARNG and EMC EO recently excavated bullet pockets on India Range and Echo Range and found that the projectiles captured in berms have not significantly moved with erosion; significant projectile debris is not found until just under the primary projectile pocket; and the steel penetrators oxidize and accrete quickly. Projectile related environmental contaminants have not been detected in soil, porewater or groundwater at Camp Edwards small arms ranges.
- Camp Edwards would like to move to a formal removal schedule, removing projectiles on one range every two years; there are currently four ranges for an 8-year cycle. The schedule would be administratively institutionalized. Monitoring data, projectile sampling, and modeling support 8-year rotation.

Commissioner Heiple asked if the excavations (Mr. Ciaranca's and Mr. Pinaud's work at Echo and India ranges) were surgical? She also asked if due to the volume at Echo, should cleanout be done more frequently?

- The excavations were exploratory, utilizing sifting. A large-scale cleanout may mean removing the face of the berm and removing the metals. Echo Range has lower density; not as many Soldiers fire on Echo Range.

Commissioner O'Shea asked with rounds being fired in a concentrated area they could collect more quickly in an area with a higher risk of fracture.

- Metals recovery is not the only range maintenance; berm maintenance, including adding material to bullet pockets, is completed through the ranges.

Mr. Pinaud said that this can be brought to the SAC Ad Hoc Committee and all stakeholders should agree on the process.

Agenda Item #6. Public Comment – *Commissioner Tom O'Shea, Environmental Management Commission Chair*

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item #7. Adjourn – *Commissioner Tom O'Shea, Environmental Management Commission Chair*

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.