

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
March 4th, 2019
7:00 PM

Location: DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007

Members: (members in **BOLD** were present)

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: **Tom Berube (chair person)**

Alternate:

Trout Unlimited: **Jerry Eves**

Alternate: Joe Babineau

Quabbin Fisherman's Association: **Larry Gates**

Alternate: Bill Martell

Worcester County League of Sportsmen: Craig Cortis

Alternate:

North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association: Tony Brighenti (vice chair person)

Alternate: **Tom Barnes**; Dennis Duguay

Mass Audubon: Tom Lautzenheiser

Alternate:

Swift River Valley Historical Society: James Boyko

Alternate: Jane Peirce

Massachusetts Wildlife Federation: **Bill Pula**

Alternate:

New England Sierra Club: **Elisa Campbell**

Alternate:

Friends of Quabbin, Inc.: **J.R. Greene**

Alternate: **Gene Theroux**

General Public: **Ralph Lapinskas**

Alternate:

DCR staff present: Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor

Members of the public present: Lexi Dewey, Dan Eaton, Melissa Eaton, Paul Godfrey, Dan Hammock, Bob Howe, Cynthia Labombard, Mike Laprade, Tony Ostrewski, Bob Sagan, Clayton Sydla, Mark Thompson, Steve Ward

Meeting Start Time: 7:01 PM

Approval of Minutes of Meeting on December 3rd, 2018

Bill Pula made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on December 3rd, 2018. J.R. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Quabbin Park Cemetery (QPC) – Friends of Quabbin (FOQ) presentation

Gene Theroux, president of the FOQ, gave a presentation regarding the restoration and preservation of the QPC. DCR recently produced a QPC management plan that the FOQ provided comments on. DCR's 'Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries' document was used as a reference for FOQ's maintenance recommendations.

Several recommendations were given regarding QPC lawns:

1. Avoid soil buildup around markers.
2. Prevent weeds by watering and fertilization.
3. Reduce heavy shade and lime to avoid moss.
4. Regular watering is critical to maintain normal growth and color of lawns.
5. Mowing no closer than 12" from marker and finish with string trimmer, except for marble markers.
6. Soil analyses should be done every 3 to 5 years to determine levels of fertilization and liming.

Gene stated that the deterioration of gravestones has become increasingly evident. Multiple recommendations were given on how grave markers should be maintained:

1. Seasonal site visits should be conducted to check for fallen stones and any other cases of accelerated deterioration due to weather and/or vandalism.
2. Repair/restoration efforts should be monitored at least once each year.
3. Gravestone rubbings should be prohibited because the process can leave wax or ink and cause surface losses.
4. All markers should be inventoried and prioritized for needed repairs in terms of historical significance. Most surveys and some evaluations can be performed by trained volunteers.

Various chipped, broken, and/or downed monuments and grave markers were highlighted throughout the presentation. It was recommended that any accidental damage done to a grave or monument by DCR staff be documented. The FOQ recently (2017) conducted a survey of damaged grave markers. They found that roughly 3% of the 8,000+ markers were damaged. A cost of \$57,700 was estimated to repair the damages. It was also noted that QPC lot tags are often missing or buried.

Gene noted DCR's QPC restoration efforts from 2012 when \$50,000 in funding was raised for repairs after three micro-bursts had caused significant damage to the cemetery.

FOQ has estimated the costs (2009 prices) of grave marker repairs. They estimate it would cost \$150-175 to reset a toppled or leaning marker, \$175-250 to repair a loose marker, and \$250-300 to repair a broken marker. The above costs are average costs and do not include documentation. Markers with complex repair issues can cost substantially more.

It was suggested that DCR modernize their burial records. The current records are on 3x5 cards and located at the Quabbin administration building. It was recommended that a digital version be incorporated for all existing information (cards, veterans, etc.) into one system. It could be accessible for viewing, printing, and downloading by the public. Changes to the original records should only be allowed after DCR review. Various local cemeteries were highlighted that have successfully transitioned to a digital records system and online presence.

FOQ would like to establish a partnership with DCR for the restoration and long-term preservation of QPC. The group is advocating for QPC to be added to the list of National Historic Places. They have established an avenue for donations to QPC monument maintenance and are willing to recruit volunteers, have them trained, and accomplish headstone repairs and cleanings. FOQ is also prepared to produce pamphlets on notable citizens, veterans, etc.

FOQ is also proposing a broad partnership with volunteer groups including the historical societies of the valley for the purposes of increasing funding (state and other sources), improving database management, improving the frequency and quality of cemetery assessment, creating a process for catching up with

restoration and maintenance of markers, and developing an informational presence that will guarantee public support for the future.

Dan Hammock on behalf of the Trustees of New Salem Academy presented the FOQ with a check for \$1,000 to start their QPC restoration efforts.

J.R. Greene made a motion that QWAC support that the FOQ initiate legislation and file for specific funding regarding the restoration of QPC from the state's general fund; a line item in the budget. Ralph Lapinskas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. It was suggested that the Trust Board oversee distribution of the funds.

Tom Berube suggested the FOQ ask local Eagle/Boy scout groups to help with cemetery cleanings.

Steve Ward suggested the FOQ put a fundraising appeal for the QPC restoration project in the next Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) newsletter.

2018 Quabbin deer hunt results

Dan Clark briefed the committee on the 2018 Quabbin deer hunt results.

The hunt took place on December 6th and 7th. Only the zones with an estimated density above 15 deer/mi² (Petersham and Hardwick) were hunted. 850 people applied and 458 were selected in the lottery. A total of 275 antlerless permits were awarded to hunters (60%). 35 deer (25 bucks; 10 does) were harvested over the 2-day hunt. Quabbin hunter success rate was 12% compared to the statewide average of 10%.

A full report of the 2018 hunt will be available online in June. A presentation on the 2019 Quabbin hunt proposals will be given at the next meeting.

Season pass pre-sale registration

Dan Clark updated the committee on the upcoming 2019 fishing season and new season pass pre-sale registration system. Currently, 80 people have completed the online registration.

Plastic boater ID cards will be mailed out later in March. Everyone who has a private boat and/or purchases a season pass will get an ID card to be used in the check in/out process at the boat launch areas (BLA's). The season passes will now be in the form of a sticker to be mounted on the back of their boater ID card. iPads with scanning software will be used in conjunction with the boater ID cards to check people in and out of the BLA's; hopefully speeding up the process.

The 2019 Quabbin fishing season begins on Saturday, April 20th.

16 new motors have been purchased for BLA2, with another 10 in the process of being ordered. They are all Mercury 8hp 4-stroke engines. This should mark the end of Quabbin's rental boats having 2-stroke motors. Two new kayaks and one canoe were also bought.

A member of the public asked about the status of the gate 8 road that leads to BLA1. Dan Clark answered that the road will be re-graded before the fishing season begins with the belief that it will solve the problem from the previous year.

Discussion of QWAC vacancies; membership, etc.

Dan Clark commented that many of the representative groups on QWAC do not currently have an alternate member. J.R. Greene suggested sending a letter to each organization notifying them of the vacancy and asking if they would like to nominate someone. Dan agreed and will draft that letter.

Steve Ward stated that the Massachusetts Wildlife Federation has not existed since 1990, according to IRS documents. He also stated that the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC) has them listed as disbanded in their meeting minutes. J.R. Greene suggested getting a ruling from DCR's legal department. Dan Clark will put in an inquiry about the issue.

Member Issues

Jerry Eves asked about the possibility of placing a memorial plaque or bench near the Y-pool in Quabbin Park. Dan Clark answered that Quabbin has not allowed specific memorials in the past but requests can be sent to him directly.

Larry Gates asked about the condition of the bridge at BLA3. Dan Clark answered that there is money in the next fiscal year's budget for repairs/remediation to that bridge. He also added that the New Salem facility that burned down last year is set to be rebuilt. The project will begin in the current fiscal year and be completed during the following year.

Larry Gates mentioned that he was happy to see that the tally of 1-day fishing licenses was added to the Quabbin Fishing Program's 2018 Annual Report. 2,251 were sold last year; very popular.

Steve Ward stated that the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law allows for the posting of meeting minutes in draft form. He would like to see the draft version of QWAC meeting minutes be posted online before the next meeting happens. Justin Gonsor added that currently, meeting minutes only get posted in their final form after the committee has voted to approve them. The draft version is only sent to committee members. Dan Clark will investigate the matter.

Meeting End Time: 8:19 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings:

- Monday, June 3rd, 2019 at 7PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007