

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
**7:30 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:** Mark Brighenti, Lexi Dewey, Brad Miner, Bob Sagan, Steve Ward

## **Meeting Start Time: 7:30 PM**

### **Approval of Minutes of Meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Tony Brighenti made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with edits. J.R. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **DCR updates**

#### **Cemetery Plan**

Dan Clark updated the committee on the status of Quabbin Park Cemetery Management Plan.

A draft of the document is currently under final review by the DCR commissioner. It will be made available to the committee and public at large as soon as it is finalized. The plan will be the first formal, comprehensive set of rules and operations for management of the cemetery.

J.R. Greene asked if there is a policy in the plan regarding when/if employees accidentally damage headstones or grave markers. Dan Clark answered that there will be a protocol in the plan that addresses damaged stones.

Steve Ward asked if the state has a set of official guidelines for historic cemeteries. Dan Clark answered that the state guidelines don't equate to a management plan. The plan will include sections on the guidance of burials, grounds maintenance, vegetation control, etc.

Gene Theroux asked if the plan would include wording on how repairs, restorations, and preservations to stones and memorials could be conducted. Dan Clark answered that there will be a section that details the process on how people outside of DCR can work with the agency on restoration related issues.

Gene also mentioned that there is a dead, hazard tree in section 8 of the cemetery that should be removed as soon as possible. Dan Clark noted that a recent goal has been to dedicate funds every fiscal year for the specific purpose of removing trees from the cemetery; this past year \$30,000 was spent. Steve Ward suggested pushing the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA), the organization who pays DCR's operation budget, for a larger cemetery

maintenance budget. Bill Pula added that there is always the need for additional funds to address the long list of current and upcoming projects at the administration building, reservoir, and cemetery. Dan Clark commented on DCR's Bureau of Forestry. They have several tree crews that have done cemetery work at Quabbin in the past. This is an added benefit as their work is free of charge and doesn't have to be paid out of the reservoir's operating budget.

### **Swift River vegetation**

Paula Packard, DCR aquatic biologist, recently investigated the Y-pool area of the Swift River at the request of a committee member. Two recent releases of water appear to have flushed much of the vegetation downstream. No invasive species were found.

### **Boat launch area (BLA) technology**

Dan Clark briefed the committee on new equipment and technology that are planning to be used at the BLA's.

The current check-in and check-out process for private boats and their Quabbin seal requires a lot of paperwork and is fairly inefficient. The goal is to provide each fishing area with an iPad loaded with software to automate that process. Plastic, credit card sized ID cards that can be scanned will be distributed to private boaters. This process will first be tested at fishing area 1. DCR employees Erica Tefft and Brett Boisjolie have developed the software and application for the iPad. An ID card can be generated for everyone who has gone through the boat decontamination program. If a boater forgets their ID card, the attendant will still be able to enter their information into the system manually.

Larry Gates suggested researching if a digital version of the ID card could be created for smart phones.

Tom Barnes asked if there are any plans to get cell reception boosted at fishing areas 2 and 3. Dan Clark answered that there are plans to purchase antennas for both areas that should act as signal boosters and provide enough service for the iPads.

\$20,000 has been put into the budget for replacing equipment at the BLA's. Originally, the plan was to put that money toward boats but motors have since

become a higher priority. 10-12 new motors are set to be purchased for the rental boats. Tom Barnes suggested purchasing 6-horsepower motors. In the operating budget, \$9,000 has been set aside to purchase 2-3 new rental boats. The goal is to replace a few boats each year going forward. A small amount of funds have also been earmarked for the purchase of new rental canoes and kayaks.

### **Quabbin deer hunt**

Dan Clark updated the committee on plans for the upcoming 2018 Quabbin deer hunt.

The application period closed on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Out of the 850 people that applied, 458 were accepted. This year only two of the five zones will be hunted; Petersham and Hardwick. People are required to apply in groups of at least two people with a maximum of six per group. If one person in a group is selected to hunt, everyone in the group also gets in.

The Wachusett area will feature expanded hunting zones this year during the deer season. 250 people were selected to hunt Wachusett. People applying for the Wachusett hunt were not required to apply in groups.

### **Gypsy moth mortality/salvage**

Dan Clark briefed the committee on how the gypsy moth population has been causing tree mortality across the state over the last couple seasons.

Typically, gypsy moth outbreaks in the past have been driven down by a naturally occurring fungus and virus. But, the current outbreak is extensive and the usual controls don't seem to be taking hold; leaving experts puzzled. Lots of egg casings are being seen on the bark of trees which means another dramatic defoliation could occur again in 2019.

The large, historic red oak tree located just inside the visitor center entrance has died. The plan is to take down the tree this fall. Public information about the tree will be available at the visitor center. A DCR forestry crew will come out to harvest the tree. Lexi Dewey commented that the Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) appreciates the public education efforts that have been planned. Steve Ward commented that he would have preferred to see the tree

protected. He noted that it was affected by gypsy moths in 2015. He felt it then should have been sprayed or treated with oil at that time. He would like to see a plan put in place to protect other historic trees located on the watershed. Dan Clark answered he will discuss the topic with the Quabbin forestry staff.

### **New Salem facility site restoration**

Dan Clark talked about the status of the restoration effort at the New Salem office. A fire recently burned it to the ground. The garage, office building, a vehicle, and many tools were completely lost in the fire.

Over the last several months efforts have been focused on salvage and cleanup of the site. Some contaminated soils were discovered under the foundation. A licensed site professional needs to be brought in to remove the contaminated soil. Also, the underground fuel tank will be dug up. The plan is to install an above ground tank going forward. A trailer has been delivered to the site but is currently unusable by DCR staff; it needs to be brought up to code. An internal working group has been formed to develop how the site should be laid out and restored. The goal is to rebuild the office during the current fiscal year.

### **Member Issues**

Tony Brighenti wanted confirmation that the BLA's will continue to accept cash as a form of payment going forward. Dan Clark stated that he would like to introduce the possibility of accepting credits cards in future years. Cash will continue to be accepted as well. The BLA's are currently cash-only.

Tom Barnes commented that he has recently received multiple reports of squirrels swimming in the reservoir. Larry Gates confirmed that many boaters tend to see them swimming during the fall season.

Jerry Eves asked about a set of two PVC-piped fishing line recycling receptacles that were donated to DCR earlier in the year by an eagle scout; if they were ever installed. They were placed at Brigham Pond in Hubbardston and Demond Pond in Rutland.

Larry Gates talked about the need to improve the gate 8 road conditions heading down to fishing area 1. He stated that the trap rock that has been put down is too

sharp and has caused multiple flat tires this past season. Dan Clark will follow up with the road crew on how to best rectify the situation.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented on some problems regarding a recent forestry operation in Pelham. Photos were passed around showing significant rutting and ground damage associated with logging equipment. The photos do not represent the high standard of forestry that needs to be practiced on watershed lands. It seems as though the operator, Jim Harrington, circumvented the conditions in the cutting plan. Places where bridges should have been built over two stream crossings were never constructed, or constructed inadequately. Steve Ward visited the site on July 19<sup>th</sup> and notified forestry staff of the problems. He believes major corrective actions (using an excavator) are needed restore and stabilize the area; the soil structure has been damaged. He also wants to see better oversight of the logging operators by forestry staff in the future. Dan Clark agreed that mistakes were made both by DCR and the logging operator. Oversight should have been better and the logger should have stopped his work when conditions became too wet due to excessive rains. The logger has been removed from the site. Some restorations have been made to the site, but weather conditions have been making it challenging. This event will be used as a learning opportunity on how to avoid this kind of breakdown in the future. Going forward, language may be added to the cutting plans in the form of an insurance clause for any needed site remediation to a given job. Lexi Dewey asked how bonds would be raised for insurance purposes. She also asked if the logger in question would be able to bid on future lots. Dan Clark answered that rather than using a bond, an insurance clause would be a better option. A review will be conducted of the Pelham forestry operation and then a decision will be made on the logger's future ability to bid on lots. Tom Barnes clarified that the logger doesn't have anything to do with the \$1,000 bond in the cutting plan; the bond was bought by the company who hired the logger. He also asked if there is a policy in place for how often the foresters are supposed to check in on their forestry jobs. Dan Clark answered that oversight should be happening on a weekly, regular basis. Certain conditions could warrant additional checks.

Tom Lautzenheiser mentioned that there will be an emerald ash borer workshop held on Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at the Mass Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton. It will start at 9AM. The goal is to get the word out about the problem and the potential solutions available. Signs of the ash borer have been

found at Arcadia and it is estimated that the population has been there for at least 4 years already. Searching for D-shaped holes in bark is not an adequate method to find signs of the ash borer. There are better field indicators to use to spot an infestation.

**Meeting End Time: 8:47 PM**

**Upcoming QWAC Meetings:**

- Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 at 7:30 PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007