

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**October 6, 2025**  
**6:30 PM**

**Location: DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor's Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007**

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

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: **Bill Pula**

Alternate: Robert Sagan

Trout Unlimited: Richard Taupier

Alternate: Joe Babineau

Quabbin Fisherman's Association: **Clayton Sydla (Vice-Chair)**

Alternate: Mike Laprade; **Bill Kimball**

Worcester County League of Sportsmen: Ronald Komar

Alternate: John Root

North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association: **Samantha Robinson**

Alternate: Tom Barnes; Mike Polchlopek

Mass Audubon: **Tom Lautzenheiser**

Alternate:

Swift River Valley Historical Society: Elena Palladino

Alternate: **Lexi Dewey**

New England Sierra Club: **Janet Sinclair**

Alternate:

Friends of Quabbin, Inc.: **J.R. Greene (Chair)**

Alternate: Gene Theroux

General Public: **Ralph Lapinskas**

Alternate: **Eric Weiss**

**DCR staff present: Ken Canfield, Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor, Ken MacKenzie**

**Members of the public present: Andrew Robinson, Scott Robinson, Moussa Siri**

**Meeting Start Time: 6:32 PM**

## **Approval of minutes from meeting on Monday, July 7, 2025**

Ralph Lapinskas made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on July 7, 2025. Janet Sinclair seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **Presentation of FY26 proposed forestry lots**

Chief Forester Ken Canfield presented the proposed FY26 forestry lots to the committee.

A summary of his presentation and the 12 project proposals is as follows:

- DCR DWSP FY26 Harvest Proposals process details
  - Months long process – outline in [Land Management Plan \(LMP\)](#)
  - Designed to achieve DWSP forest diversity/resiliency goals
  - Mapping, measuring, write-up by forester
  - Internal review by staff
  - Public review and comments
  - Variable timeframe after approval
- HA-26-1-1
  - Ware
  - Adjacent to the lower spillway to the east and west
  - 48-acre footprint
  - Fire dependent community restoration
  - White pine, oak, white pine/oak
  - Removal of 8-acre white pine ‘island’ below dam and oak woodlands restoration/openings
  - Prescribed fire
- HA-26-1-2
  - Belchertown
  - South of Rt. 9 across from the entrance to Quabbin Administration Building
  - 169-acre footprint
  - Northern red oak, white pine/mixed oak, white pine
  - 35 acres in regeneration openings 0.5-2.0 acres, 25 acres of thinning in between openings
  - Opening up diverse regeneration created by harvest completed in 2020
- PE-26-10
  - Pelham, gate 12
  - At the end of Bohmer Road

- 78-acre footprint
  - Black birch/hardwood, oak/hardwood, white pine/oak, northern hardwood
  - 22 acres in openings 0.5-4.0 acres, 44 acres of thinning
  - Slashwall
- NS-26-06
  - New Salem
  - Gate NS4 at the intersection of Rockwell Hill Road and Macedonia Road
  - 88-acre footprint
  - White pine oak, oak/hardwood, hemlock/hardwood
  - 18 acres in openings 0.5-2.0 acres, 12 acres of thinning/single tree selection
- PR-26-23
  - New Salem, gate 17
  - west of the Cooleyville (gate 17) Road,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile south of gate 17 to the hunt shack field
  - 68-acre footprint
  - White pine oak, white pine/hemlock, mixed oak, white pine
  - 68 acres prep shelterwood
  - Prescribed fire
- PR-26-24
  - New Salem, gate 18
  - located west of Hunt Road,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of gate 18
  - 56-acre footprint
  - Hemlock/hardwood, white pine/oak, mixed oak, white pine/hardwood
  - 56 acres prep shelterwood
- PR-26-14A
  - New Salem, gate 17
  - located east of Cooleyville (gate 17) Road, 2.5 miles south of gate 17
  - 43-acre footprint
  - White pine/hardwood white pine/oak, white pine
  - 10 acres of openings 0.6 to 6.0 acres in size
- PR-26-14B
  - New Salem, gate 17
  - located east of Cooleyville (gate 17) Road, 3.75 miles south of gate 17, north of Herman Powers Road

- 45-acre footprint
  - White pine/hardwood, northern red oak, white pine
  - 12 acres of openings 0.5 to 5.0 acres in size
  - Slashwall
- PR-26-5
  - New Salem, gate 17
  - located west of Newbury Road, on the southwest corner of the peninsula
  - 71-acre footprint
  - White pine/oak, oak/hardwoods, mixed oak, black birch, white pine/hardwood, northern hardwoods
  - 10 to 15 acres of openings 0.5 to 2.0 acres in size
- NS-26-21
  - New Salem, gate 35
  - located west of gate 35, south of Bassett Pond
  - 41-acre footprint
  - White pine, white pine/oak, white pine/hardwood, white pine hemlock
  - 10 to 14 acres of openings 0.5 to 2.0 acres in size, 27 to 30 acres of thinning
- PT-26-8
  - Petersham, gate 39
  - Located east of Whit Meadow Pond south of Dugway Road
  - 20-acre footprint
  - White pine/oak, white pine/hardwood, white pine
  - 5 to 7 acres of openings 0.5 to 2.0 acres in size, 13 to 15 acres of thinning
- PT-26-9
  - Petersham, gate 39
  - Located north of Dugway Road
  - 89-acre footprint
  - White pine/hemlock, hemlock/hardwoods, white pine/oak, white pine/hardwood
  - 21 to 29 acres of openings 0.2 to 2.0 acres in size, 50 to 64 acres of thinning
- For more information on past and current go to the [DCR Watershed Forestry Projects](#).

- To view an interactive map showing past and current FY26 proposals you can scan the QR code or visit the: [DWSP Forestry Projects Maps](#) website.
  - This website also features a link to the public comments form, general info about DWSP forestry, contact information, and links to other DCR sites.
  - For any additional watershed forestry related questions or inquiries Ken can be reached at [Kenneth.canfield@mass.gov](mailto:Kenneth.canfield@mass.gov) and at 857-274-7090.



The bidding process was discussed. Once a proposal is ultimately approved it is then bid on by private foresters. Whoever wins the bid then typically has between 1 to 2 years to complete the job, abiding by the stipulations put forth by DCR-DWSP.

Limits to the size of openings were discussed. Any opening larger than 5 acres requires additional approval from the DCR commissioner.

Lexi mentioned that three people from the Swift River Valley Historical Society (SRVHS) were interested in a tour of proposed forestry projects. They were unavailable for the official public tour that was offered earlier in the year. She will email Ken to coordinate a potential tour for them.

## 2025 Quabbin deer hunt plans

Ken MacKenzie presented plans for the 2025 Quabbin deer hunt to the committee. His presentation also included details on deer management program at Quabbin in general.

A summary of his presentation is as follows:

- Deer harvest data is collected using two different approaches based on the type and location of the deer management program
  - On-site data collection from DCR deer hunt check stations
  - Data collected by MassWildlife at check stations or through online harvest data submitted by hunters
- Since 2019, DCR has been running a longer shotgun season hunt at Quabbin. Instead of the 2-day hunts that were run for many years.
  - Access was mainly walk-in from closed gates.
  - All hunters were accepted into this hunt, and they could hunt any or all of the open hunting zones.

- In 2024, Hardwick, New Salem, and Pelham zones were open for the two-week shotgun season.
  - Access permits were distributed to 627 hunters. 307 of 625 authorized hunters purchased a Quabbin Antlerless Deer Permit
  - In 2024, DCR used the deer reported to MassWildlife through their MassFishHunt system to estimate the deer harvest totals for the 2-week shotgun season hunt.
  - As a result, deer harvest from these hunts are presented as a range (# confirmed – total # possible). A total of 24 antlerless deer were harvested across all 2-week shotgun season zones.
    - Pelham: 9-16 deer taken
    - New Salem: 12-22 deer taken
    - Hardwick: 16-18 deer taken
- Even with tweaks to the deer management program implementation, DCR has still been able to sustain an effective harvest, while reducing manpower, overall cost and potential damage to internal roads. Due to this success, DCR will continue to explore opening other zones in a similar fashion.
- Quabbin partners with Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to host a special 3-day paraplegic hunt every year.
  - In 2024, 5 hunters participated at Quabbin, and no deer were harvested over the 3 days.
  - The 2025 paraplegic hunt will be held from October 30 to November 1 on the Prescott Peninsula in New Salem.
- In 2024 Prescott Peninsula and Petersham zones were hunted via 2-day controlled hunts.
  - 734 hunters applied for the 2 hunts. 392 were selected for Prescott and 265 for Petersham. Of those selected, 82% participated on one or both days of the hunts.
  - 46 deer (29 female) were harvested in Prescott. Removing females from the population is critical to reducing deer density because any doe over 1.5 years of age produces an average of 2 fawns per year.
  - 59 deer (35 female) were harvested in Petersham.
- After years of collecting data that supported the need for a hunt in Quabbin Park, the DCR commissioner approved hunting in the park in 2019. But it was cancelled just weeks before the hunt pending further stakeholder input. In October of 2023 the park hunt was

approved to move forward. The park is now the sixth hunt zone in the Reservation.

- 37 deer were harvested in 2023. 37 deer were also harvested in 2024. This equates to a 9.0 deer per square mile reduction in the park.
- 2025 proposed Quabbin hunting plan
  - Regulation changes are still pending, and adoption is unfortunately not expected prior to 2025 season. The current regulations allow for a shotgun hunt only on watershed lands.
  - Shotgun season hunts will continue in Hardwick and New Salem and part of Pelham.
    - There will be no cap on the number of hunters.
  - Two-day controlled hunts will take place in Pelham, Petersham, and Quabbin Park zones.
    - Applications were available July 1 to August 31.
    - Lottery was held on September 16.
    - Plan is to rotate in shotgun zones back into 2-day controlled hunts every few years
  - Antlerless permits will be issued in consultation with DFW
    - 2 antlerless permits for Pelham and Petersham
    - 2 antlerless permits for Quabbin Park
  - Pellet group surveys
    - As a harvest-independent measure of success of the deer management program, DCR plans to continue to estimate the current population by collecting density information via pellet group transect surveys this winter at Sudbury, Wachusett, and Quabbin.
  - Infrared survey
    - Additionally, there is a proposal to use a drone-mounted infrared camera to obtain another independent estimate of deer density at Quabbin Park.
  - Pelham zone
    - This zone has a bit of a hybrid hunt situation happening this year. This will cater to our two-day controlled hunters by allowing drive-in access through gates 8 and 15 on December 3 and 4. But also allows some of our regular shotgun season hunters access during part of the season as well.
    - The areas between gate 5 and Cobb Brook are open to the 2-day controlled hunters on December 3 and 4.

- In addition, two parts of Pelham will be open by walk-in at gates to our shotgun season hunters for both weeks of shotgun season (December 1 to December 13).
  - The most northern end of the Pelham zone from Cobb Brook north to Gate 16A
  - The most southern end of the Pelham zone from Gate 5 south to Blue Meadow Road
- Finally, during the second week of shotgun season only starting on Monday, December 8, all of Pelham will be open to shotgun season hunters.

It was noted that deer is the only species allowed to be hunted on Quabbin reservation lands. There are some areas of Quabbin off-reservation lands (northwest or Rt. 202) that are open to more general hunting.

Lexi suggested the committee draft a letter in support of DWSP using drones to conduct the infrared deer population survey. She will draft the letter and then circulate it amongst the rest of the committee before it is officially sent out. Discussion/finalization of the letter will be on the January meeting agenda.

### **Status of the cleanup at Pottapaug Pond**

Dan updated the committee on the invasive plant removal at Pottapaug Pond.

The hired consultants have finished their field work for the season. Results are still being reviewed. The aim is to present the results and plans for the upcoming season at the next QWAC meeting.

Dan also mentioned a few potential changes to the boating program that have been discussed internally:

- The survey at Pottapaug exposed certain vulnerabilities. Currently, boat trailers with carpeted bunks are allowed to go through the cold weather quarantine program, get sealed, and then launch at Quabbin. The goal is to phase out the allowance of carpeting bunks sometime in the future. The carpeted bunks are hard to clean, things get attached to them, etc. Most people have transitioned away from carpeted bunks already.
- Currently, people are allowed to bring their own electric trolling motor to put on a rental boat without inspection. Going forward, there will

be a wash station at each boat launch area (BLA) to allow for people to clean their trolling motor before putting it on a rental.

- Currently, people are allowed to bring their own anchor and line. It's not possible to clean an anchor line. DCR is moving towards not allowing people to bring their own anchors/lines going forward. DCR provides an anchor and line in each rental boat.

### **Condition of gate 8 road**

Conditions on the gate 8 road that leads to BLA1 was discussed. It appears the road has remained in fairly good condition throughout the season. With it being a gravel road, there were still a few reports of people getting flat tires. Preparations in the spring of 2026 will mirror the protocol from 2025.

Bill Kimball suggested grading the road at some point in the future.

### **Member Issues**

Ralph asked for a status update on the Keystone Bridge inside gate 30. Dan answered that the Friends of Quabbin are funding the repair work, and a contractor has been hired. The work is expected to begin on/around October 15<sup>th</sup> and should take about a month to complete.

Bill Pula commented that he has heard of a movement in the state to have towns adopt their own 'cutting practices' plan regarding forestry. Dan mentioned that DWSP does send all forestry lot proposals to the respective town selectboards.

Bill Kimball asked about the possibility of upgrading the boat ramp at BLA1. Dan mentioned that he felt upgrading the ramp at BLA2 was of higher priority as it's never been upgraded. However, he was willing to discuss upgrades at the BLA1 ramp as well.

**Meeting End Time: 8:03 PM**

### **Upcoming QWAC Meetings:**

- Monday, January 5, 2026, at 6:30 PM – DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007