

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
January 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; Jerry Eves

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:

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: Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor

Members of the public present: Chris Adeletti, John Alco, Larry Bandolin, Chuck Embury, Jon Fisher, Ken Frisbie, Mary Frisbie, Dirk Heffelfinger, Walter Johnson, Jim Marco, Moussa Siri, George Trikas, Cameron Young

Meeting Start Time: 6:36 PM

Approval of minutes from meeting on Monday, September 16, 2024

Bill Pula made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on September 16, 2024. Tom Lautzenheiser seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Report on 2024 Swollen Bladderwort effects at Pottapaug and O'Loughlin Ponds and plans for 2025

Dan updated the committee on the swollen bladderwort issue at Pottapaug and O'Loughlin Ponds.

- Summary from 2023
 - Routine fragment barrier inspection on 5/26/2023 discovered suspected invasive plant
 - Plant identification confirmed by DCR-Wachusett Aquatic Biologists and follow-up investigation happened on 6/5/2023
 - Plant identified as swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*)
 - Partial pond survey conducted on 6/5/2023
 - Shoreline survey completed on 6/21/2023
 - Plant was documented along shallow areas throughout pond
 - Pottapaug Pond closed to private boats on 6/7/2023
 - DCR staff began removal efforts on 6/12/2023: 2 days of hand harvesting
 - MWRA was notified of the plant on 6/6/2023 and assistance was requested
 - MWRA sent their contractor – Solitude – to the site on 7/6/2023 and 7/7/2023
 - 48 gallons were removed
 - When plant flowering subsides – it makes it impossible to identify
- Summary of 2024 efforts
 - MWRA hired TRC
 - Point-intercept survey completed on Pottapaug Pond on May 30, 2024
 - Point-intercept survey completed on O'Loughlin Pond on June 17, 2024
 - On Pottapaug Pond, very few plants identified along the shoreline; densest in shallow coves
 - On O'Loughlin Pond, very low densities – most points only had one plant
 - Harvesting on Pottapaug Pond on June 3 – July 3, 2024
 - 1,527 gallons of bladderwort were removed from 9 harvest zones
 - 617 person-hours of effort
 - Harvesting on O'Loughlin Pond was conducted over 3 days in June
 - 1 gallon removed = 33 plants
- TRC Conclusions and Recommendations
 - Achieving eradication in Pottapaug Pond will be challenging
 - Eradication seems possible at O'Loughlin Pond
 - Control at Quabbin Reservoir is also possible
 - Continue pre-harvest surveys at Pottapaug Pond, O'Loughlin Pond, and Quabbin Reservoir

- Considering increasing the 2025 budget to expand harvesting area or focus on areas nearest to the boat launch
- Consider installing fragment barriers in smaller coves to control the spread of the plant
- Aggressively survey and harvest at O'Loughlin Pond to maintain control and eventually eradicate
- DCR's proposed plan for 2025
 - Extend closure of Pottapaug Pond to boat fishing for the 2025 season
 - Reassess at the end of 2025 to determine plans for 2026
 - Extend closure of O'Loughlin Pond to boat fishing for the 2025 season
 - Reassess at the end of 2025 to determine the possibility of reopening boat fishing in 2026
 - Prioritize the survey and control of bladderwort in Quabbin Reservoir
 - Revisit areas where the plant was found and extend survey to those coves
 - Install a fragment barrier at Pottapaug Pond to determine its feasibility as a containment method

A member of the public commented that the bladderwort was likely spread to the ponds via birds.

Tom Barnes asked if it would be possible to reopen Pottapaug Pond to boats in 2026. Dan answered that it was premature to open Pottapaug back up to boat fishing given the current density of the plant and relatively little time (1 season) spent removing it. DCR was open to discussing a potential future tagging process for 'Pottapaug Pond only' boats.

A member of the public commented that he is a Pottapaug only fisherman and was in favor of a tagging process to ensure boats aren't going from the reservoir to the pond and vice versa.

A member of the public asked where the fragment barrier at Pottapaug Pond would be located. Dan answered that it would be in one of the southern/western coves. They also asked for information about the horseshoe dam at BLA3. Dan answered that the barrier at the dam is indeed a fragment barrier, it is where the bladderwort was initially discovered.

A member of the public commented that he feels the scope and efforts to eradicate the bladderwort are unrealistic; that access on the ponds is going to be curtailed indefinitely. Dan reiterated DCR's proposed plans for 2025 as well as TRC's conclusions and recommendations that are set to be adopted.

There was discussion about the fragment barrier at the horseshoe dam being broken down for a few weeks within the past year. Dan confirmed there was an instance where the barrier was down due to high water; it was repaired as soon as conditions allowed.

A member of the public suggested another potential idea/protocol to allow for people who only want to launch their boat on the ponds, to do so. The process involved scanning boater ID cards to ensure they were only launching on the pond.

There was discussion about the possibility of allowing volunteers to aid in the eradication efforts that TRC will be conducting in 2025.

A member of the public asked if TRC gave other management options to eradicate the plant. Dan answered that there are no other control methods, hand harvesting is the only viable option that was suggested.

A member of the public asked what would happen if no management action was taken. Dan answered that he would expect the plant to gradually take over the ponds. The coves could become overrun. Boat fishing could become very difficult. The more plants you have in the ponds, the greater the chance of it escaping into the reservoir. Reproduction methods and how the plant spreads were discussed.

2024 Quabbin Fishing Report

Dan discussed the 2024 Quabbin Fishing Report with the committee. The full report is attached at the end of these minutes.

Highlights from the report include:

- The fishing area foreman position was filled. Kyle Nevue now supervises the fishing areas.
- Gate 43 road paving was completed this season. BLA3 was closed for a few weeks during the paving period.
- BLA updates – 2025 fee structure
 - Single boat rental fee of \$40
 - DCR currently offers ‘full day’ and ‘half day’ rentals; half day rentals will be eliminated
 - Single ‘special rate’ for seniors and handicap customers that is half price
 - senior pricing based on day of week will be eliminated
 - Proposed fee changes for out-of-state customers: will be double the regular (in state) fees
 - E.g., season passes would be \$50 in state and \$100 out of state

The DCR Les and Terry Campbell Visitor Center is hosting a program on Sunday, January 26, from 2-3PM

- Quabbin Reservoir Creel Survey: Understanding Fish Species at Quabbin Reservoir
 - Creel surveys are a common technique used by fisheries professionals to better understand waterbody specific catch and harvest trends. Creel data from Quabbin Reservoir were collected at each of the three BLA’s during the 2024 fishing season. Join us for a presentation that will provide updates regarding participation, catch, harvest, and species-specific trends. These

data will be compared to other statewide and waterbody specific creel data collected by MassWildlife and DCR.

- Register here: [Sunday January 26, 2-3pm Quabbin Reservoir Creel survey: Understanding Fish Species at Quabbin Reservoir](#)

2024 preliminary Quabbin Deer Hunt Report

Dan presented the preliminary results for the 2024 Quabbin Deer Hunt. Those statistics are as follows:

Hunter Participation:

Parameter	Quabbin Park	Prescott	Petersham
Number of Applicants	412	724	724
Number Selected (percent)	120 (29%)	392 (91%)	265 (91%)
Number Scouting – Day 1	-	91	58
Average time (hrs.)	-	4.2	4.1
Number Scouting – Day 2	-	103	74
Average time (hrs.)	-	3.7	3.5
Number Hunting – Day 1	93 (78%)	295 (75%)	189 (71%)
Average time (hrs.)	8.6	9.0	9.1
Number Hunting – Day 2	69 (58%)	173 (44%)	152 (57%)
Average time (hrs.)	6.6	6.9	8.0

Deer Harvest:

		Quabbin		
Sex	Age	Park	Prescott	Petersham
Female	0.5	5	2	1
Female	1.5	4	1	8
Female	2.5	10	6	8
Female	3.5+	6	20	18
Female	Total	25	29	35
Male	0.5	4	2	3
Male	1.5	3	3	6
Male	2.5	0	5	5
Male	3.5+	5	7	10
Male	Total	12	17	24
Grand	Total	37	46	59

Two harvested deer from the Prescott hunt were donated to the ‘share the harvest’ program. This was a new program that Quabbin participated in where the meat is distributed to families and people in need. The program is set to continue for the 2025 hunt.

Tom Barnes asked if there are any plans to open the other zones (Harwick, New Salem, Pelham) back up for controlled hunts. In recent years these zones have been hunted via walk-in hunting during the 2-week shotgun season. Dan answered there is a plan to conduct controlled hunts in those zones occasionally, but no specific years in place just yet.

Catch per unit effort was discussed. It is the metric DCR's biologists use to determine hunter effort to harvest a deer. This statistic is not in the preliminary report but should be in the final report.

The moose survey was discussed. The data from this past season's survey is not yet available. The data should be in the final report.

Update on condition of Gate 8 Road to BLA1

Dan updated the committee on the condition of the gate 8 road that leads to BLA1.

The usual preparations will take place in the spring, prior to the opening of the fishing season, to grade/smooth/roll the dirt road. The road should be in a similar condition to what it was at the end of the 2024 season.

Clayton commented that he heard of only 1 person getting a flat tire from sharp stones on the road in 2024. He was complimentary of the maintenance program conducted on the road over the past few years.

Member Issues

Tom Barnes asked if it would be possible to line up Quabbin's fishing season dates with that of Wachusett Reservoir. Dan answered that he has inquired about the idea but hasn't received a definitive answer on the matter.

Janet Sinclair asked for information regarding the public input process for DCR watershed forestry lot proposals. She also inquired about public tours of proposed lots. Dan answered that the FY25 lot proposals have already gone through the public input process. The lots were presented to QWAC, which then opened a 30-day public comment period. Forestry tours have been offered at the committee's request in previous years, these tours generally take place during the 30-day comment period. The committee did not request a tour of the FY25 lots when presented to them. The public comment period for the FY25 lots has since passed. Once approved, the lots go out to bid to logging companies. When the lots are sold, the loggers then have 2 years to harvest the lot. Forestry lots are generally shown quarterly for loggers to bid on.

Public tours of forestry lots were discussed. Dan added that since the public comment period for the FY25 lots has already ended, giving a tour of those lots during the current time is not ideal. The main thrust for offering tours of proposed forestry operations is to get

comments and feedback. Anyone who would still like to request an informational tour of forest management is welcome to get in touch with the DCR-DWSP chief forester, Ken Canfield (Kenneth.canfield@mass.gov).

Clayton asked if the indoor restrooms at the observation tower would be opened back up in 2025. Dan answered that the goal is to get them opened for the coming spring, barring any unforeseen issues.

Meeting End Time: 8:00 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings

- Monday, April 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM – DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007

Quabbin Fishing Program 2024 Annual Report



December 2024

I. Introduction

The Quabbin Fishing Program began in 1946 when the reservoir was opened to the public for shore fishing. The program was expanded in 1952 to establish limited boat fishing within defined areas and parameters. Rules governing the operation of the Quabbin Fishing Program are outlined in *Watershed Protection Regulations 313 CMR 11.9*.

In accordance with *313 CMR 11.09(2)(b) Special Regulations for Quabbin Reservoir*, “Fishing from the shorelines of Quabbin Reservoir and its tributaries within the Watershed System or fishing from boats shall be allowed only during a season designated by the Commissioner”. The Quabbin fishing season runs for a period of six months beginning around the third Saturday of April, weather and conditions permitting. In 2024, the Quabbin Fishing Program operated from April 20th to October 19th. There were 183 days to the season, and the program operated three boat launch areas (BLAs) seven days per week. It should be noted that this year BLA 3 was closed from May 6th through May 24th for road paving and maintenance.

Revenues related to the operation of the Quabbin Fishing Program came from two sources – user fees (rental boats, private boater launching fees and shore fishing/parking fees) and season pass sales. Season passes were only available on-line beginning in January 2024.

This year there were a total of 19,467 visitors to the three Boat Launch Areas (BLA). The revenue generated by the Quabbin Fishing Program was \$179,751. In addition, revenue generated by season pass sales totaled \$28,065.

The following is a summary of revenues and usage of the Quabbin Fishing Program for the 2024 season. In addition, this report includes a description of the Quabbin Boat Decontamination and Quabbin Boat Seal programs.

II. Quabbin Fishing Program Revenues

The revenue from rentals, private boat launching, shore fishing and parking totaled \$179,751. Season pass sales reached \$28,065 for a combined total revenue of \$207,816.

a. 2024 BLA Revenues by Month

Month	BLA Fees – Credit Card	Total*
April	\$13,530	\$13,530
May	\$30,334	\$30,334
June	\$36,870	\$36,870
July	\$34,643	\$34,643
August	\$31,632	\$31,632
September	\$24,310	\$24,310
October	\$8,432	\$8,432
TOTAL	\$179,751	\$179,751

* Beginning in 2022, cash sales were discontinued at the BLAs

b. BLA Revenues by Year

Year	Fee Revenue	Season Pass Revenue	Total Revenue
2024	\$179,751	\$28,065	\$207,816
2023	\$180,852	\$30,925	\$211,777
2022	\$193,984	\$30,150	\$224,133
2021	\$193,617	\$29,945	\$223,562
2020 ¹	\$22,983	\$27,045	\$50,028

¹ There were no boat rentals in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

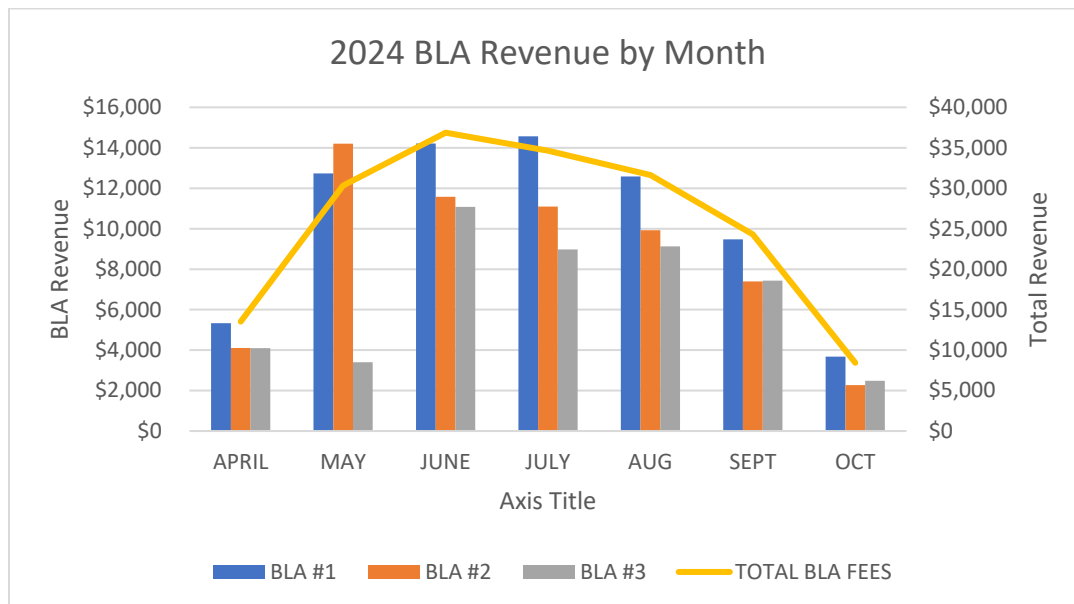
c. Boat Launch Area Revenue

Boat launch area revenues were comprised of fees for rental boats, private boat launching, shore fishing, as well as parking.

2024 BLA FEES REVENUE BY MONTH and AREA

Month	BLA #1	BLA #2	BLA #3	Total BLA Revenue
April	\$5,327	\$4,108	\$4,095	\$13,530
May	\$12,734	\$14,202	\$3,398	\$30,334 ¹
June	\$14,210	\$11,581	\$11,079	\$36,870
July	\$14,567	\$11,097	\$8,979	\$34,643
August	\$12,584	\$9,924	\$9,124	\$31,632
September	\$9,479	\$7,396	\$7,435	\$24,310
October	\$3,677	\$2,273	\$2,482	\$8,432
Total	\$72,578	\$60,581	\$46,592	\$179,751

BLA 3 was closed for Paving work from May 6th-May 24th.



d. Season Pass Sales

Season pass sales opened January 1, 2024. All season passes were purchased online; no season pass cash sales were available at the Boat Launch Areas. A total of 806 passes were sold. Out of state residents accounted for roughly 5% of total sales – 24 from Connecticut, 7 from New Hampshire, 3 from Rhode Island, 4 from Vermont, and 2 from Florida.

On-line Season Pass Sales

Month	Number of Regular	Total Fees	Number of Seniors	Total Fees	Number of Handicapped	Total Fees	Total All Fees
January	1	\$50	8	\$200	1	\$25	\$275
February	54	\$2,720	126	\$3,190	6	\$170	\$6,080
MAR	74	\$3,720	155	\$3,895	5	\$125	\$7,740
April	115	\$5,830	106	\$2,710	6	\$150	\$8,690
May	39	\$1,940	47	\$1,250	2	\$50	\$3,240
June	14	\$500	18	\$625	1	\$25	\$1,150
July	5	\$250	15	\$395	1	\$25	\$670
August	1	\$70	4	\$100	0	\$0	\$170
September	0	\$0	0	\$0	1	25	\$25
October	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Totals	303	\$15,080	479	\$12,365	23	\$595	\$28,040
Replacement Fees	1	\$25					
Total Season Pass Sales							\$28,065

Number of Season Passes Used by Month per Area

Month	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Total Season Passes Used
April	138	257	188	583
May	412	724	136	1,272
June	259	425	350	1,034
July	219	307	315	841
August	217	285	294	796
September	262	304	237	803
October	90	133	90	313
Total	1,597	2,435	1,610	5,642

e. BLA Payment Vouchers

The BLAs switched to ‘credit card sales only’ on June 1, 2022. To accommodate visitors who did not have a credit or debit card but wanted to rent a boat, park, etc., a process was developed to aid these patrons. Patrons were allowed on to the water but were given the original of a three-part payment form and were told they were required to mail in their payment as a check or money order. This exception was only allowed once for each individual boater. In addition, customers who owed DCR money were not allowed access on to the water until their payment had been received.

All of this year’s revenue was received by credit card transactions. No payment vouchers were generated, as customers came to the BLA’s prepared with their credit/debit cards. The BLA’s will continue to have payment vouchers available for those visitors who need to utilize them, but the preferred method of collecting revenue will remain through electronic transactions.

III. Usage

a. Boat Launch Area Usage

The 2024 fishing season drew a total of 19,467 visitors. This year’s usage was comprised of rental boats, private boaters, shore fishing and parking.

Boat Launch Area Usage by Category

BLA 1	Number of Instances	Number of Visitors - Regular	Number of Visitors - Senior	Number of Visitors - Handicapped	Number of Visitors - Minor
Private Boats	1,544	1,170	1,269	3	25
Motor Boats	1,762	1,870	359	33	138
Row Boats	12	11	6	4	1
Shore Fishing	309	477	45	8	94
Just Parking	198	220	82	3	35
BLA 1 Totals	3,825	3,748	1,761	51	293

BLA 2	Number of Instances	Number of Visitors - Regular	Number of Visitors - Senior	Number of Visitors - Handicapped	Number of Visitors - Minor
Private Boats	2,401	1,711	1,983	17	84
Motor Boats	1,458	2,205	424	62	219
Row Boats	4	10	2	0	8
Shore Fishing	586	731	216	23	158
Just Parking	232	222	112	9	10
BLA 2 Totals	4,681	4,879	2,737	111	479

BLA 3	Number of Instances	Number of Visitors - Regular	Number of Visitors - Senior	Number of Visitors - Handicapped	Number of Visitors - Minor
Private Boats	1,660	1,462	1,289	4	56
Motor Boats	1,074	1,840	297	16	166
Row Boats	1	2	0	0	0
Shore Fishing	70	118	11	1	9
Just Parking	85	108	26	1	2
BLA 3 Totals	2,890	3,530	1,623	22	233
Total of all BLAs	11,396	12,157	6,121	184	1,005

Boat Launch Area Usage Total Visitors: 19,467

2024 One Day Fishing Licenses Sold at Boat Launch Areas

Month	Purchased at BLA1	BLA1 Cash Sale	BLA1 Credit Card Sales	Purchased at BLA2	BLA2 Cash Sale	BLA2 Credit Card Sales	Purchased at BLA3	BLA3 Cash Sale	BLA3 Credit Card Sales	Total Sales
April	55	\$70	\$205	41	\$0	\$205	55	\$95	\$180	\$755
May	183	\$170	\$745	159	\$0	\$795	45	\$70	\$155	\$1935
June	215	\$105	\$970	105	\$0	\$525	139	\$270	\$425	\$2295
July	282	\$180	\$1230	141	\$0	\$705	116	\$275	\$305	\$2695
August	186	\$70	\$860	148	\$0	\$740	98	\$190	\$300	\$2160
September	172	\$115	\$745	97	\$0	\$485	97	\$100	\$385	\$1830
October	70	\$25	\$325	39	\$0	\$195	28	\$15	\$125	\$685
Total	1,163	\$735	\$5,080	730	\$0	\$3,650	578		\$1,875	\$12,355

b. Boater ID Cards

Boater I.D. Cards are issued to private boaters to identify themselves and their boats prior to launching at one of the three boat launch areas. The card is scanned by an attendant with an iPad when the boater is going on and coming off the water. This expedites the launching process and provides instant and accurate data. In addition, as boats are scanned on and off the water, an online BLA tag in/tag out monitoring dashboard is instantly updated. This information is available at the boat launch areas and is used by the BLA attendants to track boats still on the water. It is also used by Watershed Rangers in case of emergencies. This season there were 117 Boater I.D. cards issued to Quabbin boaters.

2024 BOATER ID CARDS

Card Type and State	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total Cards Issued
New Cards -MA		1	4	21	13	8	7	7	3		1	65
New Cards -NH				2	2							4
New Cards -CT						1						1
New Boats - MA		1	3	6	6	1			1	1	2	21
New Boats - NH												0
New Boats - CT							1					1
Replacements - MA	4	1	3	8		3	2	2				23
Replacements - MA												0
Replacements - MA						2						2
Total Cards Issued												117

c. Personnel Update

Beginning in the 2020 season, the Boat Launch Area Foreman was out of work with an injury. As a result, the Field Operations Team Leader (FOTL) for the Quabbin/Ware Region assumed responsibilities for managing day to day operations of the fishing areas. Prior to the 2024 season, DCR was able to backfill the vacant Boat Launch Area Foreman position. The new Foreman worked the entire season managing the day-to-day operations of the fishing program. This freed up the FOTL from most of the operating responsibilities of the program.

Two additional seasonal attendant positions were hired for the 2024 fishing season for a total of 14 attendants. This personnel change was first used in the 2022 season. The rationale is to provide two-person coverage for every morning shift (Tues-Sat) at Boat Launch Areas 2 and 3. Mornings are the busiest times at the fishing areas, and historically only one attendant had worked the morning shift on Tuesdays-Fridays. Adding a second attendant provided extra help to the morning shift and offered redundancy if someone needed to call out sick. Adding the extra staff person when possible was helpful. It is likely this expanded staffing will continue in the future.

The Quabbin Fishing Program is a collaborative effort between multiple sections of the DWSP Quabbin/Ware Region. Twelve to fifteen Recreational Facility Supervisors and one Boat Launch Area Foreman run the three Boat Launch Areas (BLAs) in a variety of weather conditions and situations that arise during the season.

Melissa Hanks, an Office Support Specialist I, along with Leah Mustakangas, an Office Support Specialist II, process BLA receipts and revenue, tabulates data, generate the Quabbin Fishing program report, and produce Boater I.D. cards. In addition, the Office Support Specialists provide data on season pass sales, produce season pass cards and process credit card refunds. Interpretive Services staff provide information such as the annual Fishing Guide and schedule boat decontaminations for the Boat Seal program. Watershed Rangers provide security support to all three Boat Launch Areas, and operational support is provided by Watershed Maintenance staff. Environmental Quality staff conduct the Quabbin Boat Seal, Boat decontamination and Cold Weather Quarantine Programs, and contribute to the development of reporting.

IV. BLA Fee Structure Changes

DCR is implementing several adjustments to the BLA fee schedule for the 2025 season. Specifically, the following changes will be made:

1. Single boat rental fee of \$40
 - a. Currently, DCR offers a full-day boat rental for \$40 and a “half-day” rental for \$30. Starting in 2025 and going forward, a single rate of \$40 will be charged to all boat rental customers, regardless of when they rent the boat. This is being implemented to streamline the revenue collection process.
2. Single “special rate” for senior and handicap customers that is half price.
 - a. This would eliminate different senior pricing depending on the day of the week (weekend vs. weekday). This is being implemented to streamline the revenue collection process.
3. Proposed: New fees for out-of-state customers that are double in-state fees
 - a. Currently, there is no distinction between out-of-state customers and in-state customers; they all get charged the same amount. DCR has recommended changes to the regulations that would make the Quabbin fishing program fee structure identical to state park fees where out-of-state residents are charged more than in-state. When the regulation change takes effect and going forward, all out-of-state fees will be double in-state fees. For example, season passes will cost in-state residents \$50 and out-of-state customers \$100; in-state boat rental customers will be charged \$40 and out-of-state customers will be charged \$80. Again, this is being implemented to align our fee structure with DCR State Parks.

V. Quabbin Boat Decontamination and Quabbin Boat Seal Programs

Since 2010, the DWSP has implemented a comprehensive Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention program for Quabbin Reservoir. The program assesses risks from AIS and implements prevention strategies for all vectors that might introduce alien species into Quabbin Reservoir. A major component of the program is a decontamination procedure for all boats, motors, trailers, and other equipment that are launched or otherwise used in Quabbin Reservoir. Before a private or public agency boat is allowed to launch onto the reservoir, it must be inspected and decontaminated to remove any possible AIS. This process can occur via a high-temperature wash that is conducted at a local carwash, or via a “cold weather quarantine” period.

During the high temperature wash procedure (Warm Weather Decontamination, “WWD”) the boat’s hull, all through-hull fittings, live wells, bilge, downriggers, anchors, anchor ropes, and trolling motors, as well as the boat trailer or any other piece of equipment that may come in contact with the water, are thoroughly washed with pressurized water that is maintained at a minimum of 140 °F. Boat motors are also flushed with hot water and are run until a thermometer registers that the water flowing from the exit hole in the motor has reached 140°F for 10 seconds.

Cold weather quarantine (CWQ) dates were initially determined using the 100th Meridian Calculator. CWQ is typically conducted up to five dates during the months of October, November, and December; in 2023, CWQ was conducted on one date in October, three dates in November and one date in December. Boats and trailers are inspected to be sure that they are clean, do not have excessive amounts of rust, and all compartments are dry. By the time the fishing season begins at Quabbin, any possible AIS would be killed from a combination of desiccation and freezing.

Boats going through one of these decontamination processes are ultimately sealed with a Quabbin-specific, numbered security seal affixed to the trailer. Only boats/trailers with intact seals are allowed to launch on the Reservoir or Regulating Ponds at the Boat Launch Areas during the Quabbin Boat Fishing Season. Prior to the launch, the seal is inspected by the attendants, documented for validation and tracking purposes, and removed. Upon leaving the reservoir, the Boat Launch Area attendants affix a new seal. The unique numbers on the individual boat seals allow them to be traced through a database for program validation, monitoring, and analyses.

In 2018, DWSP made significant changes to streamline data management related to the collection and storage of boat decontamination and boat launch records. This included the use of iPads to electronically track boat seal records both at boat decontamination stations and at the three boat launch areas. To collect boat-seal records quickly and efficiently, Quabbin boaters were issued unique boater ID cards that allowed boat launch area attendants to quickly scan boaters on and off the water. The use of iPads, coupled with ArcGIS software, helped eliminate the need for paper records and time-intensive data entry work. Records from Quabbin Boat Decontamination are also collected in real-time and stored in a database for enhanced record-keeping and information sharing across DWSP programs.

In 2024, 117 boats were inspected and decontaminated over 15 event dates, and 61* boats went through CWQ over 4 dates (Table 1). One additional CWQ date is scheduled for December, with an estimated 14* additional boats to be inspected and sealed. A total of 117 boats were inspected and decontaminated during WWD events this year. In 2024 there were 45 boats sealed through WWD that were new to the program and 8* boat sealed through CWQ that were new to the program. There are currently 2,935* unique boats in the Quabbin Boat Decontamination/Boat Seal database following an update and standardization of Boater Records. Since 2010, a total of 3,459 warm-weather decontaminations have been conducted. CWQ accounted for another 1,473* boats sealed since 2010.

**Numbers before final CWQ event. Projected numbers based on scheduled appointments.*

Table 1. Number of boat decontaminations, 2019-2024.

Year	Warm Weather Decontamination	Cold Weather Quarantine
2019	164	96
2020	173	105
2021	201	92
2022	160	72
2023	145	62
2024	117	61 (75 total projected)

There were approximately 6,576 boat launches across the three BLAs during the CY 2024 fishing season. A total of 2,100 boats were sealed at BLA1, a total of 2,470 boats were sealed at BLA2, and a total of 2,006 boats were sealed at BLA 3 (Table 2). QA/QC on boat tag records is ongoing, and some minor data entry errors and subsequent changes to these records are anticipated. Since 2010, the first year of full-season Boat Seal

Program operations, there have been approximately 122,561 “sealed” boat visits to the three BLAs: 29,610 to BLA 1; 42,538 to BLA 2; and 50,413 to BLA 3. See Table 2 for the number of “sealed” boat visits processed for 2024 and the previous 5 years.

Table 2. Number of Boat Launches at Quabbin Boat Launch Areas, 2019-2024

Year	BLA 1	BLA 2	BLA 3	BLA Total
2019	2,054	2,797	3,647	8,498
2020	2,049	2,763	3,939	8,751
2021	2,286	3,294	3,879	9,459
2022	2,041	2,766	3,301	8,108
2023	2,002	2,835	2,791	7,628
2024	2,100	2,470	2,006	6,576