

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
March 9th, 2020
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 (chairperson)**

Alternate:

Trout Unlimited: **Jerry Eves**

Alternate: Joe Babineau

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

Alternate: **Bill Martell**

Worcester County League of Sportsmen: **Ronald Komar**

Alternate:

North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association: **Tony Brighenti (vice chairperson)**

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, Mike Laprade, Bob Sagan, Clayton Sydla

Meeting Start Time: 7:06 PM

Approval of Minutes of Meeting on September 9th, 2019

J.R. Greene made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on December 9th, 2019. Elisa Campbell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2019 Quabbin deer hunt results

Dan Clark updated the committee on the preliminary 2019 Quabbin deer hunt results. A more detailed report will be presented later in the year.

The controlled hunt happened in Petersham over December 12th-13th. 18 total deer were harvested (9 male; 9 female).

The Pelham zone was open for walk-in hunting during the 2-week shotgun season for deer in the state. Natural Resources staff have been working with MassWildlife to assess the harvest numbers. 9 harvests were confirmed for the Pelham zone (3 male; 6 female). A public survey was conducted post-hunt. 40% of people who received a Pelham permit showed up to hunt. 8% said they were dissatisfied with the hunt. Those complaints were mainly concerning snowpack. 91% said that they would participate in an archery season for deer at Quabbin if it was opened. DCR is looking into creating an app for next year that would allow hunters to log their harvests directly. Based on the success of the walk-in Pelham hunt, New Salem and Hardwick could adapt a similar style of hunt in the future. Petersham and Prescott will probably stay as 2-day controlled hunts.

Quabbin Park deer densities are continued to be studied. The plan is to hunt the Park in 2020. Bill Pula brought up discussions at the last meeting about sending the new DCR commissioner a letter from the committee. A letter has been drafted that describes the committee's concern over the park hunt being cancelled in 2019, the lack of involving the committee in the decision, and invites the commissioner to a future meeting.

Bill Pula made a motion to send DCR commissioner Jim Montgomery a letter on behalf of the committee. J.R. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2020 fishing season preparations

Dan Clark updated the committee on preparations for the upcoming 2020 Quabbin fishing season.

Seven new rental boats (\$3,200 each) have been purchased and will be rotated into the fleet.

Credit card sales will be introduced at the boat launch areas (BLA's). Cash transactions are not being eliminated. The credit sales will run off iPads. External antennas have been installed at BLA 2 and 3 to increase cell service.

A website will be rolled out to allow people to purchase their BLA season parking pass prior to the season opening. Paid for by credit card. The parking pass, in the form of a plastic card, would then be mailed out to people before the season opens. The seasonal BLA parking pass card is separate from boater id cards. The boater id cards are given to all people who launch a private boat at Quabbin and is used by DCR staff to help check people in/out of the BLA's quicker.

MassWildlife is interested in doing a creel survey at Quabbin. It is unclear at this time what format the study would take.

Money has been set aside to finish repaving the road leading to BLA 2 prior to the season opening. There is also a plan to repair the concrete at the boat ramp at BLA 2.

Quabbin Park Cemetery update

A water spigot system is set to be installed prior to the growing season. It will provide an additional four spots where people can fill up water jugs.

Plans are moving forward to demolish the old storage shed and pump house. Mass Historical has given their approval of the project. MWRA is managing the contract and will handle the demolition.

Lead paint abatement is occurring at the office building. Roof and gutter work are also needed at the building. An evaluation will first need to be conducted.

Multiple red pines have been harvested around the cemetery before the red pine scale kills them off and they become hazards. A plan is being formulated on how to best revegetate those areas.

Changes to vegetation management in Quabbin Park

Dan Clark presented the committee with proposed changes to the vegetative management in Quabbin Park.

There is a proposal to reduce the amount of lawns to be maintained/mowed. This will be most noticeable near the main entrance (west gate) off Rt. 9. An edge along the road will be maintained. The left side of the entrance has a steep slope that will be allowed to be taken over by the forest. The other side of the entrance will have perennials and other flowers planted to present a more natural landscape.

There are plans to install a pollinator garden demonstration plot next to the visitor center parking area. It would be used as an education opportunity and highlight what we are doing in other areas of the park.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented on additional lawn substitutes that are also low maintenance, such as micro clover, that also achieve vegetative cover. He suggested exploring these options.

Member Issues

J.R. Greene asked about the status of the New Salem office rebuild. Dan Clark answered that a two-building design, connected by a breezeway, was chosen. Construction could start next fiscal year.

Tom Lautzenheiser asked about DCR watershed staffing. He has letters from both WSCAC and the MWRA advisory board that implore the secretary to increase staffing in the division of water supply protection (DWSP), which is currently under the hiring capacity by about 14 positions. J.R. Greene added that the ratepayers of the water fund DCR's water supply operations. The trust board was set up so they would have a say in how the money was spent. One reason for this setup was to be independent of budget freezes in the state.

Elisa Campbell made a motion that the committee draft a letter to the Secretary of Administration and Finance detailing their support in allowing DCR-DWSP to fill their staff to capacity and not subject them to the hiring freeze in the state at large. Ralph Lapinskas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting End Time: 8:01 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings:

- Monday, June 1st, 2020 at 7PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007