

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
April 7, 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: **Lexi Dewey**

New England Sierra Club: **Janet Sinclair**

Alternate:

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

Alternate: **Gene Theroux**

General Public: **Ralph Lapinkas**

Alternate: **Eric Weiss**

DCR staff present: Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor

Members of the public present: Larry Bandolin, Patti Bandolin, Andrew Robinson, Scott Robinson, Moussa Siri

Meeting Start Time: 6:30 PM

Approval of minutes from meeting on Monday, January 6, 2025

Ralph Lapinskas made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on January 6, 2025. Bill Pula seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Forestry building demolition update and final discussion on ranger station demolition plans

J.R. Greene reminded everyone that QWAC had previously voted that the board opposes the demolition of the former ranger station.

Dan Clark updated everyone that the forestry building along Blue Meadow Road has been demolished and removed. There is currently no plan for any future use of the ranger station. Any formal requests on why the building should not be demolished or ideas for futures uses of the building should be sent to Dan (dan.clark@mass.gov).

J.R. Greene commented that the Friends of Quabbin were looking into asking DCR to use the building for FOQ storage and possibly board meetings. If not demolished, who would potentially oversee the upkeep of the building was discussed. The partnership between DCR and FOQ was detailed.

Janet Sinclair commented that she would not like to see a historic building demolished. Clayton Sydla also voiced his opposition to demolishing the building. Tom Barnes voiced support for not demolishing the building. Lexi Dewey voiced support on behalf of the Swift River Valley Historical Society for keeping the building intact.

Ralph Lapinskas made a motion that QWAC does not support demolishing the ranger station and would like to see alternative uses for the building investigated, such as allowing FOQ to use it. Tom Barnes seconded the motion. The historical value of the building was discussed. The motion was unanimously approved.

Gate 8 road condition for opening day of fishing update

Dan updated the committee on the condition of the gate 8 road that leads to boat launch area (BLA) 1. Annual maintenance is being completed, and the road is ready for opening day. The road condition will be monitored as the season goes on.

J.R. Greene asked for details on the FY26 road maintenance plans. Dan answered that one major upcoming project is a bridge rebuild on one of the roads in the off-watershed area. There are a variety of other regular road maintenance activities planned as well.

Clayton Sydla asked if the bushes/trees could be trimmed back near where boaters line up in the morning to get checked in at BLA1. Dan answered that his staff will investigate the issue.

Bill Pula commented that he had seen a few potholes inside the middle gate entrance and was hoping they could be patched. Dan answered that his staff will investigate the issue.

Observation tower restroom reopening update

Dan updated the committee on the status of the restrooms at the tower. Plumbing restoration work is currently being conducted and completed in the restrooms. The water and heat seem to be in good working conditions. As the weather gets warmer, the restrooms should be reopened.

Report on upcoming 2025 fishing season at Quabbin

Dan updated the committee on the upcoming 2025 fishing season. The BLA's will be fully staffed when the season begins. The planned opening day is Saturday, April 19th (weather permitting). The revenue structure is being simplified this year. Electronic equipment has been upgraded as well; this should help with credit card payments.

A law starting April 1, 2026, that states a valid boater safety certificate will be required for all individuals operating motorboats or personal watercrafts (PWC) in Massachusetts. It appears that rental boats will be exempt from the law.

Repair of Keyston Bridge update

Gene Theroux updated that committee on Friends of Quabbin (FOQ) efforts to salvage the keystone bridge inside gate 29. The masonry expert is unavailable until sometime this coming summer. Scott Campbell has been working to get the required permits through the town to begin repairing the bridge. FOQ has committed \$60,000 of their own money and been fundraising additional funds for the bridge repair.

Member Issues

Clayton Sydla asked about the status of Pottapaug Pond and questioned if MWRA could hire more employees to abate the invasive plant issue. Dan answered that the same contractor that was used last season has been awarded the contract for the coming season as well. Dan will inquire with MWRA about the possibility of increasing contractor staffing. Tom Lautzenheiser asked about the possibility of using citizen volunteers to help remove the plant. Dan answered that due to various reasons (plant biology, etc.) it's too complicated to open it up to the public. The possibility of using watershed rangers to remove the plant was asked. Dan reiterated that a private contractor has been hired to assess the issue, along with DCR's aquatic biologist.

Gene Theroux gave some FOQ updates. There is an effort to preserve multiple bronze artifacts and plaques in the Quabbin Park Cemetery (QPC). Restoration work is set to be completed before Memorial Day services. FOQ is also set to replace some corroded GAR211 flag holders at QPC. Gene advocated for an extensive survey of the entire QPC to be done annually to address maintenance needs (fallen stones, etc.). Gene also spoke about a desire for a new septic system built at QPC and permanent, indoor restrooms installed.

Bill Pula commented on an article in the Hampshire Gazette regarding a potential white pine forestry project in Shutesbury. Dan clarified that there is a DCR forestry proposal in Shutesbury. DCR has met with the landowner whose property abuts the potential project. The forestry project has not yet been marked for harvest.

Tom Lautzenheiser alerted the committee to the recently released statewide forest carbon study:

- [Forest Carbon Study website](#)
- [Forest Carbon Study: The Impact of Alternative Land-Use Scenarios on Terrestrial Carbon Storage and Sequestration in Massachusetts](#)

Lexi Dewey alerted the committee to a proposed bill that state Senator Comerford is working on: Bill S.447 - An act relative to the Quabbin Watershed and regional equity. The major points of the bill would create a

trust fund and require the MWRA to put in a certain amount every year for watershed communities. The bill would also update the PILOT payments formula. The bill would also increase the number of representatives from watershed communities on the MWRA board from 1 to 3. J.R. Greene commented that the MWRA funds the DCR-DWSP budget. 6-7 Watershed towns have submitted comments to the MWRA board of directors regarding the feasibility study that the MWRA paid for. Those comments will be discussed at the MWRA advisory board of directors meeting on April 16th.

Janet Sinclair asked about the watershed forestry program. She referenced the 'Forests as Climate Solutions' initiative that was implemented by the Healy administration and requested additional information on how watershed forestry projects were evaluated from that perspective. She asked about reserve areas and referenced a DCR website statistic that states, '20,000 acres are currently reserve areas on watershed property.' Dan answered that the reserve statistic must be incorrect because DWSP currently has no officially designated reserve areas. Janet will send Dan the website where she saw the statistic so they can clear up the confusion. Dan spoke about the DCR-DWSP forestry program and mentioned that the typical DWSP silviculture aligns with many of the Forests as Climate Solutions initiative. All projects were evaluated under the initiative and some were modified.

A member of the public commented on the boat launch at BLA1. He mentioned long lines from time to time for the private boaters. He referenced an improved boat launch that allows one boat at a time to launch and a secondary launch that he would like to see updated and repaired. He would like to see the launch at BLA1 evaluated to see how it can be improved.

Meeting End Time: 7:35 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings:

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