

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**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:

Alternate:

Friends of Quabbin, Inc.: **J.R. Greene**

Alternate: **Gene Theroux**

General Public: **Ralph Lapinkas**

Alternate:

**DCR staff present:** Dan Clark, Herm Eck, Justin Gonsor, Brian Keevan

**Members of the public present:** Elisa Campbell, Lexi Dewey, Bob Sagan, Clayton Sydla

## **Meeting Start Time: 7:01 PM**

\*A moment of silence was observed at the start of the meeting to honor Art Miner who recently passed away. He was a former member of QWAC and the Quabbin Fisherman's Association. He also played a large role, along with his wife Vicky, in bringing the Special Olympics to Quabbin for many years.

### **Approval of Minutes of Meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

J.R. Greene made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Ralph Lapinskas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **2020 Quabbin deer hunt recap**

Dan Clark recapped Quabbin's 2020 deer hunt season. The Hardwick, New Salem, and Pelham zones were hunted this year during the 2-week shotgun season. Due to many hunters failing to submit their data to both DCR and MassWildlife, this year's harvest numbers are a range and as follows:

Hardwick: 14-16 deer

New Salem: 8-12 deer

Pelham: 14 deer

Harvest numbers for the other watersheds are as follows:

Wachusett Reservoir: 33-50 deer

Wachusett Watershed Lands (5-year permit): 8-110 deer

Sudbury: 28-54 deer

In total, there were 105 confirmed deer harvests across all DWSP lands, and a possible total of 257.

The New Salem and Hardwick zones were open to walk-in hunting for the 2-week shotgun season for the first time rather than the traditional 2-day controlled hunts that have operated at Quabbin on rotating years in the past.

The Wachusett Reservoir zone was open for all deer seasons rather than just the shotgun and primitive firearms seasons as had been the case in previous years.

This year DWSP launched a new 'deer harvest reporting' requirement to track harvest numbers across all watershed properties.

No movement has been made on hunting Quabbin Park. It is still being held up legislatively. Deer density estimates in the park are still high. The plan for the 2021 deer hunt season at Quabbin should be almost identical to 2020, but those specific details will be presented at the next QWAC meeting. Current regulations allow for only deer hunting via shotgun at Quabbin. This year there are plans to update those regulations to allow other deer harvesting methods.

### **2020 BLA and fishing season recap**

Dan Clark presented results from the Quabbin Fishing Program's 2020 annual report.

Quabbin's 2020 fishing program was greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the opening of the fishing season was delayed until May 21, 2020. When the season did open, it was restricted to private boats launched by vehicles registered with MA license plates. Starting on June 8, 2020, private boats from out-of-state were allowed to launch at Quabbin. Given the lingering concerns with the pandemic, no rentals (boats, canoes, kayaks) were offered in 2020 at any of the 3 BLA's.

Starting in 2020, season parking passes were offered for sale through an online website. However, cash and credit card sales of season passes were still accepted at each BLA during the season. The 2020 fishing season drew a total of 22,751 visitors comprised of private boaters and shore fishing. Attendance in 2019 was 28,813. The revenue from private boat launching, shore fishing, and parking was \$22,983. Season pass sales totaled \$27,045. Combined total revenue was \$50,028.

The Quabbin boat seal program was continued in 2020, decontaminating/sealing boats during the fishing season and sealing boats after a visual inspection in the winter. In 2020, 173 boats were inspected and decontaminated, and 105 went through the cold weather quarantine (CWQ) program. There are currently 1,289 unique boats in Quabbin's database. Approximately 8,751 boat launches across the three BLA's occurred during the 2020 fishing season.

### **2021 BLA and fishing season update**

Beginning in 2021, all season parking pass sales moved to the online system, they are no longer sold at the BLA's. So far, 810 passes have been sold this year, a new record.

The BLA's opened on the usual 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in April for 2021. Boat rentals were reinstated at all three of the BLA's (canoe and kayak rentals were delayed until May 15<sup>th</sup>). Going forward, DCR no longer provides life jackets to people who rent a boat, everyone now needs to bring their own.

Cell service continues to be a problem for credit card sales at both BLA 2 and 3, even when the attendants use a signal booster.

### **FY22 Quabbin forestry lot proposals**

Herm Eck presented the FY22 proposed forestry lots for the Quabbin watershed. Detailed descriptions for each of the 10 lot proposal can be found online at DCR's watershed forestry projects website: <https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e12cdd08ec6b45f5bb00edc3489fb5df>

Public comments can be submitted until August 6<sup>th</sup> online at: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>

Tom Barnes asked about the potential of cutting some potentially hazardous red pines located along the road to boat launch area (BLA) 2. Herm answered that he would check out the situation but noted that a filter strip regulation prevents cutting trees that are too close to the shoreline.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented that he is glad to see DCR forestry working closely with MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program as well as their desire to work controlled burns into their management strategy.

Elisa Campbell and Tom Lautzenheiser both commented on the presence of anti-forestry/logging groups in Massachusetts. They both urged DCR to consider new ways to showcase the positive results of their forestry projects to the public as well as local politicians and legislators. Dan Clark was open to the possibility of hosting local representatives for a Quabbin forestry tour.

### **FOQ effort to rename Quabbin Visitor Center**

There is an initiative to rename the Quabbin visitor center after Les Campbell. Les, along with his wife Terry, were the main initiators of the visitor center being created and were among the first employees at the center.

Dan Clark hosted a delegation from the commonwealth a few weeks back that came out to investigate the site and visitor center. The bill is currently being pushed through the state legislature.

### **Member Issues**

Gene Theroux gave a presentation regarding the Quabbin Park Cemetery. He talked both about recent improvements and ongoing issues that he has identified. Improvements he mentioned were as follows:

- Lead paint and asbestos abatement
- Improved lawn maintenance

The problems he identified at the cemetery are as follows:

- Lack of septic system and permanent bathrooms
- Various gravestones and markers that have been damaged, degraded, or chipped over the years
- Pieces of several broken gravestones that have been moved out of the cemetery prior to 2012 that were never repaired and reinstalled

J.R. Greene asked about staffing vacancies at Quabbin. He mentioned a bill making its way through the state legislature that would exempt DWSP from the statewide hiring freeze. Dan Clark confirmed multiple vacancies at Quabbin and acknowledged the legislation.

J.R. brought up the idea of changing the start time of QWAC meetings from 7PM to 6:30PM. No final decision was made, meeting start time will stay at 7PM for the time being.

**Meeting End Time: 8:31 PM**

### **Upcoming QWAC Meetings:**

- Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 7PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007