

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
**7:30 PM**

**Location:** DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007

**Members Present:** Tom Barnes (North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association), Tom Berube (MA Council of Sportsmen), Tony Brighenti (North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association), Elisa Campbell (Sierra Club), Craig Cortis (Worcester County League of Sportsmen), Jerry Eves (Trout Unlimited), Larry Gates (Quabbin Fisherman's Association), J.R. Greene (Friends of Quabbin, Inc.), Ralph Lapinskas (General Public), Tom Lautzenheiser (Mass Audubon), Bill Martell (Quabbin Fisherman's Association), Jane Peirce (Swift River Valley Historical Society), Bill Pula (MA Wildlife Federation)

**DCR Staff Present:** Dan Clark, Herm Eck, Justin Gonsor, Lisa Gustavsen, Ken MacKenzie

**Public Attending:** Rosemary Charron, Lexi Dewey, Mike Krunklevich, Mike Laprade, Brad Miner, Duane Pray, Bob Sagan, Bruce Spencer, Clayton Sydla, Susannah Whipps

**Meeting Start Time: 7:30 PM**

**Approval of Minutes of Meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

Elisa Campbell made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Jerry Eves seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

J.R. Greene noted that in future minutes, members of the general court should be listed separately from the public.

**Quabbin public access management plan – final updates**

Dan Clark briefed the committee on final updates to the 2018 Quabbin reservoir watershed system public access management plan.

DWSP has decided to limit geocaching to off-reservation lands at Quabbin. There will be a 6 month grace period where people will be contacted and given the chance to remove their caches if they are located on-reservation.

Metal detecting has been designated as a separate use category in the new access plan; it is not allowed at Quabbin. Foraging has also been designated as a separate use category; it is allowed at Quabbin.

Commercial activities are not allowed on the watershed without approval from the DCR commissioner. These regulations have existed in the past and have been highlighted in the new plan. Elisa Campbell asked if someone leading a hike at Quabbin and charging money for people to attend would be considered a commercial activity. Dan Clark answered that technically it would be.

No changes to fishing have been made to the access plan.

### **FY19 Quabbin forestry lot proposals**

Herm Eck presented multiple FY19 Quabbin Reservoir watershed forestry projects proposed for harvest to the committee. Detailed descriptions of each lot can be found online at: <https://arcg.is/S95mi>.

Two proposals are located in Hardwick. One is located inside gate 46 off the west side of the road and the other is located about 1,000' inside gate 43.

Two proposals are located in New Salem. They are both situated on the north side of Route 122, one being between Orange Road and Gays Hill and the other between Blackington Road and Blackington Swamp. The goal of the Blackington Road proposal is to create a 10-14 acre patch of young forest which will provide early succession habitat for species undergoing regional population declines due to loss of this kind of habitat. Bruce Spencer reminded DCR to be sure that they have justifications for proposing larger opening cuts. He also suggested finding low quality/dying stands (inside gate 29 was used as an example) to harvest when looking to create young forest openings rather than harvesting large tracts of higher quality stands. Herm Eck agreed that finding lower quality stands for young forest openings is preferable. Tom Lautzenheiser stated that he is glad to see DCR pursuing a diversity of management goals. He gave the example of the

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife not being able to manage for early succession habits by themselves; it needs to be a team effort.

Two proposals are located in Shutesbury; one inside Route 202 and the other outside. The proposal inside Route 202 will be performed as part of a larger water supply project. Road work is needed to improve access to the spill control equipment shed for the west branch of the Swift River.

Four proposals are located in Petersham.

One of the proposals is located in Pelham inside gate 12. Bill Pula commented that he has noticed hemlocks in the area finally dying off from the hemlock wooly adelgid which has been affecting them for decades. Herm Eck added that there are other factors in Massachusetts such as elongate scale, among others, that are killing hemlocks.

Six proposals are located on the Prescott Peninsula. Bruce Spencer asked about an oak stand near Egypt brook that he feels is in poor shape and could be salvaged. Herm Eck answered that he has noticed significant mortality in the area. There is no formal plan in place just yet, and the area is tough to get at, but the problem will be addressed.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented that if there are a bunch of dead standing trees he would like to see them just left there and allowed to fall over naturally. He talked about wildlife and other habitat benefits this could create. It also mimics natural disturbance processes in a way that is different from the managed forest. Herm Eck agreed on the value of coarse woody debris over the landscape and thought lower value species would be better to leave as snags rather than harvest them. The ecological value vs. economic value of forest stands was discussed.

Elisa Campbell commented on recent Native American burial grounds that have been discovered across Massachusetts. She noted that any found on Quabbin lands could potentially have buffer zones created around them where forest management would need to be avoided.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented that he appreciates the new story map website format and how the forestry proposals are now being presented to the

committee. He suggested adding photographs from each proposal to the website. Elisa Campbell suggested not only publicizing photos of where forest management has occurred, but also areas that haven't had recent forestry operations.

### **Quabbin deer hunt – 2017 review; 2018 plans**

Ken MacKenzie presented the 2017 Quabbin deer hunt results as well as plans for the upcoming 2018 hunt to the committee. A detailed breakdown of participation and harvest numbers from 2017 is attached at the end of these minutes.

2017 was the second year where an antlerless allocation system was implemented. 737 people showed up to the hunt out of the 1,028 selected hunters. In total, 50 deer were taken; 29 bucks and 21 does. Digital scanners were used to check-in hunters at each zone except for a few of the gates in Pelham. The scanners give more detailed information on the amount of time that hunters spent hunting Quabbin.

Each year, catch per unit effort (CPUE), the amount of effort it takes to harvest a deer, is measured. If it takes more effort to harvest a deer over time, your population is going down, if it takes less, it is going up. Instituting the antlerless allocation system has changed this calculation. The overall trend in the last 10 years is slightly downward (more effort). However, CPUE has risen from 2015-2017. This means that compared to previous years, it took hunters less effort to harvest more deer. DCR is also using two harvest-independent indices to better understand the deer population: forest impact monitoring and deer/moose pellet count surveys. The primary goal of the Quabbin hunt is to maintain a deer density that allows for adequate and continued forest regeneration. Since 2006, Quabbin has continued to meet its management goal of 2,000 stems/acre above 4.5 ft.

500 antlerless permits were available to hunters in 2016 and 2017. The hunt is now in a maintenance phase with a plan to sustain the current deer herd. In 2016, with the introduction of the antlerless allocation system the antlerless harvest decreased by 50%, accounting for only 30% of the harvest. Most literature indicates that having less than 20 deer/mi.<sup>2</sup> is good for forest health.

Since 2006, moose observations have been collected during the first day of the Quabbin hunt. Based on our hunter survey, the population of moose on the watershed appears to be declining. Up until most recently, the average has been about 100 moose throughout the reservation; now the estimate is around 85. This survey is only a snapshot in time and does not take into account annual variation and moose movement on and off the watershed.

As deer density on the watershed has declined, the approach to their management is also being reevaluated. With deer densities low, the need for intense, short duration controlled hunts that Quabbin has utilized in the past has passed. In the near future, deer management at Quabbin may be moving towards opening Quabbin hunting blocks to regular hunting seasons. Many of these blocks could be made accessible by foot to hunters during the regular hunting seasons. Starting in 2019, the DWSP plans to explore options to change the way certain zones are hunted at Quabbin.

For 2018, only the Hardwick and Petersham zones will be hunted. As in previous years, each block will be hunted for one, 2-day segment during the second week of shotgun season (Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>). New Salem, Pelham, and Prescott will be taken out of rotation for 2018. 300 antlerless permits are projected to be allotted; 150 for Hardwick and 150 for Petersham. The online application and online orientation for returning hunters is set to continue. Hunter density should be maintained at 1 hunter/35 acres.

Bruce Spencer commented about hunting on the Prescott peninsula and seeing lots of moose signs. He is not seeing adequate oak regeneration and speculated that it could be due to moose browse. He would like to see DCR advocate to MassWildlife for a moose hunting season in Massachusetts. Ken MacKenzie reminded everyone that moose are not currently considered a game animal in Massachusetts. Legislation regarding their status would first need to be changed before a moose hunt could even be considered. Dan Clark added that early results from a UMass, Amherst moose exclosure study are suggesting that the deer and moose browse delay recruitment, but that ultimately those trees survive and get beyond the browse high of those mammals. Craig Cortis added that he felt possibility of a Massachusetts moose hunt in the near future is not great. He talked about legislators being afraid of political blowback of introducing/supporting a moose season and afraid of political blowback.

Elisa Campbell asked about chronic wasting disease in moose of Massachusetts. Ken MacKenzie answered that it hasn't yet been found in the commonwealth.

Tony Brighenti asked about how much it costs, all encompassing, to put on the Quabbin hunt. Dan Clark answered that it is tough to quantify, with lots of prep work being done by many people in multiple departments. Currently it costs less than \$20,000/year. During the early years of the hunt the estimate was closer to \$100,000.

### **Member Issues**

Larry Gates commented that he has noticed the historic clubhouse off Curtis Island that become overgrown with vegetation. He would like to see the vegetation cut back.

Bill Martell noted that as of May 17<sup>th</sup>, QWAC is starting their 34<sup>th</sup> year as a committee. Their first meeting was held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1985.

Bill Pula attended the Memorial Day services at Quabbin Park Cemetery and mentioned that the cemetery looked great and thought activities for the day went well.

Jane Peirce also commented that the cemetery looked beautiful at the Memorial Day services. She also offered to help with storage/office space at the Swift River Valley Historical Society (SRVHS) for the New Salem DCR crew who recently suffered a fire which burned down their office.

J.R. Greene asked about the status of the Quabbin Park Cemetery. Dan Clark answered that DCR is in the final phases of drafting a cemetery operations and management plan. J.R. added that he hopes the plan will allow for volunteers outside of DCR to help clean/clear headstones. Dan Clark agreed that language should be included in the plan.

Jerry Eves commented on recent weed (invasive plant) growth on the upper sections of the Y-pool. Dan Clark responded that our aquatic biologist can take a look at the situation. Jerry also noted that a 28-inch brown trout was recently caught near the Y-pool.

Tom Berube commented about recently going fishing at Quabbin and having to deal with long lines at 7:30am.

**Meeting End Time: 9:17 PM**

**Upcoming QWAC Meetings:**

- Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 7:30 PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007

**2017 Quabbin Deer Hunt**

	Nov 30 & Dec 1 <b>New Salem</b>	Nov 30 & Dec 1 <b>Prescott</b>	Dec. 7 & 8 <b>Hardwick</b>	Dec. 7 & 8 <b>Pelham</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Hunters Selected	191	384	201	252	1,028
Eligible Hunters (Returning or Attended Orientation)	181	359	197	230	967
Scouting - % participating Day 1, % participating Day 2, (Total %)	22%; 26%; (41%)	27%; 22%; (45%)	20%; 27%; (42%)	27%; 21%; (44%)	23%; 22%; (44%)
Attendance @ Hunt - Day 1/ Hunters Eligible to Hunt	141 (78%)	252 (70%)	160 (81%)	176 (77%)	729 (75%)
Attendance @ Hunt - Day 2/ Hunters Eligible to Hunt	77 (43%)	153 (43%)	91 (46%)	117 (51%)	438 (45%)
Participation Rate: (Day 1 and/or Day 2)	<b>144 (80%)</b>	<b>257 (72%)</b>	<b>157 (80%)</b>	<b>179 (78%)</b>	<b>737 (76%)</b>
Deer Taken - Day 1 (sex)	3 (2♀, 1♂)	9 (3♀, 6♂)	11 (6♀, 5♂)	13 (5♀, 8♂)	36 (16♀, 20♂)
Deer Taken - Day 2 (sex)	4 (1♀, 3♂)	4 (1♀, 3♂)	4 (3♀, 1♂)	2 (0♀, 2♂)	14 (5♀, 9♂)
Total -both days (sex)	<b>7 (3♀, 4♂)</b>	<b>13 (4♀, 9♂)</b>	<b>15 (9♀, 6♂)</b>	<b>15 (5♀, 10♂)</b>	<b>50 (21♀, 29♂)</b>
Success Rate	5.0%	5.0%	9.0%	8.0%	7.0%
Size of Hunt Area (Mile <sup>2</sup> )	6871.4 acres (10.7)	12,019.9 acres (18.78)	5636.7 acres (8.8)	8487.2 acres (13.3)	33015.2 acres (51.6)
Deer Harvest/Square Mile	0.65	0.69	1.70	1.13	0.97
Largest Deer Taken	M - 146 lbs, 2.5 yrs, 8 pt F - 147 lbs, 2.5 yrs	M - 158.5 lbs, 3.5 yrs, 8pt F - 125 lbs, 3.5 yrs	M - 157 lbs, 3.5 yrs, 10 pt F - 125 lbs, 3.5 yrs	M - 178 lbs, 3.5 yrs, 6 pt F - 113 lbs, 2.5 yrs	M - 178 lbs, 3.5 yrs, 6 pt (PEL) F - 147 lbs, 2.5 yrs (NS)