Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
July 6, 2026
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
Quabbin Fisherman's Association: **Clayton Sydla (Vice-Chair)**
Alternate: **Mike Laprade**; **Bill Kimball**
Worcester County League of Sportsmen: **Dave Morin**
Alternate:
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 Lapinskas**
Alternate: **Eric Weiss**

DCR staff present: Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor

Members of the public present: Larry Bandolin, Patty Bandolin, State Senator Jo Comerford, Judy Eisman, David Korash, Andrew Robinson, Scott Robinson

Meeting Start Time: 6:36 PM

Approval of minutes from meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026
Ralph made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on April 6, 2026. Samantha seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

An Act relative to the Quabbin watershed regional equity
State Senator Jo Comerford updated the committee on Massachusetts House Bill S.546, An act relative to the Quabbin Watershed and Regional Equity, that she and Representative Saunders had sponsored in 2025.

The legislation has proposed four things:

- A review of the payment in leu of taxes (PILOT) formula. Since the bill has been filed Governor Maura Healey has established a commission to look at the watershed PILOT program and is under review. Several public hearings have been scheduled to discuss this topic. The first hearing is on July 16 at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Other hearings are scheduled in Orange, the Berkshires, and Holyoke.
- Adding an additional representative or two from the Quabbin watershed region to the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) Board.
- Establishment of a host community trust fund. This fund would be available to communities in and around the Quabbin watershed.
- A water study for the towns that are in and around the Quabbin watershed.

The bill is currently in the Commonwealth's Senate Ways and Means committee. The Governor has added $50,000 per year for the next two years for Quabbin communities in addition to the annual PILOT payments while the House Bill is being reviewed. These funds would be attached to the Environmental Bond Bill.

In the recent past the MWRA hired Tighe and Bond to review the PILOT program as well. Minimal changes were proposed from that report.

The next MWRA Board meeting is scheduled for July 10 at the Quabbin Visitor Center in Belchertown at 10AM. The House Bill will be discussed at this meeting. The meeting is scheduled to be recorded by Belchertown Public Access.

J.R. clarified that DCR manages the water and surrounding land in the Quabbin watershed. The transportation and treatment of the water is managed by the MWRA.

Update on Pottapaug and O'Loughlin Ponds
Dan updated the committee on the status of the swollen bladderwort removal at Pottapaug and O'Loughlin Ponds.

The Quabbin fishing season began on April 18. TRC began their field operations surveying the invasive species on June 1. Results of the survey determined where harvesting and removal occurred. A final report will be generated once the fishing season is completed and should be available for presentation at the next QWAC meeting.

There was discussion if any of the five colleges in the area are currently studying the swollen bladderwort; it doesn't appear so. In general, not much science has been done on the drinking water quality impacts of swollen bladderwort could have.

Gate 8 road
The status of the gate 8 road was discussed, and there was general agreement that the road was in good shape. However, a recommendation was made to DCR to blow small stones off the road and roll it again. DCR said they would follow up with the road crew.

Gate 8 boat launch
The committee asked about the current location of the Gate 8 private boat dock and why it was so far away from the boat ramp. DCR said they would follow up with the BLA supervisor to get more information on why it was placed in its current location.

Gate 43 potholes on road before Horseshoe Dam
The committee expressed concern about the number of potholes on the Gate 43 road right before the bridge crossing. DCR indicated that the recent paving project's limit of work did not include the causeway or bridge, so that section of road wasn't improved. DCR said they would investigate the condition of the road and determine if repairs could be done.

Gate 8 road dead trees
The committee expressed concern about the presence of dead/dying trees along the Gate 8 road. DCR responded that the DCR tree crew and Quabbin Chief Forester would be surveying the hazardous trees on 7/9/2026. Based on the results of the survey, the DCR tree crew may be able to remove and/or cut the hazardous trees.

Member Issues and other items not reasonably anticipated
Janet asked about the status of DWSP designating a certain percentage of their managed lands as 'reserves' in the future. She asked if DCR had identified a certain percentage of their lands that would become reserves. DCR responded that it is currently identifying areas that would be designated reserves, but DWSP had not set a specific percentage goal of acres in reserve. She also offered to have Sierra Club give an informational presentation to QWAC at a future meeting about why forest reserves are important. She will contact J.R. about setting up that presentation.

There was discussion regarding the current drought the state is going through and how numerous smaller towns in the western part of the state are currently under water bans or restrictions while the larger city of Boston is not.

Meeting End Time: 7:21 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings:

- Monday, October 5, 2026, at 6:30 PM – DCR Les and Terry Campbell Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007