

**Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**September 18, 2023**  
**6:30 PM**

**Location:** DCR Quabbin Visitor 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: **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:

New England Sierra Club:

Alternate:

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

Alternate: Gene Theroux

General Public: **Ralph Lapinskas**

Alternate: **Eric Weiss**

**DCR staff present:** Kevin Allen, Maria Beiter, Dan Clark, John Scannell

**Members of the public present:** Larry Bandolin, Jerry Eves, Gerald Johnson, Jim Marco, John Pavelcsyk

**Meeting Start Time: 6:33 PM**

**Approval of minutes from meeting on Monday, June 5, 2023**

The minutes from the June 5 meeting unanimously approved.

### **2023 Quabbin deer hunt update**

No discussion; item was added to the agenda by mistake.

### **DWSP forestry update**

Dan presented the committee with a summary of the status of the Forests as Climate Solutions initiative.

DCR is waiting for the guidelines to be developed and released. There is still a commitment to restart watershed forest management by mid-December.

John Scannell added that DCR didn't anticipate any significant changes to their forest management program from the new guidelines – DWSP is already doing many climate smart techniques.

### **DCR presentation on status of Quabbin/Ware region historical facilities/structures**

Dan gave the committee a presentation on the status of historic facilities/structures in the Quabbin/Ware regions.

- Background information
  - Most structures built in association with Quabbin Reservoir (~1930s).
  - Almost none of the structures have been renovated.
  - Many structures started out as residences.
  - Many structures reaching the end of their useful lives = would require major investment or abandonment.
- Overview: Quabbin Administration Building
  - History:
    - Built in 1937-38
    - East annex residency:
      - Lt. Arthur H. Brennen, ca. 1950-68
      - Officer James P. Dalton, 1968-69
      - Vacant, 1970
      - Lt. William E. Roy (head of Quabbin Section Police), 1971-79
      - Vacant, 1979-82
      - Jonathan M. Sargent (Assistant Supt.), 1982-85
      - Current: Administrative offices
    - West Annex residency (State Police)
      - Roy E. Kimball (Supt.), ca. 1950-63

- Harold E. Mellin, Jr. (Supt.), 1965-79 (died while resident/Supt.); wife Jean and family permitted to live in residence for no more than 1 year, or until they found a new home, vacated 1980
    - Current: MDC Police Quabbin Section Station and Barracks
  - Status:
    - Provides space for:
      - Environmental Quality, rangers, civil engineering, administration, planning, building maintenance, interpretive services staff
      - Les and Terry Campbell Visitor Center
      - MWRA Lab
      - C-7 State Police Barracks
    - Lead paint & asbestos present
    - Original building systems
    - No major or significant renovations since construction
    - Efforts underway to replace existing windows
    - Discussion underway w/ MWRA about renovating the building
    - Renovation costs in the millions
- Overview: Residence 1 (forestry)
  - History:
    - Built in 1945
    - Built using “suitable lumber from the Cunningham barn...leftovers from the Rutland and Holden sewers...salvaged from other buildings”
    - Residence 1 residency:
      - Donald K. Sampson (engineer), 1948-50 (1<sup>st</sup> occupant)
      - Leslie A. Campbell (Sanitary Engineer), 1951/52-91+; lease transitioned to wife/employee Terry Ann Campbell sometime in the late 1980s, with Les being retired.
      - 1980’s to 2022 DCR staff offices (Forestry, Natural Resources)
  - Status:
    - Lead paint & mold
    - Leaking plumbing and heating
    - Original building systems
    - No major or significant renovations since construction

- Introduction of hybrid workers in 2020 meant less need for physical workspaces
  - Building decommissioned in 2022 – vacated and building systems shut down
  - Building located in a regulated area (reservoir protection zone) which limits third party reuses
- Overviews: Residence 2 (BMCC)
  - History:
    - Built 1948
    - Built using “suitable lumber from the Cunningham barn...leftovers from the Rutland and Holden sewers...salvaged from other buildings”
      - John W. Copithorne (Assistant Supt., then Supt.), 1948-76 (1<sup>st</sup> occupant)
      - Roland F. Beaudoin (engineer), 1977-87+
      - Douglas M. Williams (engineer), 1992-2004
      - Currently houses Forestry staff, WSCAC staff, and a conference room
  - Status:
    - Major renovation in 2008
      - Interior renovations and asbestos abatement
      - Upgrades to wastewater and IT equipment
      - Only dedicated meet room on campus
      - Fair condition
- Overview: Baraniuk Place: (Ranger Station)
  - History:
    - Built ~1900
    - House original to the site
    - “Remodeled” in 1944 to accommodate employee housing
    - Baraniuk residency:
      - R.O. Benson, ca. 1950
      - Officer James W. Shea, 1959-6-?
      - Wilson B. Fantom, Jr., 1965-80
      - Vacant, 1980-82
      - Joseph A. Kowalski (forester), 1982-87+
      - DCR staff offices until 2023

- Status:
  - 1986 memo: “This residence is old wood frame, which will require extensive renovation in the future. When it becomes vacant, it should be demolished”
  - No renovation or major improvements since 1986
  - Lead paint & mold
  - Building vacated in 2023; building systems shut down
- Overview: Keystone Bridge
  - History:
    - Built ~1866
    - Dry-stone arch bridge
    - Crosses middle branch of Swift River
  - Status:
    - Partial collapse of SE spandrel wall discovered in 2021
    - DCR hired Stantec to assess bridge:
      - “Critical condition”
      - Beyond point of practical repair
      - Recommended demolition
    - Friends of Quabbin hired Michael Weitzner to assess bridge
      - Remedial action:
        - Remove trees
        - Install rip rap on SE wall
        - Monitor movement
      - Rebuilding bridge = \$2 to \$3 million dollars
- Overview: Quabbin Tower
  - History:
    - Built ~1940
    - Built for radio equipment, fire lookout, and observation deck
    - 6 story unheated structure
    - Stone exterior/brick interior
  - Status:
    - No significant renovations/repairs since construction
    - 2020-22 work included:
      - Installation of ventilation fans and humidity controls
      - Lead paint removal
      - Exterior cleaning
      - Water sealing exterior walls
      - Repair of broken windows & abatement of window glazing

- 2023 study identified deficiencies and recommended:
    - Repair exterior
    - Address safety hazards including deteriorated support beams
    - Repair/preserve the interior
    - Estimated costs = 2 million dollars
  - Well known attraction; visited by thousands of people annually
- Overview: Quabbin Park Cemetery (QPC)
  - History:
    - Dedicated 1932
    - About 6,600 graves were relocated from the Valley TO QPC
    - Structures included:
      - Vault
      - Office (constructed in 1941)
      - Storeroom
      - Maintenance garage
      - Well pump house
  - Status:
    - Office building: minor repairs & maintenance; in 2021 – roof replacement, abatement work, trim work
    - Maintenance Garage; upgraded electric & minor maintenance; 2021 siding repaired and painted; new roof
    - Well pump house: demolished in 2021
    - Storeroom: demolished in 2021
- Potential Quabbin Park Historic District
  - Potential National Register District
    - None of Quabbin Watershed is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places because the Quabbin features were not yet 50 years old when the Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston was nominated (1985)
    - MA Historical Commission supports a National Register District for the Quabbin Park area
    - The Administration Building, garages, terraced stonework, reservoir views, and landscape comprise central features.
    - Quabbin Tower, QPC, and Quabbin Park recreational landscape are recommended for listing as part of the district
    - Blue Meadow Road buildings are considered “contributing features” and could be listed on the National Register as part of

a district, but the district would still be eligible if they were demolished.

- Prioritizing Preservation
  - Need to focus limited resources:
    - Recent work to preserve actively used, historically significant buildings and landscapes:
      - QPC (\$500,000)
      - Investments in Administration Building
        - \$1.3 million for windows
    - Preliminary work to identify problems on Quabbin Tower (\$100,000)
      - Significant resources needed to preserve it (\$2 million)
    - Plans for significant renovation of Administration Building (via MWRA)
      - At least \$15 million
    - Use of best practices for maintenance of historic landscape features including arboriculture, mowing and shrub care, vista maintenance
    - Forestry and ranger station on Blue Meadow Road have never been open to the public, were originally built as residences, have outlived their useful lives, would require significant investments, and DCR no longer has an operational need for them (\$1 million)

Kevin Allen provided additional commentary about how buildings are prioritized, and at Quabbin the priority is the Administration Building, not satellite offices.

Questions from the audience included the meaning of the national register designation, how many other buildings are within DCR, and how many other them have been/will be demolished.

John Scannell asked the committee if there were any objections to demolishing the forestry building. There were no objections; QWAC still wants to consider the fate of the ranger station.

### **Pottapaug Pond closure to private boats due to invasive species update**

Dan gave the committee an update on aquatic invasive plant situation at Pottapaug Pond.

- Discovery:
  - Since 2010, pond surveyed annually by contractors in August; no invasives detected
  - Routine fragment barrier inspection on 5/26/2023 discovered suspect invasive plant
  - Plant identification confirmed by DCR-Wachusett Aquatic Biologists and follow-up investigation happened on 6/5/2023
  - Plant identified as swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*)
    - Treatment includes ozone, chlorine, pH adjustment, and fluoride
- Swollen Bladderwort biology
  - Rootless plant; can form dense mats
  - Flowers in early spring
  - Native to South U.S. – not native to MA
  - Prefers lakes and ponds
  - Reproduces through seed and vegetatively
  - Stem fragments can re-sprout
  - Impacts:
    - Dense mats can impede boaters, fishing
    - Increases sediment levels
    - Depletes oxygen
    - Reduces native vegetation
- Action steps
  - Partial pond survey on 6/5/2023
  - Shoreline survey completed on 6/21/2023
  - Documented along shallow areas throughout pond
  - Pottapaug closed to private boats on 6/7/2023
  - DCR staff began removal efforts on 6/12/2023: 2-days of hand harvesting
- Removal
  - Removal began on 6/12/2023
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> day of removal on 6/15/2023
  - Removal focused on first and second cove along western shore
  - Plant still in bloom, but also degrading
  - 73 gallons removed
  - MWRA notified of the plant on 6/6/2023 and assistance requested
    - MWRA sent their contractor – Solitude – to the site on 7/6/2023 and 7/7/2023 to hand pull
    - 48 gallons removed
  - Plant flowering subsiding – impossible to identify



- Future plans
  - MWRA contractor to return in spring 2024 as soon as flowering occurs
  - Continued hand pulling
  - Ongoing monitoring
  - BLA3 reservoir surveys
  - No private boat launching at Pottapaug until:
    - Plant eradicated
    - New policies developed to prevent spread to Reservoir

A member of the public spoke why rental motorboats are allowed on the pond when they have the potential to disturb/spread the bladderwort. Dan answered that the issue would be considered.

Tom Barnes asked if a new boat seal could be developed to allow private boats specifically onto the pond and not the reservoir. Dan answered that there were lots of options to consider and DCR would spend the off-season discussion these possibilities and come back to QWAC with their findings.

Tom Lautzenheiser commented that he thought the chances of eradication were almost 0 – and that DCR would have to deal/live with the plant from now on.

#### **Status of paving gate 43 road**

Dan provided an update that the new paving contract was going out to bid and it would be a few weeks before the contract was awarded. It is still possible that the paving will happen this fall, but unlikely. If not, it would be done prior to next year's fishing season opening.

#### **Condition of gate 8 access road**

Dan provided a brief update that routine maintenance continues on the road (rolling, blowing, etc.) and that not much more can be done at this time.

#### **Gate 8 issue – anchor ropes at barrels causing fishermen to lose gear**

Dan indicated that the state police dive team was approached about conducting an exercise on the reservoir to look for the lost anchor ropes.

Clayton Sydla offered to provide GPS locations of the ropes to Dan.

### **Pelham Lookout on Rt. 202 – scenic tree cutting proposal**

J.R. Greene asked about the condition of the Rt. 202 lookout and Enfield lookout. Trees have grown and are impacting the view. Dan answered that he would discuss the issue with staff and see what kind of vista restoration was possible.

### **Member Issues**

N/A

**Meeting End Time: 8:30 PM**

### **Upcoming QWAC Meetings:**

- Monday, December 18, 2023, at 6:30 PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 100 Winsor Dam Road, Belchertown, MA 01007