
**Science Advisory Council
to the
Environmental Management Commission
Building 1805, West Inner Road
September 19, 2024
6:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**

SAC Members:

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Attendees:

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Handouts Distributed at Meeting:

1. Science Advisory Council Draft Meeting Minutes, May 16, 2024
2. Letter, US Fish and Wildlife Service re: Camp Edwards Recognized with 2024 Northeast Region Military Conservation Partner Award, September 10, 2024
3. Environmental Management Commission Environmental Officer Update, September 2024
4. Camp Edwards Update, 19 September 2024
5. Camp Edwards Natural Resources Update
6. Camp Edwards/MassWildlife Conservation through Partnership
7. Wildland Fire Discussion, Burning Questions from the Spring Meeting

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Agenda – Mr. Paul Cavanagh, SAC Chair

Science Advisory Council (SAC) Chair Paul Cavanagh welcomed everyone to the SAC meeting.

Agenda Item #2: Review of SAC Minutes and Approval - Mr. Paul Cavanagh, SAC Chair/SAC Members

- Mr. Pinaud said that his phone number as listed in the draft May 16, 2024, meeting minutes is incorrect.
- Mr. Cavanagh made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as corrected, and Mr. Gschwend seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Agenda Item #3: SAC Membership Vacancies – Mr. Leonard Pinaud – EMC Environmental Officer
Mr. Pinaud provided an update on vacancies on the SAC and the Community Advisory Council (CAC).

- The CAC has three vacancies: At-Large, Town of Falmouth, and US Coast Guard community member. The EMC has notified the Town of Falmouth and the Coast Guard Commander of the vacancies and offered to assist them with recommendations for appointment. SAC and CAC members are appointed by the Governor through the Office of Boards and Commissioners.
- The EMC has been working with the Division of Fish and Game Chief of Staff to fill vacancies on the SAC and CAC.
- In addition to the vacancies on the CAC, there are three appointed At-Large members who have not attended meetings in the past few years and have not been responsive to attempts to contact them. After discussion at the CAC's next meeting (October 1, 2024), the CAC Chair plans to recommend to the EMC appointments for these members be revoked and new members appointed to replace them.
- The *Guidelines and Procedures for the Administration of the EMC* (Guidelines) identifies a process for appointments for vacancies and pending vacancies on the CAC and SAC. The CAC and SAC chairs will draft a memo identifying the vacancies and requesting the EMC chair notify the Governor of the vacancies and that the EMC would like to have new members appointed to the SAC and CAC.
- The SAC has five vacancies that must be filled by subject matter experts recognized for expertise in public health, water protection, wildlife habitat management or land use management.

Mr. Pinaud said that he and the chair are requesting feedback on how subject matter experts who are willing to serve on the SAC may be found. Mr. Cavanagh noted the SAC has no budget for advertising. Feedback on ways to solicit new SAC members included:

- Placing an announcement in the Massachusetts Environmental Monitor, which would reach state agencies and non-profits.
- Putting a notice on the EMC's website.
- Providing a press release announcing the vacancies to the local newspaper; the newspaper may respond with a news article.
- Engaging outlets such as the Southeastern Massachusetts Communication Outlet (SEMCO), which is an email list serve for the science community in Southeastern Massachusetts, or regional, professional organization newsletters, such as scientific organizations like the Boston Society of Civil Engineers.

COL Bagaglio noted that the Massachusetts National Guard through Cooperative Agreement funding of the E&RC may be able to provide funding towards filling the vacancies. COL Bagaglio will relay any additional information about that to Mr. Pinaud.

Mr. McCumber recommended, if the SAC vacancies are advertised, considering what qualifies as a subject matter expert and what people would be asked to provide to demonstrate their expertise. Mr. Cavanagh replied that using the exact language out of Chapter 47 of the Acts of 2002 makes certain that nothing is misrepresented, and the areas of expertise are as identified in the legislation

Mr. Pinaud said the next steps are he will incorporate feedback from the SAC meeting into the draft memo, the CAC chair will present this information to the CAC and solicit their feedback, which Mr. Pinaud will incorporate into the draft memo. The chairs will then decide what to send to the EMC. This can be put on the agenda of the EMC meeting on October 17, 2024.

Agenda Item #4: Environmental Officer Update – Mr. Leonard Pinaud, EMC Environmental Officer

Mr. Pinaud, Environmental Management Commission (EMC) Environmental Officer (EO), summarized the activities related to the Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve (the Reserve).

- The EMC and Camp Edwards Environmental & Readiness Center conducted 14 range inspections between May and September 2024.
- Seven non-standard training requests were reviewed and approved for pyrotechnics for training, removal and detonation of munitions items and other maintenance activities in the Camp Edwards Training Area/Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve.
- Range Operations and Control Area (ROCA): on India, Sierra, and Tango ranges, support buildings will be replaced or added; there is no significant change in use at these ranges.
- The EMC is working with the E&RC to revise and update the Operations, Maintenance and Monitoring Plans (OMMPs) for the operational active small arms ranges on Camp Edwards. OMMPs are required to be updated at least every three years, are reviewed annually, and enforceable under the Environmental Performance Standards (EPSs). Camp Edwards is working with the EMC to determine the frequency and degree of range maintenance and projectile removal from the ranges—considering each range’s specific environmental impact, safety hazard and intended use, lease requirements, and the quantities and types of ammunition expended on the range. The SAC’s Ad Hoc Committee has discussed the frequency and degree of range maintenance primarily to comply with the EPS requirements for the prevention of fragmentation and ricochets. Recommendations from the SAC and other groups and agencies, such as USEPA and APCC, that have provided recommendations to the EMC are being drafted for incorporation in the OMMP updates. The EMC’s current focus is on proactive containment avoidance to the maximum extent practicable and an “adaptive management approach,” which is making decisions as part of a continuing process of monitoring, reviewing data, assessing human health and the environment, environmental risk, evaluating advances in range monitoring, range design and technology and responding with management actions dictated by resulting information rather than on soil, groundwater, and porewater action levels.
- Mr. Pinaud has been participating in the Camp Edwards tours; he encourages members to take the tour.
- The Community Advisory Council will meet on October 1; the EMC will meet on October 17.
- In May, US EPA Region 1 requested information from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environmental Management and Restoration on the occurrence and content of PFAS and fluorinated polymers in munitions items including propellants, explosives, pyrotechnics, and other components of munitions, used or potentially used at Camp Edwards by the military or government contractors. US EPA requested this information to assist in identifying PFAS present in munitions used at camp Edwards to determine if there are areas of PFAS release that would need to be addressed by state or federal regulation.

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- The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense responded to the US EPA's request on June 24. The response indicated that the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense does not have documents concerning munitions used or potentially used at Otis Air National Guard Base or Army National Guard Camp Edwards. They noted that the Office of the Secretary of Defense is researching DoD wide for PFAS presence in certain explosives in the binding materials and whether PFAS are destroyed during normal use.
 - The Impact Area Groundwater Study Program is completing its PFAS report that will summarize all the Army's investigative work into PFAS at Camp Edwards. The draft report is currently in internal review and is scheduled to be submitted to the US EPA and MassDEP in the fall.

Mr. Cavanagh asked if the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense's response letter is available. Mr. Pinaud will provide the letter to the SAC and CAC if it is publicly available. Mr. Pinaud will also provide US EPA's letter to the SAC and CAC.

Agenda Item #5: Camp Edwards Update – COL John Bagaglio, Camp Edwards Commander

COL Bagaglio presented an update on activities at Camp Edwards.

- Administrative changes include the return of CW4 Justin Smith, training operations, from deployment. In addition, a new range operations manager was hired and will be onboarded in the coming weeks.
- Camp Edwards Natural Resources Program was awarded the 2024 Northeast Region Military Conservation Partner Award from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The National Academy of Sciences: a one-day gathering on October 30 of selected experts and governmental officials will discuss the scientific and technical issues surrounding potential impacts to the Cape Cod aquifer from the MAARNG's proposed machine gun range at Camp Edwards.
- Fourteen units were projected to be trained at Camp Edwards, however because of priority conflicts at Ethan Allen Training Site in Vermont, units were bumped to Camp Edwards upping the number of units trained to 22. The training focus for the next fiscal year is individual Weapons Qualification. An estimated 2,600 soldiers will train over four weekends in October; an estimated 2,300 soldiers will train over three weekends in November.
- Range Operations and Control Area (ROCA): for Sierra, Tango and India Ranges are training support facilities, usually a covered mess shelter, a building for breaking down/issuing ammunition and a storage building. Construction is ongoing and projected to be completed in early 2025.
- Range sampling was conducted on Sierra, Echo, Tango, India and Lima Ranges. The samples were sent to the lab and results are pending.
- For the Multi-Purpose Machine Gun Range, the MAARNG has a duty to continue moving forward with the range and has changed the bidding documents to be able to advertise and award pieces of the range and add two "alternate bid" items. The base bid included three firing lanes and the range tower. Site work needing to be completed includes work that facilitates stormwater management and natural resources habitat conservation. Alternate bid items include ROCA building construction and an ammunition breakdown building. Four bids were received and the MAARNG is in the process of reviewing those.

Mr. Gschwend asked what the area is to be cleared and noted that the MAARNG will likely receive pushback clearing that many acres of trees.

- Seventy acres will be cleared and three firing lanes planned for construction. Benefits to clearing the area include development of sandplain grassland on the range and increasing beneficial habitat. MAARNG has accounted for all projects it may possibly do over the next 20 years and established a mitigation bank with the goal of proactively providing restored habitat for species; the metric is net benefit under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. The MAARNG has implemented more than 2,000 acres of mitigation under its conservation management permit.
- If additional money is programmed in the future, the remaining five lanes would be constructed.

Mr. McCumber provided an update on the Natural Resources Program:

- Outreach efforts continue and include the Cape Cod Natural History Conference, tours and speaking engagements.
- Flora projects include annual vegetation surveys, forest stand surveys including the pine beetle risk assessment, surveys and an updated protocol for the Few-flowered Nutsedge, invasive plant mapping and partner survey assistance for endangered plants.
- Wildlife surveys and monitoring are being conducted for the Spotted Turtle and Eastern Box Turtle, bird surveys are being conducted for Woodcock and grouse. The program is going through Endangered Species Act consultations for bats including formal consultation for growing season prescribed fire.
- The program continues reporting and annual plan submission for Agassiz's Clam Shrimp. Two major puddle repairs were completed; Clam shrimp were found back in the puddles within a week of repair. A new puddle complex was added at the Unit Training Equipment Site facility.
- There has been a dramatic increase in the Whip-poor-will population on Camp Edwards; the per point count has been doubled through management.
- Frosted Elfin butterfly has been confirmed at 11 of 15 survey sites from the last three years, comparing to 1 of 14 sites in 2017. Skid roads, fire breaks, roadsides, and other openings are essential within the barrens habitat.
- The Fall deer hunt runs over a number of dates September through December, ending with the muzzleloader deer hunt December 18-19.
- The Integrated Wildland Fire Management Plan is being finalized. The program is preparing for the fall fire training and the spring burn season, targeting 1,200 acres.
- Upcoming restoration projects include the Battle Position 14/16 Landing Zone, collaborative habitat restoration and aviation support, a 16-acre harvest with sandplain grassland/heartland species, and continuing efforts to build resilience for species and habitat off powerline rights of way.

Agenda Item #6: Camp Edwards/MassWildlife Conservation through Partnership – Mr. Jason Zimmer, Southeast District Supervisor

Mr. Zimmer was unable to attend the SAC meeting; Mr. Zimmer will be invited to a future meeting.

Agenda Item #7: Prescribed Fire at Camp Edwards – Mr. Jake McCumber, Natural Resources and Training Lands Manager

This agenda item was postponed to a future meeting.

Agenda Item #8: Public Comment – Mr. Paul Cavanagh, SAC Chair

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item #9: Adjourn – Mr. Paul Cavanagh, SAC Chair

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Science Advisory Council Action Items

September 19, 2024

Action Items:

1. Mr. Pinaud will provide US EPA Region 1's letter of request to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense of Environmental Management and Restoration on the occurrence and content of PFAS and fluorinated polymers to the SAC and CAC.
2. Mr. Pinaud will provide the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense's response letter to US EPA to the SAC and CAC if it is publicly available.