



## DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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### COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth/Secretary, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Fred Winthrop, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Tom French/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/ Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Elizabeth Wroblicka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Dave Fuller/CVWD Wildlife Manager, Jason Zimmer/SEWD Manager, Andrew Madden/WWD Manager, Alex Krofta/CVWD Stewardship Biologist, Chalis Bird/NEWD Wildlife Manager, Lt. Col. Tony Khabir/OLE, Major David Loos/OLE

DATE: September 25, 2018

LOCATION: Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Connecticut Valley District Office  
Belchertown, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the September meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 11:00 a.m.

#### Acceptance of Amendment to July Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to amend the minutes from the July meeting to correct the land protection acreages reported during the Director's Comments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Acceptance of August Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to accept the minutes from the August meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that the next step in the Board's public investigation of the rattlesnake conservation plan has been accomplished. An analysis was completed by staff, a report was completed, and it has been sent to the two groups that assisted the public inquiry. He noted that there were no responses in all the comments received to the request for additional information, nor any refutations of the science used.

The Chair also stated that the Board had first awarded the Francis W. Sargent Conservation Award in 2000, and he asked Vice Chair Roche to report on the recent actions of the Nominations Committee of the Board. Vice Chair Roche reported that the current committee, composed of himself, Secretary Booth, and Mr. Sears, was unanimous in nominating former Fisheries and Wildlife Board member and Chair George L. Darey to be the 2018 recipient. Director Tisa reported that his staff would make arrangements with the Lenox Sportsmen's Club to hold the event there, Lenox being very convenient for Mr. Darey.

Dr. Van Roo moved that the Board present the 2018 Sargent Award to Mr. Darey, as proposed; Secretary Booth seconded the motion; the vote carried unanimously to general applause in the meeting room.

### Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that on September 9 he had attended the Transportation and Wildlife conference held at UMass/Amherst with approximately 300 biologists, practitioners, and hardware and software vendors attending. He stated that he gave the opening remarks and that he thought there was a lot of good information in the presentations that first day. And there have been good results from the collaborations already, with MassDOT working with the Department's OFBA [Office of Fishing and Boating Access] on a parcel that will be developed for lake access.

The Commissioner reported that he had attended a Rifles to Rods meeting with EEA Secretary Beaton; the group does outreach to veterans. On September 12, the Department had its Performance Awards ceremony, with staff from DMF, DER, and DFW Sandwich Hatchery management staff Adam Davies and Greg McSherry. He also attended two events in public-access locations that are being renovated.

The Commissioner also reported that he had attended the Big MOE on September 23 with Director Tisa and approximately 2,300 other people. There were lots of kids, plenty of great activities for them to explore, and an all-around great event. In answer to a question from the Board, Director Tisa reported that the Chair and Co-Chair of the new Big COD [Cape OutDoors] event planned on the Joint Base Cape Cod in Bourne/Sandwich also attended the Big MOE, as well as two of the military representatives who are helping to organize and execute the event. Commissioner Amidon also reported that later on the day of the meeting he and Director Tisa would be attending the rededication of the reconstructed Congamond Lakes South Ramp, being held at the Southwick town hall (because of the inclement weather).

### Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported that he had attended the AFWA [Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies] Annual Meeting in Florida the week of September 8. He stated that MassWildlife has had many long and involved relationships at the national level. The Director reported that it was a very intense meeting, with everyone working all the time; even the meals are working, and committee meetings go right into the evening. He noted that there are 25 AFWA committees, and that being at the meetings gives him the opportunity to see where the agency and the Director stand on various issues in relation to other state agencies across the country. The top three issues, he has found, are 1) passing RAWA [the Recovering America's Wildlife Act], upon which all the states are unanimous; 2) establishing agency relevancy: the need to reach out to all citizens and diversify the constituents who engage with wildlife agencies. Director Tisa noted that he is working with his staff to develop, hone, and promote a core message, "MassWildlife: All Wildlife"; 3) R3 [Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation/Reengagement], to create opportunities for traditional sporting constituents to engage with the agency and its programs. He stated that he found it amazing that all the states have similar problems and challenges to those in Massachusetts, noting that we talk about issues with hunting in Massachusetts, but it's actually not too bad here compared with other states in terms of negative public attitudes.

Going forward, Director Tisa reported that he would be meeting with the AFWA Executive Director in early October to go over the committees Director Tisa will join. He stated that he is also serving as Treasurer of the NEAFWA [Northeast AFWA] effective the following week. In general, the Director has a lot of travel commitments coming up, and will be on the road most of the fall.

### Law Enforcement Comments

Lieut. Colonel Tony Khabir introduced Major Dave Loos, also present, who had recently been promoted to Inland Chief and Special Operations Chief and was a +20-year veteran of the OLE.

Lt. Col. Khabir reported almost 300 MassWildlife-related calls for service so far this year, including 155 raptor calls. He also reported 10 boating fatalities, and 5 fatalities linked to ORV use.

In his report, Lieut. Col. Khabir offered the OLE's thanks to the Office of Fishing and Boating Access (OFBA) for its help with two highly publicized areas in Easthampton and on the Merrimack River; signage was needed and OLE received needed help from OFBA.

The Lieutenant Colonel also reported an unusual snake bite incident, stating that two laborers saw and handled an 8-inch copperhead, and one was bitten in the thumb. OLE was called, the injured man was sent to Quincy Hospital (which has antivenin), and OLE secured the snake. He also reported that Lieut. Clayton was attending the North American Wildlife Conservation Officers conference, which is in Canada; the attendees were able to observe polar bear migration while they were there. The Lieutenant is hopefully bringing back info on dealing with large-animal response. Lieut. Col. Khabir reported that two officers had been hired, and that the OLE was currently giving them their field training. In the recent past, three officers have retired. He then announced that he himself had recently been promoted to lieutenant colonel, and he was roundly congratulated by the meeting.

After Lt. Col. Khabir had completed his report, Director Tisa stated that he had meant to report that MassWildlife was currently hosting the ACJV [Atlantic Coast Joint Venture] and AFC [Atlantic Flyway Council] meetings in Plymouth. With 90 attendees, it is a fairly large series of important technical meetings, and staff did a great job organizing it. Director Tisa noted that he had given the opening remarks on Monday.

### Personnel Report (Mark Tisa)

Director Tisa submitted the following personnel report for the Board's consideration and vote:

#### **Promotion**

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jon Regosin	Deputy Director (Program Manager VIII)	Westborough

Mr. Sears moved acceptance of the report, Secretary Booth seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous. Director Tisa stated that there were a number of excellent candidates for the position, but that he has worked with Dr. Regosin very productively and is very pleased with the outcome. Assistant Director French reported that he highly approved of the promotion and believes that Dr. Regosin is an excellent choice for the Deputy Director position.

### Tracking with Dogs (Michael Huguenin)

Assistant Director for Wildlife Michael Huguenin reported on a matter that the Board had requested staff look into, based on a request from a constituent to allow a study of the use of dogs to track wounded, unfound deer. Assistant Director Huguenin reviewed the agency's mandate, its general deer management goals, and the details of the request that resulted in this inquiry. He reported that the study proposed was in violation of the existing statutes as well as the regulations, and that the statute took the matter out of agency hands. He also reported that staff had determined that the study would

not provide any benefit to the work of the agency relative to its deer management goals, and that, taking all the circumstances together, staff did not recommend taking any steps to pursue it.

After a brief discussion, Chair Larson offered the Board's thanks to staff for the research and analysis done on the issue.

#### Connecticut Valley Wildlife District Report (Joseph Rogers)

Connecticut Valley Wildlife District Manager Joseph Rogers presented the Board with an overview of recent management and stewardship activities in his district, with information on staffing, including recent hires (himself included); fisheries management projects and surveys, some undertaken with Westborough staff; wildlife management projects, including eagle banding and black bear barrel trapping and monitoring; land stewardship activities in WMAs and conservation-restriction lands demonstrated by an extended analysis of the Southwick WMA; and a lot of outreach and development work, including staff participating in the Mass Junior Conservation Camp, the Big MOE, the Northeast Transportation and Wildlife Conference, and the Franklin County Fair.

In response to a question in the discussion that followed, Mr. Rogers reported that the district will begin fall stocking the following week. He said he was looking forward to experiencing it first-hand, but that his district is ready to go. The Board members thanked him for his very informative talk and congratulated him on a busy, productive spring and summer.

#### Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee (NHESAC) Appointments (Ronald Amidon)

Commissioner Amidon reported that the appointments to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee had expired, and that he had reviewed the Members and Associate Members of the Advisory Committee in consultation with Director Tisa, Assistant Director Tom French, and Chairman Larson. Upon Director Tisa's recommendation and with the Board's approval, Commissioner Amidon stated that he was reappointing Wayne R. Petersen and Mark Mello as full members, and that their resumes and those of all the other nominees to follow were in the Board's meeting packets. Noting that Chairman Larson is on the Advisory Committee ex officio representing the Fisheries and Wildlife Board, Commissioner Amidon stated that he was also making two new appointments to the Advisory Committee, with William E. Brumbach and Timothy Flanagan to fill existing vacancies, including the one left by the recent death of longtime Chairwoman Kathleen 'Betty' Anderson. He reported that both Mr. Brumbach and Mr. Flanagan were formerly Associate Members, so they are familiar with the responsibilities and workings of the Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Amidon then reappointed David Small, Andy Finton, Kevin Powers, and Bryan S. Windmiller, Ph.D., as NHESAC Associate Members. And he appointed Russ Hopping as a new Associate Member, noting that Mr. Hopping is well known to the Massachusetts conservation community as the Ecology Program Director to The Trustees.

The Commissioner stated that he recommended this Advisory Committee for the Board's consideration and asked the Board to vote its approval at this time.

Chair Larson provided some background on the history and makeup of the NHESAC. He reiterated that there are two types of members, and that, by statute, they are recommended by the DFG commissioner and approved by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board. He reported that Associate Members are appointed by the commissioner and have no legal basis but participate in discussions and contribute their expertise. The Advisory Committee's primary job is to advise the Director on species that should be listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and at what level. Chair Larson noted that he

has been the Board's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species representative ever since joining the Board.

Mr. Sears moved acceptance of the appointments as proposed; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

#### Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson reported that the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee's September meeting had been cancelled, so the Chair had no report.

#### Confirm Meeting Dates

Members discussed the October Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting in light of the Sargent Award ceremony. Members agreed to meet at 10:00 a.m., tentatively at the Lenox Sportsmen's Club [later changed to the Lenox Library, 18 Main Street, Lenox], and hold the Sargent Award ceremony at 1:00 p.m. [subsequently adjusted to 1:30 p.m.] at the Lenox Sportsmen's Club, following the meeting.

Members also discussed November meeting date: November 20, 2018, 10:00 a.m., in Westborough.

Members also discussed December meeting date: December 20, 2018, 10:00 a.m., in Westborough.

#### Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo, Mr. Foster, Secretary Booth, and Mr. Winthrop reported no comment.

Vice Chair Roche reported that there is a forestry issue in his District; not on our property, but MassWildlife is named in the article.

Mr. Sears reported he had attended the Western District land committee meeting and that he found it very instructive. He also noted that Western District Habitat Coordinator Brian Hawthorne had told him about a relatively large forest chestnut tree full of chestnuts, and he was able to go out and see it. He also reported that on October 4 the Berkshire County League was planning to have Deer Project Leader David Stainbrook give a presentation on Chronic Wasting Disease, which is of special concern because of the nearby border with New York and many Western district sportsmen hunt there. The talk was scheduled for the Cheshire Rod & Gun Club, and the League was planning to publicize it and invite the public to attend. Mr. Sears also reported that he had received a positive email the previous day from Tom Tynning regarding the Board's rattlesnake statement, and he wanted Chair Larson and Director Tisa to be aware of it.

There being no further business, Secretary Booth made a motion to adjourn; Vice Chair Roche seconded; the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth  
Secretary

#### List of documents presented to the Board in its September meeting packets

September Agenda

Draft August meeting minutes for review

MassWildlife's 2017 Annual Report

MassWildlife's 2018-2019 Migratory Game Bird Regulations pamphlet

September Personnel Report

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2018)