

Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 12th, 2019
7:00 PM

Location: Rutland Free Public Library, 280 Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543

Members: (Members in **BOLD were present)**

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: William Lebel

Alternate: Mike Moss

Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs: **John Root**

Alternate: Dave Papale

Trout Unlimited: **Jeffrey Schaaf (chairperson)**

Alternate:

A Rod and Gun Club: **Joe Cataldo**

Alternate: Bryan Waterman

Barre Selectboard: Martha Varnot

Alternate: Edward Yaglou

Hubbardston Selectboard:

Alternate: **Cindy Schlener**

Oakham Selectboard: Thomas Hughes

Alternate: **Phillip Warbasse**

Rutland Selectboard: **Charles R. Williams**

Alternate: **Brett Russ**

Barre Historical Society: Margo Petracone

Alternate:

Hubbardston Historical Society: **Robin Langer**

Alternate:

Oakham Historical Society: Bill Mucha

Alternate: Lee Dougan

Rutland Historical Society:

Alternate:

Massachusetts Wildlife Federation: (group disbanded)

Alternate:

Massachusetts Audubon Society: **Martha Gach**

Alternate:

Sierra Club: Matt Hopkinson

Alternate:

Upper Ware River Watershed Association: (group disbanded)

Alternate:

General Public: Mark DuBois

Alternate: **Dave Small**

DCR Staff Present:

Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor, Lisa Gustavsen

Members of the Public Present:

Lydia Barter, Ed Blanchard, Leslie Choquette, Dick Hutchings, Denise Kellicker, Paul Kreswick, Chris Palin, Charlie Schmuhl, Doug Walther, Mike Wikader, Marianne Wojcicki, Dean Zuppio

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 7:03 PM

Approval of minutes from meeting on Thursday, June 20th, 2019

Cindy Schlener requested that a comment be added to the minutes regarding the closing of the Rt. 122 parking area. Her statement was that she felt the new parking lot should be in the open on a public way (preferably Rt. 122) for security purposes, women walking alone, etc. She also asked that her comment on page 7 of the minutes be bulleted so that it is clear the statement is about Comet Pond.

Dick Williams made a motion to accept the minutes from the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC) meeting on June 20th, 2019 with edits. Cindy Schlener seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Brief update on status of the Ware River Watershed Public Access Management Plan (WRWPAMP) development

Dan Clark updated the committee on the status of the update of the WRWPAMP.

DCR has met with various user groups of the watershed, most recently the Comet Pond Homeowners Association. Soon, another round of meetings with those same user groups will occur; each group will be met with individually. The goal is to present more definitive plans and maps regarding the plan update at the October WRWAC meeting. The timeline looking forward is to have a draft version

of the plan completed and presented to WRWAC and the public by the end of the year, a 30-day public comment period would then follow. Those comments would be compiled, analyzed and taken into consideration, and the final step is having the DCR commissioner sign off on the final version of the plan. It then becomes official and would be implemented by DCR.

Comments from the recent public survey regarding the WRWPAMP are still being compiled. An internal working group has been also been formed to work on the plan.

A single database is being compiled that will include all the official trails in the watershed. Cindy Schlener commented she has a set of trails digitally mapped on GPX files that DCR may not be aware of and aren't on current maps. There was discussion on whether DCR has already received these files. Brett Russ will confirm, as he has given DCR several digital trail files in the past that should be comprehensive.

T3 trail

Cindy Schlener is hoping that T3 makes it onto the draft version of the WRWPAMP. If so, she asked if flagging/cutting of the reroute could happen this winter (weather permitting). Dan Clark answered that there will be several steps involved in implemented new aspects of the access plan: signage in the field, etc. Further, before any work could be done on water supply property, a formal agreement/relationship with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) would first need to be established. It was noted that there is a DCR explainer available online that details how to become a friend's group.

DCR is also developing an app that will allow users to bring up in real-time a digital map on their smartphone will show where they are in the watershed as well as detail other public access information.

Member Issues

Jeff Schaaf recently spoke with senator Anne Gobi regarding legislation she introduced that would change and add some of the groups represented on WRWAC. There was some controversy around discussion of the legislation and the fact that no new environmental groups are being added. Revisions got

delayed in committee long enough so that it won't be approved before the next legislative session.

Cindy Schlener stated that she is currently listed as the alternate member of the Hubbardston selectboard on the WRWAC, even though the town voted her to be the primary member. The primary spot has been vacant since Tom Bratko resigned. The actual WRWAC legislation states that each group should nominate three people for a membership spot and that the DCR commissioner is to choose one person from that list of three. It was noted that many groups can't find three people to nominate and are lucky to find a single person looking to join the committee. Cindy will coordinate with the Hubbardston selectboard and get them to draft an official letter to Dan Clark clarifying that Cindy has been nominated/appointed to be their primary member on the committee.

Dick Williams asked for a follow up on the aquatic weed/vegetation issue at Long Pond. He suggested limiting boat access to potentially improve the issue. Dan Clark answered that he has not yet seen the end of summer pond report that is done by the aquatic biologist. He noted that this is concern at multiple ponds (Demond Pond, Comet Pond) regarding invasive species introduction and growth.

Dick Williams asked about the dam at Rutland State Park and if the park could contribute money to repair it. Dan Clark answered that since they are not under the Division of Water Supply Protection, we can't take funds from them. He added that there are other, higher priority dams, that are currently being focused on for repairs.

Dick Williams expressed concern over invasive species encroachment in areas that have recently been logged. He would like to see DCR plan regarding invasive species management in the proposal/planning phase of forestry operations.

There was discussion of a section of Coldbrook Road that gets closed during winter. It was stated that in past years the 'road closed' sign has not gotten put up until well after the road has been closed. This resulted in people driving part way down the road only to be forced to turn around when they notice the locked gate. It was requested that a sign be placed at the nearby Rt. 122 intersection stating, 'Coldbrook Road closed' at the appropriate time.

Dick Williams talked about a recent experience he had bicycling on the Blackstone Trail at a DCR park. He noted the high-quality maintenance of the trail and dedication of the staff involved. He would like to see similar quality trails in Rutland.

Brett Russ commented on an illegal dump site he had previously brought to DCR's attention. He updated the committee that it has been cleaned up.

Dean Zuppio passed on a message from Herm Eck that the skid steer machine has been brought to the prison camp and used to clean out the brush in the area.

Cindy Schlener brought up the fact that the DCR field leases will be up for bid next year. She knows of two brothers from Athol who may be interested in putting in a bid for those fields. She will pass the names on to Dan Clark.

Meeting End Time: 7:52 PM

Upcoming WRWAC Meetings

- Thursday, November 7th, 2019 at 7 PM – Rutland Free Public Library (downstairs), 280 Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543