

**Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**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:

Alternate: Bryan Waterman

Barre Selectboard: Martha Varnot

Alternate:

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:**

Sara Cohen, Dan Clark, Justin Gonsor, John Scannell

**Members of the Public Present:**

Due to overcapacity, an attendance sheet was not filled out.

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Start Time: 7:04 PM**

\*Due to attendance exceeding the capacity of the library, agenda items were postponed for Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7PM at the Quabbin Regional High School auditorium, 800 South Street, Barre, MA 01005.

**Approval of minutes from meeting on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Cindy Schlener made a motion to accept the minutes from the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC) meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Dave Small seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Ware River Public Access Management Plan: plan on hold pending DCR commissioner review; brief update from DCR**

Sara Cohen briefed everyone on how the update process for the Ware River public access plan has progressed to the current point. It is updated roughly every 10 years.

John Scannell commented that a new commissioner was appointed to DCR in early February. The plan has been put on hold while he can be briefed on the issues, which may be several months. The commissioner is the person who ultimately approves the plan. The 2010 plan/policies will remain in place as they have been, until the new plan is updated, finalized, and adopted. It was clarified that certain gates are locked, as needed, each year during mud season. With

constant freezing and thawing, this season has been extra muddy. This is the reason some gates are currently locked.

Jeff Stillings and Matt Urban spoke on behalf of the Rutland Board and Selectmen and Rutland Board of Selectmen, respectively. Recently, both towns have signed position papers stating that it is the position of the towns of Rutland and Barre that no changes be made regarding lawful access to the Prison Camp. They specifically ask that the gates remain open and unlocked. The position papers were presented to the committee. He is also in the process planning meetings with representatives from the towns of Oakham and Hubbardston in the coming weeks. Over the past couple weeks, two citizen petitions have been generated and currently has over 1,000 signatures. He invited the DCR commissioner to attend the next WRWAC meeting and would like to present the petitions to him.

Cindy Schlener asked if the main concern from the town's perspective is over access to the Prison Camp specifically, or if they have other concerns as well. Jeff Stillings answered that he is concerned over many of the regulation changes and feels as though the town should be able to weigh in before any changes are made. Matt Urban commented that access to the west side of the Ware River Watershed is just as important as access to the Prison Camp.

### **Member Issues**

Dave Small made a motion to nominate Brett Russ as a representative from the general public on the committee, pending commissioner approval. Cindy Schlener seconded the motion. Brett would fill Dave's seat, who is stepping down from the committee as of March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Meeting End Time: 7:39 PM**

### **Upcoming WRWAC Meetings**

- Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7 PM – Quabbin Regional High School, auditorium, 800 South Street, Barre, MA 01005